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WRITINGS

OF THE

REV. JOHN BRADFORD,

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S AND MARTYR,

A. D. 1555.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE valuable work here presented to the Christian public is a reprint of the London edition,* and comprehends the most valuable writings of the English Reformers. Their excellence has been generally appreciated, and their republication in the United States, where they are rarely to be met with, must be regarded as an auspicious event, as it may serve to diffuse and perpetuate those principles, in support of which the blood of the martyrs was shed, and for which the American Church is again called to contend. In presenting an exact reprint of the English edition, the Presbyterian Board of Publication do not wish to be considered as concurring in every form of expression or shade of sentiment to be found in these volumes. Their object is to present the Reformers as they appeared in their own writings, at a time when the church was just emerging

* By the London Tract Society.

from papal darkness. Still they appreciate the sound argument, evangelical doctrine and fervent piety which generally characterize their religious writings and can commend them to the discriminating reader.

It affords the Board unfeigned pleasure to state, that they have been encouraged to engage in this enterprise, by the liberality of an esteemed friend who has engaged to assume the entire expense of stereotyping the work. The sum requisite to accomplish this was more than *Five Thousand Dollars*.

The whole work is comprised in *Twelve* volumes, although each volume is complete and distinct in itself.

As the reader may be anxious to know upon what principles the English edition was prepared, the following information on the subject is extracted from the Postscript to that edition.

“The following particulars will explain the manner in which this work has been carried through the press. The pieces contained therein are without abridgment, unless where expressly mentioned. There are a few omissions which are necessary in a publication intended to be generally circulated, and to be useful at the present day. In other editions, the obsolete spelling has been laid aside, the

same plan is pursued in the present publication; the involved construction of sentences, common in writers of that period, has also been removed. Those words which have become unintelligible or offensive, are exchanged for others, or are explained by notes when it is desirable that they should be retained. These variations, if they may be so called, were as necessary to render this work generally useful, as the adoption of modern orthography. The utmost care has been taken that the meaning of the author should be strictly preserved, and the various pieces have been collated with the best and earliest editions, or with manuscript copies. This has been done, that the meaning of the author might be given as nearly as possible, not from the first editions being the most correct, as they often abound with errors, for which the hurried or careless manner in which they were for the most part passed through the press, will readily account. The present reprints, it is believed, will be found to present the most correct text of these writers that has hitherto appeared. More than half of the pieces included in this collection, have not been reprinted since the sixteenth century, and a considerable portion is now printed for the first time."

The Volumes included under the title of

THE BRITISH REFORMERS may be arranged in the following order :

- Volume 1. WICKLIFF TO BILNEY.
2. TINDAL, FRITH, AND BARNES.
3. EDWARD VI., PARR, BALNAVES, &c.
4. LATIMER.
5. HOOPER.
6. BRADFORD.
7. RIDLEY AND PHILPOT.
8. CRANMER, ROGERS, CARELESS, &c.
9. KNOX.
10. BECON.
11. JEWELL.
12. FOX, BALE AND COVERDALE.

By order of the Executive Committee.

WM. M. ENGLIS, EDITOR.

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SOME ACCOUNT
OF
THE REV. JOHN BRADFORD,

Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Martyr, A. D. 1535.

JOHN BRADFORD was born at Manchester about the year 1510. His parents gave him a good education. He was a hard student from his youth, and his skill in accounts procured him employment under sir John Harrington, treasurer and paymaster of the English forces in France. The abilities he manifested in this situation obtained him considerable esteem, and, as Fox expresses, "he continued certain years in a right honest and good trade of life, after the course of this world, likely to have come forward, if his mind could have so liked, or had been given to the world as many others." His office he resigned, apparently not being willing to connive at some abuses by which the king was defrauded to a considerable amount.

The precise nature of the transaction, and Bradford's share in it are not clearly ascertained. His letters to father Traves show that it was some transaction affecting his employer, and that he used every means in his power to induce sir John Harrington to replace the amount. A letter from father Traves to Bradford, (see p. xiv,) confirms this view, that it was a matter affecting his master more than himself, although Bradford seems to have been concerned in the transaction, and therefore not free from blame. That it was no act for his own advantage further appears from his answer to Gardiner, when the latter asserted that Bradford had defrauded his master. In reply, he called upon any one to prove this, and desired the lord chancellor, as chief justicer of England, to do justice upon them that slandered him.

But whatever were the circumstances, he could not rest satisfied till restitution was made; at one time he thought of making himself a bondman, and he seems to have sacrificed his patrimonial property towards attaining this object, which evidently worked most painfully on his mind. This transaction is generally supposed to be noticed in one of Latimer's searching sermons. The energetic appeals of that powerful preacher might have been the means of exciting a right feeling in Bradford, and it appears that he conferred with Latimer on the subject. It was not finally settled till after he had gone to Cambridge.

Bradford studied the law for a short period, but his heart was set upon a more spiritual calling. Fox says, "The Lord which had elected him unto a better function, and preordained him to preach the gospel of Christ, in that hour of grace, which in his secret council he had appointed, called this his chosen child to the understanding and partaking of the same gospel of life. In which call he was so truly taught, that forthwith his effectual call was perceived by the fruits. For then Bradford did forsake his worldly affairs and forwardness in worldly wealth, and after a just account given to his master of all his doings, he departed from him, and with marvellous favour to further the kingdom of God by the ministry of his holy word, he gave himself wholly to the study of the holy scriptures. The which his purpose to accomplish the better, he departed from the temple at London, where the temporal law is studied, and went to the University of Cambridge, to learn by God's law how to further the building of the Lord's temple. In Cambridge, his diligence in study, his profiting in knowledge, and godly conversation, so pleased all men, that within one whole year after he had been there, the university gave him a degree.

"Immediately after, the master and fellows of Pembroke-hall gave him a fellowship in their college; yea, that man of God, Martin Bucer, so liked him that he had him not only most dear unto him, but also oftentimes exhorted him to bestow his talent in preaching. Unto which Bradford answered always, that he was unable to serve in that office through want of learning. To the which Bucer was wont to reply, 'If thou have not fine manchet bread,* yet give the poor people barley bread, or whatsoever else the Lord hath committed unto thee.' And while Bradford was thus persuaded to enter into the ministry, Dr. Ridley, that worthy bishop of London, and glorious martyr of Christ, according to the order that then was in the church of England, called him to take the degree of a deacon. Which order because it was not without some abuse, to which Bradford would not consent, the bishop yet perceiving that Bradford was willing to enter into the ministry, was content to order him deacon without any abuse, even as he desired. This being done, he obtained for him a license to preach, and gave him a prebend in his cathedral church of St. Paul's.

"In this preaching office, by the space of three years, how faithfully Bradford walked, how diligently he laboured, many parts of England can testify.† Sharply he opened and reprov-

* The best wheaten bread.

† Bradford was for some time one of the six preachers appointed by king Edward to itinerate through the kingdom. His letters to Cambridge, London, and other places, show the earnestness with which he had laboured as a preacher. During Lent, in the last year of the reign of Edward VI., Bradford preached before him, on the second psalm. In one of these sermons, he warned his hearers that the judgments of God were at hand.

sin, sweetly he preached Christ crucified, pithily he impugned heresies and errors, earnestly he persuaded to godly life."

Sampson, another contemporary, testifies concerning Bradford, "After that God touched his heart with that effectual and holy calling, he sold his chains, rings, brooches, and jewels of gold, which before he used to wear, and bestowed the price of these, his former vanities, in the necessary relief of Christ's poor members, whom he could hear of, or find lying sick or pining in poverty." His earnestness in repentance is also noticed by Sampson, (see p. 240,) who speaks thus of his constant and practical piety, and his constant communion with God in prayer.

"Without an inward exercise of prayer, our Bradford did not pray to his full contentation, as appeared by this; he used in the morning to go to the common prayer in the college where he was, and after that he used to make some prayer with his pupils in his chamber. But not content with this, he then repaired to his own exercise in prayer by himself, as one that had not yet prayed to his own mind; for he was wont to say to his familiars, 'I have prayed with my pupils, but I have not yet prayed with myself.' Let those secure men mark this well, which pray without touch of breast, as the pharisees did, and so that they have said an ordinary prayer, or heard a common course of prayer, they think they have prayed well, and as the term is, they have served God well; though they never feel sting for sin, taste of groaning, or broken heart, nor of the sweet saving health of Christ, thereby to be moved to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, nor change or renewing of mind; but as they came secure in sin and senseless, so they do depart without any change or affecting of the heart; which is even the cradle in which Satan rocketh the sinners of this age asleep, who think they do serve God in these cursory prayers, made only of custom; when their heart is as far from God as was the heart of the Pharisee. Let us learn by Bradford's example to pray better, that is, with the heart, and not with the lips alone; as Cyprian saith, 'Because God is the hearer of the heart, and not of the voice;' that is to say, not of the voice alone without the heart, for that is but lip-labour. This conscience of sin, and exercise in prayer had Bradford, clean contrary to that cursed custom of those graceless men, which do joy to make large and long accounts of their lewdness, and glory therein, so feeling their delights with their lives past, as the dog returneth to his vomit; such as the prophet, Isa. xxxix. saith, They declare their sins as Sodom, they hide them not, woe be to their souls! It goeth with them as in the days of Jeremiah it went with those, Jer. iii. God give these men better grace, else let them be assured they shall find woe! woe! to their very souls.

"Another of his exercises was this: he used to make unto himself a journal, in which he used to write all such notable things, as either he did see or hear each day that passed; but whatsoever he did hear or see, he did so pen it, that a man might see in that

book the signs of his smitten heart; for if he did see or hear any good in any man, by that sight he found and noted the want thereof in himself, and added a short prayer, craving mercy and grace to amend; if he did hear or see any plague or misery, he noted it as a thing procured by his own sins, and still added, 'Lord! have mercy upon me.' He used in the same book to note such evil thoughts as did rise in him, as of envying the good of other men, thoughts of unthankfulness, of not considering God in his works, of hardness and insensibleness of heart, when he did see others moved and affected. And thus he made to himself, and of himself, a book of daily practises of repentance.

"Besides this, they which were familiar with him might see, how he, being in their company, used to fall often into a sudden and deep meditation, in which he would sit with fixed countenance and spirit moved, yet speaking nothing a good space; and sometimes in this silent sitting, plenty of tears would trickle down his cheeks; sometimes he would sit in it, and come out of it, with a smiling countenance. Oftentimes have I sat at dinner and supper with him in the house of that godly harbourer of many preachers and servants of the Lord Jesus, master Elsyng, when, either by occasion of talk had, or of some view of God's benefits present, or some inward cogitation and thought of his own, he hath fallen into these deep cogitations, and he would tell me in the end such discourses of them, that I did perceive that sometimes his tears trickled out of his eyes, as well for joy as for sorrow. Neither was he only such a practiser of repentance in himself, but a continual provoker of others thereunto; not only in public preaching, but also in private conference and company. For, in all companies where he did come, he would freely reprove any sin and misbehaviour which appeared in any person, especially swearers, filthy talkers, and popish praters. Such never departed out of his company unreprieved; and this he did with such a divine grace and christian majesty, that ever he stopped the mouths of the gainsayers; for he spake with power, and yet so sweetly, that they might see their evil to be evil, and hurtful unto them, and understand that it was good indeed to the which he laboured to draw them in God."

Bradford's zeal and activity as a preacher of the gospel rendered him very obnoxious to the papists, and his popularity in the city of London, though he was always most faithful in reprov- ing sin, made them the more anxious to silence and remove him. To accomplish this, as Fox well observes, because they had no just cause, they took occasion to do him injury, for such an act as, among Turks and infidels, would have been with thankfulness rewarded, and with great favour accepted as it deserved.

The act was this. Immediately after the accession of queen Mary, Bourne, afterwards bishop of Bath, a papist, preached at Paul's cross, when he spoke so reproachfully of the late king, so justified Bonner, and said so much in favour of popery, that the people were indignant, and a tumult ensued. A dagger was

hurled at the preacher, who shrunk back, and entreated Bradford, who stood near him, to come forward and speak to the people. Bradford addressed them, and sharply reproving their conduct, prevailed upon them to desist. Having obtained a respite, he and Rogers assisted the mayor and sheriffs in conducting the trembling preacher into the grammar school, Bradford following Bourne, and sheltering him with his own person. Many pressed after them, loudly expressing their regrets that such a character should be so protected. One gentleman who had made a direct attack upon Bourne, told Bradford, "Thou savest him that will help to burn thee!" The same Sunday afternoon, Bradford preached at Bow church, and sharply reproved the people for their proceedings.

Such conduct ought to have procured Bradford countenance or favour from the queen, but he was one of the most eminent of the protestant divines, and against them every opportunity was to be taken! Three days after, on August 16, 1553, Bradford was summoned before the council, and committed to the Tower on a charge of seditious conduct, shown while protecting Bourne! The people's having listened to his rebukes, was alleged as a proof that he had excited them to tumult!

Fox thus speaks of Bradford's imprisonment, "He was committed first to the Tower, then unto other prisons, out of the which neither his innocency, godliness, nor charitable dealing could purchase him liberty of body, till by death, which he suffered for Christ's cause, he obtained the heavenly liberty of which neither pope nor papist shall ever deprive him. From the Tower he came to the King's Bench in Southwark; and after his condemnation, he was sent to the Compter, in the Poultry, in London, in the which two places, for the time he did remain prisoner, he preached twice a day continually, unless sickness hindered him; where also the sacrament was often ministered, and through his means, the keepers so well did bear with him, such resort of good folks was daily to his lecture, and to the ministration of the sacrament, that commonly his chamber was well nigh filled. Preaching, reading, and praying was all his whole life. He did not eat above one meal a day, which was but very little when he took it, and his continual study was upon his knees. In the midst of dinner, he used often to muse with himself, having his hat over his eyes, from whence came commonly plenty of tears dropping on his trencher. Very gentle he was to man and child, and in so good credit with his keepers, that at his desire, in an evening, when prisoner in the King's Bench in Southwark, he had license, upon his promise to return again that night, to go into London without any keeper, to visit one that was sick, lying by the steel-yard. Neither did he fail his promise, but returned unto his prison again, rather being before his hour, than breaking his fidelity; so constant was he in word and in deed.

"Of person he was somewhat tall and slender, spare of body, of a faint sanguine colour, with an auburn beard. He slept

not commonly above four hours in the night; and in his bed till sleep came his book went not out of his hand. His chief recreation was in no gaming or other pastime, but only in honest company, and comely talk, wherein he would spend a little time after dinner at the board, and so to prayer and his book again. He counted that hour not well spent, wherein he did not some good, either with his pen, study, or in exhorting of others. He was no niggard of his purse, but would liberally participate what he had to his fellow prisoners. And commonly once a week he visited the thieves, pick-purses, and such others that were with him in prison where he lay, on the other side; unto whom he would give godly exhortation to learn the amendment of their lives by their troubles, and after that so done, distribute among them some portion of money to their comfort.

“While he was in the King’s Bench, and M. Saunders in the Marshalsea, both prisoners, at the back of those two prisons they met many times, and conferred together when they would, so mercifully did the Lord work for them, even in the midst of their troubles; and the said Bradford was so trusted with his keeper, and had such liberty, that there was no day but that he might have easily escaped away, if he would, but that the Lord had another work to do for him. In the summer time, while he was in the said King’s Bench, he had liberty of his keeper to ride into Oxfordshire, to a merchant’s house of his acquaintance, and a horse, and all things prepared for him for that journey, and the party in a readiness that should ride with him, but God prevented him by sickness that he went not at all.

“One of his old friends and acquaintance came unto him whilst he was prisoner, and asked him, if he sued to get him out, what then he would do, or whither he would go! Unto whom Bradford made answer, as not caring whether he went out or no; but if he did, he said he would marry, and abide still in England secretly, teaching the people as the time would suffer him, and occupy himself that way. He was had in so great reverence and admiration with all good men, that a multitude which never knew him but by fame, greatly lamented his death; yea, and a number also of the papists themselves, wished heartily his life. There were few days in which he was thought not to spend some tears before he went to bed, neither was there ever any prisoner with him, but by his company he greatly profited, as all they will yet witness, and have confessed of him no less, to the glory of God, whose society he frequented: among many, one special thing I thought to note, which is this:

“Bishop Farrar being prisoner in the King’s Bench, was travailed withal of the papists in the end of Lent, to receive the sacrament at Easter in one kind, who after much persuading, yielded to them, and promised so to do. Then, so it happened by God’s providence, on the easter even, the day before he should have done it, was Bradford brought to the King’s Bench, prisoner; where the Lord making him his instrument, Bradford only

was the mean that the said bishop Farrar revoked his promise and word, and would never after yield to be spotted with that papistical pitch; so effectually the Lord wrought by this worthy servant of his. Such an instrument was he in God's church, that few or none there were that knew him, but esteemed him as a precious jewel, and God's true messenger."

A few other particulars relative to Bradford's imprisonment may be added. When in the Tower, it was so full of prisoners, that Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Bradford were all thrust into one chamber. They gladly endured the inconvenience on account of the opportunity it afforded of enjoying sweet intercourse together; thus establishing one another. There they read over the New Testament together, with great deliberation, studying to see if there were any passages which savoured the popish doctrine of the corporeal presence. But, as Strype observes, after all, they could find no presence but a spiritual, nor that the mass was any sacrifice for sin. But they found in that book, that the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was perfect, holy, and good, and that God did require no other, nor that it should ever be done again.

After his removal to the King's Bench, he long enjoyed the liberty related by Fox, but towards the close of the time he was more strictly imprisoned, chiefly at the instance of Dr. Story, and the keeper was threatened with death if he allowed any to speak with Bradford.

His letters show that he had discussions with some of his fellow prisoners in the King's Bench, who adopted Pelagian or free-will doctrines, but though painful, they by no means proceeded to the lengths which the papists at the time misrepresented, and some modern writers have willingly repeated. Many particulars relative to these discussions and other circumstances of his imprisonment are mentioned in his letters, and will be read with interest. This subject is further noticed at page xvi.

During king Edward's reign, many professed to be attached to the doctrines of the reformation, whose lives were not consistent with their profession. It is no new thing for persons to talk of the doctrines of truth, while in their lives they deny them. Most of these turned at once to popery when queen Mary came to the throne, but a few were so obnoxious to the ruling powers, as to be included in the general proscription, and were reckoned with the Reformers, although their conduct while in prison was very different. Such persons, Bradford and others seriously admonished, warning them of their danger, nor should they ever be confounded with the real sufferers for conscience sake.

During this imprisonment, an intention was formed of sending Bradford and others to Cambridge, to be publicly disputed with by the papists; but this design was laid aside.

The prisoners made a declaration, in which they plainly set forth the proceedings which had been urged forward against

the reformation, and offered to maintain publicly the doctrines they had professed. This declaration is printed by Strype, from a manuscript containing several pieces written by Bradford, and it appears to have been the supplication referred to in his letter XLIX. in the following pages. It is as follows.

“To the king and queen’s most excellent majesties, with their most honourable high court of parliament.

“We, poor prisoners for Christ’s religion, require your honours, in our dear Saviour Christ’s name, earnestly now to repent, for that you have consented of late to the unplacing of so many godly laws, before set forth, touching the true religion of Christ, by two most noble kings, being father and brother to the queen’s highness, and agreed upon by all your consents; not without your great and many deliberations, free and open disputations, costs, and pains-taking in that behalf, neither without great consultations and conclusions, had by the greatest learned men in the realm, at Windsor, Cambridge, and Oxford, neither without the most willing consent, and allowing the same by the whole realm thoroughly. So that there was not one parish in all England that ever desired again to have the romish superstitious and vain service, which is now by the popish, proud, covetous clergy, placed again, in contempt not only of God, all heaven, and all the lessons of the Holy Ghost in the blessed bible; but also against the honour of the said two noble kings, against your own country, fore-agreements, and against all the godly consciences within this realm of England, and elsewhere. By reason whereof, God’s great plagues must needs follow, and great unquietness of conscience, besides all other persecutions and vexations of bodies and goods must ensue. Moreover, we certify your honours, that since your said unplacing of Christ’s true religion and true service, and placing in the room thereof antichrist’s romish superstition, heresy, and idolatry, all the true preachers have been removed and punished; and that with such open robbery and cruelty, as in Turkey was never used, either to their own countrymen, or to their mortal enemies.

“This therefore, our humble suit, is now to your honourable estates, to desire the same, for all the mercies’ sake of our dear and only Saviour Jesus Christ, and for the duty you owe to your native country, and to your own souls, earnestly to consider from what light, to what darkness this realm is now brought, and that in the weightiest, chief, and principal matter of salvation, of all our souls and bodies, everlasting and for evermore. And even so we desire you, at this your assembly, to seek some effectual reformation for the before written most horrible deformation in this church of England. And touching yourselves, we desire you in like manner, that we may be called before your honours; and if we are not able to prove and approve, by the catholic and canonical rules of Christ’s true religion, the church homilies and service set forth in the most innocent king Edward’s days;

and also to disallow and reprove, by the same authorities, the service now set forth since his departing; then we offer our bodies, either to be immediately burned, or else to suffer whatsoever other painful and shameful death it shall please the king and queen's majesties to appoint. And we think this trial and probation may be now best, either in the plain English tongue by writing, or otherwise by disputation in the same tongue. Our Lord, for his great mercy sake, grant unto you all, the continual assistance of his good and holy Spirit. Amen."

While Bradford was in prison, he did much service to the cause of Christ, especially by his letters. The importance and value of these writings was proved by a complaint made against them in the parliament house. The effect produced by them in Lancashire was described as very considerable.

When the plans of the papists were sufficiently matured, Bradford was one of the first brought forward for judgment. He was examined before Gardiner, Bonner, and others, in January, 1555, and condemned to the stake. His examinations are preserved by Fox, and exhibit the unshrinking fidelity of the martyr to the truth; but the artifices of the papists confined them almost wholly to the subjects of the pope's supremacy, and the sacrament of the altar, so that they have little interest for the general reader. During these examinations, another testimony to the effects of Bradford's writings was given. Secretary Bourne said, "Yea, it was reported this parliament time, by the earl of Derby, that he hath done more hurt by letters, and by exhorting those that have come to him in religion, than ever he did, when he was abroad, by preaching." It is added, "All which divers of the council affirmed." At the close of the first examination, being urged to submit himself and receive mercy, he answered, "Mercy, with God's mercy should be welcome, but otherwise he would none." In the course of these examinations, Bradford's conduct at Paul's cross was adverted to, when he appealed to bishop Bourne who sat among his judges! In these examinations he conducted himself with meekness, yet firmness.

Fuller well says, "All men observed the malice and cruelty of his enemies, how they had first committed him without law, and then, after a year and half imprisonment, made one that took away his life. He denied, indeed, the pope's authority over the church of England, and so had his judges done but the year before."

After receiving sentence of condemnation, Bradford was conducted to the Poultry Compter. His conduct in that prison has been already described. There he remained till the beginning of July, during which time he was harassed by repeated disputations with the romanists. Bonner, bishop of London, the bishop of Chichester, the archbishop of York, two Spanish friars, one of whom was the king's confessor, with Harpsfield, Weston, Harding, Pendleton and others, came to him from day

to day. The substance of their disputations is preserved by Fox. In answer to an observation of the bishop of Chichester, "He is a heretic, and so none of the church, that doth hold any doctrine against the definition of the church," Bradford emphatically said, "O my lord, will ye condemn to the devil any man that believeth truly the twelve articles of the faith, (wherein I take the unity of Christ's church to consist,) although in some points he believe not the definition of that which ye call the church? I doubt not but that he which holdeth firmly the articles of our belief, though in other things he dissent from your definition, yet he shall be saved." "Yea," exclaimed the bishops, "is this your divinity?" The substance of these disputations show that Bradford was well grounded in the argumentative learning then necessary, as well as in scriptural knowledge.

At the latter end of the month of June, the hour of suffering drew near; the particulars are thus related by Fox:—

"The night before Bradford was had to Newgate, which was the Saturday night, he was troubled divers times in his sleep by dreams, how the chain for his burning was brought to the Compter-gate, and how the next day, being Sunday, he should be had to Newgate, and on the Monday after burned in Smithfield, as indeed it came to pass accordingly. Now he, being vexed so often with these dreams, about three of the clock in the morning, waked him that lay with him, and told him his unquiet sleep, and what he was troubled withal. Then, after a little talk, master Bradford rose out of the bed, and gave himself to his old exercise of reading and prayer, as always he had used before; and at dinner, according to his accustomed manner, he did eat his meat, and was very merry, nobody being with him from morning till night, but he that lay with him, with whom he had many times on that day communication, of death, of the kingdom of heaven, and of the ripeness of sin in that time.

"In the afternoon, they two walking together in the keeper's chamber, suddenly the keeper's wife came up, as one half amazed, and seeming much troubled, being almost breathless, said, 'Oh, Mr. Bradford, I come to bring you heavy news.' 'What is that?' said he. 'Marry,' quoth she, 'to-morrow you must be burned, and your chain is now a buying, and soon you must go to Newgate.' With that Bradford put off his cap, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, 'I thank God for it; I have looked for the same a long time, and therefore it cometh not now to me suddenly, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof.' And so thanking her for her gentleness, he departed up into his chamber, and called his friend with him, and when he came thither, went secretly himself alone a long time and prayed. Which done, he came again to him that was in his chamber, and took him divers writings and papers, and showed him his mind in those things, what he would have done; and after they had spent the afternoon till night, in many and sundry such things, at last came to him half a dozen of his friends more,

with whom all the evening he spent the time in prayer and other good exercises, so wonderfully, that it was marvellous to hear and see.

“A little before he went out of the Compter, he made a notable prayer of his farewell, with such plenty of tears, and abundant spirit of prayer, that it ravished the minds of the hearers. Also, when he shifted himself with a clean shirt that was made for his burning, by one M. Walter Marlar’s wife, who was a good nurse unto him, and his very good friend, he made such a prayer of the wedding garment, that some of those that were present were in such great admiration, that their eyes were as thoroughly occupied in looking on him, as their ears gave place to hear his prayer. At his departing out of the chamber, he made likewise a prayer, and gave money to every servant and officer of the house, with exhortation to them to fear and serve God, continually labouring to eschew all manner of evil. That done, he turned him to the wall, and prayed vehemently that his words might not be spoken in vain, but that the Lord would work the same in them effectually, for his Christ’s sake. Then being beneath in the court, all the prisoners cried out to him, and bade him farewell, as the rest of the house had done before, with weeping tears.

“The time they carried him to Newgate, was about eleven or twelve o’clock in the night, when it was thought none would be stirring abroad: contrary to their expectation in that behalf, there was in Cheapside and other places, between the Compter and Newgate, a great multitude of people that came to see him, who most gently bade him farewell, praying for him with most lamentable and pitiful tears, and he again, as gently, bade them farewell, praying most heartily for them and their welfare. Now whether it were a commandment from the queen and her council, or from Bonner and his adherents, or whether it were devised of the lord mayor, alderman, and sheriffs of London, or no, I cannot tell; but a great noise there was over night about the city, that Bradford should be burnt the next day in Smithfield, by four of the clock in the morning, before it should be greatly known to any. In which rumour many heads had divers minds; some thinking the fear of the people to be the cause thereof. Others thought nay, that it was rather because the papists judged his death would convert many to the truth, and give a great overthrow to their kingdom. So some thought one thing, and some another, that no just conjecture of the cause could be known that ever I heard yet. But this was certain, the people prevented the device suspected; for the next day, at the said hour of four o’clock in the morning, there was in Smithfield such a multitude of men and women, that many, being in admiration thereof, thought it was not possible that they could have warning of his death, being so great a number, in so short time, unless it were by the singular providence of almighty God.

“Well, this took not effect as the people thought; for that

morning it was nine of the clock before Bradford was brought into Smithfield. In going through Newgate thitherward, he spied a friend of his whom he loved, standing on the one side the way, unto whom he reached his hand over the people, and pulled him to him, and delivered to him from his head his velvet nightcap, also his handkerchief, with other things besides. After a little secret talk with him, as they parted, immediately came a brother-in-law of his, called Roger Beswick, who as soon as he had taken the said Bradford by the hand, one of the sheriffs of London, called Woodroffe, came with his staff and brake the said Roger's head, that the blood ran about his shoulders. Which Bradford beholding with grief, bade his brother farewell, willing him to commend him to his mother, and the rest of his friends, and to get him to some surgeon; so they departing, had little or no talk at all together. Then was he led forth to Smithfield with a great company of weaponed men, to conduct him thither, as the like was not seen at any man's burning, for in every corner of Smithfield there were some, besides those which stood about the stake.

"When they came to the stake in Smithfield to be burned, Bradford lying prostrate on the one side of the stake, and a young man, John Leaf,* on the other side, they lay flat on their faces, praying to themselves the space of a minute. Then one of the sheriffs said to Bradford; 'Arise and make an end; for the press of the people is great.'

"At that word they both stood up upon their feet; and then Bradford took a fagot in his hand, and kissed it, and likewise the stake. When he had so done, he desired of the sheriffs that his servant might have his raiment. 'For,' said he, 'I have nothing else to give him; and besides that, he is a poor man.' And the sheriff said, he should have it. Forthwith Bradford put off his raiment, and went to the stake, and holding up his hands and casting his countenance to heaven, he said thus, 'O England, England, repent thee of thy sins, repent thee of thy sins! Beware of idolatry, beware of the false antichrists; take heed they do not deceive you.' And as he was speaking these words, the sheriff bade to tie his hands, if he would not be quiet. 'O master sheriff,' said Bradford, 'I am quiet. God forgive

* John Leaf was apprentice to a tallow-chandler, about twenty years of age, and was burned for refusing to believe the popish doctrine concerning the sacrament. Fox says, "It is reported of the said John Leaf, by one that was in the Compter the same time, and saw the thing, that after his examinations before the bishop, when two bills were sent unto him in the Compter in Bread-street, the one containing a recantation, the other his confessions, to know to which of them he would put his hand to, first hearing the bill of recantation read unto him, because he could not read nor write himself, he refused it. And when the other was read unto him, which he well liked of, instead of a pen he took a pin, and so pricking his hand, sprinkled the blood upon the said bill, willing the reader thereof to show the bishop that he had sealed the same bill with his blood already."

you this, master sheriff.' And one of the officers who made the fire, hearing Bradford so speaking to the sheriff, said, 'If you have no better learning than that, you are but a fool, and were best to hold your peace.' To the which words, Bradford gave no answer; but asked all the world forgiveness, and forgave all the world, and prayed the people to pray for him, and turned his head unto the young man that suffered with him, and said, 'Be of good comfort, brother, for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night,' and so spake no more words that any man did hear, but embracing the reeds, said thus, 'Strait is the way, and narrow is the gate that leadeth to eternal salvation, and few there be that find it.'

"And thus they both ended their mortal lives, like two lambs, without any alteration of their countenance, being void of all fear, hoping to obtain the prize that they had long run at; to the which I beseech almighty God happily to conduct us, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour." Amen.

Such was the end of John Bradford, concerning whom Ridley, whose chaplain he was, bore the following testimony. "He was a man by whom God hath and doth work wonders in setting forth his word." The papists were so sensible of his worth, that they took more pains to bring him over to their doctrines than any other.

His long protracted confinement was rendered a blessing to the church of Christ, and affords a striking instance how God overruleth the wrath of man, causing it to praise him. Had he not been thus secluded from public services, he could hardly have been more useful among the people at large, as appears from the testimony of the papists respecting his letters; and certainly some of the most valuable statements of the doctrines of the British Reformers would have been wanting to succeeding generations. He translated some of the writings of the German Reformers in addition to the pieces included in this volume, which, however, is the most complete collection of his works yet published. In his letters and tracts he, being dead, yet speaketh, and many a weary and heavy laden soul has blessed God for the writings of John Bradford. They often present more of the genuine truths of the gospel in a single page, than is contained in whole volumes of later divines. Fox well observes, "They show how godly he occupied his time when a prisoner; what special zeal he bore to the state of Christ's church; what care he had to perform his office; how earnestly he admonished all men; how tenderly he comforted the heavy hearted, and how fruitfully he confirmed them whom he had taught." They plainly evidence the deep abhorrence of sin felt by the writer, and his sense of the divine mercy which had been imparted to him. In connexion with this, it may be related, that when he saw malefactors carried to execution, he would say, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God!"

Nor was his testimony only in writing or in words. As Fuller beautifully says, "He endured the flame as a fresh gale of wind in a hot summer's day, without any reluctancy; confirming by his death the truth of that doctrine, which he had so diligently and powerfully preached during his life."

A Letter of Father Traves (as it seems) to John Bradford; concerning a debt of his, and making restitution; which he was not yet able to do.

"Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Ye shall understand, that after the receipt of your letters, I declared to M. Latimer the sum that ye writ to me concerning your matter with your master. When I came to that place, that you offered yourself to be a bondman, he misliked it, and said, though by God's word appeareth, that to make restitution, we ought to sell ourselves; 'yet would I not,' said he, 'that he should go so far with his master.* I asked him, what counsel he would give you? He said, 'Better counsel, or more than I have given him, I cannot. Let him tarry, and, committing the whole to God, work by leisure.' More could I not get of him: and I durst not trouble him, because he was studiously occupied in preparing a sermon to be preached, if God will, before the king this next Sunday. He knoweth not certainly whether he shall thereto be called, but as yet judgeth. What his counsel is you have heard.

"You proceed and ask my counsel. Alas! you know that I am but a very block, yea, more dumb than a dumb idol; as little help in me as in the block of Walsingham.† Earnestly I protest that I know not what, nor how, to counsel you: but pray, pray, and commit yourself wholly to God. Wish an increase of that desire that ye have to make restitution. And whether that God will so enrich you, that ye shall be able to pay it, or that he will move your master, so that he will and shall pay it, commit it to God with earnest desire and faithful prayer, that at length, yet when his merciful eye shall see most meet, he will unburden you of your check; and look for his help in peace. I mean no such brutish security as is in me; but with patient suffering, without writhing, wresting, or doubting of his promise, without desperate voices, thoughts, groanings, or woes. For the Lord knoweth when and how to deliver them that trust in him, for their best avail; yea, in spite of all hard hearts, God will at length, man, deliver thee. In the mean time, be neither stock nor stone, but labour for your part towards the ending of it, as

* Or, for his master.

† The image of the virgin Mary, worshipped at Walsingham in Norfolk, which was much resorted to by pilgrims.

opportunity shall serve: whether in moving him again, as I would surely wish to do, or labouring to gather of your own, for the payment thereof. Do it freely, but do all in the name of the Lord, in all things giving thanks to God the Father, through Jesus Christ. And the most mighty God move the heart of your master to enrich you to your unburdening, even when his will shall be.

“Despair not, though all in haste it be not repaid, as though ye were a man forlorn, for that the payment is not made; but rather give thanks to God even heartily, for that he hath opened the fault unto you, and hath given you a conscience in it. For he might have given you up into a lewd* mind, which should, nothing regarding it, have cried Peace! peace! until sudden destruction had come. But God of his mercy hath opened it to you; not that ye should delight in it, as oh! God forgive me, that I do in commemoration of my iniquity much more delight, than sorrow; but that it should be a school, a cross, a vexation, and perturbation of mind unto you. And also, that ye must be void from that desperate solicitude, and with this, that God hath given you an earnest desire to recompense: which is a great comfort, a signifying, that though you are a wretch and a sinner, yet God is with you and in you. Who can then harm you?”

“But how shall I do, if I die, say you, this being unpaid? I say, God hath given you a desire to pay it, but not a power. Is God so cruel, think ye, that he will exact of you to do that which is impossible for you to do? Are ye able to pay it? Then pay it. Are ye not able? Have a continual desire, which is to be begged of God, to pay, and, in the name of God, work so long as ye live, as God shall lead you towards the payment of it. And if ye die before the satisfaction, yet I think ye shall go without peril. For I believe the sin is forgiven already, for Christ’s sake.

“There remaineth then by the doctor’s mind but restitution: and I believe that you have *animum restituendi*,† and earnestly labour and follow, upon God’s preparation, toward the restitution; the same hath made a good restitution, if ye die before a full restitution.

“But indeed that substance that ye have at that time gathered together, must go fully towards it. But what talk ye of death? God is able to make you to make restitution, even to-morrow. Pray continually for his help, and ease to unburden, that way which he knoweth to be best for you. And I dare say, that, for Jesus’ sake, he will both hear and help you. But pray not, appointing God any time: ‘Sed expecta Dominum, donec misereatur tui,’‡ with full submission even in a patient, faithful mind to his will. Oh! how arrogantly take I upon me to babble. But as I scribble, so do I but partly: follow not me, Bradford, follow

* Ignorant.

† A desire and mind to restore.

‡ But wait upon God till he have compassion upon thee.

not me. For I am a very impenitent beast. I tell you of restitution! Oh! Lord, spare me; give me not up altogether to a lewd impenitent heart, in which I procure heaps of wrath. Lord, help, for Christ's sake, help me. All that I do, I do it in sin and vainglory. Yet shall not the devil hinder me to write. For out of the wild fig-tree some profit may come. But no thanks to the tree, but the Creator.

"Now foolishly further will I go. I would not offer myself into bondage to that earthly master. Ye know not what bondage meaneth. Be it that I speak but carnally, I speak as I am. I would not but think assuredly, that as God hath given me that grace to acknowledge my debt, being free, that the same Lord, of his mercy will, and is able, at ease to work in my freedom the discharge of my debt."

(*Something is wanting.*)

Note relative to the disputations in the King's Bench prison, see page vii.

The account given by Strype of the disputes in the King's Bench, mentioned at page v, is as follows: "One thing now fell out, (A. D. 1554,) which caused some disturbance among the prisoners. Many of them, that were under restraint for the profession of the gospel, were such as held free will, tending to the derogation of God's grace, and refused the doctrine of absolute predestination and original sin. They were men of strict and holy lives, but very hot in their opinions and disputations, and unquiet. Divers of them were in the King's Bench, where Bradford and many other gospellers were. Many whereof, by their conferences they gained to their own persuasions. Bradford had much discourse with them. The name of their chief man was Harry Hart, who had writ something in defence of his doctrine. Trew and Abingdon were teachers also among them. Kemp, Gibson, and Chamberlain were others. They ran their notions as high as Pelagius did, and valued no learning; and the writings and authorities of the learned they utterly rejected and despised." Strype then notices Bradford's correspondence with Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, on this subject.

Trew wrote some particulars of these contentions, and pointed out what he styled various "enormities" in doctrine, which he imputed to Bradford and his friends; he also accuses the followers of "the imagined predestination sect," as he styles them, of playing at bowls, cards, and dice, and of behaving in an unkind manner towards the freewillers. Bradford replied in his short and pithy defence of the doctrine of election, (printed at page 331 of the present volume,) to which was added a second part, answering the prominent "enormities" alleged by Trew. He

wrote in a christian spirit, and his arguments appear to be satisfactory and conclusive.

Trew's statement, and Bradford's defence, have lately been printed from a manuscript in the Bodleian library. The former is stated to be "the most complete document upon the anti-predestinarian side of the question." Prominence is given to the reflections cast by Trew and his party upon their opponents, while the full and satisfactory letters of Bradford on this subject, (see pages 191, 193, 197, 198,) are passed over.

This statement of Trew has been also referred to, as evidence of a laxity of manners among the professors of predestination, and as supporting what is called a natural conclusion, that the Calvinist will be careless about morals.

It is unnecessary here to enter into the doctrinal part of this controversy, or to urge that such conclusions are unfounded, but as the allegations just noticed have induced some to suppose that Bradford and his associates were licentious and careless in their conduct, it is important to refer the reader to the letters already quoted, and to the following extract from the second part of his defence, in which, after replying to Trew, he adds :

"This withal I say, that no man can use more godly discipline towards themselves, and to the correcting and chastening of the old man, than those do, which have truly tasted of the spirit of God's election, for to such the corruption of our nature is felt a more horrible thing than hypocrites are able to think, and therefore they are more rough and severe to others, which are fallen, than the elect are, who have put on them bowels of mercies, and cannot but take other men's faults to heart, as their own, and therefore, so soon as any lovely sign of repentance ensueth, they seek with Paul that charity might prevail, where hypocrites are haughty, and contemn the poor publicans, as did the proud pharisee. Again, indeed, we say, that none is good but such as are predestinate, and also we say, that of those which are now in our sight evil, many may be called hereafter, and as God's dear elect, declare themselves to the world, and the wicked if they would see it.

"As for who are the elect, and who are not, because it is God's privilege to know who are his, God's people are not curious in others, but as in themselves they feel the earnest of the Lord, and have God's Spirit in possession by faith, (I speak of those which are of years of discretion,) so do they judge of others by their works, and not further do they enter with God's office.

"Moreover, where he saith Predestination is not absolute, if he meaneth it is not infallible, or it is not so certain but it may alter, then, when he hath proved it by scripture, a man may something be moved to mark better his words; but till that time, which will never be, I will say, that if God predestinate any to life, they shall never be undone.

“As for his surmised imagination of election in the elect, whereby he taunts their faith, I will speak nothing, but God increase his, and and all our faith, and open our eyes to see what true faith is, whereof for my part I acknowledge a great weakness, and much more imagination, than true faith; but yet, be it ever so little, I hope the Lord alloweth it, and will increase it for his name’s sake, which I humbly crave at his hands, for the love of our only blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, who lighten all our darkness to see his true light, and inflame our hearts and wills to approve and love the same unfeignedly. Amen. Then will taunting not tarry, but charitable admonition, and sorrowful sighing to see any professing God with us, entangled with such errors, as nourish such enormities, as here he maketh this most comfortable and profitable doctrine of God’s holy election, for the which God’s holy name be praised and magnified for ever, through Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.”

LETTERS

OF

MASTER JOHN BRADFORD.

A faithful Minister and pillar of Christ's Church, by whose great labours and diligence in preaching and planting the sincerity of the gospel, by whose most godly and innocent life, and by whose long and painful imprisonments for the maintenance of the truth, the Kingdom of God was not a little advanced : who also at last most valiantly and cheerfully gave his blood for the same, on the 1st day of July, in the year of our Lord 1555.

LETTERS
OF
JOHN BRADFORD,

WRITTEN ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

[After the time that Bradford was condemned and sent to the Compter, it was purposed by his adversaries that he should be had to Manchester, where he was born, and there be burned; whereupon he wrote to the City of London, thinking to take his last farewell of them in this letter. *Fox.*]

LETTER I.

To the City of London.

To all that profess the gospel and the true doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the city of London; John Bradford, a most unworthy servant of the Lord, now not only in prison, but also excommunicated and condemned to be burned, for the same true doctrine, wishes mercy, grace, and peace, with increase of all godly knowledge and piety, from God the Father of mercy, through the merits of our alone and all-sufficient Redcemer Jesus Christ, by the operation of the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen.

My dearly beloved brethren in our Saviour Christ:— Although the time I have to live is very little, for I look hourly when I shall be conveyed into Lancashire, there to be burned, and, by the providence of God, to render my life where I first received it, by the same providence: and although the charge is great to keep me from all things whereby I might signify any thing to the world of my state; yet having, as now I have, pen and ink, through God's working, notwithstanding the power of Satan and his soldiers, I thought good to write a short confession of my

faith, and thereto join a little exhortation unto you all, to live according to your profession.

First for my faith: I do confess, and pray all the whole congregation of Christ to bear witness with me of the same, that I believe constantly, through the gift and goodness of God, for faith is only God's gift, all the twelve articles of the symbol or creed, commonly attributed to the apostles. This my faith I would gladly particularly declare and expound, to confirm and comfort the simple; but, alas! by starts and stealth I write in the manner that I write, and therefore I shall desire you all to take this brevity in good part. And this faith I hold, not because of the creed itself, but because of the word of God, which teacheth and confirmeth every article accordingly. This word of God, written by the prophets and apostles, and contained in the canonical books of the Holy Bible, I do believe to contain plentifully all things necessary to salvation, so that nothing, as necessary to salvation, ought to be added thereto; and therefore neither the Church of Christ, nor any of his congregation, ought to be burdened with any other doctrine, than that which hereout has its foundation and ground. In testimony of this faith, I render and give my life, being condemned, as well for not acknowledging the antichrist of Rome to be Christ's vicar-general and supreme head of his catholic and universal church, here or elsewhere upon earth; as for denying the horrible and idolatrous doctrine of transubstantiation, and Christ's real, corporeal, and carnal presence in his supper, under the forms and accidents, (or appearance,) of bread and wine.

To believe that Christ our Saviour is the head of his Church, and that kings in their realms are the supreme powers, to whom every soul oweth obedience, and to believe that in the supper of Christ is a true and very presence of whole Christ, God and man, to the faith of the receiver, but not to the stander by and looker upon, even as it is a true and very presence of bread and wine to the senses of men: to believe this,—I say,—will not serve; and therefore as a heretic I am condemned, and shall be burned; whereof I ask God heartily for mercy that I do no more rejoice than I do, having so great cause, as to be an instrument wherein it may please my dear Lord God and Saviour to suffer.

For albeit my manifold sins, even since I came into prison, have deserved at the hands of God, not only temporal fire,

but also eternal fire and hell, much more my former sinful life, which the Lord pardon for his Christ's sake, as I know he of his mercy hath done, and that he never will lay mine iniquities to my charge, to condemnation; so great is his goodness, praised therefore be his holy name! Although, I say, my manifold and grievous late sins have deserved most justly all that man or devil can do unto me; and therefore I confess that the Lord is just, and that his judgments are true and deserved on my behalf; yet the bishops and prelates do not persecute *them* in me, but Christ himself, his word, his truth, and religion. And therefore I have great cause, yea, most great cause, to rejoice that ever I was born, and hitherto kept of the Lord; that by my death, which is deserved for my sins, it pleases the heavenly Father to glorify his name, to testify his truth, to confirm his verity, to oppugn his adversaries. O good God and merciful Father! forgive my great unthankfulness, especially herein.

And you, my dearly beloved, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, I humbly and heartily in his bowels and blood do now, for my last farewell in this present life, beseech you and every one of you, that you will consider this work of the Lord accordingly. First by me be admonished to beware of hypocrisy and carnal security; profess not the gospel with tongue and lips only, but in heart and verity; frame and fashion your lives accordingly; beware that God's name be not evil spoken of, and the gospel still less regarded by your conversation. God forgive me, that I have not so heartily professed it as I should have done, but have sought myself much therein. The gospel is a new doctrine to the old man; it is new wine; and therefore cannot be put in old bottles, without more hurt than good to the bottles. If we will talk with the Lord, we must put off our shoes and carnal affections; if we will hear the voice of the Lord, we must wash our garments and be holy; if we will be Christ's disciples, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ; we cannot serve two masters. If we will seek Christ's kingdom, we must seek for the righteousness thereof. To the petition, Let thy kingdom come, we must join, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. If we will not be doers of the word, but hearers of it only, we sorely deceive ourselves. If we hear the gospel, and love it not, we declare ourselves to be but fools, and builders upon the sand.

The Lord's Spirit hateth feigning; deceitfulness the Lord abhorreth; if we come to him we must beware that we come not with a double heart; for then may chance that God will answer us according to the block which is in our heart, and so we shall deceive ourselves and others.

See that we couple a good conscience to faith, lest we make a shipwreck. To the Lord we must come with fear and reverence. If we will be gospellers, we must be Christ's; if we be Christ's, we must crucify our flesh with the lusts and concupiscences thereof; if we will be under grace, sin must not bear rule in us. We may not come to the Lord, and draw nigh unto him with our lips, and leave our hearts elsewhere, lest the Lord's wrath wax hot, and he take from us the good yet remaining. In no case can the kingdom of Christ approach unto them that repent not. Therefore, my dearly beloved, let us repent and be heartily sorry that we have so carnally, so hypocritically, so covetously, so vain-gloriously professed the gospel. For all these I confess of myself, to the glory of God, that he may cover my offences in the day of judgment. Let the anger and plagues of God most justly fallen upon us, be applied to every one of our deserts, that from the bottom of our hearts every one of us may say, It is I, Lord, that have sinned against thee; it is my hypocrisy, my vain-glory, my covetousness, uncleanness, carnality, security, idleness, unthankfulness, self-love, and such like, which have deserved the taking away of our good king,* of thy word, and true religion, of thy good ministers by exile, imprisonment, and death; it is my wickedness that causes success, and increase of authority, and peace to thy enemies. Oh, be merciful, be merciful unto us. Turn to us, again, O Lord of hosts, and turn us unto thee; correct us, but not in thy fury, lest we be consumed in thine anger; chastise us not in thy wrathful displeasure; reprove us not, but in the midst of thine anger remember thy mercy. For if thou mark what is done amiss, who shall be able to abide it? But with thee is mercifulness, that thou mightest be worshipped. Oh then be merciful unto us, that we may truly worship thee. Help us, for the glory of thy name; be merciful unto our sins, for they are great: Oh, heal us, and help us for thine honour. Let not the wicked people say, Where is their God, &c.

On this sort, my right dearly beloved, let us heartily

* King Edward VI.

bewail our sins, repent us of our former evil life, heartily and earnestly purpose to amend our lives in all things, continually watching in prayer; diligently and reverently attend, hear, and read the holy Scriptures, and labour after our vocation to amend our brethren. Let us reprove the works of darkness. Let us flee from all idolatry. Let us abhor the antichristian and Romish rotten service, detest the popish mass, renounce their Romish god, prepare ourselves to the cross, be obedient to all that are in authority, in all things that are not against God, and his word; answering with the apostles, It is more meet to obey God than man. Howbeit, never for any thing resist, or rise against the magistrates. Avenge not yourselves, but commit your cause to the Lord, to whom vengeance belongs, and he in his time will reward it. If you feel in yourselves a hope, and trust in God that he never will tempt you above that which he will make you able to bear, be assured the Lord will be true to you; and you shall be able to bear all brunts. But if you want this hope, flee and get you hence, rather than, by your tarrying, God's name should be dishonoured.

In sum, cast your care upon the Lord, knowing for most certain, that he is careful for you; with him are all the hairs of your head numbered, so that not one of them shall perish without his good pleasure and will: much more, then, nothing shall happen to your bodies, which shall not be profitable, however for a time it seems otherwise to your senses. Hang on the providence of God, not only when you have means to help you, but also when you have no means, yea, when all means are against you. Give him this honour, which, of all other things, he most chiefly requires at your hands; namely, believe that you are his children through Christ, that he is your Father and God through him, that he loves you, pardons you all your offences, he is with you in trouble, and will be with you for ever. When you fall, he will put his hand under, you shall not lie still. Before you call upon him he hears you: he will finally bring you out of evil, and deliver you to his eternal joy. Doubt not, my beloved, herein, doubt not, I say; God your Father will do this for you, not for respect of yourselves, but for respect of Christ your captain, your pastor, your keeper; out of whose hands none shall be able to catch you; in him be quiet, and often consider your dignity; namely, how that you are God's children, the

saints of God, citizens of heaven, temples of the Holy Ghost, the thrones of God, members of Christ, and lords over all.

Therefore be ashamed to think, speak, or do any thing that should be unseemly for God's children, God's saints, Christ's members, &c. Marvel not though the devil and the world hate you, though you are persecuted here, for the servant is not above his master. Covet not earthly riches, fear not the power of man, love not this world, nor the things that are in this world; but long for the coming of the Lord Jesus, at which time your bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body: when he appeareth you shall be like unto him: when your life shall thus be revealed, then shall you appear with him in glory.

In the mean season live in hope thereof. Let the life you lead be in the faith of the Son of God: for the just doth live by faith, which faith flees from evil, and follows the word of God as a lantern to her feet and a light to her steps. Her eyes are above, where Christ is; she beholds not the things present, but rather things to come; she glories in affliction, she knows that the afflictions of this life are not to be compared to the glory that God will reveal to us and in us. Of this glory God grant us here a lively taste; then shall we run after the scent it sendeth forth. It will make us valiant men to take to us the kingdom of God, whither the Lord of mercy bring us in his good time, through Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

My dearly beloved, I would gladly have given here my body to be burned, for the confirmation of the true doctrine I have taught here unto you; but that my country must have it. Therefore I pray you take in good part this signification of my good-will towards every of you. Impute the want herein to time and trouble. Pardon me mine offensive and negligent behaviour when I was amongst you. With me repent and labour to amend. Continue in the truth which I have truly taught unto you by preaching in all places where I have come, God's name therefore be praised. Confess Christ when you are called, whatsoever comes thereof; and the God of peace be with us all. Amen. This 11th of February, anno 1555.

Your brother in bonds for the Lord's sake,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER II.

To the University and Town of Cambridge.

To all that love the Lord Jesus and his true doctrine in the university and town of Cambridge, John Bradford, a most unworthy servant of the Lord, now not only imprisoned, but also condemned for the same true doctrine, wisheth grace, peace, and mercy, with increase of all godliness from God, the Father of all mercy, through the bloody passion of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, by the lively working of the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen.

Although I look hourly when I should be had to the stake (my right dearly beloved in the Lord), and although the charge over me is great and strait; yet having, by the providence of God, secretly pen and ink, I could not but signify unto you something of my solicitude which I have for you and for every one of you in the Lord, though not as I would, yet as I may. You have so often and openly heard the truth disputed and preached, especially in this matter wherein I am condemned, that it is needless to do any more than to put you in remembrance of the same; but hitherto you have not heard it confirmed, and as it were sealed up, as now you do and shall hear by me, that is, by my death and burning. For albeit I have deserved eternal death and hell fire through my uncleanness, hypocrisy, avarice, vain-glory, idleness, unthankfulness, and carnality, whereof I accuse myself, to my confusion before the world, that before God, through Christ, I might find mercy, as my assured hope is that I shall. Albeit, I have deserved much more than this affliction and fire prepared for me: yet, my dearly beloved, it is not for these, or any of these things, wherefore the prelates persecute me, but for God's verity and truth; yea, even Christ himself is the only cause and thing whereof I am now condemned, and shall be burned as a heretic, because I will not grant the anti-christ of Rome to be Christ's vicar-general and supreme head of the church here, and every where upon earth, by God's ordinance; and because I will not grant such corporeal, real, and carnal presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament as doth transubstantiate the substance of bread and wine, and is received by the wicked, yea, even by dogs and mice. Also I am excommunicated, and count-

ed as a dead member of Christ's Church, as a rotten branch, and therefore shall be cast into the fire.

Therefore you ought heartily to rejoice with me, and to give thanks for me that God, the eternal Father, hath vouchsafed our mother* to bring up any child in whom it would please him to magnify his holy name as he doth, and I hope, for his mercy and truth's sake, will do in me and by me. Oh! what such benefit upon earth can there be as that I, which deserved death by reason of my sins, should be delivered for a demonstration, a testimony, and confirmation of God's verity and truth! Thou, my mother, the University, hast not only had the truth of God's word plainly manifested unto thee, by reading, disputing, and preaching publicly and privately, but now to make thee altogether excuseless, and, as it were, almost to sin against the Holy Ghost, if thou put to thy helping hand with the Romish rout to suppress the verity and set out the contrary, thou hast my life and blood as a seal to confirm thee, if thou wilt be confirmed, or else to confound thee, and bear witness against thee, if thou wilt take part with the prelates and clergy, which now fill up the measures of their fathers which slew the prophets and apostles, that all the righteous blood, from Abel to Bradford, shed upon earth, may be required at their hands.

Of this therefore I thought good before my death, as time and liberty would suffer me, for the love and duty I bear unto you, to admonish thee, good mother, and my sister the town, that you would call to mind from whence you are fallen, and study to do the first works. You know, if you will, these matters of the Romish supremacy, and the anti-christian transubstantiation, whereby Christ's supper is overthrown, his priesthood annulled, his sacrifice frustrated, the ministry of his word unplaced, repentance repelled, faith fainted, godliness extinguished, the mass maintained, idolatry supported, and all impiety cherished: you know, I say, if you will, that these opinions are not only besides God's word, but even directly against it; and therefore to take part with them is to take part against God, against whom you cannot prevail.

Therefore, for the tender mercy of Christ, in his bowels and blood I beseech you to take Christ's eye-salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see what you do and have done, in admitting, as I hear you have admitted, yea, alas!

* The University of Cambridge.

authorized, and by consent confirmed, the Romish rotten rags, which once you utterly expelled. Oh! be not a dog returned to his vomit. Be not the washed sow returned to her wallowing in the mire. Beware, lest Satan enter in with seven other spirits, and then thy last state shall be worse than the first. It had been better you had never known the truth, than after knowledge to run from it. Ah! woe to this world and the things therein, which has now so wrought with you. Oh! that ever this dirt of the devil should daub up the eye of the realm. For thou, O mother, art as the eye of the realm. If thou be light and shine, all the body shall fare the better; but if thou the light be darkness, alas! how great will the darkness be! What is man, whose breath is in his nostrils, that thou shouldst thus be afraid of him!

Oh! what is honour and life here? Bubbles. What is glory in this world but shame?—Why art thou afraid to carry Christ's cross? Wilt thou come into his kingdom, and not drink of his cup? Dost thou not know Rome to be Babylon? Dost thou not know, that as the old Babylon had the children of Judah in captivity, so hath this Rome the true Judah, that is, the confessors of Christ? Dost thou not know, that as destruction happened unto it, so shall it do unto this? And supposest thou that God will not deliver his people, now when the time is come, as he did then? Has not God commanded his people to come out from her, and wilt thou give example to the whole realm to run unto her? Hast thou forgotten the woe that Christ threatens to offence-givers? Wilt thou not remember that it were better that a millstone were hanged about thy neck, and thou thrown into the sea, than that thou shouldst offend the little ones?

And, alas! how hast thou offended! Yea, and how dost thou still offend! Wilt thou consider things according to the outward show? Was not the synagogue more seemly and like to the true church than the simple flock of Christ's disciples? Hath not the harlot of Babylon more costly array, and rich apparel, externally to set forth herself, than the homely housewife of Christ? Where is the beauty of the King's daughter, the church of Christ? without or within? Doth not David say within? Oh! remember, that as they are happy which are not offended at Christ, so are they happy which are not offended at his poor church. Can the pope and his prelates mean honestly,

which make so much of the wife and so little of the husband? The church they magnify, but Christ they contemn. If this church were an honest woman, (that is, Christ's wife,) except they would make much of her husband, Christ and his word, she would not be made much of by them.

When Christ and his apostles were upon earth, who seemed more likely to be the true church, they or the prelates, bishops, and synagogue? If a man should have followed custom, unity, antiquity, or the more part, would not Christ and his company have been cast out of the doors? Therefore Christ bade them to search the Scriptures. And, good mother, shall the servant be above his master? Shall we look for other entertainment at the hands of the world than Christ and his dear disciples found? Who was taken in Noah's time for the church, poor Noah and his family, or others? Who was taken for God's church in Sodom, Lot, or others? And doth not Christ say, As it was then, so shall it be now towards the coming of the Son of Man? What meaneth Christ when he says, Iniquity shall have the upper hand? Doth not he say that charity shall wax cold? And who sees not a wonderful great lack of charity in those which would now be taken for Christ's church? All that truly fear God in this realm can tell more of this than I can write.

Therefore, dear mother, receive some admonition of one of thy poor children, now going to be burned for the testimony of Jesus. Come again to God's truth; come out of Babylon; confess Christ and his true doctrine; repent that which is past; make amends by declaring thy repentance by the fruits. Remember the readings and the preachings of God's prophet, and true preacher, Martin Bucer. Call to mind the threatenings of God, now something seen by thy children, Leaver and others. Let the exile of Leaver, Pilkington, Grindall, Haddon, Horne, Scory, Ponet, &c. something awake thee. Let the imprisonment of thy dear sons, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, move thee. Consider the martyrdom of Rogers, Saunders, Taylor. And now cast not away the poor admonition of me, going to be burned also, and to receive the like crown of glory with my fellows. Take to heart God's calling by us. Be not as Pharaoh was, for then will it happen unto thee as it did unto him. What is that?—Hardness of heart? And what then?—Destruction eternally, both

of body and soul. Ah! therefore, good mother, awake, awake, repent, repent, bustle thyself, and make haste to turn to the Lord, for else it shall be more easy for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for thee. Oh! harden not your hearts; oh! stop not your ears to-day in hearing God's voice, though it be by me a most unworthy messenger. Oh! fear the Lord, for his anger is begun to kindle. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.

You know I prophesied truly to you before the sweating sickness came on you, what would come if you repented not your carnal gospelling. And now I tell you, before I depart hence, that the ears of men will tingle to hear the vengeance of God that will fall upon you all, both town and university, if you repent not, if you leave not your idolatry, if you turn not speedily to the Lord, if you still are ashamed of Christ's truth which you know.

Oh! Perne, repent; oh! Thompson, repent; oh! you doctors, bachelors, and masters, repent; oh! mayor, aldermen, and town-dwellers, repent, repent, repent, that you may escape the near vengeance of the Lord. Rend your hearts, and come apace, calling on the Lord. Let us all say, We have all sinned, we have done wickedly, we have not hearkened to thy voice, O Lord. Deal not with us after our deserts, but be merciful to our iniquities, for they are great. Oh! pardon our offences. In thine anger remember thy mercy. Turn us unto thee, O Lord God of Hosts, for the glory of thy name's sake. Spare us, and be merciful unto us. Let not wicked people say, Where is now their God? Oh! for thine own sake, for thy name's sake, deal mercifully with us. Turn thyself unto us, and us unto thee, and we shall praise thy name for ever.

If in this manner, my dearly beloved, in heart and mouth we come unto our Father, and prostrate ourselves before the throne of his grace, then surely, surely, we shall find mercy. Then shall the Lord look graciously upon us, for his mercy's sake in Christ; then shall we hear him speak peace unto his people; for he is gracious and merciful, of great pity and compassion; he cannot be chiding for ever; his anger cannot last long to the penitent; though we weep in the morning, yet at night we shall have our sorrow cease; for he is easy to be entreated, and hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, he rather would have our conversion and turning.

Oh! turn now and convert, yet once again I humbly beseech you, and then the kingdom of heaven shall draw nigh. The eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor is the heart of man able to conceive the joys prepared for us, if we repent, amend our lives, and heartily turn to the Lord. But if you repent not, but be as you were, and go on forwards with the wicked, following the fashion of the world, the Lord will lead you on with wicked doers, you shall perish in your wickedness, your blood will be upon your own heads, your part shall be with hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; you shall be cast from the face of the Lord for ever and ever. Eternal shame, sorrow, woe, and misery, shall be both in body and soul to you, world without end. Oh! therefore, right dear to me in the Lord, turn you, turn you, repent you, repent you, amend, amend your lives, depart from evil, do good, follow peace and pursue it. Come out from Babylon, cast off the works of darkness, put on Christ, confess his truth, be not ashamed of his gospel, prepare yourselves for the cross, drink of God's cup before it come to the dregs, and then shall I with you, and for you, rejoice in the day of judgment, which is at hand, and therefore prepare yourselves thereto I heartily beseech you; and thus I take my farewell of you in this present life, mine own dear hearts in the Lord. The Lord of mercy be with us all, and give us a joyful and sure meeting in his kingdom. Amen. Amen. Out of prison the 11th of February, anno 1555.

Your own in the Lord for ever,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER III.

To Lancashire and Cheshire.

To all that profess the name and true religion of our Saviour Jesus Christ, in Lancashire and Cheshire, and especially those abiding in Manchester and thereabouts, John Bradford, a most unworthy servant of the Lord, now not only in bonds, but also condemned for the same true religion, wishes mercy and grace, peace and increase of all godliness, from God, the Father of all pity, through the deserts of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the working of

the most mighty and lively Spirit, the Comforter, for ever. Amen.

I hear it reported credibly, my dearly beloved in the Lord, that my heavenly Father hath thought it good to provide, that, as I have preached his true doctrine and gospel among you by word, so I shall testify and confirm the same by deed, that is, I shall with you leave my life, which, by his providence, I first received there, for in Manchester was I born; for a seal to the doctrine I have taught with you and among you; so that if from henceforth you waver in the same, you have no excuse at all. I know the enemies of Christ which exercise this cruelty upon me, (I speak in respect of my offence, which is nothing towards them, I think,) by killing of me amongst you, to affright you and others, lest they should attempt to teach Christ truly, or believe his doctrine hereafter. But I doubt not that my heavenly Father will, by my death, more confirm you in his truth than ever. And therefore I greatly rejoice to see Satan and his soldiers supplanted in their own wisdom, which is plain foolishness among the truly wise; that is, among such as have heard God's word, and do follow it; for they only are counted wise of the wisdom of God our Saviour. Indeed, if I should simply consider my life, with that which it ought to have been, and as God in his law requires, then could I not but cry as I do, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and all thy judgments are true. For I have much grieved thee, and transgressed thy holy precepts, not only before my professing the gospel, but since also: yea, since my coming into prison I do not excuse, but accuse myself before God and all his church, that I have grievously offended my Lord God. I have not lived his gospel as I should have done. I have sought myself, and not simply and only, his glory and my brethren's commodity. I have been too unthankful, secure, carnal, hypocritical, vain-glorious, &c. All which my evils, the Lord of mercy pardon me for his Christ's sake, as I hope and certainly believe he hath done for his great mercy in Christ our Redeemer. But when I consider the cause of my condemnation, I cannot but lament that I do no more rejoice than I do, for it is God's verity and truth; so that the condemnation is not a condemnation of Bradford simply, but rather a condemnation of Christ and of his truth. Bradford is nothing else but an instrument, in whom

Christ and his doctrine is condemned. And therefore, my dearly beloved, rejoice, rejoice, and give thanks with me and for me, that God ever did vouchsafe so great a benefit to our country as to choose the most unworthy, I mean myself, to be one in whom it would please him to suffer any kind of affliction; much more this violent kind of death, which I perceive is prepared for me amongst you, for his sake. All glory and praise be given unto God our Father, for his great and exceeding mercy towards me, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

But perchance you will say unto me, What is the cause for which you are condemned? we hear say, that you deny all presence of Christ in his holy supper, and so make it a bare sign and common bread, and nothing else. My dearly beloved, what is said of me, and what will be said, I cannot tell. It is told me that Pendleton is gone down to preach with you, not as he once recanted, for you all know he has preached contrary to that he was wont to preach before I came among you, but to recant that which he has recanted. How he will speak of me, and report before I come and when I am come, and when I am burned, I care not much; for he that is so uncertain and will speak so often against himself, I cannot think will speak well of me, except it make for his purpose and profit: but of this enough.

Indeed the chief thing which I am condemned for as a heretic, is because I deny that in the sacrament of the altar (which is not Christ's supper, but a plain perverting of it, when used as the Papists now use it,) there is a real, natural, and corporeal presence of Christ's body and blood, under the forms and accidents of bread and wine. That is, because I deny transubstantiation, which is the darling of the devil, and daughter and heir to Antichrist's religion, whereby the mass is maintained, Christ's supper perverted, his sacrifice and cross imperfected, his priesthood destroyed, the ministry taken away, repentance repelled, and all true godliness abandoned. In the supper of our Lord, or sacrament of Christ's body and blood, I confess and believe, that there is a true and real presence of the whole Christ, God and man, to the faith of the receiver, (but not of the stander-by and looker on,) as there is a very true presence of bread and wine to the senses of him that is partaker thereof. This faith, this true doctrine, which con-

sents with the word of God and with the true testimony of Christ's church, which the popish church persecutes, I will not forsake, and therefore am I condemned as a heretic, and shall be burned. But, my dearly beloved, this truth which I have taught, and you have received, I believed and do believe, and therein give my life. And I hope in God it shall never be burned, bound, nor overcome, but shall triumph, have victory and be at liberty, in spite of the head of all God's adversaries; for there is no counsel against the Lord, nor can any device of man be able to defeat the verity, in any other than such as are children of unbelief, which have no love to the truth, and therefore are given up to believe lies. From which plague may the Lord of mercy deliver you and all the realm, my dear hearts in the Lord, I humbly beseech his mercy. Amen.

And to the end you might be delivered from this plague, right dear to me in the Lord, I shall, for my farewell with you for ever in this present life, heartily desire you all in the bowels and blood of our most merciful Saviour Jesus Christ, to attend unto these things which I now shall shortly write unto you, out of the holy Scriptures of the Lord.

You know that a heavy plague, or rather plagues, of God is fallen upon us, in taking away our good king and true religion, God's true prophets and ministers, &c. and setting over us such as seek not the Lord according to knowledge, those whose endeavours God prospers wonderfully for the trial of many, that his people may both better know themselves, and be known. Now the cause hereof is our iniquities and grievous sins. We did not know the time of our visitation; we were unthankful unto God, we condemned the gospel, and carnally abused it to serve our hypocrisy, our vain-glory, our viciousness, avarice, idleness, security, &c. Long did the Lord linger and tarry to have showed mercy upon us, but we were ever, the longer the worse; therefore most justly has God dealt with us, and deals with us, yea, yet we may see that his justice is tempered with much mercy, whereto let us attribute that we are not utterly consumed; for if the Lord should deal with us after our deserts, alas! how could we abide it? In his anger, therefore, seeing he remembers his mercy undeserved, yea, undesired on our behalf, let us take occasion the more speedily to go out to meet him, not with force of arms, for we are not able so to withstand him,

much less to prevail against him, but to beseech him to be merciful unto us, and to deal with us according to his wonted mercy.

Let us arise with David, and say, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord! for in thy sight no flesh living shall be justified. Let us send ambassadors, with the centurion, and say, Lord, we are not worthy to come ourselves unto thee; speak the word, and we shall have peace. Let us penitently, with the publican, look down on the earth, knock our hard hearts to burst them, and cry out, O God! be merciful unto us wretched sinners. Let us, with the lost son, return and say, O Father! we have sinned against heaven and earth, and before thee; we are unworthy to be called thy children. Let us, I say, do thus, that is, heartily repent us of our former evil life, and our past unthankful gospelling. Let us convert and turn to God with our whole hearts, hoping in his great mercy through Christ, and heartily calling upon his holy name; and then undoubtedly we shall find and feel otherwise, than as yet we feel both inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly we shall feel peace of conscience between God and us, which peace passes all understanding; and outwardly we shall feel much mitigation of these miseries, if not an outward taking of them away.

Therefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord, I your poorest brother, now departing to the Lord, as my farewell for this present life, pray you, beseech you, and even from the very bottom of my heart, for all the mercies of God in Christ showed unto you, I most earnestly beg and crave of you out of prison, as often out of your pulpits I have done, that you will repent you, leave your wicked and evil life, be sorry for your offences, and turn to the Lord, whose arms are wide open to receive and embrace you; whose hand, stretched out to strike to death, stayeth, that he may show mercy upon you, for he is the Lord of mercy, and God of all comfort. He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that you should return, convert, and amend; he hath no pleasure in the destruction of man; his long-suffering draweth to repentance before the time of vengeance and the day of wrath, which is at hand, doth come.

Now is the axe laid to the root of the tree, utterly to destroy the impenitent; now is the fire gone out before the face of the Lord, and who is able to quench it? Oh! therefore, repent you, repent you; it is enough to have

lived as we have done, it is enough to have played the wanton gospellers, the proud protestants, hypocritical and false Christians, as, alas! we have done. Now the Lord speaks to us in mercy and grace: oh! turn before he speak in wrath. Yet is there mercy with the Lord, and plenteous redemption. Yet he has not forgotten to show mercy to them that call upon him. Oh! then call upon him while he may be found, for he is rich in mercy, and plentiful, to all them that call upon him; so that he that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved. If your sins be as red as scarlet, the Lord saith, he will make them as white as snow: he hath sworn, and never will repent him thereof, that he will never remember our iniquities: but as he is God, faithful, and true, so will he be our God, and we shall be his people; his law will he write in our hearts, and ingraft in our minds, and never will he have in mind our unrighteousness. Therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord, turn you, turn you to the Lord your Father, to the Lord your Saviour, to the Lord your Comforter. Oh! why do you stop your ears and harden your hearts to-day, when you hear his voice by me your poorest brother? Oh! forget not how that the Lord hath showed himself true, and me his true preacher, by bringing to pass these plagues, which, at my mouth, you often heard of before they came to pass; especially when I treated of Noah's flood, and when I preached from the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, on St. Stephen's day, the last time that I was with you. And now by me the Lord sends you word, dear countrymen, that if you will go on forward in your impenitency, carnality, hypocrisy, idolatry, covetousness, swearing, gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, &c., where-with, alas, alas! our country floweth; if, I say, you will not turn and leave off, seeing me now burned among you, to assure you on all sides how God seeks you, and is sorry to do you hurt, to plague you, to destroy you, to take vengeance upon you; oh! your blood will be upon your own heads; you have been warned and warned again by me in preaching—by me in burning.

As I said therefore, I say again, my dear hearts, and dearlings in the Lord, turn you, turn you, repent you; cease from doing evil, study to do well. Away with idolatry, fly the Romish God and service, leave off from swearing, cut off carnality, abandon avarice, drive away drunkenness, fly from fornication and flattery, murder and malice; destroy

deceitfulness, and cast away all the works of darkness; put on piety and godliness, serve God after his word, and not after custom; use your tongues to glorify God by prayer, thanksgiving, and confession of his truth, &c. Be spiritual, and by the Spirit mortify carnal affections; be sober, holy, true, loving, gentle, merciful; and then shall the Lord's wrath cease, not for this our doings' sake, but for his mercy's sake. Go to, therefore; good countrymen, take this counsel of the Lord by me, and now sent unto you, as the Lord's counsel and not as mine, that in the day of judgment I may rejoice with you and for you, which I heartily desire; and not to be a witness against you. My blood will cry for vengeance against the papists, God's enemies (whom I beseech God, if it be his will, heartily to forgive, yea, even them which put me to death, and are the causers thereof, for they know not what they do;) so also will my blood cry for vengeance against you, my dearly beloved in the Lord, if you repent not, amend not, and turn not unto the Lord.

Turn unto the Lord, yet once more, I heartily beseech thee, thou Manchester, thou Ashton-under-Line, thou Bolton, Bury, Wigan, Liverpool, Mottrin, Stepport, Winsley, Eccles, Prestwich, Middleton, Radcliff, and thou city of West-Chester, where I have truly taught and preached the word of God. Turn, I say unto you all, and to all the inhabitants thereabouts, turn unto the Lord our God, and he will turn unto you; he will say unto his angel, "It is enough, put up the sword." And that he do this, I humbly beseech his goodness, for the precious blood sake of his dear Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Ah! good brethren, take in good part these my last words unto every one of you. Pardon me mine offences and negligences in behaviour amongst you. The Lord of mercy pardon us all our offences, for our Saviour Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Out of prison, ready to come to you, the eleventh of February, anno 1555.

LETTER IV.

To the Town of Walden.

To the faithful, and such as profess the true doctrine of our Saviour Jesus Christ, dwelling at Walden, and there-

abouts: John Bradford, a most unworthy servant of the Lord, now in bands, and condemned for the same true doctrine, wishes grace, mercy, and peace, with the increase of all godliness, in knowledge and living, from God the Father of all comfort, through the deserts of our alone and full Redeemer Jesus Christ, by the mighty working of the most holy Spirit, the Comforter, for ever. Amen.

When I remember how that, by the providence and grace of God, I have been a man, by whom it hath pleased him, through my ministry, to call you to repentance and amendment of life, something effectually, as it seemed, and to sow amongst you his true doctrine and religion;—lest that by my affliction and the storms now arisen to try the faithful, and to conform them like to the image of the Son of God, into whose company we are called, you might be faint-hearted—I could not, but out of prison, secretly, for my keepers may not know that I have pen and ink, write unto you a signification of the desire I have, that you should not only be more confirmed in the doctrine I have taught amongst you, which I take on my death, as I shall answer at the day of doom, I am persuaded to be God's assured, infallible, and plain truth; but also that you should, after your vocation aver the same by confession, profession and living—I have not taught you, my dearly beloved in the Lord, fables, tales, or untruths; no, I have taught you the verity, as now by my blood gladly, praised be God therefore, I seal the same.

Indeed, to confess the truth unto you, and to all the church of Christ, I think of myself, that I have most justly deserved not only this kind, but also all kinds of death, and that eternally, for my hypocrisy, vain-glory, uncleanness, self-love, covetousness, idleness, unthankfulness, and carnal professing of God's holy gospel, living therein not so purely, lovingly, and painfully as I should have done. May the Lord of mercy, for the blood sake of Christ, pardon me, as I hope, yea, I certainly believe, he hath done for his holy name sake, through Christ. But, my dearly beloved, you and all the whole world may see and easily perceive, that the prelates persecute in me another thing than mine iniquities, even Christ himself, Christ's verity and truth, because I cannot, dare not, will not, confess transubstantiation, and how that wicked men, yea, that even mice and dogs, eating the sacrament, (which they call the sacrament of the altar, thereby overthrowing Christ's holy supper

utterly,) do eat Christ's natural and real body born of the Virgin Mary.

It is not enough now to believe and confess as God's word teaches, the primitive church believed, and all the catholic and good holy fathers taught, five hundred years at the least after Christ, that, in the supper of the Lord, which the mass overthroweth, as it doth Christ's priesthood, sacrifice, death, and passion, the ministry of his word, true faith, repentance, and all godliness;—there is whole Christ, God and man, present by grace to the faith of the receivers, but not of the standers-by and lookers-on, as bread and wine is to their senses. Therefore I am condemned, and shall be burned out of hand as a heretic. Wherefore I heartily thank my Lord God, that will and doth vouch me worthy to be an instrument, in whom he himself does suffer; for you see my affliction and death is not simply because I have deserved no less, but much more at his hands and justice, but rather because I confess his verity and truth, and am not afraid through his gift so to do, that you also might be confirmed in his truth. Therefore, my dearly beloved, I heartily pray you, and so many as unfeignedly love me in God, to give, with me and for me, most hearty thanks to our heavenly Father, through our sweet Saviour Jesus Christ, for this his exceeding great mercy towards me, and you also, that your faith waver not from the doctrine I have taught, and you have received; for what can you desire more to assure your consciences of the verity taught by your preachers than their own lives?

Go to therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord; waver not in Christ's religion, truly taught you and set forth in king Edward's days. Never shall the enemies be able to burn it, to prison it, and keep it in bonds; us they may prison, they may bind and burn, as they do, and will do so long as shall please the Lord; but our cause, religion, and doctrine, which we confess, they shall never be able to vanquish and put away; their idolatry and popish religion shall never be built in the consciences of men that love the truth. As for those that love not God's truth, that have no pleasure to walk in the ways of the Lord, in those, I say, the devil shall prevail, for God will give them strong illusion to believe lies. Therefore, dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, I humbly beseech you and pray you, in the bowels and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ, now I am going to the death for the testimony of Jesus, as oftentimes I have done before, out of your pulpit, that you would love the Lord's truth; love, I say, to live it, and frame your lives thereafter. Alas! you know the cause of all these plagues which are fallen upon us, and of the success which God's adversaries have daily, that it is for our not living according to God's word.

You know that we were but gossellers in lips, and not in life; we were carnal, full of concupiscence, idle, unthankful, unclean, covetous, arrogant, dissemblers, crafty, subtle, malicious, false, backbiters, &c., and even glutted with God's word, yea, we loathed it, as the Israelites did the manna in the wilderness. And therefore, as to them the Lord's wrath waxed hot, so it does unto us; so that there is no remedy, but that (for it is better late to turn than never to turn) we confess our faults, even from the bottom of our hearts, and with hearty repentance, which may God work in us all for his mercy's sake, we run unto the Lord our God, who is ready to be entreated, merciful, and sorry for the evil poured out upon us; and we cry unto him with Daniel, saying, We have sinned, we have sinned grievously, O Lord God, against thy majesty; we have heaped iniquity upon iniquity; the measure of our transgressions floweth over: so that thy vengeance and wrath are justly fallen upon us, for we are very miserable. We have contemned thy long suffering, we have not hearkened to thy voice; when thou hast called us by thy preachers, we hardened our hearts, and therefore now deserve that thou send thy curse thereupon, to harden our hearts also, that we should henceforth have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, hearts and understand not, lest we should be converted and be saved. Oh! be merciful unto us, spare us, good Lord, and all thy people whom thou hast dearly bought; let not thine enemies triumph altogether and always against thee, for then will they be puffed up. Look down, and behold the pitiful complaints of the poor; let the sorrowful sighing of the simple come in thy sight, and be not angry with us for ever. Turn us, O Lord God of Hosts, unto thee, turn thou unto us, that thou mayest be justified in thy sweet sentences, and overcome when thou art judged, as now thou art by our adversaries: for they say, Where is their God? Can God deliver them now? Can their gospel serve them? O Lord! how long, for the glory of thy name, and for thy honour's sake, in the bowels and blood of Jesus Christ, we

humbly beseech thee, come and help us, for we are very miserable.

In this manner I say, dearly beloved, let us publicly and privately bewail our sins, but so that hereto we join ceasing from wilfulness and sin of purpose; for else the Lord heareth not our prayers, as David saith: and in St. John it is written, the impenitent sinners God heareth not. How impenitent are they, which purpose not to amend their lives! As for example, not only such as still follow their pleasures in covetousness, uncleanness, and carnality, but those also which for fear or favour of men against their conscience consent to the Romish rags, and resort to the rotten religion, communicating in service and ceremonies with the papists; thereby declaring themselves to love the world more than God, to fear man more than Christ, to dread the loss of temporal things more than of eternal; in whom it is evident the love of God abideth not: for he that loveth the world hath not God's love abiding in him, saith St. John; therefore, my dear hearts, and dear again in the Lord, remember what you have professed—Christ's religion and name, and the renouncing of the devil, sin, and the world.

Remember, before you learned A, B, C, your lesson was Christ's cross.* Forget not that Christ will have no disciples, but such as will promise to deny themselves, and take up their cross, mark, they must take it up, and follow him, and not the multitude, custom, and use. Consider, for God's sake, that if we gather not with Christ, we scatter abroad. What should it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul? We must not forget that this life is a wilderness, and not a paradise; here is not our home; we are now in warfare; we must needs fight, or else be taken prisoners. Of all things we have in this life, we shall carry nothing with us; if Christ be our captain, we must follow him as good soldiers; if we keep company with him in affliction, we shall be sure of his society in glory; if we forsake not him, he will never forsake us; if we confess him, he will confess us; but if we deny him, he will deny us; if we are ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of us. Wherefore, as he forsook his Father, and heaven, and all things, to come to us, so let us forsake all things to come to him, being sure and most certain that we shall not lose thereby.

* He refers to the figure of a cross formerly put at the top of the hornbook, from which children used to learn their letters.

Your children shall find and feel it double, yea, treble, whatsoever you lose for the Lord's sake—you shall find and feel peace of conscience, and friendship with God, which is worth more than all the goods of the world

My dearly beloved, therefore, for the Lord's sake, consider these things which I now write unto you of love, for my last farewell for ever in this present life. Turn to the Lord, repent you of your evil and unthankful life, declare repentance by the fruits; take time while you have it; come to the Lord while he calls you; run into his lap while his arms are open to embrace you; seek him while he may be found; call upon him while time is convenient; forsake and fly from all evil, both in religion, and in the rest of your life and conversation. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and praise God in the day of his visitation. Oh! come again, come again, you strange children, and I will receive you, saith the Lord. Convert and turn to me, and I will turn unto you. Why will ye needs perish? As sure as I live (swareth the Lord) I desire not your death; turn therefore unto me. Can a woman forget the child of her womb? If she should, yet I will not forget you, saith the Lord your God. I am he, I am he, which putteth away your sins for mine own sake.

Oh then, dear friends, turn, I say, unto your dearest Father; cast not these sweet and loving words to the ground and behind you, for the Lord watches over his word to perform it, which he does in two ways. To them that lay it up in their hearts, and believe it, will he pay all, and eternal joy and comfort; but to them that cast it at their backs, and wilfully forget it, to them, I say, will he pour out indignation and eternal shame. Wherefore I heartily yet once more beseech you, and pray you, and every one of you, not to contemn this poor and simple exhortation, which now out of prison I make unto you, or rather the Lord by me. Loath would I to be a witness against you in the last day, as of truth I must, if you repent not, if you love not God's gospel, yea, if you live it not.

Therefore, to conclude, love God's gospel, live in it, make it all your conversation; so shall God's name be praised, his plagues mitigated, his people comforted, and his enemies ashamed. Grant all this, thou gracious Lord God, to every one of us, for thy dear Son's sake, our Saviour, Jesus Christ: to whom, with thee and the

Holy Ghost, be eternal glory, for ever and ever. Amen.
The twelfth of February, anno 1555.

By the bondsman of the Lord, &c.

Your afflicted poor brother,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER V.

A comfortable letter of Master Bradford to his mother, a godly matron, dwelling in Manchester, and to his brethren and sisters, and others of his friends there.

OUR dear and sweet Saviour Jesus Christ, whose prisoner at this present (praised be his name therefor) I am, preserve and keep you, my good mother, with my brothers and sisters, my father John Traves, Thomas Sorrocold, Lawrence and James Bradshaw, with their wives and families, &c. now and for ever, amen!

I am at this present in prison, sure enough for starting to confirm that I have preached unto you: as I am ready, I thank God, with my life and blood to seal the same, if God consider me worthy of that honour; for, good mother and brethren, it is a most special benefit of God to suffer for his name sake and gospel as now I do. I heartily thank him for it, and I am sure that with him I shall be partaker of his glory. As Paul saith, If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him. Therefore be not faint-hearted, but rather rejoice, at least for my sake, which now am in the right and high way to heaven, for by many afflictions we must enter the kingdom of heaven. Now God will make known his children. When the wind does not blow, then a man cannot know the wheat from the chaff; but when the blast comes, then the chaff flies away, but the wheat remains, and is so far from being hurt, that by the wind it is cleansed from the chaff, and known to be wheat. Gold, when it is cast into the fire, is the more precious; so are God's children by the cross of affliction. God always begins his judgment at his house; Christ and the apostles were in most misery in the land of Jewry, but yet the whole land smarted for it afterwards; so now God's children are chastised in this world, that they should not be damned with the world, for surely great plagues of God hang over this realm.

You all know that there never was more knowledge of God, and less godly living and true serving of God. It was counted a foolish thing to serve God truly, and earnest prayer was not passed upon; preaching was but a pastime; the communion was counted too common; fasting to subdue the flesh was far out of use; alms were almost nothing; malice, covetousness, and uncleanness, were common every where, with swearing, drunkenness, and idleness. God therefore now is come, as you have heard me preach; and because he will not condemn us with the world, he begins to punish us,—as me for my carnal living. For as for my preaching, I am most certain it is and was God's truth, and I trust to give my life for it by God's grace; but because I lived not the gospel truly, but outwardly, therefore he thus punishes me; nay, rather in punishing blesses me. And indeed I thank him more for this prison than for any parlour, yea, than for any pleasure that ever I had; for in it I find God, my most sweet good God always. The flesh is punished, first to admonish us now to live heartily as we profess; secondly, to certify the wicked of their just damnation, if they repent not.

Perchance you are weakened as to that which I have preached, because God does not defend it, as you think, but suffers the popish doctrine to come again and prevail; but you must know, good mother, that God by this proves and tries his children and people, whether they will unfeignedly and simply hang on him and his word. So did he with the Israelites, bringing them into a desert after their coming out of Egypt; where, I mean in the wilderness, was want of all things in comparison of that which they had in Egypt. Christ, when he came into this world, brought no worldly wealth nor quietness with him, but rather war. The world, said he, shall rejoice, but ye shall mourn and weep, but your weeping shall be turned into joy; and therefore happy are they that mourn and weep, for they shall be comforted. They are marked then with God's mark in their foreheads, and not with the beast's mark, I mean the Pope's shaven crown, who now rejoices with his shavelings; but woe unto them, for they shall be cast down, they shall weep and mourn. The rich glutton had here his joy, and Lazarus sorrow, but afterwards the time was changed. The end of carnal joy is sorrow. Now, let the whoremonger joy with the drunkard, swearer,

covetous, malicious, and blind buzzard Sir John;* for the mass will not bite them, neither make them to blush, as preaching would. Now may they do what they will, come devils to the church, and go devils home, for no man may find fault, and they are glad of this; now they have their heart's desire, as the Sodomites had when Lot was gone; but what followed? Forsooth when they cried, "Peace, all shall be well," then came God's vengeance, fire and brimstone from heaven, and burnt up every mother's child; even so, dear mother, will it do to our papists.

Wherefore fear God, stick to his word, though all the world swerve from it. Die you must, once, and when or how you cannot tell. Die therefore with Christ, suffer for serving him truly and after his word; for sure may we be that of all deaths, it is most to be desired to die for God's sake. This is the most safe kind of dying; we cannot doubt but that we shall go to heaven if we die for his name sake. And that you shall die for his name sake, God's word will warrant you, if you stick to that which God by me hath taught you. You shall see that I speak as I think; for by God's grace I will drink before you of this cup, if I am put to it.

I doubt not but God will give me his grace, and strengthen me thereto: pray that he would, and that I refuse it not. I am at a point, even when my Lord God will, to come to him: death nor life, prison nor pleasure, I trust in God, shall be able to separate me from my Lord God and his gospel. In peace, when no persecution was, then you were content and glad to hear me, then you believed me; and will you not do so now, seeing I speak that which I trust by God's grace, if needs be, to verify with my life? Good mother, I write before God to you, as I have preached before him.

It is God's truth I have taught, it is that same infallible word whereof he said, "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my word shall not pass." The mass and such baggage as the false worshippers of God and enemies of Christ's cross, the papists, have brought in again, to poison the church of God withal, displeases God highly, and is abominable in his sight. Happy may he be which for conscience suffers loss of life or goods in disallowing it.

* The Romish priests were so styled.

Come not at it. If God be God, follow him; if the mass be God, let them that will, see it, hear or be present at it, and go to the devil with it. What is therein as God ordained? His supper was ordained to be received of us in memorial of his death, for the confirmation of our faith, that his body was broken for us, and his blood shed for pardon of our sins; but in the mass there is no receiving, but the priest keeps all to himself alone. Christ saith, Take, eat: No, saith the priest, gape, peep. There is a sacrifice, yea, a killing of Christ again as much as they may. There is idolatry in worshipping the outward sign of bread and wine; there is all in Latin, you cannot tell what he saith. To conclude, there is nothing as God ordained; wherefore, my good mother, come not at it.

Oh! some will say, it will be a hinderance to you if you refuse to come to mass, and to do as others do;—but God will further you, be you assured, as you shall one day find, who hath promised to them that suffer hinderance or loss of any thing in this world, his great blessing here, and in the world to come life everlasting.

You shall be counted a heretic, but not of others, only of heretics, whose praise is a dispraise.

You are not able to reason against the priests, but God will, so that all of them shall not be able to withstand you. Nobody will do so but you only; indeed no matter; for few enter in at the narrow gate which bringeth to salvation. Howbeit, you shall have with you, I doubt not, father Traves and others my brothers and sisters, to go with you therein; but if they will not, I your son in God, I trust, shall not leave you an inch, but go before you; pray that I may, and give thanks for me. Rejoice in my suffering, for it is for your sakes, to confirm the truth I have taught. Howsoever you do, beware this letter come not abroad but into father Traves's hands; for if it should be known that I have pen and ink in the prison, then would it be worse with me. Therefore keep this letter to yourselves, commending me to God, and his mercy in Christ Jesus, may he make me worthy, for his name sake, to give my life for his gospel and church. Out of the Tower of London, the 6th day of October, 1553.

My name I write not, for causes you know well enough: like the letter never the worse. Commend me to all our good brethren and sisters in the Lord. Howsoever you do, be obedient to the higher powers, that is, in no point either

in hand or tongue rebel; but rather, if they command that which with good conscience you cannot obey, lay your head on the block, and suffer whatsoever they shall do or say. By patience possess you your souls.

LETTER VI.

To my Loving brethren, B. C.—&c., their wives, and whole families, J. BRADFORD.

I BESEECH the everliving God to grant you all, my good brethren and sisters, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the continual sense of his mercy in Christ our Lord, now and for ever. Amen. The world, my brethren, seems to have the upper hand, iniquity overflows, the truth and verity seem to be oppressed, and they which take part therewith are unjustly entreated; and they which love the truth lament to see and hear as they do. 'The cause of all this is God's anger and merey; his anger, because we have grievously sinned against him; his mercy, because he punishes us here, and nurtures us as a father. We have been unthankful for his word; we have contemned his kindness; we have been negligent in prayer; we have been so carnal, covetous, licentious, &c., that we have not hastened to heaven-ward, but rather to hell-ward. We were fallen almost into an open contempt of God, and all his good ordinances. So that of his justice he could no longer forbear, but must make us feel his anger, as now he hath done, in taking his word and true service from us, and permitting Satan to serve us with antichristian religion, and that in such a manner, that if we will not yield to it, and seem to allow it in deed and outward fact, our bodies are likely to be laid in prison, and our goods given we cannot tell to whom.

This we should look upon as a sign of God's anger, procured by our sins, which, my good brethren, every one of us should now call to our memories oftentimes, as particularly as we can, that we may heartily lament them, repent them, hate them, ask earnestly mercy for them, and submit ourselves to bear in this life any kind of punishment which God will lay upon us for them. This we should do in consideration of God's anger at this time. Now his mercy in this time of wrath is seen, and should be

seen by us, my dearly beloved, in this respect, that God vouchsafes to punish us in this present life. If he had not punished us, do not you think that we should have continued in the evils we were in? Yes, verily, we should have been worse, and have gone forward in hardening our hearts, by impenitency, and negligence of God, and true godliness; and then, if death had come, should we not have perished, both soul and body, in eternal fire and perdition? Alas! what misery we should have fallen into, if God had suffered us to go forward in our evils! No greater sign of damnation is there, than to lie in evil and sin, unpunished of God, as now the papists, my dearly beloved, are cast into Jezebel's bed of security, (Rev. iii.) which of all plagues is the most grievous plague that can be; they are bastards, and not sons, for they are not under God's rod of correction.

A great mercy therefore it is that God punishes us: for if he loved us not, he would not punish us: now he chastises us, that we should not be damned with the world. Now he nurtures us, because he favours us; now we may think ourselves God's house and children, because he begins his chastising at us. Now he calls us to remember our sins past. Wherefore?—That we might repent, and ask mercy. And why?—That he might forgive us, pardon us, justify us, and make us his children, and so begin to make us here like Christ, that we might be like unto him elsewhere, even in heaven, where already we are set by faith with Christ. And at his coming, in very deed we shall enjoy his presence, when our sinful and vile bodies shall be made like to Christ's glorious body, according to the power whereby he is able to make all things subject to himself.

Therefore, my brethren, let us in respect hereof not lament, but laud God. Let us not be sorry, but be merry, not weep, but rejoice and be glad, that God vouchsafes to offer us his cross, thereby to come to him to endless joys and comforts. For if we suffer, we shall reign; if we confess him before men, he will confess us before his Father in heaven; if we are not ashamed of his gospel now, he will not be ashamed of us in the last day, but will be glorified in us, crowning us with crowns of glory, and endless felicity. For blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Be glad, (saith Peter,) for the Spirit of God

resteth upon you. And after you are a little while afflicted, God will comfort, strengthen, and confirm you. And therefore, my good brethren, be not discouraged for cross, for prison, or loss of goods, for confession of Christ's gospel and truth which ye have believed, and which was taught amongst you in the days of our late good king, and most holy prince king Edward. This is most certain, if you lose any thing for Christ's sake, and for contemning the antichristian service set up again among us;—as you for your parts, even in prison, shall find God's great and rich mercy far passing all worldly wealth;—so shall your wives and children, in this present life, find and feel God's providence more plentifully than tongue can tell; for he will show merciful kindness on thousands of them that love him. The good man's seed shall not go a-begging his bread. You are good men, so many as suffer for Christ's sake.

I trust that you all, my dearly beloved, will consider this with yourselves, and in the cross see God's mercy, which is more sweet and to be set by, than life itself, much more than any muck or pelf of this world. This mercy of God should make you merry and cheerful, for the afflictions of this life are not to be compared to the joys of the life prepared for you. You know the way to heaven is not the wide way of the world, which windeth to the devil, but it is a strait way, which few walk in. For few live godly in Christ Jesus; few regard the life to come; few remember the day of judgment; few remember how Christ will deny them before his Father, that deny him here; few consider that Christ will be ashamed of them in the last day, which now are ashamed of his truth and true service; few cast their accounts what will be laid to their charge in the day of vengeance; few regard the condemnation of their own consciences, in doing that which inwardly they disallow; few love God better than their goods.

But I trust yet, you are of this few, my dearly beloved; I trust you are of that little flock, which shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; I trust you are the mourners and lamenters which shall be comforted with comfort that never shall be taken from you, if you now repent your former evils, if now you strive against the evils that are in you, if now you continue to call upon God, if now you defile not your bodies with any idolatrous service, used in the

antichristian churches; if you molest not the good Spirit of God, which is given you as a gage* of eternal redemption, a counsellor and master to lead you into all truth; which good Spirit I beseech the Father of mercy to give to us all, for his dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom I commend you all, and to the word of his grace, which is able to help you all, and save you all, that believe it, follow it, and serve God thereafter.

And of this I would you were all certain, that all the hairs of your heads are numbered, so that not one of them shall perish, neither shall any man or devil be able to *attempt* any thing, much less to *do* any thing to you, or any of you, before your heavenly Father, which loveth you most tenderly, shall give them leave; and when he has given them leave, they shall go no further than he will, nor keep you in trouble any longer than he will. Therefore cast on him all your care, for he is careful for you. Only study to please him, and to keep your consciences clean, and your bodies pure from the idolatrous service, which now every where is used, and God will marvellously and mercifully defend and comfort you; which thing he will do for his holy name's sake in Christ our Lord. Amen.

LETTER VII.

To my dearly beloved in Christ, Erkinalde Rawlins and his wife.

God, our dear and most merciful Father, through Christ, be with you, my good brother and sister, as with his children for ever; and in all things so guide you with his Holy Spirit, the leader of his people, as may be to his glory, and your own everlasting joy and comfort in him. Amen. Because I have oftentimes received from either of you comfort corporeal, for which I beseech the Lord to make me thankful, and to recompense you both now and eternally, I cannot but go about (Lord, help hereto for thy mercy's sake!) to write something for your comfort spiritually.

My dearly beloved, look not upon these days and the afflictions of the same here with us, simply as they seem unto you, that is, as dismal days, and days of God's

* Pledge.

vengeance, but rather as lucky days, and days of God's fatherly kindness towards you, and such as you are, that is, towards such as repent their sins and evil life past, and earnestly propose to amend, walking not after the will of the world, as the most part of men do, for the preservation of their self, which, will they, nill they, they shall leave sooner or later, and by whom, or how it shall be used, they know not. Indeed, to such as walk in their wickedness, and wind on with the world, this time is a time of wrath and vengeance; and their beginning of sorrow is but now, because they contemn the physic of their Father, which by this purging time, and cleansing days, would work their weal, which they will not. And because they will not have God's blessing, which both ways he has offered unto them, by prosperity and adversity; therefore it shall be kept far enough from them, as, when the sick man will take no kind of physic at the hands of the physician, he is left alone, and so the malady increases, and destroys him at length. To such men, indeed, these days are and should be doleful days, and days of woe and weeping, because their damnation draweth nigh. But unto such as be penitent, and are desirous to live after the Lord's will, among whom I do not only count you, but, as far as a man may judge, I know you are, unto such I say this time is and should be comfortable. For, first, now your Father chastiseth you and me for our sins; for the which if he would have destroyed us, then would he have let us alone, and left us to ourselves, not taking to heart his fatherly visitation, which here it pleases him to work at present, because elsewhere he will not remember our transgressions, as Paul writes; he chastises us in this world, lest with the world we should perish. Therefore, my dear hearts, call to mind your sins, to lament them, and to ask mercy for them in his sight, and withal undoubtedly believe to obtain pardon, and assured forgiveness of the same, for the Lord punishes not twice for one thing.

So that, I say, first we have cause to rejoice for these days, because our Father suffers us not to lie in Jezebel's bed, sleeping in our own sins and security; but is mindful of us, and corrects us as his children, whereby we may be certain that we are not bastards, but children; for he chastiseth every child whom he receiveth; so that they which are not partakers of his chastising, or that contemn it, declare themselves to be bastards and not children. But

I know you are children who when you are chastised, take it to heart accordingly. And therefore be glad, my dear hearts, as folks knowing certainly, even by these visitations of the Lord, that you are his dear elect children, whose faults your Father may visit with the rod of correction, but his mercy he will never take away from you. Amen.

Secondly, you have cause to rejoice for these days, because they are days of trial, wherein not only you yourselves, but also the world, shall know that you are none of his, but the Lord's dearlings. Before these days came, how many thought of themselves that they had been in God's bosom, and so were thought, and would be thought by the world. But now we see whose they are; for to whom we obey, his servants we are. If we obey the world, which God forbid, and hitherto ye have not done it, then are we the world's; but if we obey God, then are we God's; which thing, (I mean that you are God's,) these days have declared both to you, to me, and to all others that know you, better than ever we knew it; therefore you have no cause to sorrow, but rather to sing, seeing yourselves to be God's babes, and seeing that all God's children do so count you.

What though the world repine thereat? what though he kick? what though he seek to trouble and molest you? My dear hearts, he does but after his kind. He cannot love the Lord, who lives not in the Lord; he that hates the father, cannot bear the child; he cannot mind the servant, that cares not for the master: if you were of the world, the world would love you; you should dwell quietly; there would be no grief, no molestation. If the devil dwelt in you, (which the Lord forbid,) he would not stir up his servants to besiege your house, to snatch your goods, or suffer his fiends to enter into your hogs; but because Christ dwelleth in you, as he does by faith, therefore he stirs up his first-begotten son, the world, to seek how to disquiet you, to rob you, to spoil you, to destroy you. And perhaps your dear Father, to try and to make known to you and to the world, that you are destined to another dwelling than here on earth, to another city than man's eyes have seen at any time, has given or will give power to Satan and to the world to take from you the things which he has lent you; and, by taking away, to try your fidelity, obedience, and love towards him; for you may not love them above him, as

by giving what you have, and continuing it, he has declared his love towards you.

Satan perchance tells God, as he did of Job, that you love God for your goods' sake. What now then if the Lord, to try you, with Job, shall give Satan power on your goods and body accordingly; should you be dismayed? should you despair? should you be fainthearted? Should you not rather rejoice, as did the apostles, that they were counted worthy to suffer any thing for the Lord's sake? Oh! forget not the end that happened to Job, for as it happened unto him, so shall it happen unto you; for God is the same God, and cannot long forget to show mercy to them that look and long for it, as I know you do, and I pray you so to do still; for the Lord loveth you, and never can nor will forget to show and pour out his mercy upon you. After a little while that he has afflicted and tried you, (saith Peter,) he will visit, comfort, and confirm you. As unto Jacob, wrestling with the angel, at the length morning came, and the sun arose; so, dear hearts, doubtless it will happen unto you. Howbeit, do you as Job and Jacob did: that is, order and dispose your things, that God has lent you, as you may, and while you have time—who knows whether God has not given you power thus long even for that purpose?

Go to, therefore, dispose your goods, prepare yourselves to trial, that either you may stand to it, like God's champions, or else, if you feel such infirmity in yourselves that you are not able, give place to violence, and go where you may with free and safe conscience serve the Lord.* Think not this counsel to come by chance or fortune, but to come from the Lord. Other oracles we may not look for now. As God told Joseph in a dream by an angel, that he should flee, so if you feel such infirmity in yourselves as should turn to God's dishonour, and your own destruction, know that at this present I am as God's angel, to admonish you to take time while you have it, and to see that in no case God's name by you might be dishonoured. Joseph might have objected the omission of his vocation,† as perchance you will do; but, dear hearts, let vocations, and all things else, give place to God's name, and the sanctifying thereof.

* Erkinalde Rawlins and his wife followed this counsel, and fled beyond sea. *Fox.*

† Matt. c. ii. v. 14. The loss of his business.

This I speak, not as though I would not have you rather to tarry and to stand to it, but I speak it in respect of your infirmity, which if you feel to be so great in you that you are not certain of this hope, that God will never tempt you above your ability, flee and get you hence, and know that thereby God will have you tried, to yourselves and to others. For by it you shall know how to take this world, and that your home here is no home, but that you look for another, and so give occasion to others to love this world less, and perchance to some to doubt of their religion, wherein, though they are earnest, yet would they not lose so much as you do for your religion, which you do confirm to me and others by your giving place to violence.

Last of all, you have cause to rejoice over these our days, because they are days of conformation, in which and by which God our heavenly father makes us like unto Christ's image here, that we may be like unto him elsewhere. For if we suffer with him, then we shall reign also with him; if we are buried with him, then we shall rise with him again; if we company with him in all troubles and afflictions, then we shall rejoice with him in glory; if we now sow with him in tears, we shall reap with him in gladness; if we confess him before men, he will confess us before his Father in heaven; if we take his part, he will take ours; if we lose aught for his name's sake, he will give us all things for his truth's sake. So that we ought to rejoice and be glad, for it is not given to every one to suffer loss of country, life, goods, house, &c., for the Lord's sake. What can God the Father do more unto us, than to call us into the camp with his Son? what may Christ our Saviour do more for us, than to make us his warriors? what can the Holy Ghost do to us above this, to mark us with the cognizance of the Lord of Hosts?

The cognizance of the Lord standeth not in forked caps, tippets, shaven crowns, or such other baggage and antichristian pelf, but in suffering for the Lord's sake. The world shall hate you, saith Christ. Lo! there is the cognizance and badge of God's children:—the world shall hate you. Rejoice, therefore, my dearly beloved; rejoice that God thus vouchsafes to begin to conform you, and to make you like to Christ. By the trial of these days you are occasioned more to repent, more to pray, more to condemn this world, more to desire life everlasting, more to be holy, for to be holy is the end wherefore God afflicts us,

and so to come to God's company; which thing, because we cannot do, as long as this body is as it is, therefore by the door of death we must enter, with Christ, into eternal life, and immortality of soul and body; which God of his mercy send shortly, for our Saviour Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

LETTER VIII.

To Mistress A. Warcup.

THE everlasting peace of Christ be more and more lively felt in your hearts, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, now and for ever. Amen.

Although I know it is not needful to write any thing unto you, good sister, being, as I doubt not you are, diligently exercised in reading of the Scriptures, in meditating of the same, and in hearty prayer to God for the help of his Holy Spirit for the sense and feeling, especially of the comforts you read in God's sweet book; yet having such opportunity, and knowing not whether hereafter I shall ever have the like, as this bringer can declare, I thought good, in few words, to take my farewell in writing, because otherwise I cannot. And now methinks I have done it: for what else can I, or should I say unto you, my dearly beloved in the Lord, but farewell? Farewell, dear sister! farewell; howbeit, in the Lord, our Lord, I say, farewell! In him shall you fare well, and so much the better, by how much in yourself you fare evil, and shall fare evil.

When I speak of yourself, I mean also this world, this life, and all things properly pertaining to this life: in them you look not for your welfare, and be not dismayed when accordingly you shall not feel it. To the Lord our God, to the Lamb our Christ, which hath borne our sins on his back, and is our Mediator for ever, do I send you. In him look for welfare, and that without all wavering, because of his own goodness and truth, which our evils and untruth cannot take away. Not that, therefore, I would have you to flatter yourself in any evil or unbelief; but that I would comfort you, that they should not dismay you. Yours is our Christ, wholly; yours I say he is, with all that ever he hath. Is not this welfare, think you?

Mountains shall move, and the earth shall fall, before you find it otherwise, say that liar Satan what he list.

Therefore, good sister, farewell, and be merry in the Lord; be merry, I say, for you have good cause. If your welfare, joy, and salvation, hanged upon any other thing than only God's mercy and truth, then might you well be sad, heavy, and stand in doubt; but since it hangeth only upon these two, tell Satan he lieth, when he would have you to stand in a mammering,* by causing you to cast your eyes on yourself in some respect, which in this case should be set on Christ your sweet Saviour only. Indeed, look on yourself, on your faith, on your love, obedience, &c. to wake you up from security, to stir you up to diligence in doing the things appertaining to your vocation. But when you would be at peace with God, and have true consolation in your conscience, altogether look upon the goodness of God in Christ; think on this commandment, which precedes all others, that you must have no other gods but the Lord Jehovah, which is your Lord and God; which he could not be if he did not pardon your sins in very deed. Remember that Christ commands you to call him Father for the same intent. And hereto call to mind all the benefits of God, hitherto showed unto you, and so shall you feel, in very deed, that which I wish unto you and pray you to wish unto me. Farewell, or welfare, in the Lord Jesus; with whom may he grant us shortly to meet, as his children, for his name and mercy's sake, to our eternal welfare. Amen. Amen.

Your own in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER IX.

*To mine own dear brother, Master Laurence Saunders,
prisoner in the Marshalsea.*

My good brother, I beseech our good and gracious Father always to continue his gracious favour and love towards us, and by us, as by instruments of his grace, to work his glory and the confusion of his adversaries. Out of the mouths of infants and babes he will show forth his praise to destroy the enemy, &c.

* Hesitating.

I have perused your letters for myself, and have read them to others; for answer whereof, if I should write what Doctor Taylor and Master Philpot think, then must I say that they think the salt sent us by your friend* is unseasonable; and indeed I think they both will declare it heartily, if they should come before men. As for me, if you would know what I think, because I am so sinful, and so defiled, (the Lord knoweth I lie not,) with many grievous sins, which I hope are washed away by the blood of Christ our Lord, I neither can nor would be consulted withal, but as a cipher. Howbeit, to tell you how and what I mind, take this: I pray God that in no case I may seek myself, and indeed, I thank God therefore, I purpose it not. That which remains I commit to my Lord God; and I trust in him that he will do according to this: Cast thy care on the Lord, &c. Cast all your care upon him, &c. Reveal unto the Lord thy way, and trust, &c. Whoso trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. I did not, nor do I know, but by your letters, that to-morrow we shall come in the presence of each other. Mine own heart, stick still to, "It shall be given you," &c.; for the Lord is faithful; he will in temptation make a way, that ye may be able to bear it. The Lord knoweth how to rid out of temptation the godly, &c. Oh! would God I were godly! The Lord knoweth how to deliver out of temptation such as trust in him, &c. I cannot think that they will offer any kind of indifferent† or mean conditions; for if we will not adore "The Beast," we never shall be delivered, but against their will, think I. God our Father and gracious Lord make perfect the good he hath begun in us! He will do it, my brother, my dearest brother, whom I have in my heart to live and die with. Oh! if I were with you! Pray for me, mine own heart-root, in the Lord.

For ever your own,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* This friend advised them to subscribe to the Papists' articles with this condition, "so far as they were not against God's word," when in fact they were quite contrary to it, yet shortly after he valiantly suffered death for refusing the same.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

† Impartial or fair terms.

LETTER X.

Another Letter to Master Laurence Saunders.

God's sweet peace in Christ be with you, my good brother in the Lord Jesus, and with all your fellow captives. Amen.

I was hindered this morning from musing on that which I purposed to have thought on, by reason of you; against whom I saw myself guilty of negligence, even in this point, that I would not write—I should say that I had not written unto you as yet. Therefore out of hand, I prepared myself to clear myself hereof; not that I will go about to excuse my fault, for that were more to load me; but by asking both God and you pardon, to get it no more laid to my charge. Now when I was thus purposing, and partly doing, there cometh one with a letter from you; for which as I have cause to thank God and you, (howbeit not so that you should think I give not the whole to God,) so I see myself more blameworthy for thus long holding my peace. Howbeit, good brother, in this I have given a demonstration to you, to behold my negligence in all other things, and especially in praying for you, and for the church of God; which for my sins and hypocrisy (hypocrisy, indeed!—even in this writing; God deliver me from it!) have deserved to be punished. God is just, for we have deserved all kind of plagues at his hands; but yet he is merciful, that will on this wise chastise us in this world, that we should not be condemned with the world. He might otherwise have punished us; I mean he might have cast us into prison for other causes, me especially, and not for his gospel and word's sake; praised, therefore, be his name, which voucheth us worthy this honour. Ah, good God! forgive us our sins, and work by this thy fatherly correction on us—on me especially, effectually to love thee and thy Christ; and with joyfulness to carry thy cross to the end, through thick and thin. Always set before our eyes, not this gallows on earth, if we stick to thee; but the gallows in hell, if we deny thee, and swerve from that we have professed.

Ah, good brother! if I could always have God, his majesty, mercy, heaven, hell, &c., before mine eyes, then should I be, as Paul writes of Moses, Heb. xi. "He endured, (saith he,) as seeing Him who is invisible." Pray for me, as I know you do, and give thanks also; for in the Lord I

trust I shall not waver. If I walk by the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear, for thou art with me, O Lord. I think we shall be shortly called forth, for now they have a law, and according to that law we must die, otherwise they will not reason with us, and I think their sheet-anchor will be, to require us to subscribe; the which thing if we do, though with the condition only so far as the thing subscribed to, repugneth* not against God's word, yet this will be offensive. Therefore let us all confess we are no changelings; but are the same we were in religion, and therefore cannot subscribe, except we dissemble both with God, ourselves, and the world. These things I write unto you, dear brother in the Lord: now I will read your epistle. Ah, brother! that I had the practical understanding with you in that Vine, which you describe! Pray the Lord that I may so think indeed. God make me thankful for you! All our fellow-prisoners salute you, and give thanks to God for you. The same do you for us, and pray that, &c.

Your brother in the Lord Jesus, to live and die with you.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XI.

To my dear fathers, D. Cranmer, D. Ridley, D. Latimer, prisoners in Oxford for the testimony of the Lord Jesus and his holy gospel.

MAY Almighty God our heavenly Father more and more kindle our hearts and affections with his love, that our greatest cross may be to be absent from him and strangers from our home, and that we may godly contend more and more to please him. Amen.

As I have always had great cause to praise our dear Father through Christ; so I think I have more and more, in seeing it is more likely that the end of my life which is due for my sin, will be through the exceeding grace of Christ a testimony of God's truth. Thus the Lord dealeth not with every body: not that every body hath not deserved more at God's hands than I who have deserved more vengeance than any other, I know, of my time and state; but that by me I hope the Lord will make the riches of his grace to his glory, to be seen more excellent. Therefore I humbly

* Opposes.

beseech you all, my most dear fathers in God, with me to give thanks for me, and as you do, still to pray for me that the Lord, as for his love's sake in Christ he has begun his good work in me, even so of and for the same his love's sake in Christ he would make it perfect; and make me to continue to the end, as I hope he will, for his mercy and truth endureth for ever. As for your parts, since it is commonly thought your staff standeth next to the door, you have the more cause to rejoice and be glad, as they which shall come to your fellows under the altar, (Rev. vi.,) to the which society may God bring me also with you, in his mercy, when it shall be his good pleasure. I have received many good things from you my good lord, master, and dear father, N. Ridley, fruits I mean of your godly labours. All which I send unto you again by this bringer: one thing except, which he can tell I do keep for your further pleasure to be known therein. And herewith I send unto you a little treatise which I have made, that you might peruse the same, and not only you, but also you my other most dear and reverend fathers in the Lord for ever, to give to it your approbation as you may think good. All the prisoners hereabouts in manner have seen it and read it; and therein they agree with me, nay rather with the truth: as they are ready and will be to signify it as they shall see you give them example. The matter may be thought not so necessary as I seem to make it; but yet if you knew the great evil that is likely hereafter to come to posterity by these men, as partly this bringer can signify unto you; surely then could you not but be most willing to put your helping hands thereto. The which that I might more occasion you to perceive, I have sent you a writing of Harry Harte's* own hand, whereby you may see how Christ's glory and grace is likely to lose much light if your sheep be not something helped by them which love God, and are able to prove that all good is to be attributed only and wholly to God's grace and mercy in Christ without respect of other worthiness than Christ's merits. The effects of salvation they so mingle and confound with the cause, that if it is not seen to, more hurt will come by them than ever came by the papists, inasmuch as their life commendeth them to the world more than the papists. God is my witness that I write not this, but because I desire God's glory

* This was the chief maintainer of man's free will, and enemy to God's free grace.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

and the good of his people. In free will they are plain papists, yea Pelagians; and you know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. They utterly contemn all learning.* But hereof the bearer will show you more. I complain of it to you as the chief captains of Christ's church here. And truly I must complain of you even unto God in the last day if you will not, as far as you can, help that the truth of doctrine may remain among those that come after, in this point, as you have done respecting the matters expunged by the papists.† May God for his mercy in Christ guide you, my most dearly beloved fathers, with his Holy Spirit here and in all other things, as may most tend to his glory and the advantage of the church. Amen.

All here, God be praised for it, prepare themselves willingly to pledge our captain Christ, when he will and how he will. By your good prayers we shall all fare the better, and therefore we all pray you to continue to cry to God for us, as we, God willing, do and will remember you. My brethren here with me have thought it their duty to signify that this need is not less than I make it, to prevent the plantations which may take root by these men.

Yours, in the Lord, JOHN BRADFORD.
Robert Ferrar, Rowland Taylor, John Philpot.

LETTER XII.

To my dear fathers, D. Cranmer, D. Ridley, and D. Latimer.

JESUS EMMANUEL. My dear fathers in the Lord, I beseech God our sweet Father, through Christ, to make perfect the good he hath begun in us all. Amen.

I had thought that all your staves had stood next the door, but now it is otherwise perceived. Our dear brother Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly; and as this day, I think, or to-morrow at the uttermost, hearty Hooper, sincere Saunders, and trusty Taylor, end their course, and receive their crown. The next am I, which hourly look for the porter to open for me the gates after them, to enter into

* This is well known to all who have had to do with them in disputations, or otherwise, for they have utterly rejected and despised the writings and authority of the learned.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

† Upon this occasion, M. Ridley wrote a learned and godly treatise upon God's election and predestination.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

the desired rest. God forgive me mine unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy, that amongst so many thousands it pleaseth his mercy to choose me to be one in whom he will suffer. For although it is most true that I justly suffer, for I have been a great hypocrite, and a grievous sinner—the Lord pardon me! yea, he hath done it; he hath done it, indeed; yet, what evil hath he done? Christ, whom the prelates persecute; his verity, which they hate in me, hath done no evil, nor deserveth death. Therefore ought I most heartily to rejoice of this dignation,* and tender kindness of the Lord towards me, which uses this remedy for my sin, as a testimonial of his testament; to his glory, to my everlasting comfort, to the edifying of his church, and to the overthrowing of antichrist and his kingdom. Oh! what am I, Lord! that thou shouldest thus magnify me, so vile a man and miserable as I always have been? Is this thy wont, to send for such a wretch, and a hypocrite, as I have been, in a fiery chariot, as thou didst for Elias? Oh, dear fathers! be thankful for me, and pray for me, that I still may be found worthy in whom the Lord would sanctify his holy name. And for your part, make you ready: for we are but your gentlemen-ushers. The marriage of the Lamb is prepared; come unto the marriage. I now go to leave my flesh there, where I received it. I shall be conveyed thither, as Ignatius was to Rome, by wild beasts,† by whose evil I hope to be made better; God grant what I ask, if it be his will, it may make them better by me. Amen.

For my farewell, therefore, I write and send this unto you, trusting shortly to see you, where we shall never be separated; in the mean season, I will not cease, as I have done, to commend you to our Father in heaven, and I must heartily pray every one of you, that you would so do by me; you know now I have most need; but faithful is God, which will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength. He never did it hitherto, nor now, and I am assured he never will. Amen. He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall. Wherefore my heart shall rejoice; for he shall not leave my soul in hell, neither shall suffer me, his holy one,

* (Being accounted worthy.) This is a singular mercy of God to have death, which is a punishment due for sin, turned into a demonstration and testimony of the Lord's truth.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

† He means that he should be conveyed by the Queen's guard into Lancashire, to be burned as the adversaries had once determined. Like as Ignatius was conveyed to Rome by a company of soldiers, and cast to the wild beasts.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

by his grace in Christ, to see corruption. Out of prison, in haste, looking for the tormentor. The 8th of February, 1555.
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XIII.

To the Right Honourable Lord Russell, (afterwards Earl of Bedford,) being then in trouble for the verity of God's gospel.

THE everlasting and most gracious God and Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, bless your good Lordship with all manner of heavenly blessings, in the same Christ, our only comfort and hope. Amen.

Praised be God our Father, which hath vouched you worthy of faith in his Christ, and of his cross for the same. Magnified be his holy name, who, as he has delivered you from one cross, so he has made you willing, I trust, and ready to bear another, when he shall see it his time to lay it upon you; for these are the most singular gifts of God, given to few, and to none else but to those few which are most dear in his sight. Faith is reckoned, and worthily, amongst the greatest gifts of God; yea, it is itself the greatest that we may enjoy; for by it, as we are justified, and made God's children, so are we temples and possessors of the Holy Spirit; yea, of Christ also, Eph. iv. and of the Father himself, John xiv.: by faith we drive the devil away, 1 Peter v.; we overcome the world, 1 John v.; and are already citizens of heaven, and fellows with God's dear saints. But who is able to reckon the riches that this faith bringeth with her, unto the soul she sitteth upon? No man or angel. And therefore, as I said, of all God's gifts she may be set at the top, and have the upmost seat. Which if men considered, that she cometh alone from God's own mercy-seat by the hearing, not of mass, matins, dirges, or such dross, but of the word of God, in such a tongue as we can and do understand, they would be diligent, and take great heed for doing or seeing any thing which might cast her down, for then they fall also. And they would, with no less care, read and hear God's holy word, joining thereto most earnest and frequent prayer, as well for the more and better understanding, as for the loving, living, and confessing of the same, in spite of the head of the devil, the

world, our flesh, reason, goods, possessions, carnal friends, wife, children, and very life, here; though they should pull us back to hearken to their voice and counsel, for more quiet, sure, and longer use of them.

Now, notwithstanding this excellency of faith, since we read the apostle to match therewith, yea, as it were, to prefer suffering persecution for Christ's sake, I think no man will be so foolish as to think otherwise, but that I and all God's children have cause to glorify and praise God, which has vouched you worthy so great a blessing. For though the reason or wisdom of the world think of the cross according to their reach, and according to their present sense, and therefore fly from it, as from a most grievous ignominy and shame; yet God's scholars have learned otherwise to think of the cross, that it is the frame-house in which God frameth his children like to his Son Christ; the furnace that fineth God's gold; the highway to heaven: the suit and livery* that God's servants are served withal; the earnest and beginning of all consolation and glory; for they, I mean God's scholars, as your lordship I trust is, enter into God's sanctuary lest their feet slip. They look not, as beasts do, on things present only, but on things to come, and so they have present to faith, the judgment and glorious coming of Christ Jesus; as the wicked now have their worldly wealth, wherein they wallow, and will wallow till they tumble headlong into hell, where are torments terrible and endless. Now they follow the fiend, as the bear does the train of honey, and the sow the swillings, till they are brought into the slaughter-house, and then they know that their prosperity has brought them to perdition. Then cry they, "Woe, woe! we went the wrong way; we counted these men (I mean such as you are, that for God's sake suffer loss of goods, friends, and life, whom they shall see endued with rich robes of righteousness, crowns of most pure precious gold, and palms of conquest in the goodly glorious palace of the Lamb, where is eternal joy, felicity, &c.); we counted, will they then say, these men but fools and madmen. We took their condition to be but curiosity, but then will it be too late; then the times will be turned, laughing shall be turned into weeping, and weeping into rejoicing." Read Wisdom, ii. iii. iv. v.

Therefore, as I have said before, I have great cause to thank God, which hath vouched you worthy of this most

* Allowances given to servants.

bountiful blessing: much more then you have cause, my good Lord, so to be, I mean thankful; for look upon your vocation: I pray you tell me how many noblemen, earls' sons, lords, knights, and men of estimation, has God in this realm of England dealt thus withal? I dare say you think not that you have deserved this. Only God's mercy in his Christ hath wrought this in you, as he did in Jeremiah's time, on Ebedmelech; in Ahab's time, on Obadiah; in Christ's time, on Joseph of Arimathea; in the apostles' time, on Sergius Paulus, and the Queen Candace's chamberlain. Only now be thankful and continue; continue, my good Lord, continue to confess Christ. Be not ashamed of him before men, for then he will not be ashamed of you. Now will he try you; stick fast unto him, and he will stick fast by you; he will be with you in trouble, and deliver you. But then you must cry unto him, for so it follows; He cried unto me, and I heard him: I was with him in trouble, &c. Psalm xci.

Remember Lot's wife which looked back. Remember Francis Spira. Remember that none is crowned but he that strives lawfully. Remember that all you have is at Christ's commandment. Remember he lost more for you, than you can lose for him. Remember you lose not that which is lost for his sake; for you shall find much more here and elsewhere. Remember you shall die; and when, and where, and how, you cannot tell. Remember the death of sinners is most terrible. Remember the death of God's saints is most precious in his sight. Remember the multitude goeth the wide way, which windeth to woe. Remember, the strait gate which leads to glory has but few travellers: remember, Christ bids you strive to enter in thereat. Remember, he that trusts in the Lord shall receive strength to stand against all the assaults of his enemies. Be certain all the hairs of your head are numbered. Be certain your good Father has appointed bounds, over which the devil dares not look. Commit yourself to Him; he is, has been, and will be your keeper. Cast your care on him, and he will care for you. Let Christ be your scope and mark to aim at; let him be your pattern to work by; let him be your ensample to follow; give him your heart, and your hand; your mind, and your tongue; your faith, and your feet: and let his word be your candle to go before you, in all matters of religion. Blessed is he that walks not to these popish prayers, nor stands at them, nor sits at

them. Glorify God both in soul and body. He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad. Use prayer; look for God's help, which is at hand, to them that ask; and hope thereafter assuredly. In which prayer, I heartily desire your Lordship to remember us, who, as we are going with you right gladly, (God therefore be praised,) so we look to go before you, hoping that you will follow, if God so will, according to your daily prayer; Thy will be done on earth, &c. The good Spirit of God always guide your Lordship unto the end. Amen.

Your lordship's own for ever,

JOHN-BRADFORD.

LETTER XIV.

To Master Warcup and his wife, Mistress Wilkinson, and others of his godly friends, with their families.

THE same peace our Saviour Christ left with his people, which is not without war with the world, Almighty God work plentifully in your hearts now and for ever. Amen.

The time I perceive is come wherein the Lord's ground will be known; I mean, it will now shortly appear who have received God's gospel into their hearts indeed, to the taking of good root therein; for such will not wither, for a little heat or sun-burning, but will stiffly stand and grow on, in spite of the malice of all burning showers and tempests. And for as much as, my beloved in the Lord, I am persuaded of you that you are indeed the children of God—even God's good ground which grows, and will grow on, by God's grace, bringing forth fruit to God's glory, after your vocations, as occasions shall be offered, burn the sun never so hot; therefore I cannot but so signify unto you, and heartily pray you, and every one of you, accordingly to go on forwards after your master, Christ; not sticking at the foul way and stormy weather, which you are come into, and are like so to do. Being most certain, that the end of your journey shall be pleasant and joyful, in such a perpetual rest and blissfulness, as cannot but swallow up the showers that you now feel, and are soused in, if you often set before your eyes, Paul's counsel in the latter end of the fourth, and beginning of the fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians. Read it, I pray you, and remember it

often, as a restorative to refresh you, lest you faint in the way.

And besides this, set before you also, that though the weather is foul, and storms grow apace, yet you go not alone, but others your brothers and sisters tread the same path, as St. Peter tells us, and therefore company should cause you to be the more courageous and cheerful. But if you had no company at all to go at present with you, I pray you tell me, if even from the beginning the best of God's friends have found any fairer weather and way to the place whither ye are going, I mean to heaven, than you now find and are like to do, except you will with the worldlings, which have their portion in this life, tarry still by the way, till the storms be overpast, and then either night will so approach that you cannot travel, or the doors will be barred before you come, and so you then must lodge without in wonderful evil lodgings. Read Revelation xxii. Begin at Abel, and come from him to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the Patriarchs, Moses, David, Daniel, and all the saints of the Old Testament, and tell me whether ever any of them found any fairer way than you now find?

If the Old Testament will not serve, I pray you come to the New, and begin with Mary and Joseph, and come from them to Zachariah, Elizabeth, John Baptist, and every one of the Apostles and Evangelists, and search whether they all found any other way unto the city we travel towards, than by many tribulations.

Besides these, if you call to remembrance the primitive church, you would see many who have cheerfully given their bodies to most grievous torments, rather than they would be stopped in their journey. There is no day in the year, but (I dare say) a thousand at least, with great joy, lost their homes here; and in the city they went unto have found other manner of homes than man's mind is able to conceive.

But if none of these things were so—if you had no company now to go with you, as you have me, your poor brother and bondman of the Lord, with many others, I trust in God, if you have none other of the fathers, patriarchs, good kings, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, and other holy saints and children of God, who in their journey to heaven-ward found, as you now find, and are like to find, if you go on forward, as I trust you will; yet you have your Master and your Captain, Jesus Christ, the dear

darling and only begotten and beloved Son of God, in whom was all the Father's pleasure, joy, and delectation; you have him who went before you, no fairer way, but one much fouler into this our city of Jerusalem. I need not, I trust, rehearse what manner of way he found. Begin at his birth, and till you come to his burial, you shall find that every foot and stride of his journey was no better, but much worse, than yours is now.

Wherefore my dearly beloved in the Lord, be not so dainty as to look for that at God's hands, your dear Father, which the fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, saints, and his own Son Jesus Christ, did not find. Hitherto we have had fair way and fair weather also: now because we have loitered by the way, and not made the speed we should have done, our loving Lord and sweet Father hath overcast the weather, and stirred up storms and tempests, that we might with more haste run out our race before night come, and the doors be barred. The devil standeth now at every inn-door in his city and country of this world, crying unto us to tarry and lodge in this or that place, till the storms be overpast; not that he would not have us wet to the skin, but that the time might overpass us, to our utter destruction. Therefore beware of his enticements. Cast not your eyes on things that are present, how this man doth, and that man doth, but cast your eyes on the gleve* you run at, or else you will lose the game.

You know that he which runs at the gleve, does not look on others that stand by, and go this way or that way, but he looks altogether at the gleve, and on them that run with him, that those which are behind overtake him not, and that he may overtake them that are before. Even so should we do, leaving off looking on those which will not run the race to heaven's bliss, by the path of persecution with us, and casting our eyes on the end of our race, and on them that go before us, that we may overtake them; and on them which come after us, that we may provoke them to come faster after.

He that shoots, will not cast his eyes in his shooting on them that stand by, or ride by the way, but rather at the mark he shoots at, for else he were likely to win the wrong way! Even so, my dearly beloved, let your eyes be set on the mark you shoot at, even Christ Jesus, who for the joy

* The mark. He alludes to the words of the apostle, Philipians iii.

set before him did joyfully carry his cross, contemning the shame, and therefore he now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. Let us follow him; for this he did, that we should not be fainthearted; for we may be most assured, that if we suffer with him, we shall undoubtedly reign with him; but if we deny him, surely he will deny us. For he that is ashamed of me, says Christ, and of my gospel, in this faithless generation, I will be ashamed of him before the angels of God in heaven. Oh! how heavy a sentence is this to all such as know the mass to be an abominable idol, full of idolatry, blasphemy, and sacrilege, against God and his Christ, as undoubtedly it is, and yet for fear of men, for loss of life or goods, yea, some for advantage or gain, will honest* it with their presence, dissembling both with God and man, as their own heart and conscience accuses them! Better it were that such had never known the truth, than thus wittingly, and for fear or favour of man, whose breath is in his nostrils, dissemble it, or rather, as indeed it is, deny it. The end of such is like to be worse than their beginning. Such had need to take heed to the two terrible places to the Hebrews, in the 6th and 10th chapters, lest by so doing they fall therein. Let them beware they play not willy-beguile† with themselves, as some do, I fear me, which go to mass, and because they worship not, nor kneel, nor knock, as others do, but sit still in their pews, therefore they think they rather do good to others than hurt.

But, alas! if these men would look into their own consciences, there should they see they are very dissemblers, and in seeking to deceive others, for by this means the magistrates think them of their sort, they deceive themselves. They think at the elevation-time, all men's eyes are set upon them to mark how they do. They think others, hearing of such men going to mass, do see or inquire of their behaviour there. Oh! if there were in those men that are so present at the mass, either love to God or to their brethren, then would they, for the one or both, openly take God's part, and admonish the people of their idolatry. They fear man more than Him which hath power to cast both soul and body into hell fire: they halt on both knees: they serve two masters. God have mercy upon such, and open their eyes with his eye-salve, that they may see that they which take no part with God are against God: and

* Make it appear right.

† Do not deceive themselves.

that they which gather not with Christ, do scatter abroad. Oh! that they would read what St. John saith will be done to the fearful! The counsel given to the church at Laodicea is good counsel for such. Rev. iii. xxi.

But to return to you again, dearly beloved: Be not ashamed of God's gospel. It is the power of God to salvation to all those that believe it. Be therefore partakers of the afflictions, as God shall make you able, knowing for certain that he will never tempt you farther than he will make you able to bear; and think it no small grace of God to suffer persecution for God's truth; for the Spirit of God resteth upon you, and you are happy, as one day you shall see. Read 2 Thessalonians i.; Hebrews xii. As the fire hurts not gold, but makes it finer, so shall you be more pure by suffering with Christ. 1 Pet. i. The flail and wind hurts not the wheat, but cleanses it from the chaff; and you, dearly beloved, are God's wheat; fear not therefore the flail; fear not the fanning wind; fear not the mill-stone: fear not the oven: for all these make you more meet for the Lord. Soap, though it is black, soileth not the cloth, but rather at length makes it more clean. Because you are God's sheep, prepare yourselves for the slaughter, always knowing that in the sight of the Lord our death shall be precious. The souls under the altar look for us to fill up their number: happy are we if God have so appointed us. However it be, dearly beloved, cast yourselves wholly upon the Lord, with whom all the hairs of your head are numbered, so that not one of them shall perish. Will we, nill we, we must drink God's cup, if he has appointed it for us. Drink it willingly then, and at the first, when it is full, lest peradventure, if we linger, we shall drink at length of the dregs with the wicked, if at the beginning we drink not with his children; for with them his judgment beginneth; and when he has wrought his will on Mount Sion, then will he visit the nations round about.

Submit yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. No man shall touch you without his knowledge. When they touch you, therefore, know it is for your weal. God thereby will work to make you like unto Christ here, that you may be also like unto him elsewhere. Acknowledge your unthankfulness and sin, and bless God that corrects you *in* the world, because you shall not be condemned *with* the world. He might otherwise correct us, than by making us to suffer for righteousness' sake, but this he does

because we are not of the world. Call upon his name, through Christ, for his help, as he commands us. Believe that he is merciful to you, hears you, and helps you. "I am with him in trouble, and will deliver him," saith he. Know that God has appointed bounds, over which the devil and all the world shall not pass. If all things seem to be against us, yet say with Job, If he kill me, I will hope in him. Read the 91st Psalm, and pray for me, your poor brother and fellow-sufferer for God's gospel sake, his name therefore be praised: and of his mercy may he make me and you worthy to suffer with good conscience for his name's sake. Die once we must, and when we know not: happy are they to whom God gives to pay nature's debt, I mean, to die for his sake.

Here is not our home: therefore let us accordingly consider things always having before our eyes the heavenly Jerusalem. Heb. xii.; Rev. xxi. and xxii. Remembering that the way thither is by persecutions; the dear friends of God, how they have gone it after the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose footsteps let us follow, even to the gallows, if God so will, not doubting, but that as he within three days rose again immortal, even so we shall do in our time, that is, when the trump shall blow, and the angel shall shout, and the Son of man shall appear in the clouds, with innumerable saints and angels, in majesty and great glory: then shall the dead arise, and we shall be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord, and so be always with him. Comfort yourselves with these words, and pray for me. From prison. 19 November, 1553.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XV.

To Sir James Hales, Knt., then prisoner in the Compter in Bread Street.

THE God of mercy and Father of all comfort, plentifully pour out upon you, and in you, his mercy; and with his consolation comfort and strengthen you to the end, for his and our Christ's sake.

Although, right worshipful sir, many causes might move me to be content with crying for you to your God and my God, that he would give you grace to persevere well, as he has right notably begun, to the great glory of his name, and

comfort of all such as fear him; as lack of learning, of familiarity, yea acquaintance, for I think I am unknown to you, both by face and name, and other such-like things might do; yet I cannot content myself, but I presume to scribble something unto you; not that I think my scribbling can do you good, but that I might declare my sympathy, compassion, love, and affection I bear towards your mastership, which is contented, yea desirous with us poor wretches, to confess Christ's gospel in these perilous times and days of trial. O Lord God! how good art thou, which dost thus glean out grapes, I mean children for thyself, and brethren for Christ! Look, good Master Hales, on your vocation; not many judges, not many knights, not many landed men, not many rich men, and wealthy to live as you are, hath God chosen to suffer for his sake, as he has now done you. Certainly I dare say you think not so of yourself, as if God were bound to prefer you, or had need of you; but rather attribute this, as all good things, unto his free mercy in Christ. Again, I dare say that you, being a wise man, judge of things wisely; that is, concerning this your cross, you judge of it not after the world and people, nor after the judgment of reason and worldly wisdom, which is foolishness to faith, nor after the present sense, to which it seems not to be joyous but grievous, as Paul writeth: but after the word of God, which teaches your cross to be, in respect of yourself, between God and you, God's chastening and your Father's correction, nurture, school, trial, pathway to heaven, glory, and felicity, and the furnace to consume the dross, and mortify the relics of old Adam, which yet remain: yea, even the frame-house to fashion you like to the dearest saints of God here, yea to Christ the Son of God, that you might be like unto him elsewhere.

Now concerning your cross in respect of the world between the world and you, God's word teaches it to be a testimonial of God's truth, of his providence, of his power, of his justice, of his wisdom, of his anger against sin, of his goodness, of his judgment, of your faith and religion, so that by it you are to the world a witness of God, one of his witnesses that he is true. He ruleth all things, he is just, wise, and at length will judge the world, and cast the wicked into perdition, but the godly he will take and receive unto his eternal habitation. I know you judge of things after faith's estimate, and by the effects or ends of things; and so you see an eternal weight of glory which this cross shall bring

unto you, while you look not on things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen. Let the worldlings weigh things, and look upon the affairs of men with their worldly and corporeal eyes, as many did in subscribing the King's last will; and therefore they did that for the which they beshrewed themselves.* But let us look on things with other manner of eyes, as, God be praised, you did, in not doing that which you were desired and driven at to have done. You then beheld things not as a man, but as a man of God; and so you do now in religion, at the least hitherto you have done, and that you might do so still, I humbly beseech and pray you to say, with David, "Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?" Though you are as a bottle in the smoke, for I hear you want health, yet do not forget the statutes of the Lord; but cry out, "How many are the days of thy servant! when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?" and be certain the Lord will surely come and not stay: though he tarry, wait for him; for he is but a little while in his anger, but in his favour is life: weeping may abide at evening, but joy cometh in the morning. Follow, therefore, Isaiah's counsel: hide thyself for a very little while, until his indignation pass over, which is not so indeed but to our sense; and therefore, in the seven-and-twentieth chapter of Isaiah, God saith of his church and people, that as he keepeth it night and day, so there is no anger in me, saith he.

The mother sometimes beats the child, but yet her heart melts upon it even in the very beating; and therefore she casts the rod into the fire, and collett[†] the child, gives it an apple, and dandles it most motherly. And, to say the truth, the love of mothers to their children is but a trace to train us to behold the love of God towards us: and therefore, saith he, Can a mother forget the child of her womb? as who should say, No: but if she should so do, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord of Hosts. Ah! comfortable saying! I will not forget thee, saith the Lord. Indeed the children of God think oftentimes that God has forgotten them, and therefore they cry, "Hide not thy face from me; leave me not, O Lord," &c. Whereas in very truth it is not

* Or were angry with themselves. Sir James Hales refused to assent to King Edward VIth's will, by which the crown was left to Lady Jane Grey, whereby he incurred the displeasure of the Duke of Northumberland.

† Embraces.

so, but only to their present sense; and therefore David said, "I said, in my agony, I was clean cast away from thy face." But was it so? Nay, verily: read his psalms and you shall see. So he also writes in other places very often, especially in the person of Christ; as when he says, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" He says not, Why dost thou forsake me? or Why wilt thou forsake me? but, Why hast thou forsaken me? Where, indeed, God had not left him, but only it seemed so to his sense, and that this psalm tells us plainly; which psalm I pray you now and then read; it is the twenty-second, and thereto join the thirtieth, and the hundred and sixteenth, with divers others. We read the same in the prophet Isaiah, the fortieth chapter, where he reproves Israel for saying, God had forgotten them; he saith, Knowest thou not, hast thou not heard, they that trust in the Lord shall renew their strength? And in his four-and-fiftieth chapter, Fear not, &c., for a little while I have forsaken thee, but with great compassion will I gather thee: for a moment in mine anger I hid my face from thee for a little season, but in everlasting mercy have I had compassion on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer: for this is unto me as the waters of Noah; for, as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with thee, nor rebuke thee: for the mountains shall remove, and hills shall fall down, but my mercy shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace fall away, saith the Lord, that hath compassion on thee.

But the Scriptures are full of such sweet places to them that will bear the wrath of the Lord, and wait for his health and help. As of all temptations this is the greatest, to think that God hath forgotten, or will not help us through the pikes, as they say; so of all services of God, this pleases him the best; to hope assuredly on him, and for his help always, who is a helper in tribulations, and more gloriously shows his power, by such as are weak, and feel themselves so: for the weaker we are, the more strong we are in him. Thus the eyes of the Lord are on them that tremble and fear; he will accomplish their desire; he is with them in their trouble; he will deliver them: before they cry, he heareth them, as all the Scriptures teach us. To the reading whereof, and hearty prayer, I heartily commend you, beseeching Almighty God, that of his eternal mercies he would make perfect the good he has begun in

you, and strengthen you to the end, that you might have no less hope, but much more of his help, to your comfort, now against your enemies, than he has already given you against N. for not subscribing to the king's will.

Be certain, be certain, good Master Hales, that your dear Father hath numbered all the hairs of your head, so that one of them shall not perish; your name is written in the book of life; therefore cast all your care upon God, who will comfort you with his eternal consolations, and make you able to go through the fire, if need be, which is nothing to be compared to the fire wherein our enemies shall fall, and lie for ever, from which the Lord deliver us, though it be through temporal fire, which must be considered, according to the end and profit that comes after it; so then it shall not much fear us to suffer for our master Christ's cause; which the Lord grant us, for his mercies' sake. Amen. From the King's Bench.

Your humble,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XVI.

To my very dear friend in the Lord, Dr. Hill, Physician.

THE God of mercy and Father of all comfort, at this present and for ever, ingraft in your heart the sense of his mercy in Christ, and the continuance of his consolation, which cannot but enable you to carry with joy whatsoever cross he shall lay upon you. Amen.

Hitherto I could have no such liberty as to write unto you, as I think you know; but now, since through God's providence I have no such restraint, I cannot but write something, as well to clear me of this suspicion of unthankfulness towards you, as also to signify my carefulness for you in these perilous days, lest you should wax cold in God's cause, which God forbid, or suffer the light of the Lord once kindled in your heart, to be quenched, and so become as you were before, after the example of the world, and many others, which would have been accounted otherwise in our days, and who still beguile themselves, and still would be so accounted, although by their outward life they declare the contrary, in that they think it enough to keep the heart pure, notwithstanding that the outward man doth curry favour.

In which doings, they deny God to be jealous, and that he therefore requires the whole man, as well body as soul, being created for immortality and for society with him, and also redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and now sanctified by the Holy Spirit, to be the temple of God, and member of his Son. By their parting the stakes to give God the heart, and the world the body, they deny God to be jealous, for else they would give him both, as the wife would do to her husband, whether he is jealous or not, if she be honest; so they play the dissemblers with the church of God, by their acts offending the godly, whom either they provoke to fall with them, or make more careless and conscienceless if they are fallen, and occasion the wicked and obstinate to triumph against God, and the more vehemently to prosecute their malice against such as will not defile themselves in body or soul, with the Romish rags now revived amongst us. Because of this, lest you, my dear master and brother in the Lord, should do as many of our gossellers do, for fear of man whose breath is in his nostrils, and has power only over the body, and not fearing the Lord, who hath power both of soul and body, not only temporally, but also eternally — I could not but write something unto you, as well because duty deserves it, for I have received of God many benefits by your hands, (for which may he reward you, for I cannot,) as also because charity and love compel me;—not that I think you have any need, for as I may rather learn of you, so I doubt not but you have hitherto kept yourself upright from halting; but that I might both quiet my conscience from calling upon me about this, and signify unto you my carefulness for your soul, as painfully and often you have done for my body.

Therefore I pray you to call to mind that there are but two masters, two kinds of people, two ways, and two mansion-places; the masters are Christ and Satan; the people are servitors to either of these: the ways are strait and wide; the mansions, heaven and hell. Again, consider that this world is the place of trial of God's people and the devil's servant; for as the one will follow his master, whatsoever comes of it, so will the other. For a time it is hard to discern who pertains to God, and who to the devil: as in the calm and peace it is hard to learn who is a good shipman and warrior, and who is not; but when the storm arises the expert mariner is known, and as in war the good soldier is seen, so in affliction and the cross

God's children are easily known from Satan's servants; for then, as the good servant will follow his Master, so the godly will follow their Captain, come what will come: whereas the wicked and hypocrites bid adieu, and desire less of Christ's acquaintance; for which cause the cross is called the probation and trial; because it tries who will go with God, and who will forsake him: and now in England we see how small a company Christ has in comparison of Satan's soldiers. Let no man deceive himself; for he that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad. No man can serve two masters; the Lord abhorreth double hearts. The lukewarm, that is, such as are both hot and cold, he spitteth out of his mouth; none that halt on both knees doth God take for his servants. The way of Christ is the strait way, and so strait, that as few find it, and few walk in it, so no man can halt in it, but he must needs go upright: for as the straitness will suffer no reeling to this side or that side; so, if any halt, he is like to fall off the bridge into the pit of eternal perdition.

Strive therefore, good Master Doctor, now you have found it, to enter into it; and if you should be called and pulled back, look not on this side or that side, or behind you, as Lot's wife did, but straight forwards, to the end which is set before you, as if it were even now present, though it be to come. Like as you do, and desire your patients to do in your ministrations, to consider the effect that will ensue; whereby the bitterness and loathsomeness of the physic is so overcome, and the painfulness in abiding the working of that which is ministered is so eased, that it makes the patient willingly and joyfully receive that which is to be taken, although it is never so unpleasant. So, I say, set before you the end of this strait way, and then doubtless, as Paul saith, "it shall bring with it an eternal weight of glory," whilst we look not on the thing which is seen, for that is temporal, but on the thing which is not seen, which is eternal. So does the husbandman in ploughing and tilling, set before him the harvest-time; so does the fisher consider the draught of his net, rather than the casting-in; so does the merchant the return of the merchandise; and so should we in these stormy days set before us, not the loss of our goods, liberty, and very life, but the reaping-time, the coming of our Saviour Christ to judgment; the fire that shall burn the wicked and disobedient to God's gospel; the blast of the trump, the exceeding glory

prepared for us in heaven eternally; such as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man can conceive. The more we lose here, the greater joy we shall have there; the more we suffer, the greater triumph; for corruptible dross we shall find incorruptible treasures; for gold, glory; for silver, solace without end; for riches, robes royal; for earthly houses, eternal palaces; mirth without measure, pleasure without pain, felicity endless. We shall have God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. O happy place! Oh that this day would come! Then shall the end of the wicked be lamentable; then shall they receive the just reward of God's vengeance, then shall they cry, "Woe! woe!" that they ever did as they have done! Read Wisdom, ii. iii. iv. v.: read Matthew xxv.: read 1 Corinthians xv.: 2 Corinthians v.: and by faith (which God increase in us!) consider the thing there set forth: and for your comfort read Hebrews xi. to see what faith has done; always considering the way to heaven is by many tribulations; and that all they which will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. You know that this is our alphabet. He that will be my disciple, saith Christ, must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow ME; not this bishop, nor that doctor; not this emperor, nor that king; but ME, saith Christ; for he that loveth father, mother, wife, children, or very life, better than me, is not worthy of me. Remember that same Lord saith, He that will save his life shall lose it. Comfort yourself with this, that as the devils had no power over the swine, or over Job's goods, without God's leave, so shall they have none over you. Remember also, that all the hairs of your head are numbered with God. The devil may make one believe he will drown him, as the sea in his surges threatens the land; but as the Lord appointed bounds for the one, over the which he cannot pass, so has he done for the other. On God therefore cast your care; love him and serve him after his word; fear him, trust in God; hope at his hand for all help, and always pray, looking for the cross; and whenever it comes, be assured the Lord is faithful, he will never tempt you further than he will make you able to bear, but in the midst of the temptation will make such a way to escape as shall be most to his glory, and your eternal comfort. God, for his mercy in Christ, with his Holy Spirit endue you, comfort you, shadow you under the wings of his mercy, and as his

dear child guide you for evermore; to whose merciful tuition I commit you with my hearty prayer: and I doubt not but you pray for me, and so I beseech you to do still. My brother P. tells me you wish to have the last part of Saint Jerome's works, to have the use thereof for a fortnight; I cannot for these three days well spare it, but on Thursday next I will send it you, if God hinder me not; and use me, and what I have, as your own. The Lord for his mercy in Christ, direct our ways to his glory. Out of prison, by yours to command,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XVII.

To Mistress M. H., a godly gentlewoman, comforting her in that common heaviness and godly sorrow, which the feeling and sense of sin worketh in God's children.

I HUMBLY and heartily pray the everlasting God, and Father of mercy, to bless and keep your heart and mind in the knowledge and love of his truth, and of his Christ, through the inspiration and working of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Although I have no doubt but that you prosper and go forward daily in the way of godliness, drawing more and more towards perfection, and have no need of any thing that I can write; yet because my desire is, that you might be more fervent, and persevere to the end, I could not but write something unto you, beseeching you both often and diligently to call unto your mind as a mean to stir you hereunto, yea, as a thing which God most straitly requires you to believe, that you are beloved of God, and that he is your dear Father, in, through, and for Christ and his death's sake. This love and tender kindness of God towards us in Christ, is abundantly herein declared, in that he has beside the godly work of creation of this world, made us after his image; redeemed us being lost; called us into his church; sealed us with his mark and sign manual of baptism; kept and conserved us all the days of our life; fed, nourished, defended, and most fatherly chastised us; and now has kindled in our hearts the sparkles of his fear, faith, love, and knowledge of his Christ and truth; and therefore we lament, because we lament not more our unthankfulness, our frailness, our

diffidence and wavering in things wherein we should be most certain.

All these things we should use as means to confirm our faith of this, that God is our God and Father; and to assure us that he loveth us as our Father in Christ. To this end, I say, we should use the things before touched upon, especially since that, of all things, God requires this faith and persuasion of his fatherly goodness, as his chiefest service; for before he asks any thing of us, he saith, "I am the Lord thy God:" giving himself, and then all he hath, to us to be our own. And this he does in respect of himself, of his own mercy and truth, and not in respect of us, for then were grace no grace. In consideration whereof, when he saith, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me: thou shalt love me with all thy heart," &c.; though of duty we are bound to accomplish all that he requires, and are culpable and guilty if we do not the same, yet he requires not these things further of us, than to make us abound more in love, and more certain of this his covenant, that he is our Lord and God. In certainty whereof, as he has given this whole world to serve for our need and commodity, so has he given his Son Christ Jesus, and himself in Christ, to be a pledge and gage, whereof the Holy Ghost now and then gives us some taste and sweet smell to our eternal joy.

Therefore, as I said, because God is your Father in Christ and requires of you straitly to believe it, give yourself to obedience, although you do it not with such feeling as you desire. Faith must first go before, and then feeling will follow. If our imperfection, frailty, and many evils, should be occasions whereby Satan would have us to doubt, let us abhor that suggestion as much as we can, as of all others most pernicious, for so indeed it is; for when we stand in a doubt whether God be our Father, we cannot be thankful to God; we cannot heartily pray or think any thing we do acceptable to God; we cannot love our neighbours, and give ourselves to care for them, and do for them as we should do; and therefore Satan is most subtle herein, knowing full well, that if we doubt of God's fatherly eternal mercies towards us through Christ, we cannot please God, or do any thing as we should do to man; he continually casts into our memories our imperfections, frailty, falls, and offences, that we should doubt of God's mercy and favour towards us.

Therefore, my good sister, we must not be sluggish herein; but, as Satan labours to loosen our faith, so must we labour to fasten it, by thinking on the promises and covenant of God in Christ's blood; namely, that God is our God, with all that ever he hath; which covenant depends and hangs upon God's own goodness, mercy, and truth only, and not on our obedience or worthiness in any point, for then should we never be certain. Indeed, God requires of us obedience and worthiness, but not that thereby we might be his children, and he our Father; but because he is our Father and we his children, through his own goodness in Christ, therefore requires he faith and obedience. Now, if we want this obedience and worthiness which he requires, should we doubt whether he be our Father? Nay, that were to make our obedience and worthiness the cause, and so to put Christ out of place, for whose sake God is our Father; but rather because he is our Father, and we feel ourselves to want such things as he requires, we should be stirred up to shamefacedness and blushing, because we are not as we should be, and thereupon should we take occasion to go to our Father in prayer in this manner:

Dear Father, thou of thine own mercy in Jesus Christ hast chosen me to be thy child, and therefore thou wouldst I should be brought into thy church and faithful company of thy children, wherein thou hast kept me hitherto; thy name therefore be praised! Now I see myself to want faith, hope, love, &c. which thy children have, and thou requirest of me; wherefore, though the devil would have me to doubt, yea, utterly to despair of thy fatherly goodness, favour, and mercy, I come to thee as to my merciful Father, through thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and pray thee to help me, good Lord, help me, and give me faith, hope, love, &c.; and grant that thy Holy Spirit may be with me for ever, and more and more assure me that thou art my Father; and that thou madest this merciful covenant with me in respect of thy grace in Christ and for Christ; and not in respect of any my worthiness, is always true to me, &c.

On this sort, (I say,) you must pray and use your cogitations when Satan would have you to doubt of salvation;—he does all he can to prevail herein; do you all you can to prevail herein against him;—though you feel not as you would, yet doubt not, but hope beyond all hope, as Abraham did; for always, as I said, faith goeth before feeling.

As certain as God is almighty; as certain as God is merciful; as certain as God is true; as certain as Jesus Christ was crucified, is risen, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; as certain as this is God's commandment, "I am the Lord thy God, &c.;" so certain ought you to be that God is your Father. As you are bound to have no other gods but him, so are you no less bound to believe that God is your God. What profit should it be to you to believe this to be true; "I am the Lord thy God" for others, if you should not believe that this is true for yourself? The devil believes thus; and whatsoever it is that would move you to doubt, whether God be your God through Christ, that same comes undoubtedly of the devil. Wherefore did God make you, but because he loved you? Might not he have made you blind, dumb, deaf, lame, frantic, &c.? Might not he have made you a Jew, a Turk, a Papist, &c., and why has he not done so? Verily, because he loved you. And why did he love you? What was there in you to move him to love you? Surely nothing moved him to love you, and therefore to make you, and hitherto to keep you, but his own goodness in Christ. Now then, since his goodness in Christ still remains as much as it was, that is, even as great as himself, for it cannot be lessened; how should it be, but that he is your God and Father? Believe this, believe this, my good sister, for God is no changeling; those whom he loveth, he loveth to the end.

Cast, therefore, yourself wholly upon him, and think, without all wavering, that you are God's child; that you are a citizen of heaven; that you are the daughter of God, the temple of the Holy Ghost, &c. If you are assured hereof, as you ought to be, then shall your conscience be quieted; then shall you lament more and more that you want many things which God loveth; then shall you labour to be holy in soul and body; then shall you go about, that God's glory may shine in you in all your words and works; then shall you not be afraid what man can do unto you; then shall you have wisdom to answer your adversaries, as shall serve to their shame and your comfort; then shall you be certain that no man can touch one hair of your head, further than shall please your good Father for your everlasting joy; then shall you be most certain that God, as your good Father, will be more careful for your children, and make better provision for them, if all you have were gone, than you can; then shall you, being assured of

God's favour towards you, give over yourself wholly to help and care for others that are in need; then shall you contemn this life, and desire to be at home with your good and sweet Father; then shall you labour to mortify all things that would spot either soul or body. All these things spring out of this certain persuasion and faith, that God is our Father, and that we are his children by Christ Jesus. All things should help our faith herein, but Satan goes about in all things to hinder us.

Therefore let us use earnest and hearty prayer; let us often remember this covenant: "I am the Lord thy God." Let us look upon Christ and his precious blood, shed for the obsignation* and confirmation of his covenant; let us remember all the free promises of the gospel; let us set before us God's benefits generally, in making this world, in ruling it, in governing it, in calling and keeping his church, &c.; let us set before us God's benefits, particularly how he hath made us creatures after his image, how he made us of perfect limbs, forms, beauty, memory, &c.; how he hath made us Christians, and given us a right judgment in his religion; how he hath, ever since we were born, blessed, kept, nourished, and defended us; how he hath often beaten, chastised, and fatherly corrected us; how he hath spared us, and now spares us, giving us time, space, place, grace. This if you do, and use earnest prayer, and so flee from all things which might wound your conscience, giving yourself to diligence in your vocation, you shall find at length, (which God grant to me with you!) a sure certainty of salvation, without all such doubts as may trouble the peace of conscience, to your eternal joy and comfort. Amen, Amen.

Yours to use in Christ,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XVIII.

Another letter, full of godly comfort, written to the same person.

THE good Spirit of God, which guideth his children, be with you, my good sister in the Lord, for ever. Amen.

Although, as I am to you, so you are unknown unto me

* Sealing.

in person: yet to Him, whom we desire to please, we are not only known in person, but also in heart known and thoroughly seen; and therefore, as for his sake you desire, by what you sent to me, it should be perceived that in God you bear to me a good will; so that I might be seen in God to bear you the like, I send to you these few words in writing, wishing that in all your doings and speech, yea even in your very thoughts, you would labour to feel, that they are all present and open before the sight of God, be they good or bad. This cogitation being often had in mind, and prayer made to God for the working of his Spirit, thereby, as a mean, you shall at the length feel more comfort and advantage, than any man can know, but such as are exercised therein. Howbeit, this is to be added, that in thinking yourself, and all you have and do, are in the sight of God; this, I say, is to be added, that you think his sight is the sight not only of a lord, but rather of a father, which tendereth more your infirmities than you can tender the infirmities of any of your children. Yea, when in yourself you see a motherly affection to your little one that is weak, let the same be unto you a trace to train you to see the unspeakable kind affection of God your Father towards you.

And therefore, upon the consideration of your infirmities and natural evils, which continually cleave unto us, take occasion to go to God as your Father through Christ, and lay open your infirmities and evils before his merciful heart, with desire of pardon and help, after his good will and pleasure, but in his time, and not when you will; and by what means he will, not by what way you would. In the mean season, hang on hope of his fatherly goodness, and surely you shall never be ashamed. For if a woman, that is natural, cannot finally forget the child of her womb, be sure God, which is a Father supernatural, cannot, and will not, forget you. Yea, if a woman could be so forgetful, yet God himself saith, he will not be so.

This opinion, yea rather certain persuasion, of God your Father through Christ, see that you cherish; and by all means, as well by diligent consideration of his benefits, as of his loving corrections, whether they are inward or outward, see that you nourish it. Know for certain, that as the devil goeth about nothing so much as to bring you into doubt whether you are God's child or no, so whatever shall move you to admit that dubitation, be assured the same

comes from the devil. If you feel in yourself not only the want of good things, but also plenty of evil, do not therefore doubt, whether you are God's child in Christ, or no.

For if you should believe or doubt, for your goodness' or illness'* sake, which you feel or feel not, then should you make Christ Jesus, for whose sake only God is your Father either nothing, or else but half Christ.

But rather take occasion from your want of good, and your plenty in evil, to go to God as to your Father; and to pray to him, that inasmuch as he commands you to believe that he is your God and Father, so he would give you his good Spirit, that you might feel the same, and live as his child, to his glory. And cease not, upon such prayers, to look for comfort in God's good time, still hoping the best, and rejecting all dubitation, and all evil works, words, and cogitations, as the Lord shall enable you by his good Spirit and grace; which I beseech him to give unto you, my good sister, for ever. And further, I pray you, that as he has made you to be a helper unto your husband, so you would endeavour yourself therein to show the same, as well in soul as body, and beg grace of God that your endeavour may be effectual to both your comforts in Christ. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XIX.

To my well beloved in the Lord, W. P.

GRACE and peace from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear brother, God most justly has cast me now into a dungeon, but much better than I deserve; wherein I see no man but my keeper, nor can see any except they come to me. Something in the earth my lodging is,† which is an example and memorial of my earthly afflictions, which God, I trust, will mortify; and of my sepulchre, whereunto I trust my Lord God will bring me in peace, in his good time. In the mean season, may he give me patience, lively hope, and his good Spirit. I pray you, pray for me, for the prayer of the godly, if it be fervent, worketh much with God: I thank God my common disease troubles me less†

* Or evil.

† A dungeon partly underground.

‡ This disease was a Rheum, with a feebleness of stomach, where-with he was much troubled whilst at liberty.—*Note in Letters of the Martyrs.*

than when I was abroad, which teaches me the merciful providence of God toward me. Use true and hearty prayer, and you shall perceive God at length will declare himself to see, where now many think he sleepeth. Out of the Tower by the Lord's prisoner,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XX.

A Letter which he wrote to a faithful woman in her heaviness and trouble, most comfortable for all those to read that are afflicted and broken hearted for their sins.

AN my dearly and most dearly beloved in the Lord, how pensive is my heart at present for you, by reason of the fearful judgment of our God, which even now I heard of for truth. May God our good Father for his great mercies' sake in Christ have mercy upon us, and comfort you, my dear heart, with his eternal consolation, as I desire to be comforted by him in my greatest need. Amen.

The bearer can tell you the cause why I have not sent to you since the receipt of your letter. Yea, if I had not heard for truth of this heavy chance, you had not heard from me as yet. For I began of late, a piece of work for your comfort, whereof I send you now a part, because my heart is heavy for your sake, and I cannot be quiet till I hear how you do in this cross, wherein I beseech you, my dear sister, to be of good comfort, and to be no more discouraged than David was by Absalom's death; the good Jonathan, by his father Saul's fearful end; Adam by that of Cain; Noah of Ham; Bathsheba by the terrible end of her father or grandfather Achitophel, &c. Not that I utterly condemn and judge your father, for I leave it to God, but because the fact of itself declares God's secret and fearful judgment and justice towards him and all men, and his great mercy towards us, admonishing all the world how he is to be feared, and that Satan does not sleep—and especially warning us his children, how weak and miserable we are of ourselves, and how happy we are in him, who have him to be our father, protector, and keeper, and shall have for ever more, so that no evil shall touch us, further than shall be to our Father's glory and to our everlasting advantage. And therefore let this judgment of God be an occasion to stir us up, to walk more carefully before God,

and to cast our whole care unfeignedly upon our dear Father, who neither can, nor will leave us; for his calling and gifts are such that he can never repent of them. Romans xi.

Whom He loveth, he loveth to the end; none of his chosen can perish, of which number I know you are, my dearly beloved sister. God increase the faith thereof daily more and more in you: may he give unto you to hang wholly on him, and on his providence and protection. For whoso dwelleth under the secret and help of the Lord, he shall be quite sure for evermore. He that *dwelleth*, I say; for if we are flitters, and not dwellers, as Lot was a flitter from Zoar, where God promised him protection if he had dwelt there still, we shall remove to our loss, as he did to the mountains.

Dwell therefore, that is, trust in the Lord, my dear sister, and that finally, unto the end, and you shall be as Mount Sion. As mountains compass Jerusalem, so doth the Lord all his people. How then can he forget you, which are as the apple of his eye, for his dear Son's sake? Ah, dear heart! that I were now but one half hour with you, to be a Simon to help to carry your cross with you. God send you some good Simon to be with you and help you.

You complain in your letters of the blindness of your mind, and the troubles you feel through talk with some. God make you thankful for that which he has given unto you: may he open your eyes to see what and how great benefits you have received; that you may be less covetous, or rather less impatient, for so I fear it should be called, and more thankful. Have you not received at his hands sight to see your blindness, and a desirous and seeking heart, to see where he abideth in the mid-day, as his dear spouse speaketh of herself in the Canticles? Oh! Joyce, my good Joyce, what a gift is this! Many have some sight, but I know none that have this sobbing and sighing, none this seeking which you have, but such as he has married unto him in his mercies. You are not content to kiss his feet with the Magdalen, but you would be kissed even with the kisses of his mouth. Cant. i. You would see his face with Moses, forgetting how he bids us seek his face. Psal. xxvii. Yea, and that for ever, Psalm cv., which signifies no such sight as you desire to see in this present life, which would see God now face to face; whereas he cannot be seen but covered under something, yea, something in that which is.

as you would say, clean contrary to God—as to see his mercy in his anger. In what appears bringing us to hell, faith sees him bringing us to heaven; in darkness, it beholds brightness; in hiding his face from us, it beholds his cheering countenance. How did Job see God, but as you would say under Satan's cloak? For who cast the fire from heaven upon his goods? Who overthrew his house and stirred up men to take away his cattle, but Satan? And yet Job pierced through all these, and saw God's works, saying, "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away," &c.

In reading the Psalms, how often do you see that David in the shadow of death saw God's sweet love! And so, my dearly beloved, I see that you in your darkness and dimness, by faith do see charity and brightness; by faith I say, because faith is of things absent, of things hoped for, of things which I appeal to your conscience, whether you desire not. And can you desire any thing which you know not? And is there any other true knowledge of heavenly things than by faith?

Therefore, my dear heart, be thankful, for (before God I write it) you have great cause. Ah, my Joyce! how happy is the state wherein you are! Verily, you are even in the blessed state of God's children; for they mourn, and do not you so? And that not for worldly weal, but for spiritual riches, faith, hope, charity, &c. Do you not hunger and thirst for righteousness? And I pray you, saith not Christ, who cannot lie, that happy are such? How should God wipe away the tears from your eyes in heaven, if now on earth you shed no tears? How could heaven be a place of rest, if you found it on earth? How could you desire to be at home, if in your journey you found no grief? How could you so often call upon God, and talk with him, as I know you do, if your enemy slept all day long? How should you elsewhere be made like unto Christ, I mean in joy, if you sobbed not with him in sorrow? If you will have joy and felicity, you must needs first feel sorrow and misery. If you will go to heaven, you must sail by hell. If you will embrace Christ in his robes, you must not scorn him in his rags. If you will sit at Christ's table in his kingdom, you must first abide with him in his temptation. If you will drink of his cup of glory, forsake not his cup of ignominy.

Can the head corner-stone be rejected, and the more

base stones in God's building be esteemed in this world? You are one of his lively stones; be content therefore to be hewn and snagged at, that you may be made more meet to be joined to your fellows which suffer with you Satan's snatches, the world's wounds, the accusations of conscience, and threats of the flesh, through which they are enforced to cry, Oh! wretches that we are, who shall deliver us? You are of God's corn, fear not therefore the flail, the fan, mill-stone, nor oven. You are one of Christ's lambs, look therefore to be fleeced, haled at, and even slain.

If you were a market sheep, you should go in more fat and grassy pasture; if you were for the fair, you should be stall-fed, and want no weal; but because you are of God's own occupying, therefore you must pasture on the bare common; abiding the storms and tempests that fall. Happy, and twice happy are you, my dear sister, that God now haleth you whither you would not, that you might come whither you would. Suffer a little, and be still. Let Satan rage against you, let the world cry out, let your conscience accuse you, let the law load you and press you down, yet shall they not prevail, for Christ is Emanuel, that is, God with us. If God be with us, who can be against us? The Lord is with you; your Father cannot forget you; your spouse loveth you. If the waves and surges arise, cry with Peter, "Lord, I perish!" and he will put out his hand and help you: cast out your anchor of hope, and it will not cease for all the stormy surges, till it take hold on the rock of God's truth and mercy.

Think not that He, who has given you so many things corporeally, as foretastes of spiritual and heavenly mercies, and that without your deserts or desire, can deny any spiritual comfort you desire. For if he give to desire, he will give you to have and to enjoy the thing desired. The desire to have and the going about to ask, ought to certify your conscience, that they are his earnest of the thing which if you ask, he will give you; yea before you ask, and whilst you are about to ask, he will grant the same, as Isaiah saith, to his glory and your eternal consolation. He that spared not his own Son for you, will not and cannot think any thing too good for you, my heartily beloved.

If he had not chosen you, as most certainly he has, he would not have so called you; he would never have justified you; he would never have so glorified you with his gracious gifts, which I know, praised be his name there-

fore: he would never have so exercised your faith with temptations, as he hath done and still does, if he had not chosen you. If he has chosen you as doubtless, dear heart, he has done in Christ, for in you I have seen his earnest, and before me you could not deny it, I know both where and when; if, I say, he has chosen you, then neither can you, nor ever shall you, perish. For if you fall, he putteth under his hand: you shall not lie still, so careful is Christ your keeper over you; never was mother so mindful over her child as he is over you; and has not he always been so?

Speak, woman, when did he finally forget you, and will he now, think you, in your most need do otherwise, while you are calling upon him, and desiring to please him? Ah! my Joyce, think you that God is mutable? Is he a changeling? Does not he love to the end them whom he loveth? Are not his gifts and callings such that he cannot repent of them? For else, he were no God. If you should perish, then he would want power; for I am certain his will towards you is not to be doubted. Hath not the Spirit, which is the Spirit of truth, told you so? And will you now hearken with Eve to the lying spirit, which would have you, not to despair (no, he goeth more craftily to work, howbeit to produce that end if you should give ear unto it, which God forbid;) but to doubt and stand in a mammering,* and so should you never truly love God, but serve him of servile fear, lest he should cast you off for your unworthiness and unthankfulness; as though your thankfulness or worthiness were any cause with God why he hath chosen you, or will finally keep you.

Ah! mine own dear heart, Christ only, Christ only, and his mercy and truth. In him and for him is the cause of your election. This Christ, this mercy, this truth of God, remaineth for ever, is certain for ever, I say, for ever. If an angel from heaven should tell you the contrary, accursed be he. Your thankfulness and worthiness are fruits and effects of your election; they are no causes; these fruits and effects shall be so much more fruitful and effectual, by how much you waver not.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, arise, and remember from whence you are fallen; you have a Shepherd which neither slumbereth nor sleepeth; no man nor devil can pull you out of his hands; night and day he commandeth his angels

* Hesitating.

to keep you. Have you forgotten what I read to you out of the 23d Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I can want nothing?" Do you not know that God barred Noah in the ark on the outside, so that he could not get out? So has he done to you, my good sister, so has he done to you. Ten thousand shall fall on your right hand, and twenty thousand on your left hand, yet no evil shall touch you; say boldly therefore, "Many a time, from my youth up, they have fought against me, but they have not prevailed;" no, nor ever shall prevail; for the Lord is round about his people; and who are the people of God, but such as hope in him? Happy are they that hope in the Lord; and you are one of those, my dear heart; for I am assured you have hoped in the Lord; I have your words to show most manifestly; and I know they were written unfeignedly; I need not say, that even before God you have simply confessed this to me, and that oftentimes no less. And once if you had this hope, as you doubtless had it, though now you feel it not, yet shall you feel it again; for the anger of the Lord lasteth but a moment, but his mercy lasteth for ever. Tell me, my dear heart, who hath so weakened you?—surely not a persuasion which came from Him that called you. For why should you waver? Why should you waver, and be so heavy-hearted? Whom look you on? On yourself? on your worthiness? on your thankfulness? on that which God requireth of you, as faith, hope, love, fear, joy, &c.? Then can you not but waver indeed; for what have you as God requireth? Believe you, hope you, love you, &c. as much as you should do? No, no, nor ever can in this life. Ah! my dearly beloved, have you so soon forgotten that which should ever be had in memory—namely, that when you would and should be certain and quiet in conscience, then should your faith burst through all things, that you have in you, or which are in heaven, earth, or hell, until it come to Christ crucified, and the eternal sweet mercies and goodness of God in Christ? Here, here is the resting-place, here is your spouse's bed; creep into it, and in your arms of faith embrace him, bewail your weakness, your unworthiness, your diffidence, &c. and you shall see he will turn to you. What said I you shall see? Nay, I should have said, you shall perceive he will turn to you. You know that Moses, when he went to the mount to talk with God, entered into a dark cloud, and Elias had his face covered when God passed by: both these dear friends of God heard God,

but they saw him not; but you would be preferred before them! See now, my dear heart, how covetous you are. Ah! be thankful, be thankful; but, God be praised, your covetousness is Moses' covetousness. Well, with him, you shall be satisfied: but when? Forsooth, when he shall appear. Here is not the time of seeing, but, as it were, in a glass. Isaac was deceived, because he was not content with hearing only.

Therefore, to make an end of these many words, where-with I fear I trouble you from better exercises:—Inasmuch as you are indeed the child of God, elect in Christ before the beginning of all times; inasmuch as you are given to the custody of Christ, as one of God's most precious jewels; inasmuch as Christ is faithful, and thereto has all power, so that you shall never perish, no, one hair of your head shall not be lost—I beseech you, I pray you, I desire you, I crave at your hands, with all my very heart, I ask of you with hand, pen, tongue, and mind, in Christ, through Christ, for Christ, for his name, blood, mercies, power, and truth's sake, my most entirely beloved sister, that you admit no doubting of God's final mercies towards you, howsoever you feel yourself. But complain to God, and crave of him, as of your tender and dear Father, all things, and in that time which shall be most opportune you shall find and feel, far above what your heart, or the heart of any creature can conceive, to your eternal joy. Amen, Amen, Amen.

The good Spirit of God always keep us, as his dear children: may he comfort you, as I desire to be comforted, my dearly beloved, for evermore. Amen.

I break off thus abruptly, because our common prayer-time calls me. The peace of Christ dwell in both our hearts for evermore. Amen.

As to the report of W. P. if it be as you hear, you must prepare to bear it. It is written on heaven's door: *Do well and bear evil*. Be content therefore to hear whatsoever the enemy shall imagine to blot you withal. God's Holy Spirit always comfort and keep you. Amen, Amen. This 8th of August, by him that in the Lord desireth you as well and as much felicity as to his own heart,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXI.

*To my good Lady Vane.**

THE true sense and sweet feeling of God's eternal mercies in Christ Jesus be ever more and more lively wrought in your heart by the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I most heartily thank you, good Madam, for your comfortable letters; and whereas you wish to be told what were best to be done on your behalf, concerning your three questions;† the truth is, that the questions are never well seen nor answered, until the thing whereof they arise is well considered; I mean, until it is seen how great an evil the thing is. If indeed it is once in your heart perceived, upon probable and pithy places, gathered out of God's book, that there never was any thing upon the earth so great and so much an adversary to God's true service; to Christ's death, passion, priesthood, sacrifice, and kingdom; to the ministry of God's word and sacraments; to the church of God, to repentance, faith, and all true godliness of life, as that is whereof the questions arise, (as most assuredly it is so indeed,) then a Christian heart cannot but abhor it, and all things that in any point might seem to allow it, or any thing pertaining to the same, by so much the more as it hath the name of God's service.

Again, your Ladyship knows, that as all is to be blamed and avoided, which is followed or fled from in respect of ourselves, or in respect of avoiding Christ's cross; so the end of all our doings should be to Godwards, to his glory, to our neighbours, to edification, and good example, whereof none can be given, by allowing any of the three questions propounded by you. But because

* Here followeth another letter of his, written to the good Lady Vane, wherein he resolves certain questions which she demanded. This Lady Vane was a special nurse, and a great supporter to her power of the godly saints, which were imprisoned in Queen Mary's time. Unto whom I have divers letters, of Master Philpot, Careless, Fraherne, Thomas Rose, and of others; wherein they render unto her most grateful thanks, for her exceeding goodness towards them, with their singular commendation and testimony also of her Christian zeal towards God's afflicted prisoners, and to the verity of his gospel. She departed at Holborn, anno 1568, whose end was more like a sleep, than any death; so quietly and meekly she deceased and departed hence in the Lord. Amongst others who wrote unto her, Master Bradford also sent letters to the said Lady. *Fox.*

† These questions were concerning the mass, whereon she desired his judgment. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

this which I write now is brief, and needs the more consideration or explication, as I doubt not of the one in you, so by God's grace, you shall receive the other from me shortly. For I have already written a little book about it, which I will send unto you, in which you shall have your questions fully answered and satisfied,* and therefore I omit to write any more hereabout at present; beseeching God, our good Father, to guide you, as his dear child, with his Spirit of wisdom, power, and comfort, unto eternal life, that you may be strong, and rejoice in him, and with his church, to carry Christ's cross, if he shall think it needful, (1 Pet. i. ;) which is a thing to be desired, wished, and embraced, if we looked on things after the judgment of God's word, and tried them by that touchstone.

If you are accustomed to think on the brevity, vanity, and misery of this life, and on the eternity, truth, and felicity of everlasting life; if you look on things after their ends, and not after their present appearance only; if you use yourself to set God's presence, power, and mercy always before your eyes, to see them as God by every creature desires you should; I doubt not but you shall find such strength and comfort in the Lord, as you shall not be shaken in, with all the power of Satan. God's mercy in Christ be with you, and his good Spirit guide you for ever. Amen.

LETTER XXII.

Another Letter to the Lady Vane.

As to mine own soul, I wish your Ladyship grace and mercy, from God our dear Father in Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

I thank God that he has eased you something, and mitigated his fatherly correction in us both. I would to God he had done so much in behalf of the grief of the body to you, as he has done to me. For as for the soul, I trust you feel that, which I pray God increase in you; I mean his fatherly love, and grant that I may with you feel the same in such degree as may please him; I will not say as you feel, lest I should seem to ask too much at one time. God often much more plentifully visits with the sense of

* He means his book called "The hurt of hearing mass." *Letters of the Martyrs.*

his mercy them that humble themselves under his mighty hand, and are sore exercised, as you long have been, than others, who to the face of the world have more show and appearance.

Therefore I wish as I do, and that not only for my own advantage, but also that I might lead you to consider the goodness of God, which I by your letters well espy; which is indeed the highway whereby God increaseth his gifts, and showeth his salvation more lively. Psalm l. and cvii. I have received God's blessing from you, which I have partly distributed unto my three fellow-prisoners, Master Farrar, Master Taylor, Master Philpot; and the residue I will bestow upon four poor souls, which are imprisoned in the common jail for religion also. As for my own part, if I had need I would have served my turn also; but because I had not, nor I thank God have not, I have been and will be your almoner, as I have already advertised you. God reward you, and give you to find it spiritually and corporeally. Because I cannot talk with you otherwise, therefore in this manner, as occasion and opportunity serve, I am ready to show my good-will and desire of your help and furtherance in the Lord unto everlasting life, whereunto God bring us shortly for his mercy's sake. Amen.

Good Madam, be thankful to God, as I hope you are; be earnest in prayer, continue in reading and hearing God's word; and if God's further cross comes, as therein God serves his providence, (for else it shall not come unto you,) so be certain the same shall turn to your eternal joy and comfort. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXIII.

To my dear friends and brethren, R. and E., with their wives and families.*

THE comfort of Christ, felt commonly by his children in their cross for his sake, may the everlasting God work in both your hearts, my good brethren, and in the hearts of both of your yoke-fellows, especially of good Mary, my good sister in the Lord. Amen.

* Roydon and Esing. *Fox.*

If I had not heard something of the hazard which you are in for the gospel's sake, if you continue the confession and profession thereof, as I trust you do and will do, and that unto the end, God enabling you, as he will doubtless for his mercy's sake, if you hope in him, (for this bindeth him, as David in Christ's person witnesseth, Our fathers hoped in thee, and thou deliveredst them, &c. Psalm xxii.,) yet by conjectures, I should suppose, though not so certainly, that the time of your suffering and probation is at hand. For now is the power of darkness fully come upon this realm, most justly for our sins, and abusing the light lent us of the Lord, by setting forth ourselves more than God's glory. It is sent that we might be brought unto the better knowledge of our evils, and so heartily repent, (which God grant us to do,) as also that we might have more feeling and sense of our sweet Saviour Jesus Christ, by humbling and dejecting ourselves, thereby to make us more desirous of him, and him more sweet and pleasant unto us; which may the good Spirit of God work sensibly in all our hearts for God's holy name's sake.

For this cause, I thought it my duty, being now where I have some liberty to write, the Lord be praised, and hearing of you as I hear, to do that which I should have done, if I had heard nothing at all; that is, to desire you to be of good cheer and comfort in the Lord, although in the world you see cause rather to the contrary; and to go on forwards in the way of God, wherein you are entered, considering that the same cannot but so much more and more wax strait to the outward man, by how much you draw nearer to the end of it: even as in the travail of a woman, the nearer she draweth to her delivery, the more her pains increase; so it goes with us in the Lord's way, the nearer we draw to our deliverance by death, to eternal felicity.

Example whereof we have, I will not say in the holy prophets and apostles of God, which, when they were young, girded themselves, and went in manner whither they would, but when they waxed old, they went girded of others, whither they would not, concerning the outward man; but I will say, rather and most lively, in our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose life and way was much more painful to him towards the end, than it was at the beginning. And no marvel; for Satan can somewhat abide that a man should begin well, and set forwards; but rather than he

should go on to the end, he will do his uttermost and cast out floods to overflow him, before he will suffer that to come to pass.

Therefore, we should not now be dismayed at this world, as though some strange thing were happened unto us, since it is but as it was wont to be to the godly; for the devil declares himself after his old manner, for we have professed no less, but to forsake the world and the devil, as God's very enemies; and we learned no less at the first, when we came to God's school, than to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow our Master, who leads us no other way than he himself has gone before us. As we should not be dismayed, so we should with patience and joy go forwards, if we set before us the time to come as if present; like as the wife in her travail does the deliverance of her child; and as the saints of God did, but especially our Saviour and pattern, Jesus Christ; for the apostle saith, he set before him the joy and glory to come, and therefore contemned the shame and sorrow of the cross; and if we did so, we should find at length as they found. For who that had a long journey, would grieve to go through a piece of foul way, if he knew that, afterwards, the way should be most pleasant, yea, the journey should be ended, and he most happy at his resting-place? Who would be afraid or loath to leave a little pelf for a little time, if he knew he should shortly after receive most plentiful riches? Who will be unwilling for a little while to forsake his wife, children, or friends, &c. when he knows he shall shortly after be associated unto them inseparably, even after his own heart's desire? Who will be sorry to forsake this life that cannot but be most certain of eternal life? Who loves the shadow better than the body? Who can love this life, but they that regard not the life to come? Who can desire the dross of this world, but such as are ignorant of the treasures of everlasting joy in heaven? I mean, who are afraid to die, but such as hope not to live eternally? Christ has promised pleasures, riches, joy, felicity, and all good things, to them that for his sake lose any thing, or suffer any sorrow. And is he not true? How can he but be true? For guile was never found in his mouth.

Alas! then, why are we so slack and slow, yea, so hard of heart, to believe him, when thus promising us plentifully

eternal blissfulness; and why are we so ready to believe the world, promising us many things, and paying us nothing? If we will curry favour now, and halt on both parts, then it promises us peace, quietness, and many other things else. But how does it pay this? Or, if it will pay it, with what quietness of conscience? Or, if so, how long, I pray you? Do not we see before our eyes, men die shamefully, I mean as rebels and other malefactors, which refused to die for God's cause? What way is so sure a way to heaven, as to suffer in Christ's cause? If there is any way on horseback to heaven, surely this is the way; by many troubles, saith the apostle, we must enter into heaven. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution. For the world cannot love them that are of God; the devil cannot love his enemies; the world will love none but his own; you are Christ's, therefore look for no love here. Should we look for fire to quench our thirst? As soon shall God's true servants find peace and favour in antichrist's regiment. Therefore, my dearly beloved, be stout in the Lord, and in the power of his might; put on you his armour; stand in the liberty of Christ, which you have learned; rejoice that you may be counted worthy to suffer any thing for God's cause; this is not given to all men. Your reward is great in heaven, though in earth you find nothing. The journey is almost past; you are almost in the haven; hale on apace, I beseech you, and merrily hoist up your sails. Cast yourselves on Christ, who careth for you; keep company with him now still to the end; he is faithful, and will never leave you, nor tempt* you further than he will make you able to bear; yea, in the midst of the temptation he will make an outscapè. Now pray unto him heartily, be thankful for his favour, rejoice in hope of the health you shall receive, and be mindful of us which are in this vayward;† and by God's grace trust in Christ to be made able to break the ice before you, that you, following, may find the way more easy. God grant it may be so. Amen, Amen.

Out of prison by your brother in Christ,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* Try.

† Front of the battle.

LETTER XXIV.

To Mistress Wilkinson.

ALMIGHTY God, our most loving Father, increase in your heart, my good mother and dear mistress in the Lord, his true knowledge and love in Christ, to the encouraging and comforting of your faith in these stormy days, as is necessary unto us, and profitable, if we persist unto the end; which God grant to us. Amen.

My right dearly beloved, I know not what else to write unto you, than to desire you to be thankful unto the Lord, that amongst the not many of your calling and state, it pleases him to give you his rare blessing; I mean, to keep you from all the filth, wherewith our country is horribly defiled. This blessing assuredly is rare, as you see: but now, if he shall bless you with another blessing, which is more rare, I mean to call you forth as a martyr and a witness against this filth, I hope you will become doubly thankful; for commonly we have not a greater token to judge of our election and salvation, next to Christ and faith in him, than the cross, especially when it is so glorious as on this sort to suffer any thing, but chiefly loss of this life, which indeed is never found till it be so lost—except the grain of wheat fall and is dead, it remains fruitless.

You know that he which was taken up into the third heaven, and knew what he wrote, says that as the corn lives not, except it is dead, and cast into the earth, so truly our bodies. 1 Cor. xv. And therefore the cross should so little fright us, that even death itself should altogether be desired by us, as the tailor which putteth off our rags, and arrayeth us with the royal robes of immortality, incorruption and glory. Great shame it should be for us, that all the creatures of God should desire, yea, groan in their kind, for our liberty, and we ourselves loath it, as doubtless we do, if for the sake of the cross, yea, for death itself, we with joy swallow not up all sorrow, that might hinder us from following the Lord's calling, and obeying the Lord's providence; whereby doubtless all crosses, and death itself, comes, and not by hap or chance. In consideration whereof, right dear mother, since this providence stretches itself so unto us, and for us, that even the hairs of our head are numbered with God, and not one

of them is to fall to our hurt, surely we declare ourselves very faint in faith, if we receive not such comfort, that we can willingly offer ourselves to the Lord, and cast our whole care upon him, honouring him with this honour, that he is, and ever will be, careful for us, and all we have, as for his dear children. Be therefore of good cheer, even in the midst of these miseries, be thankful to the Lord, and prepare yourself for a further trial; which if God send you, so do you believe, as I hope, that God therein will help and comfort you, and make you able to bear whatsoever shall happen. And thus much, having this opportunity, I thought good to write, praying God our Father to recompense into your bosom all the good that ever you have done, to me especially, and to many others, both in this time of trouble and always heretofore.

Your own in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXV.

Another letter, written to certain godly persons, encouraging them to prepare themselves with patience for the cross.

GRACIOUS God, and most merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, thy dearly beloved Son, grant us thy mercy, grace, wisdom, and Holy Spirit, to counsel, comfort, and guide us in all our cogitations, words, and works, to thy glory and our everlasting joy and peace for ever. Amen.

In my last letter you might perceive my conjectures towards you to be no less than now I have learned; but, my dearly beloved, I have learned none other thing, than I have told you before would come to pass, if you cast not away that which I am sure you have learned. I do appeal to both your consciences, whether herein I speak truth, as well of my telling, (though not so often as I might and should, God forgive me,) as also of your learning. Now God will try you, to make others learn by you, that which you have learned by others, and by them which suffered this day,* you might learn, if you had not already learned, that life and honour are not to be more set by than God's com-

* Lady Jane Grey and her husband were beheaded that day.
Letters of the Martyrs.

mandment. Notwithstanding all that their ghostly fathers could do, having Doctor Death to take their part, they in no point would consent, or seem to consent, to the popish mass and papistical god, otherwise than they received in the days of our late king, and this their faith they have confessed with their deaths, to their great glory and all our comforts, if we follow them, but to our confusion, if we start back from the same. Wherefore, I beseech you to consider it, as well to praise God for them, as to go the same way with them, if God so will.

Consider not the things of this life, which is a real prison to all God's children, but the things of everlasting life, which is our real home. But to behold this, you must open the eyes of your mind, of faith I should have said, as Moses did, who chose trouble with God's people, rather than the riches of Egypt and Pharaoh's court. Your house, home, and goods, yea life, and all that ever you have, God has given you as love-tokens, to admonish you of his love, and to win your love to him again. Now will he try your love, whether you set more by him, than by his tokens. If you for his tokens' sake, that is, for your home, house, goods, yea life, will go with the world, lest you should lose them, then be assured he will cast your love away with the world, as he cannot but espy it to be a strumpet's love. Remember that he who will save his life shall lose it, if Christ is true; but he who adventures, yea, loses his life for the gospel's sake, the same shall be sure to find it eternally. Do not you know, that the way to salvation is not the broad way, which many run in; but the strait way, which few now walk in?

Before persecution came, men might partly have doubted by the outward state of the world with us, (although by God's word it was plain,) which was the high way, for there were as many that pretended to follow the gospel as popery. But now the sun is risen, and the wind blows, so that the corn which has not taken fast root, cannot and will not abide, therefore you may easily see the strait way, by the small number that pass through it. Who will now adventure their goods and life for Christ's sake, though he gave his life for our sakes? We are now become Gergesites, that would rather lose Christ than our swine. A faithful wife is never tried to be so, but when she rejects and withstands wooers. A faithful Christian is found to be so, when his faith is assaulted.

If we are not able—I mean, if we will not forsake this world for God's glory and the gospel's sake, think you that God will make us able, or give us a will to forsake it for nature's sake? Die you must once, and leave all you have, (God knows how soon and when,) will you, or will you not; and seeing that you must do this, will you not willingly do it now for God's sake?

If you go to mass, and do as the most part do, then you may live at rest and quietly; but if you deny to go to it, then shall you go to prison, lose your goods, leave your children comfortless, yea, lose your life also; but, my dearly beloved, open the eyes of your faith, and see how short a thing this life is—even a very shadow and smoke. Again, see how intolerable the punishment of hell-fire is, and that endless. Last of all, look on the joys incomprehensible, which God has prepared for all those, world without end, who lose either lands or goods for his name's sake. And then reason thus: If we go to mass, which is the greatest enemy that Christ hath, though for a little time we shall live in quiet, and leave to our children what they may live by hereafter, yet we shall displease God, fall into his hands, which is horrible to hypocrites, and be in hazard of falling from eternal joy into eternal misery, first of soul, and then of body, with the devil and all idolaters.

Again, we shall want peace of conscience, which surmounts all the riches of the world; and for our children, who knows whether God will visit our idolatry on them in this life? Yea, we are in danger of losing our house and goods, as also our lives, through many casualties; and when God is angry with us, he always can send when he will, one mean or another to take all from us, for our sins, and cast us into care, for our own sakes, if we will not come into some little trouble for his sake.

On this sort reason with yourselves, and then doubtless God will work otherwise with you, and in you, than you are aware of. Where now you think yourselves unable to abide persecution, be most assured, that if you purpose not to forsake God, he will make you so able to bear his cross, that you shall rejoice therein. Faithful is God, saith Paul, who will not tempt you further than he will make you able to bear, yea, he will give you an outscape in the cross, which shall be to your comfort. Think how great a benefit it is, if God will vouch you worthy of this honour, to suffer loss of any thing for his sake. He might justly cast

most grievous plagues upon you, and yet now he will correct you with that rod, by which you shall be made like to his Christ, that you may reign with him for ever. Suffer yourselves therefore now to be made like to Christ, for else you shall never be made like unto him. The devil would gladly have you now overthrow that godliness which you have long professed. Oh! how would he triumph, if he could win his purpose! Oh! how would the papists triumph against God's gospel in you! Oh! how would you confirm them in their wicked popery! Oh! how would the poor children of God be discomfited, if you should now go to mass, and other idolatrous service, and do as the world does!

Has God delivered you from the sweating sickness,* to serve him so? Has God miraculously restored you to health from your grievous agues for such a purpose? Has God given you such blessings in this world, and good things all the days of your life hitherto, and now of equity will you not receive at his hands, and for his sake, some evil? God forbid! I hope better of you. Use prayer, and cast your care upon God; commit your children into his hand; give to God your goods, bodies, and lives, as he has given them, or rather lent them unto you. Say with Job, God has given, and God has taken away: his name be praised for ever. Cast your care upon him, I say, for he is careful for you; and take it amongst the greatest blessings of God, to suffer for his sake; I trust he has kept you hitherto for that end.

And I beseech thee, O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, that thou wouldst be merciful unto us, comfort us with thy grace, and strengthen us in thy truth, that in heart we may believe, and in tongue boldly confess, thy gospel, to thy glory and our eternal salvation. Amen.

Pray for me, and I by God's grace will do the same for you.

JOHN BRADFORD.

* An infectious distemper by which many thousand persons died in England, in the year 1551. In the space of a few days, nine hundred and sixty persons died in London alone; and it was chiefly fatal to men in the prime of life. See *Holinshed's Chronicles*.

LETTER XXVI.

An admonition to certain professors of the gospel, to beware they fall not from it, in consenting to the Romish religion, by the example of halting and double-faced gospellers.

THE peace of Christ, which is the true effect of God's gospel when believed, my dearly beloved, be more and more plentifully perceived of you, through the grace of our dear Father, by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit our Comforter. Amen.

Though I have many letters at present to hinder me from writing unto you, yet being desired, I could not but somewhat signify my ready good-will in this behalf, so much as I may, when I cannot so much as I would.

You hear and see how Satan bestirs himself, raging as a roaring lion to devour us. You see and feel partly what storms he has raised up to drown the poor boat of Christ, I mean his church. You see how terribly he trains his soldiers to give a fierce onset on the vayward* of God's battle. You see how he hath received power of God to molest God's children, and to begin at his house. By reason whereof, consider two things; one, the cause as regards us; the other, what will be the sequel on strangers.

For the first, if we are not blind, we cannot but well see, that our sins are the cause of all this misery; our sins, I say, which I would that every one of us should apply to ourselves after the example of Jonah and David, turning over the wallet, that other men's offences might lie behind, and our own before. Not that I would excuse other men, which outwardly have walked much more grossly than many of you have done; but that I would provoke you all, as myself, to more hearty repentance and prayer. Let us more and more increase to know and lament our doubting of God, of his presence, power, anger, mercy, &c. Let us better feel and hate our self-love, security, negligence, unthankfulness, unbelief, impatience, &c., and then doubtless the cross shall be less painful, yea, it shall be comfortable, and Christ most dear and pleasant; death then shall be desired, as the despatcher of us out of all misery, and

* The front of God's army.

the entrance into eternal felicity and joy unspeakable. Which is so much the more longed for, by how much we feel the serpent's bites wherewith he woundeth our heels, that is, our outward Adam and senses. If we had, I say, a lively and true feeling of his poison, we could not but rejoice in our Captain, that has bruised his head, and be desirous to follow his example,—that is, to give our lives with him, and for him, and to fill up his passions,* so that he might conquer and overcome in us and by us, to his glory and the comfort of his children.

Now the second, I mean the sequel, or that which will follow on the strangers,† my dearly beloved, let us well look upon it. For if so be that God justly permit Satan and his seed to vex and molest Christ and his penitent people; oh! what and how justly may he and will he give power to Satan to treat the reckless and impenitent sinners? If judgment begin thus at God's house, what will follow on them that are without, if they repent not? Certainly the dregs of God's cup are reserved for them, that is, brimstone, fire, and tempest intolerable. Now are they unwilling to drink of God's cup of afflictions, which he offereth them in common with his Son Christ our Lord, lest they should lose their pigs like the Gergesites. They are unwilling to come into the way that brings to heaven, even afflictions; in their hearts they cry, "Let us cast his yoke from us;" they walk two ways, that is, they seek to serve God and Mammon, which is impossible; they will not come nigh the strait way that bringeth to life. They open their eyes to behold present things only; they judge of religion after reason, and not after God's word; they follow the more part, and not the better; they profess God with their mouths, but in their hearts deny him, or else they would sanctify him by serving him more than men. They part stakes with God, which would have all; giving part to the world, to the Romish rout, and antichristian idolatry now set abroad amongst us publicly; they are willing to have Christ, but none of his cross, which cannot be; they are willing to be counted to live godly in Christ, but they will suffer no persecution; they love this world, whereby the love of God is driven forth from them; they savour of those things that are of men, and not that are of God. To sum up, they love God in their lips, but in their hearts, yea, and in their deeds they deny him, as well by

* Sufferings.

† Strangers to Christ.

not repenting their past evils, as by continuing in evil still, by doing as the world, the flesh, and the devil willeth, and yet still perchance they will pray, or rather prate, "Thy will be done in earth," which means that every one should take up his cross, and follow Christ. But this is a hard saying: Who is able to abide it? Therefore Christ is prayed to depart, lest all the swine be drowned! The devil may have his dwelling again in themselves, rather than in their swine, and therefore to him they shall go, and dwell with him in eternal perdition and damnation, even in hell fire, a torment endless, and above all cogitations incomprehensible, if they repent not.

Wherefore by them, my dearly beloved, be admonished to remember your profession, how that in baptism you made a solemn vow to renounce the devil, the world, &c. You promised to fight under Christ's standard; you learned Christ's cross before you began your A, B, C. Go to then, pay your vow to the Lord; fight like men, and valiant men, under Christ's standard; take up your cross, and follow your master, as your brethren, Master Hooper, Rogers, Taylor, and Saunders have done, and as now your brethren, Master Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Farrar, Bradford, Hawkes, &c. are ready to do. The ice is broken before you, therefore be not afraid, but be content to die for the Lord. You have no cause to waver, or doubt of the doctrine thus declared by the blood of the pastors. Remember that Christ says, "He that will save his life, shall lose it." And what should it profit you to win the whole world, (much less a little quietness, your goods, &c.) and to lose your own souls? Render to the Lord what he has lent you, by such means as he would have you render it, and not such as you would. Forget not, Christ's disciples must deny themselves, as well concerning their will, as concerning their wisdom. Have in mind, that as it is no small mercy to believe in the Lord, so it is no small kindness of God towards you to suffer any thing, much more death, for the Lord. If they are blessed that die in the Lord, how shall they be that die for the Lord? Oh! what a blessing is it to have the death which is due for our sins, diverted into a demonstration and testimony of the Lord's truth! Oh! that we had a little of Moses's faith, to look upon the end of the cross, to look upon the reward, to see continually with Christ and his people greater riches than the riches of Egypt! Oh! let us pray that God would

open our eyes to see his hidden manna, the heavenly Jerusalem, the congregation of the first-born, the melody of the saints, the tabernacle of God dwelling with men; then we should run, and become violent men, and so take the kingdom of heaven, as it were, by force. May God our Father give us for his Christ's sake to see a little, what, and how great joy he has prepared for us, and called us unto, and most assuredly gives us for his own goodness and truth's sake. Amen. My dearly beloved, repent, be sober, and watch in prayer; be obedient, and after your vocations, show your obedience to the higher powers in all things that are not against God's word—therein acknowledge the sovereign power of the Lord; howbeit, so that you are not rebels, or rebellers, for no cause; but since with good conscience you cannot obey, be patient sufferers, and the glory and good Spirit of God shall dwell upon us. I pray you remember us your afflicted brethren, being in the Lord's bonds for the testimony of Christ, and abiding the gracious hour of our dear and most merciful Father. The Lord, for Christ's sake, give us joyful hearts to drink heartily of his sweet cup, which daily we groan and sigh for, lamenting that the time is thus prolonged. The Lord Jesus give us grace to be thankful, and to abide patiently the provident* hour of his most gracious good will. Amen. Amen. From the Compter in the Poultry.

Yours in Christ,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXVII.

To my good brother, John Careless, prisoner in the King's Bench.

THE Father of mercy, and God of all comfort, visit us with his eternal consolation, according to his great mercies in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

My very dear brother, if I report the truth unto you, I cannot but signify that since I came into prison I never received so much consolation as I did by your last letter, the name of God be most heartily praised therefore. But if I report the truth unto you, and as I have begun, speak

* Appointed.

still the verity, I must confess, that for mine unthankfulness towards you, and especially to God, I have more need of God's merciful tidings, than I had ever heretofore. Ah! that Satan envies us so greatly! Ah! that our Lord would tread his head under our feet shortly! Ah! that I might for ever myself beware, and be a godly example to you and others, to beware of unthankfulness! Good brother Careless, after a lightening* we have more need to take heed of being foiled than before. God therefore is to be praised even when he hideth, and that for long, a cheerful countenance from us, lest we, being not expert how to use it as we should do, hurt ourselves thereby; so great is our ignorance and corruption. This my good brother, and right dear to my very heart, I write unto you, as to one whom in the Lord I embrace, and I thank God that you do me in like manner. God our Father more and more give us both his good Spirit, that as by faith we may feel ourselves united unto him in Christ, so by love we may feel ourselves linked in the same Christ one to another, I to you, and you to me, we to all the children of God, and all the children of God to us. Amen. Amen. Commend me to our good brother Skelthrop,† for whom I heartily praise my God, which has given him to see his truth at the length, and to submit to it. I doubt not but he will be so heedful in all his conversation, that his old acquaintance may thereby think themselves astray. Woe and woe again should be unto us, if we by our example should make men to stumble at the truth. Forget not salutations in Christ as you shall think good, to Trewe and his fellows. The Lord hath his time I hope for them also, although we perchance think otherwise. A drop makes the stone hollow, not with once, but with often dropping; so if with hearty prayer for them and good example, you still drop upon them as you can, you shall see God's work at length. I beseech God to make perfect all the good he has begun in us all. Amen.

I desire you all to pray for me, the most unworthy prisoner of the Lord.

Your brother,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* Glimpse of Spiritual life.

† He was formerly a free-will man. *Fox.*

LETTER XXVIII.

To Master John Hall and his Wife, prisoners in Newgate, for the testimony of the gospel.

ALMIGHTY God our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, be with you both, my dearly beloved, as with his dear children for ever, and may he so bless you with his Holy Spirit, that you may rejoice in this your cross which doubtless you suffer for his cause, and gladly take it up to bear it so long as he shall think good. I have heard my good brother and sister, how that God has brought you both into his school house, whereas you were both purposed by his leave to have played truants, so that thereby you might see his carefulness and love toward you. For if it is a token of a loving and careful father for his children, to prevent the purpose, and disappoint the intent of his children, who purpose to depart a while from the school, for fear of beating, which they would not do if they rightly considered the commodity* of learning which they might get there; how should you take this work of the Lord preventing your purpose, but as an evident sign of love and fatherly carefulness that he bears towards you! If he had winked at your wills, then would you have escaped beating, I mean the cross; but then should you have lost the commodity of learning that which your Father will now have you to learn and feel, and therefore he has sent to you his cross. He, I say, hath brought you where you are; and though your reason and wit tell you, it is by chance or fortune, or otherwise, yet my dearly beloved, know for certain, that whatsoever was the *mean*, God your Father was the *worker* hereof, and that for your weal, although your old Adam tells you and you feel otherwise; yet I say of truth, that your duty is to think of this cross that, as it is of God's sending, and comes from him, so, although your deserts are otherwise, it is of love and fatherly affection for your weal and commodity's sake.

What advantage is there hereby? you will perchance object. You are now kept in close prison, you will say: your family and children are without good overseers; your substance diminishes by these means; your poverty will approach; and perchance more perils also, yea, and loss of life too. These are no commodities, but discommodities,

* Advantage.

and that not small ones; so that you would be glad to know what commodity can come to you by this cross, whereby come such great discommodities.

To these things I answer, that indeed it is true what you say of your bodies, families, children, substance, poverty, life, &c.; which if you would consider awhile with inward eyes, as you behold them with outward, perhaps you would find more ease. Do not you now by the inward sense perceive that you must part from all these and all other commodities in the world? Tell me then, have not you this commodity by your cross, to learn to loath and leave the world, and to long for and desire another world, where is perpetuity? You ought of your own head and free-will, to have (according to your profession in baptism) forsaken the world and all earthly things, using the world as though you used it not; your heart being set only upon your treasure in heaven, or else you could never be Christ's true disciples, that is be saved, and be where he is. And think you, my good hearts in the Lord, think you, I say, that it is no commodity to be compelled thereto, by this cross, that you might assuredly enjoy with the Lord endless glory? How now does God, as it were, fatherly admonish you, to remember your former offences concerning these things and all other things, so that repentance and remission might ensue? How doth God now compel you to call upon him and to be earnest in prayer! Are these no commodities? Does not the Scripture say, that God corrects us in this world, because we shall not be damned with the world? that God chastens every one whom he loveth? that the end of this correction shall be joy and holiness? Does not the Scripture say, that they are happy that suffer for righteousness' sake, as you now do? that the glory and Spirit of God is upon them? that as you are now made like unto Christ in suffering, so shall you be made like him in reigning? Does not the Scripture say, that you are now going the high and right way to heaven? that your suffering is Christ's suffering? My dearly beloved, what greater commodities than these can a godly heart desire?

Therefore you are commanded to rejoice and be glad when you suffer as you now do: for through the goodness of God great shall be your reward.—Where? Forsooth, on earth first in your children; for now they are in God's more immediate protection. Never was father so careful for his children, as God is for yours at present, God's

blessing, which is worth more than all the world, you leave to your children. Though all you have provided for them should be pulled away, yet God is not poor; he has promised to provide for them most fatherly. "Cast thy burden upon me," saith he, "and I will bear it." Psalm lv. Do you therefore cast them and commend them unto God your Father, and fear not that he will die in your debt. He never was found unfaithful, and he will not now begin with you. The good man's seed shall not go begging bread; for he will show mercy upon thousands of the posterity of them that fear him; therefore as I said, God's reward first upon earth shall be felt by your children even corporeally, and so also upon you, if God see it more for your commodity; at least you shall feel it inwardly, by quietness and comfort of conscience; and secondly, after this life, you shall find it so plentifully, as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, the heart cannot conceive, how great and glorious God's reward will be upon your bodies, much more upon your souls. God open our eyes to see and feel this indeed. Then shall we think the cross, which is a mean hereto, is an advantage: then shall we thank God that he would chastise us: then shall we say with David, Happy am I, that thou hast punished me; for before I went astray, but now I keep thy laws.

This that we may do indeed, my dearly beloved, let us first know that our cross cometh from God: secondly, that it cometh from God as a Father, that is, for our weal and good; therefore let us, thirdly, call to mind our sins, and ask pardon; whereto let us, fourthly, look for help certainly at God's hand in his good time: help, I say, such as shall make most to God's glory, and to the comfort and commodity of our souls and bodies eternally. This if we certainly conceive, then will there issue out of us hearty thanksgiving, which God requires as a most precious sacrifice. That we may all through Christ offer this, let us use earnest prayer to our God and dear Father: may he bless us, keep us, and comfort us, under his sweet cross for ever! Amen. Amen.

My dear hearts, if I could any way comfort you, you should be sure thereof, though my life lay thereon; but now I must do as I may, because I cannot as I would. Oh! that it would please our dear Father shortly to bring us where we should never depart, but enjoy continually the blessed fruition of his heavenly presence. Pray, pray;

that it may speedily come to pass—pray. To-morrow I will send to you to know your state; send me word what are the chief things they charge you with.

From the Compter.

By your brother in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXIX.

To Mistress Hall, prisoner in Newgate, and ready to make answer before her adversaries.

OUR most merciful God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, be merciful unto us, and make perfect the good he has begun in us, unto the end. Amen.

My dear sister, rejoice in the Lord, rejoice; be glad, I say, be merry and thankful, not only because Christ so commands us, but also because our state wherein we are at present, requires no less, for we are the Lord's witnesses. God the Father hath vouchsafed to choose us amongst many, to witness and testify that Christ his Son is King, and that his word is true. Christ our Saviour, for his love sake towards us, will have us to bear record that he is no usurper or deceiver of the people, but God's Ambassador, Prophet, and Messiah; so that of all dignities upon earth, this is the highest. Greater honour had not his prophets, apostles, or dearest friends, than to bear witness with Christ, as we now do. The world, following the counsel of their sire Satan, would gladly condemn Christ and his verity; but, lo! the Lord has chosen us to be his champions to hinder this. As stout soldiers, therefore, let us stand to our Master, who is with us, and standeth on our right hand, so that we shall not be much moved, if we hope and hang on his mercy; for he is so faithful and true, that he will never try us further than he will make us able to bear. Therefore be not careful what you shall answer, for I hear say this day you shall be called forth. The Lord, who is true and cannot lie, has promised, and will never fail nor forget it, that you shall have both what and how to answer, so as to make his shameless adversaries ashamed. Hang therefore on this promise of God, who is a helper at a pinch, and a most present remedy to them that hope in him. Never was it heard, nor shall it be, that any hoping in the Lord was put to foil.

Therefore as I said, I say again, dear sister, not only be not careful for your answering, but also be joyful for your cause. Confess Christ, and be not ashamed, and he will confess you, and never be ashamed of you. Though loss of goods and life are likely to ensue, yet, if Christ is true, as he is most true, it is otherwise indeed: for he that loseth his life, saith he, winneth it, but he that saveth it, loseth it. Our sins have deserved many deaths. Now if God so deal with us that he will make our deserved death a demonstration of his grace, a testimonial of his verity, a confirmation of his people, and an overthrow of his adversaries, how great cause have we to be thankful! Be thankful therefore, good sister; rejoice and be merry in the Lord; be stout in his cause and quarrel, be not faint-hearted, but run out your race, and set your captain, Christ, before your eyes. Behold, how great your reward is! See the great glory and the eternity of felicity prepared for you. Strive and fight lawfully, that you may get the crown. Run to get the game; you are almost at your journey's end; I doubt not but our Father will with us send to you also, as he did to Elijah, a fiery chariot, to convey us into his kingdom. Let us therefore not be dismayed to leave our cloak behind us, that is, our bodies to ashes. God will one day restore them to us like to the body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose coming is now at hand; let us look for it, and lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. Amen, Amen. The Lord of mercy grant us his mercy. Amen. I pray you pray for me, and so desire my brethren which are with you. God's peace be with us all. Amen. Blessed are the dead that die *in* the Lord; then how much more they that die *for* the Lord.

Your brother in bonds,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXX.

To a woman that desired to know his mind, whether she, refraining from the mass, might be present at the popish matins, or not.

I BESEECH Almighty God, our heavenly Father, to be merciful unto us, and to increase in you, my good sister, the knowledge and love of his truth, and at this present give me grace so to write to you something of the same,

as may make to his glory and our own comfort and confirmation in him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Whether you may come with safe conscience to the church now, that is, to the service used commonly, in part, as at matins, or at an even-song, or not, is your desire to have me to write something about for your further stay. My dearly beloved, although your benefits towards me perhaps might make you think, that in respect thereof I would bear with that which else were not to be borne withal; yet by God's grace I purpose, simply and without such respect in this matter, to speak to you the truth according to my conscience, as I may be able to stand unto, when I shall come before the Lord.

First, therefore, learn perfectly the first lesson to be learned by all that profess Christ, that is—to deny yourself, and in nothing to seek yourself.

Secondly, learn after this, to begin at the next lesson to it, which is—to seek God in all things you do, or leave undone.

Thirdly, know that you seek God, when in his service you follow his word, and not man's fancies, custom, the multitude, &c., and when with your brother you follow the rule of charity, that is, to do as you would be done by. In these is the sum of all the counsel I can give you, if I admonish you about the service now used, which is not according to God's word, but rather against God's word directly, and in manner wholly: so that your going to the service is a declaration that you have not learned the first lesson, nor ever can learn it so long as you go thither; therefore the second lesson you shall utterly lose, if you cease not the seeking of yourself, that is—if for company, custom, father or friend, life or goods, you seem to allow that which God disalloweth; and that you may perceive this the better, I purpose, by God's grace, briefly to show.

First, the matins and even-song are in a tongue forbidden to be used publicly in a congregation that knoweth not the tongue. Read how Paul affirms that to pray in an unknown tongue, is against God's commandment. This I think were enough, if nothing else were; for how can God's glory be sought, where his word and commandment are wilfully broken? How can charity* to man stand, when charity* to God, which is obedience to his word, is overthrown?

* Love.

Again, both in matins and even-song idolatry is maintained instead of God's service; for there is invocation and prayer made to saints departed this life, which robs God of that glory which he will give to none other. Moreover, this service and the setters forth of it condemn the English service as heresy, thereby falling into God's curse, which is threatened to all such as call good evil, and evil good; whereof they shall be partakers that communicate with them. Besides this, the Latin service is a plain mark of antichrist's catholic synagogue; so that the communicants and approvers of it, thereby declare themselves to be members of the same synagogue, and so cut off from Christ and his church, whose exterior mark is the true administration of God's word and sacraments.

Furthermore, the example of your going thither to allow the religion of antichrist, as doubtless you do indeed, howsoever in heart you think, occasions the obstinate to be utterly intractable, the weak papist to be more obstinate, the strong gospellers to be sore weakened, and the weak gospellers to be utterly overthrown: which things, how great offences they are, no pen is able to express. All these evils you shall be guilty of, that company with those in religion exteriorly, from whom you are admonished to fly. If Christ be Christ, follow him; gather with him, lest you scatter abroad; serve God, not only in spirit, but also in body. Make not your body, now a member of Christ, a member of antichrist. Come out from among them, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Confess Christ and his truth, not only in heart, but also in tongue, yea, in very deed, which few gospellers do. Indeed they deny him, and therefore had need to tremble, lest Christ deny them in the last day; which day, if it were set before our eyes often, the pleasures and treasures of this world would be but trifles.

Therefore, good sister, often have it before your eyes, daily set yourself and your doings as before the judgment-seat of Christ now, that hereafter you be not called into judgment. Think that it will little profit you to win the whole world, and to lose your own soul. Mark Christ's lessons well, He that will save his life shall lose it; the Father from heaven commands you to hear Christ, and he saith, Follow me: this you cannot do, and follow idolatry or idolaters. Flee from such, saith the Scripture.

May God grant this to you, to me, and to all God's

children. Amen. Thus in haste I have accomplished your request. God grant that as you have done me much good bodily, so this may be a little mean to do you some good spiritually. Amen. If time would serve, I would have written more at large. The 2d of March, anno 1555.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXI.

*To the worshipful, and, in God, my most dear friend, the
Lady Vane.*

(Respecting the pope's pretended supremacy.)

MAY the good Spirit of God our Father be more and more plentifully perceived by your good ladyship, through the mediation and merits of our dear Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Although your benefits towards me have deserved at my hands the service I can do for you, yet, right worshipful and dearly beloved in the Lord, the true fear of God, and love of his truth, which I perceive to be in you, specially and above all other things, bind me hereunto. This bearer hath told me that your desire is to have something sent to you, concerning the usurped authority of the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, which is undoubtedly that great antichrist, of whom the apostles do so much admonish us, that you may have something to stay yourself on, and also wherewith to answer the adversaries, because you may perchance therein be something opposed. I will briefly set about to satisfy this your desire, and so, that I shall, by God's grace, fully set forth the same, to arm you to withstand the assaults of the papists herein, if you mark well, and read over again that which I now write.

The papists place the pope in pre-eminence over the whole church, thereby unplacing Christ, who is the Head of the church, that giveth life to the whole body, and by his Spirit enlivens every member of the same. This they do without any Scripture. For where they bring in what was spoken to Peter, "Feed my sheep," I would gladly know, whether this was not commanded unto others also? As for that, which perchance they will urge, that Jesus

spake to Peter by name, if they had any learning, they would easily perceive, that it was not for any such cause as they pretend, but rather by a threefold commandment, to restore to him the honour of an apostle, which he had lost by his threefold denial. And how dare they interpret this word, “My sheep, my lambs,” to be the universal church of Christ? A man might easily, by the like reason, prove that Peter himself had resigned that, which Christ had given to him, by exhorting his fellow-pastors to feed the flock of Christ. Is not this pretty stuff—that because Christ saith to Peter, “Feed my sheep,” therefore he ought to *rule* the universal and whole church of Christ? If Peter truly writes unto others, that they should do the like, that is, feed Christ’s flock, either he transfers to them his right and authority committed to him, or else he participates or communicates with them in it; so that foolishly they endeavour to establish that which hath no ground. Peter indeed was a shepherd of the sheep, but such a one as bestowed his labour on them so far, as he could stretch himself by his ministry. But the papists prate, that he had full power over all churches; wherein they may learn better from Paul, for else he had done unjustly in denying him the superior place. Howbeit, who ever yet read that Peter took any thing upon him over churches committed unto other men? Was not he sent of the church, and sent of one not having rule over the rest? I grant that he was an excellent instrument of God, and for the excellency of his gifts, whensoever they met together, place was commonly given unto him. But what is it to the purpose, to make him ruler and head over all the whole church, because he was so over a small congregation?

But be it so that Peter had as much given to him as they affirm; who will grant that Peter had a patrimony given for his heirs? He has left, say the papists, to his successors the self-same right which he received. Then must his successor be a Satan, for he received that title from Christ himself! I would gladly have the papists show me one place about succession mentioned in the Scriptures. I am sure, that when Paul purposely pointed out the whole administration of the church, he neither makes one head, nor any inheritable primacy, and yet he altogether commends unity. After he has made mention of one God the Father, of one Christ, of

one Spirit, of one body of the church, of one faith, and of one baptism, then he describes the mean and manner how unity is to be kept, namely, because unto every pastor grace is given after the measure wherewith Christ hath endued them. Where, I pray you, is there any title of *fulness of power*? When he calls home every one unto a certain measure, why did he not forthwith say one pope? which he could not have forgotten, if it had been as the papists make it.

But let us grant, that perpetuity of the primacy in the church was established in Peter, I would gladly learn why the seat of the primacy should be at Rome rather than elsewhere. Marry,* say they, because Peter's chair was at Rome. This is even like to this—that because Moses the greatest prophet, and Aaron the first priest, exercised their offices unto their death in the desert, therefore the principal place of the Jewish church should be in the wilderness. But grant them their reason, as if it is good, what should Antioch claim? For Peter's chair was there also; wherein Paul gave him a check, which was unseemly and unmannerly done of Paul, if he would not give place unto his president and better.

No, say the papists, Rome must have this authority, because Peter died there; but what if a man should, by probable conjecture, show that it is but a fable, which is feigned of Peter's bishopric at Rome? Read how Paul salutes very many private persons, when he writes to the Romans. Three years after his epistle was made, he was brought to Rome prisoner. Luke tells, that he was received of the brethren. And yet in all these is no mention at all of Peter, who then by their stories was at Rome;—belike he was proud, as the pope and prelates are, or else he would have visited Paul! Paul when in prison at Rome, wrote divers epistles, in which he expresses the names of many, who were, in comparison of Peter, but inferior personages; but of Peter he speaks never a word. Surely, if Peter had been there, this silence about him had been suspicious. In the second epistle to Timothy, Paul complains that no man was with him in his defence, but all had left him. If Peter had been then at Rome, as they write, then either Paul had belied him, or Peter had played his Peter's part. (Luke xxii.) In another place, he blames all that were with him, only Timothy excepted. There-

* Truly.

fore we may well doubt whether Peter was at Rome, and bishop there, as they prate; for all this time and long before, they say, that Peter was bishop there.

But I will not stir up coals in this matter. If Rome is the chief seat, because Peter died there, why should not Antioch be the second? Why should not James and John, which were taken with Peter to be as pillars; why, I say, should not their seats have honour next to Peter's seat? Is not this preposterous, that Alexandria, where Mark, which was but one of the disciples, was bishop, should be preferred before Ephesus, where John the evangelist taught, and was bishop? And before Jerusalem, where not only James taught, and died bishop, but also Christ Jesus, our Lord and High Priest for ever, whom being Master, I hope honour shall be given to his chair, more than to the chair of his chaplains?

I need to speak nothing, how that Paul telleth Peter's apostleship to concern rather circumcision, or the Jews, and therefore properly pertains not to us, neither need I bring in Gregorius the first, which was bishop of Rome about the year of our Lord 600, who plainly in his works wrote, that this title of primacy, and to be head over all churches under Christ, is a title fit and agreeing only to antichrist; and therefore he calls it a profane, a mischievous, and a horrible title. Whom should we believe now, if we will neither believe apostle nor pope?

If I should tell how this name was first given by Phocas, I should be too long; I purpose, God willing, to set it forth at large in a work which I have begun respecting antichrist, if God for his mercy's sake give me life to finish it; at present therefore I shall desire your ladyship to take this in good part. If they will needs have the bishop of Rome to be acknowledged for the head of the church, then will I urge them that they give us a bishop. But they obtrude unto us a butcher rather, or a bite-sheep, than a bishop. They brag of Peter's succession, of Christ's vicar—this is always in their mouth. But, alas! how can we call him Christ's vicar, that resists Christ, oppugns his verity, persecutes his people, and, like a prelate, prefers himself above God and man? How or wherein do the pope and Christ agree? How does he supply Peter's ministry, who boasts of his succession?

Therefore to begin with this, which I will use at present for a conclusion—if the papists will have the bishop of

Rome to be supreme head of the church of Christ on earth, they must, before they attain this, give us a bishop in deed, and not in name; for whosoever he is that will make this the bond of unity, whatsoever the bishop of Rome may be, surely it must needs follow that they teach a most wicked defection and departing from Christ.

But of this, if God lend me life, I purpose to speak more at large hereafter. Now will I commit your ladyship unto the tuition of God our Father, and Christ our only Head, Pastor, and Keeper, to whom see that you cleave by true faith, which dependeth only on the word of God; which if you follow as a lantern to your feet, and a light to your steps, you shall avoid darkness, and the dangerous deeps whereinto the papists are fallen by the just judgment of God, and seek to bring us into the same dungeon with them, that, the blind following the blind, they both may fall into the ditch: out of which may God deliver them according to his good will, and preserve us for his name's sake, that we, being in his light, may continue therein, and walk in it whilst it is day; so shall the night never overpress us, we going from light to light, from virtue to virtue, from faith to faith, from glory to glory, by the governance of God's good Spirit, which God our Father give us all for ever. Amen.

Your brother in bonds, for the testimony of Jesus
Christ,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXII.

To my dear brother in the Lord, Master Richard Hopkins, and his wife, dwelling in Coventry, and other my faithful brethren and sisters, professors of God's holy gospel there and thereabouts.

THE peace which Christ left to his church and to every true member of the same, (John xiv. Rom. viii.) may the Holy Spirit, the guide of God's children, so ingraft in your heart and in the heart of your good wife, and of all my good brethren and sisters about you, that you may, in respect thereof, unfeignedly contemn all worldly peace, which is contrary to that peace which I speak of, and drives it utterly out of the hearts of all those which would

patch them both together. For we cannot serve two masters—no man can serve God and mammon. (Matt. vi.) Christ's peace cannot be kept with this world's peace: I beseech God therefore of his mercy to give unto you his peace, which passeth all understanding, and so keep your hearts and minds, that they may be pure habitations and mansions for the Holy Spirit (Phil. iv.); yea, for the blessed Trinity, who hath promised to come and dwell in all them that love Christ, and keep his sayings. (John xiv.)

My dearly beloved, the time is now come wherein trial is made of men that have professed to love Christ, and would have been counted keepers of his testimonies. But weal away!* not the tenth person perseveres! The more part divide stakes with the papists and protestants, so that they are become mangy mongrels, and infect all that company with them, to their no small peril. For they pretend outwardly popery, going to mass with the papists, and tarrying with them personally at their anti-christian and idolatrous service, but with their hearts, say they, and with their spirits they serve the Lord. And so by this means they save their swine,† which they would not lose, I mean their worldly pelf, and they would please the protestants, and be counted by them for gospellers, yea, indeed, would they. But, my own beloved in the Lord, flee from such persons as from men most perilous and pernicious both before God and man; for they are false to both, and true to neither. To the magistrates they are false, pretending one thing, and meaning clean contrary: to God they are most untrue, giving him but a piece, which should have the whole. I would they would tell me who made their bodies. Did not God, as well as their spirits and souls? And who keepeth both? Doth not he still? And, alas! shall not he have the service of the body, but it must be given to serve the new-found god of antichrist's invention? Did not Christ buy both our souls and bodies? And wherewith? With any less price than with his precious blood? Ah! wretches then that we are, if we defile either part with the rose-coloured harlot of Babylon's filthy mass abomination! It had been better for us never to have been washed, than so to wallow ourselves in the filthy puddle of popery. It had been better never to have known the truth, than thus to betray it. (Rev. xviii.

* Alas.

† Matt. viii.

2 Pet. ii. Heb. vi. x. Matt. xii. Luke xi.) Surely, surely, let such men fear lest their latter end be worse than the beginning. Their own conscience now accuses them before God if they have any conscience, that they are but dissemblers and hypocrites to God and man. For all the cloaks they make, they cannot deny that their going to church and to mass is of self-love; that is, they go thither because they would avoid the cross; they go thither, because they would be out of trouble. They seek neither the queen's highness nor her laws, which in this point cannot bind the conscience to obey, because they are contrary to God's laws, which bid us often to flee idolatry and worshipping him after men's devices. They seek neither (I say) the laws, if there were any, nor their brethren's advantage, for none comes thereby, neither godliness nor good example, for there can be none found in going to mass, &c. but horrible offences, and woe to them that give them—but they seek their own selves, their own ease, their escaping the cross, &c. And when they have made all the excuses they can, their own conscience will accuse them of this, that their going to church is only because they seek themselves; for if no trouble would ensue for tarrying away, I appeal to their conscience, would they come thither? Never, I dare say.

Therefore, as I said, they seek themselves, they would not carry the cross; and hereof their own conscience, if they have any conscience, accuses them. Now, if their conscience accuse them at this present, what will it do before the judgment-seat of Christ? Who will then excuse it, when Christ shall appear in judgment, and shall begin to be ashamed of them then, which now here are ashamed of him? (Luke ix. xii. Mark viii.) Who then, I say, will excuse these mass-gospellers' consciences? Will the queen's highness? She shall then have more to do for herself than without hearty and speedy repentance she can ever be able to answer, though Peter, Paul, Mary, James, John the pope, and all his prelates, take her part, with all the singing sir Johns* that ever were, are, and shall be. Will the lord chancellor and prelates of the realm excuse themselves there? Nay, nay. They are like then to smart for it so sore, that I would not be in their places for all the whole world. Will the laws of the realm, the nobility, gentlemen, justices of the peace, &c. excuse our gospel

* Romish priests.

massmongers' consciences then? Nay, God knows they can do little there but quake and fear for the heavy vengeance of God about to fall upon them. Will their goods, lands, and possessions, which they by their dissembling have saved—will these serve to excuse them? No, no; God is no merchant, as our mass-priests are. Will masses or trentals and such trash serve? No, verily; the haunters of this gear* shall then be horribly ashamed. Will the catholic church excuse them? Nay, it will, most of all, accuse them; as will all the good fathers, patriarchs, apostles, prophets, martyrs, confessors, and saints, with all the good doctors and good general councils: all these already condemn the mass, and all that ever use it as it is now, being of all idols that ever was, the most abominable and blasphemous to Christ and his priesthood, manhood, and sacrifice: for it maketh the priest that says mass, God's fellow, and better than Christ; for the offerer is always better or equivalent† to the thing offered. (Heb. v.) If, therefore, the priest takes upon him there to offer up Christ, as they boldly affirm they do, then he must needs be better or equal with Christ. Oh! that they would show but one jot of the Scripture of God calling them to this dignity, or of their authority to offer up Christ for the quick and dead, and to apply the benefits and virtue of his death and passion to whom they will! Surely, if this were true, as it is most false and blasphemous, though they prate at their pleasure to the contrary, then it would be no matter at all whether Christ were our friend or no, if the mass-priest were our friend; for they say he can apply Christ's merits to us by his mass if he will, and when he will—therefore we need little to care for Christ's friendship. They can make him when they will, and where they will! Lo! here he is, there he is, say they; but believe them not, saith Christ, believe them not, believe them not, saith he. (Matt. xxiv.) For in his human nature and body, which was made of the substance of the Virgin's body, and not of bread, in this body I say he is, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, in heaven, from whence, and not from the pix,‡ shall he come to judge both the quick and the dead. In the mean season, heaven, saith St. Peter, must receive

* Thing.

† Of equal value.

‡ The receptacle in which the consecrated wafer or host used by the papists is kept.

him. (Acts iii.) And as Paul saith, he prays for us, and now is not seen elsewhere, or otherwise seen than by faith there, until he shall be seen as he is, to the salvation of them that look for his coming, which I trust is not far off. For if the day of the Lord drew near in the apostles' time, which is now above fifteen hundred years past, it cannot be, I trust, long hence now. I trust our Redeemer's coming is at hand. (Rom. viii. Heb. vii. ix. 1 Thess. v. Luke xxi.) Then these mass sayers and seers shall shake and cry to the hills, "Hide us from the fierce wrath of the Lamb," if they repent not in time. (Rev. vi.) Then neither gold nor goods, friendship nor fellowship, lordship nor authority, power nor pleasure, unity nor antiquity, custom nor counsel, doctors' decrees nor any man's devices, will serve. The word which the Lord hath spoken, in that day shall judge (John xii.); the word, I say, of God in that day shall judge. And what saith it of idolatry and idolaters? Saith it not, Flee from them? And further, that they shall be damned? (1 Cor. vi. x.) Oh! terrible sentence to all mass-mongers and worshippers of things made with the hands of bakers, carpenters, &c. This word of God knoweth no more oblations or sacrifices for sin, but one only, which Christ himself offered, never more to be re-offered? (Heb. vii. ix. x.) But in remembrance thereof, his supper is to be eaten sacramentally and spiritually according to Christ's institution, which is so perverted now, that there is nothing in it simply according to the judge, I mean, the word of God. It were good for men to agree with their adversary, the word of God, now whilst they are in the way with it, lest if they linger, it should deliver them to the Judge, Christ, who will commit them to the jailor, and so they shall be cast into prison, and never come out thence till they have paid the uttermost farthing—that is, never. (Matt. v.)

My dearly beloved, therefore mark the word, hearken to the word; it allows no massing, no such sacrificing, nor worshipping of Christ with tapers, candles, copes, canopies, &c. It allows no Latin service, no images in the temples, no praying to dead saints, no praying for the dead. It allows no such dissimulation, as a great many now use outwardly. "If any withdraw himself, my soul," saith the Holy Ghost, "shall have no pleasure in him!" (Heb. x.) It alloweth not the love of this world, which makes men do many things against their consciences, for in them that love

the world, the love of God abides not (1 John ii.); it allows not gatherers elsewhere than with Christ, but says that they scatter abroad. It allows no lukewarm gentlemen; but if God be God, then follow him; if Baal and a piece of bread be God, then follow it. (Rev. iii. 1 Kings xviii.) It allows not faith in the heart that has not confession in the mouth. (Rom. x.) It allows no disciples that will not deny themselves, that will not take up their cross and follow Christ. (Matt. xvi. Mark viii.) It allows not the seeking of our own ease and advantage. (Phil. ii.) It allows not the more part, but the better part. It allows not unity, except it be in verity. It allows no obedience to any, which cannot be done without disobedience to God. (Rom. xvi.) It allows no church that is not the spouse of Christ, and hearkens not to his voice only. (Eph. v.) It allows no doctor that speaks against it. (John x.) It allows no general council that follows it (the word) not in all things. (Gal. i.) Lastly, it allows no angel, much more then any men who teach any other thing than Moses, the prophets, Christ Jesus, and his apostles have taught and left us to look upon in the written word of God, the holy books of the Bible, but it curses all that teach—not only contrary, but also any other doctrine. It says that they are fools, unwise, proud, who will not consent unto the sound word and doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and bids and commands us to flee from such. (1 Tim. vi. Matt. vii. Jer. viii.)

Therefore, obey this commandment, company not with them, especially in their church service, but flee from them; for in what consent they to Christ's doctrine? He bids us pray in a tongue to edify; they command the contrary. (1 Cor. xiv.) He bids us call upon his Father in his name when we pray (Matt. vi.); they bid us run to Mary, Peter, &c. He bids us use his supper in the remembrance of his death and passion, setting it forth till he come, whereby he shows us that he is not there corporeally in the form of bread; therefore saith Paul, "Till he come." He willeth us to eat of the bread, calling it bread after consecration, and all to drink of that cup, making no exception, so that we do it worthily; that is, take it as the sacrament of his body and blood, broken and shed for our sins, and not as the body itself, and blood itself, without bread, without wine, but as the sacrament of his body and blood, whereby he represents and gives unto our faith and signifies himself wholly

unto us, with all the merits and glory of his body and blood. But they forbid utterly the use of the supper to all but their shavelings,* except it be once in the year, and then also they take the cup from us; they never preach forth the Lord's death but in mocks and moes:† they take away all the sacrament by their transubstantiation, for they take away the elements, and so the sacrament. To be short, they most horribly abuse this holy ordinance of the Lord, by adoration, reservation, oblation, ostentation, &c. In nothing are they contented with the simplicity of God's word; they add to and take from at their pleasure, and therefore the plagues of God will fall upon them at length, and upon all that will take their part. They seek not Christ nor his glory, for you see they have utterly cast away his word, and therefore as the prophet saith, (Jer. viii.) there is no wisdom in them. They follow the strumpet church of antichrist, which they call the catholic church, whose foundation and pillars is the devil, and his daughter the mass, with his children the pope, and his prelates. (Rev. xviii.) Their laws are craft and cruelty, their weapons are lying and murder, their end and study is their own glory, fame, wealth, rest and possessions. For if a man speak and do nothing against these, though he is a sodomite, an adulterer, an usurer, &c. it matters not, he shall be quiet enough, no man shall trouble him. But if any one speak any thing to God's glory, which cannot stand without the overthrow of man's glory, then shall he be disquieted, imprisoned, and troubled, except he will play mum, and put his finger upon his mouth, although the same is a most quiet and godly man. So that a man may easily see that they are antichrist's church, and sworn soldiers to the pope and his spouse, and not to Christ and his church, for then would they not cast away God's word, then would they no more be adversaries to his glory, which chiefly consists in obedience to his word. Therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord, seem not to allow this or any part of the pelf of this Romish church and synagogue of Satan. Halt not on both knees, for halting will bring you out of the way; but, like valiant champions of the Lord, confess, confess I say, with your mouth, as occasion serves, and as your vocation requires, the hope and faith you have and feel in your hearts, 1 Kings xviii. Heb. xii. Matt. x. xvi. Mark viii. Luke ix. xiv. 2 Tim. iii. Rom. x. 1 Pet. iii.

* Romish priests.

† Absurd sermons.

But you will say, that to do so is perilous; you shall by that means lose your liberty, your lands, your goods, your friends, your name, your life, &c., and your children shall be left in miserable state, &c. To this I answer, my good brethren, that you have professed in baptism to fight under the standard of your captain Christ; and will you now, for peril's sake, leave your Lord? You made a solemn vow that you would forsake the world; and will you be forsworn, and run to embrace it now? You swore and promised to leave all, and follow Christ; and will you now leave him for your father, your mother, your children, your lands, your life, &c.? "He that hateth not these," saith Christ, "is not worthy of me. He that forsaketh not these, and himself also, and taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, the same shall be none of my disciples." (Matt. x. xvi. xix. Mark viii. Luke ix.) Therefore either bid Christ adieu, be forsworn, and run to the devil quickly, or else say as a Christian should say, that wife, children, goods, life, &c. are not too dear unto you in respect of Christ, who is your portion and inheritance. (Acts xx. Psal. xlix. cxix. Heb. xi. xii.) Let the worldlings, which have no hope of eternal life, fear perils or loss of lands, goods, life, &c. Here is not our home, we are here but pilgrims and strangers; this life is but the desert and wilderness to the land of rest. We look for a city, whose workman is God himself. We are now dwellers in the tents of Kedar. We are now in warfare, in travail, and labour, whereto we were born as the bird to fly. We sorrow and sigh, desiring the dissolution of our bodies, and the putting off corruption, that we might put on incorruption. (Psal. xc. cxx. Job v. ix. 2 Cor. iv. v.) The way we walk in is strait and narrow, and therefore not easy to our enemy, the corrupt flesh; but yet we must walk on, for if we hearken to our enemy, we shall be served not friendly. Let them walk the wide way that are ruled by their enemies; let us be ruled by our friends, and walk the strait way, whose end is weal, as the other is woe. (Matt. vii. xxv.) The time of our suffering is but short, as the time of their ease is not long; but the time of our rejoicing shall be endless, as the time of their torments shall be everlasting and intolerable. Our breakfast is sharp, but our supper is sweet. The afflictions of this life may not be compared in any part to the glory that shall be revealed unto us. (Rom. viii.) This is certain, if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him; if we con-

fess him, he will confess us, and that before his Father in heaven, and all his angels and saints, saying, Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning. (Matt. x. xxv.) There shall be joy, mirth, pleasure, solace, melody, and all kinds of beatitude and felicity, such as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man is able to conceive it as it is. (Isa. lxiv.) In respect of this and of the joy set before us, should not we run our race, though it is something rough? (Heb. xii.) Did not Moses do so, the prophets so, Christ so, the apostles so, the martyrs so, and the confessors so? They were satisfied of the sweetness of this, and therefore they contemned all that man and devils could do to them; their souls thirsted after the Lord and his tabernacles, and therefore their lives and goods were not too dear to them. Read Heb. xi. and 2 Mac. vii., and let us go the same way, that is, by many tribulations. Let us labour to enter into the kingdom of heaven; for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. (Acts xiv. 2 Tim. iii.)

Think therefore that the cross, if it comes for confession of Christ, is no strange thing to God's children, (1 Pet. iv.) but rather take it as the Lord's medicine, by which he helpeth our infirmities, and setteth forth his glory. Our sins have deserved cross upon cross; now if God gives us to suffer his cross for his truth, and confessing him;—as he by it buries our sin, so he glorifies us, making us like to Christ here, that we may be like unto him elsewhere. For if we are partakers of the affliction, we shall be partakers of the consolation; if we are like in ignominy, we shall be like in glory. (Rom. viii. 2 Cor. i. 1 Cor. xv.) We have great cause to give thanks to God for lending us liberty, lands, goods, wife, children, life, &c. thus long; so that we shall be guilty of ingratitude, except we are cheerful and content, though he shall now come and take the same away. God hath given, and God hath taken away, saith Job; as it pleases the Lord, so be it done. And should not we do this, especially when the Lord takes these away of love; to try us, and prove us, whether we are faithful lovers or not, that is, whether we love him better than his gifts or otherwise? It is a truth of all truths to be laid up in our hearts, that it is not lost which seems to be so for the confession of Christ. Read 2 Kings iv. In this life your children shall find goods plentiful, and a

blessing upon them when you are gone, and all your goods taken away. God is so good, that he helpeth the young ravens before they can fly, and feedeth them when their dams most unkindly have left them; and think you that God, which is the God of the widows and fatherless children, will not specially have a care for the babes of his dear saints, which die or lose any thing for conscience to him? (Psal. xxxvii. cxlvii. lxxiii. lv.) Oh! my dearly beloved, therefore look up with the eyes of faith; consider not things present, but rather things to come; be content now to go whither God shall gird and lead us. Let us now cast ourselves wholly into his hands with our wives, children, and all that ever we have. Let us be sure the hairs of our head are numbered, so that one hair shall not perish without the good will of our dear Father, who has commanded his angels to pitch their tents about us, and in their hands to take and hold us up, that we shall not hurt so much as our foot against a stone. (Matt. x. Psal. xci.) Let us use earnest prayer; let us heartily repent; let us hearken diligently to God's word. Let us keep ourselves pure from all uncleanness, both of spirit and body. Let us flee from all evil, and all appearance of evil. Let us be diligent in our vocation, and in doing good to all men, especially to them that be of the household of faith. Let us live in peace with all men as much as is in us. And the Lord of peace give us his peace, and that for evermore. Amen. (Eph. vi. Luke xiii. 1 Cor. iv. 1 Thess. v. Matt. xxv. 1 Tim. v. Rom. xii. xvi.) I pray you remember me, your poor afflicted brother, in your hearty prayers to God. This 2d of September.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXIII.

*A letter to Master Richard Hopkins, then sheriff of Coventry, and prisoner in the Fleet, for the faithful and constant confessing of God's holy gospel.**

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, I wish unto you, as unto mine own brother, yea, as to mine own heart root, God's

* Richard Hopkins, whom Master Bradford commendeth so much in this letter, was sheriff of Coventry, and during the time of his sheriffalty, was accused by certain malignant adversaries, of matters

mercy, and the feelings of the same plentifully in Christ, our sweet Saviour, who gave himself a ransom for our sins, and a price for our redemption: praised therefore be his holy name for ever and ever! Amen.

I will not excuse myself for not sending unto you hitherto, suffering for the Lord's sake, as you do, to the comfort of me and all that love you in the truth; but rather accuse myself both before God and you, desiring your forgiveness, and that you would with me pray to God for pardon of this my unkind forgetting you, and all my other sins, which I beseech the Lord in his mercy to do away, for his Christ's sake. Amen.

Now I would be glad if I could make amends to youward; but because I cannot, I heartily desire you to accept that will, and this which I now write unto you thereafter; I mean, after my will, and not after the deed, to accept and take it. At this present, my dear heart in the Lord, you are in a blessed state, although it seem otherwise to you, or rather unto your old Adam, which I dare now be so bold as to discern* from you, because you would have him not only discerned, but also utterly destroyed. For if God be true, then is his word true.

Now his word pronounces of your state, that it is happy, therefore it must needs be so. To prove this, I think there is no need; for you know that the Holy Ghost saith, that they are happy which suffer for righteousness' sake, and that God's glory and Spirit rests on those who suffer

pertaining to religion. What it was, I am not certainly informed, unless it were for sending and lending unto a thief, being then in prison ready to be hanged, a certain English book of Scripture for his spiritual comfort.

Whereupon he being maliciously accused, was sent for and committed to the Fleet, and there kept a long time, not without great peril of his life. And being at length delivered out of prison, following this counsel of M. Bradford, and minding to keep his conscience pure from idolatry, he was driven with his wife and eight young children to quit the realm, and so leaving all other worldly respects, with his great loss and damage he went into Germany, where he continued in the city of Basil, till the death of Queen Mary, being like a good Tobias, to his power a friendly helper, and a comfortable reliever of other English exiles; God's holy blessing so working with him, that in those far countries, he neither fell into any great decay, neither any one of all his household, during all the time there suffered materially, but so many as he brought out, so many he carried home again, yea and that with advantage, and God's plenty upon him. Fox.

* Distinguish or separate.

for conscience to God. Now this you cannot but know, that this your suffering is for righteousness' sake, and for conscience to God-wards, for else you might be out of trouble, even immediately. I know in very deed that you have felt and do feel that your unthankfulness to God, and other sins, witness to you, and that betwixt God and yourself, you have deserved this imprisonment and lack of liberty; and I would that you so would confess unto God in your prayer, with petition for pardon, and thanksgiving for his correcting you here. But you know that the magistrates do not persecute your sins, your unthankfulness, &c. but they persecute in you Christ himself, his righteousness, his verity; and therefore happy are you that have found such favour with God your Father, that he accounts you worthy to suffer for his sake in the sight of man: surely you shall rejoice therefore one day with a joy unspeakable in the sight of man also.

You may think yourself born in a blessed time, who have found this grace with God, to be a vessel of honour, to suffer with his saints, yea, with his Son. My beloved, God has not done so with many. The apostle says, Not many noble, not many rich, not many wise in the world hath the Lord God chosen. Oh! then what cause have you to rejoice, that, amongst the "not many," he hath chosen you to be one! For this cause has God placed you in your office, that you might the more see his special dignation* and love towards you. It had not been so great a thing for Master Hopkins to have suffered as Master Hopkins, as it is for Master Hopkins to suffer, as Master Sheriff. Oh! happy day, that you were made sheriff, by which, as God in this world promoted you to a more honourable degree, so by suffering in that station he hath exalted you in heaven, and in the sight of his church and children, to a much more excellent glory. When was it read that a sheriff of a city suffered for the Lord's sake? Where read we of any sheriff that has been cast into prison for conscience to God-ward? How could God have dealt more lovingly with you, than herein he has done? To the end of the world it shall be written for a memorial to your praise, that Richard Hopkins, Sheriff of Coventry, for conscience to do his office before God, was cast into the Fleet, and there kept prisoner a long time. Happy, and twice happy are you, if for this you may give your life. Never

* Favour.

could you have attained to this promotion of this sort, out of that office. How do you preach now, not only to all men, but especially to magistrates in this realm! Who would ever have thought that you should have been the first magistrate, that for Christ's sake should have lost any thing.* As I said before, therefore, I say again, that your state is happy. Good brother, before God I write the truth unto you, my conscience bearing me witness, that you are in a most happy state with the Lord and before his sight.

Be thankful therefore, rejoice in your trouble, pray for patience, persevere to the end, let patience have her perfect work. If you want this wisdom and power, ask it of God, who will give it to you in his good time; hope still in him, yea, if he should slay you, yet trust in him with Job; and you shall perceive that the end will be that you find him merciful and full of compassion; for he will not break promise with you, which hitherto never did so with any. He is with you in trouble; he hears you calling upon him; yea, before you call, your desires are not only known, but accepted through Christ. If now and then he hide his face from you, it is but to provoke your appetite to make you to long for him the more. This is most true, he is coming, and will come, he will not be long; but if for a time he seem to tarry, yet stand you still, and you shall see the wonderful works of the Lord. Oh, beloved! wherefore should you be heavy? Is not Christ Emmanuel, God with us? Shall you not find, that as he is true in saying, "In the world you shall have trouble," so is he in saying, "In me you have comfort?" He not only declares that trouble will come, but also that comfort shall ensue. And what comfort? Such a comfort as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man can conceive. Oh, great comfort! who shall have this? Truly, they that suffer for the Lord; and are not you one of them? Yea, verily, are you. Then, as I said, happy, happy, and happy again are you, my dearly beloved in the Lord. You now suffer with the Lord, surely you shall be glorified with him. Call upon God therefore in your trouble, and he will hear you, yea, deliver you in such sort, as shall make most to his and your glory also. And in this calling I heartily pray you to pray for me your fellow in affliction. Now we are

* Bradford means that M. Hopkins was the first magistrate who suffered for the truth in Queen Mary's reign. See *Fox*.

both going in the highway to heaven; for by many afflictions we must enter in thither, whither God bring us for his mercy's sake. Amen. Amen. Your fellow in affliction,
 JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXIV.

To my good sister, Mistress Elizabeth Brown.

Good sister, may God our Father make perfect the good he hath begun in you unto the end.

I am afraid to write unto you, because you so overcharge yourself at all times, even whensoever I do but send unto you commendations. I would be more bold on you than many others, and therefore you might suspend so great tokens, till I should write unto you of my need; which doubtless I would do if it urged me. Dear sister, I see your unfeigned love towards me in God, and have done so long time, which I do recompense with the like, and will do, by God's grace, so long as I live, and therefore I hope not to forget you, but in my poor prayers to have you in remembrance, as I hope you have me. Otherwise I can do you no service, except it is now and then by my writing to hinder you from better exercise, when yet the end of my writing is to excite and stir up your heart to go onwards more earnestly in your well-begun enterprise. For you know, none shall be crowned, but such as strive lawfully; and none receive the prize, but those that run to the appointed mark: none shall be saved, but such as persist and continue to the very end.

Therefore, dear sister, remember that we have need of patience, that, when we have done the good will of God, we may receive the promise. Patience and perseverance are the proper marks, whereby God's children are known from counterfeit; they that persevere not were always but hypocrites; many make godly beginnings, yea, their progress seemeth marvellous, but yet, after all, in the end they fail. These were never of us, saith St. John, for if they had been of us, they would have continued unto the very end.

Take courage therefore, mine own beloved in the Lord: as you have well begun, and well gone forward, so persist well and end happily, and then all is yours. Though this

be sharp and sour, yet it is not tedious and long. Do all that ever you do simply for God, and as to God; neither unkindness, nor any other thing shall make you leave off from well doing, as long as you may do well. Accustom yourself now to see God continually, that he may be all in all unto you. In good things behold his mercy, and apply it unto yourself. In evil things and plagues behold his judgments, through which learn to fear him. Beware of sin as the serpent of the soul, which spoils us of all ornament and seemly apparel in God's sight. Let Christ crucified be your book to study, and that both night and day. Mark your vocation, and be diligent in the works thereof. Use hearty and earnest prayer, and that in spirit. In all things give thanks to God our Father through Christ. Labour here to have life everlasting begun in you, for else it will not be enjoyed elsewhere. Set God's judgments often before your eyes, that now examining yourself, you may make diligent suit, and obtain never to come into judgment. Uncover your evils to God, that he may cover them. Beware of this antichristian trash; defile not yourself in soul or body therewith, but accomplish holiness in the fear of God, and bear no yoke with unbelievers. Look for the coming of the Lord, which is at hand; by earnest prayer and godly life, hasten it. God our Father accomplish his good work in you. Amen. Commend me to my good mother, Mistress Wilkinson, to my very dear sister, Mistress Warcup. I shall daily commend you all to God, and I pray you do the like for me.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXV.

To a friend of his, instructing him how he should answer his adversaries.

My good brother, may our merciful God and dear Father through Christ, open your eyes effectually to see, and your heart ardently to desire, the everlasting joy which he hath prepared for his slaughter-sheep, that is, for such as shrink not from his truth, for any such storm's sake. Amen.

When you shall come before the magistrates, to give an answer of the hope which is in you, do it with all reve-

rence and simplicity. And because you may be something affrighted by the power of the magistrates, and the cruelty which they will threaten against you, I wish you to set before you the good father Moses, and follow his example; for he set the invisible God before his eyes of faith, and with them looked upon God and his glorious majesty and power, while with his corporeal eyes he saw Pharaoh and all his fearful terrors. So do you my dearly beloved—let your inward eyes give such light unto you, that while you know you are before the magistrates, remember much more, that you and they also, are present before the face of God, which will give such wisdom to you, who fear him and seek his praise, as the enemies shall wonder at; and further, he will so order their hearts and doings, that they shall, will they nill they, serve God's providence towards you, (which you cannot avoid though you would,) as shall be most to his glory and your everlasting comfort.

Therefore, my good brother, let your whole study be only to please God; put him always before your eyes, for he is on your right hand, lest you should be moved. He is faithful, and never will suffer you to be tempted above that he will make you able to bear: yea, every hair of your head he hath numbered, so that one of them shall not perish without his good will, which cannot but be good unto you, since he is become your Father through Christ. And therefore, as he has given you to believe in him, (God increase his belief in us all,) so he now graciously gives unto you to suffer for his name's sake; which you ought with all thankfulness to receive, since you are made worthy to drink of the self-same cup, which not only the very sons of God drank of before you, but even the very natural Son of God himself hath happily brought you. Oh! may he of his mercy make us thankful to pledge him again. Amen.

Because the chiefest matter they will trouble you, and go about to deceive you with, is the sacrament, not of Christ's body and blood, but of the altar, as they call it, thereby destroying the sacrament, which Christ instituted, I would you noted these two things; first, that the sacrament of the altar, which the priest offers in the mass, and eats privately by himself, is not the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, instituted by him, as Christ's institution, plainly written and set forth in the Scriptures, being compared to their using of it, plainly declares.

Again, if they talk with you of Christ's sacrament, instituted by him, asking whether it is Christ's body or not, answer them, that to the eyes of your reason, to your taste, and corporeal senses, it is bread and wine, and therefore the Scripture calls it so after the consecration. But that to the eyes, taste, and senses of your faith, which ascends to the right hand of God in heaven, where Christ sitteth, it is in very deed Christ's body and blood, which spiritually your soul feedeth on to everlasting life, in faith and by faith, even as your body now feedeth on the sacramental bread and sacramental wine.

By this means, you shall not allow transubstantiation, or any of their popish opinions, and you shall declare the sacrament to be a matter of faith, and not of reason, as the papists make it; for they deny God's omnipotency, since they say Christ is not there, if bread be there. But faith looks on the omnipotence of God joined with his promise, and doubts not but that Christ is able to give what he promises us spiritually by faith—the bread still remaining in substance—as well as if the substance of bread were taken away; for Christ says not in any place, "This is no bread." But of this God shall instruct you, if you hang on his promise, and pray for the power and wisdom of his Spirit, which undoubtedly, as you are bound to look for, praying for it, so he has bound himself by his promise to give it; which may he grant unto us both, and to all his people, for his name's sake, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXVI.

To certain godly men, whom he exhorts to be patient under the cross, and constant in the true doctrine which they had professed.

My dearly beloved in the Lord, as in him I wish you well to fare, so I pray God I and you may continue in his true service, that we may perpetually enjoy the same welfare, here in hope, and in heaven indeed and eternally.

You know this world is not your home, but a pilgrimage, and place wherein God tries his children; and therefore as it knoweth you not, nor can know you, so I trust you know not it, that is, allow it not, nor in any point seem so to do,

although by many you are advised thereto. For this hot sun, which now shineth, burns so sorely that the corn, which is sown upon sand and stony ground, begins to wither; that is, many who beforesimes were taken for hearty gospellers, begin now, for the fear of afflictions, to relent, yea, to turn to their vomit again; thereby declaring, that though they go from amongst us, yet were they never of us, or else they would have still tarried with us; and neither for gain nor loss have left us, either in word or deed. As for their hearts, which undoubtedly are double, and therefore in danger of God's curse, we have as much of them with us as the papists have; and more too, by their own judgment; for they play wilybeguile themselves; and think it enough inwardly to favour the truth, though outwardly they curry favour. They say, "What though with my body I do this or that, God knows my heart is whole in him."

Ah, brother! if your heart be whole with God, why do not you confess and declare yourself accordingly, by word and fact? You believe in your heart either that what you say is good or not. If it is good, why are you ashamed of it? If it is evil, why do you keep it in your heart? Is not God able to defend you while adventuring yourself for his cause? Or will he not defend his worshippers? Does not the Scripture say, that the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear him, and trust in his mercy? And whereto? why truly, to deliver their souls from death, and to feed them in time of hunger.

If this is true, as it is most true, why are we afraid of death, as though God could not comfort or deliver us, or would not, according to his promise? Why are we afraid of the loss of our goods, as though God would leave them that fear him destitute of all good things, and so do, against his most ample promises? Ah! faith, faith, how few feel thee now-a-days! Full truly, said Christ, that he should scarcely find faith when he came on earth. For if men believed these promises, they would never do any thing outwardly which inwardly they disallow. No example of men, how many soever they are, or how learned soever they are, can prevail in this behalf; for the pattern which we must follow is Christ himself, and not the more numerous company or custom. His word is the lantern to lighten our steps, and not learned men; company and custom are to be considered according to what they allow;

learned men are to be listened to and followed according to God's lore and law; for else the greater part go to the devil. Custom causes error and blindness; so learning, if it is not according to the light of God's word, is poison, and learned men are most pernicious. The devil is called *dæmon*, for his cunning, and the children of the world in their generation are much wiser than the children of light; and I know the devil and his darlings have always, for the most part, more helps in this life, than Christ's church and her children. They, the devil and his synagogue I mean, have custom, multitude, unity, antiquity, learning, power, riches, honour, dignity and promotions plenty, as they always have had, and shall have commonly, and for the most part, until Christ's coming, much more than the true church has at present, heretofore has had, or hereafter shall have. For her glory, riches, and honour, are not here; her trial, cross, and warfare, are here.

And therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord, consider these things accordingly: consider what you are:—not worldlings, but God's children. Consider where you are, not at home, but in a strange country. Consider among whom you are conversant, even in the midst of your enemies, and of a wicked generation; and then I trust you will not much grieve at affliction, which you cannot be without, being, as you are, God's children, in a strange country, and in the midst of your enemies; except you would leave your Captain, Christ, and follow Satan for the muck of this earth, or for rest and quietness, which he may promise you; and you indeed may think you shall receive it by doing as he would have you to do, but, my dear hearts, he is not able to pay what he promiseth: peace and war come from God, riches and poverty, wealth and woe. The devil has no power but by God's permission. If then God permit him a little to attack your goods, body, or life; I pray you tell me, what can much hurt you, as Peter saith, you being followers of godliness? Think you that God will not remember you in his time, as shall be most to your comfort? Can a woman forget the child of her womb? and if she should, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord. Look upon Abraham in his exile and misery; look upon Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and the prophets, apostles, and all the godly from the beginning: and, my good brethren, is not God the same God? Is he a changeling? You have heard of the patience of Job, saith St. James, and you have

seen the end, how that God is merciful, pitiful, and long-suffering; even so I say unto you, that you shall find accordingly, if you are patient—that is, if you fear him, set his word before you, serve him thereafter; and if when he lay his cross on you, you bear it with patience, which you shall do when you consider it not according to the present sense, but according to the end. Heb. xii. 2 Cor. iv.

Therefore, I heartily beseech you, and out of my bonds, which I suffer for your sake, I pray you, my own dear hearts in the Lord, that you would cleave in heart, and humble obedience, to the doctrine taught you by me, and many others my brethren. For we have taught you no fables, nor tales of men, nor our own fantasies, but the very word of God, which we are ready to confirm with our lives, God so enabling us, as we trust he will, and by the shedding of our blood, in all patience and humble obedience to the superior powers, to testify and seal up; as well that you might be more certain of the doctrine, as that you might be ready to confess the same before this wicked world; knowing that if we confess Christ, and his truth, before men, he will confess us before his Father in heaven; but if we are ashamed hereof, for loss of life, friends, or goods, he will be ashamed of us before his Father, and his holy angels in heaven.

Therefore take heed, for the Lord's sake; take heed, take heed, and defile not your bodies or souls with this Romish and antichristian religion now set up amongst us again, but come away; come away, as the angel crieth, from amongst them, in their idolatrous service, lest you be partakers of their iniquity. Hearken to your preachers, as the Thessalonians* did to Paul; that is, compare their sayings with the Scriptures; if they are not found according therewith, the morning light shall not shine upon them. Use much and hearty prayer for the spirit of wisdom, knowledge, humbleness, meekness, sobriety, and repentance, which we have great need of, because our sins have thus provoked the Lord's anger against us; but let us bear his anger, and acknowledge our faults with bitter tears and sorrowful sighs, and doubtless he will be merciful to us, after his wonted mercy. The which may he vouchsafe to do for his holy name's sake, in Christ Jesus our Lord; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, glory, praise, and everlasting thanks, from this time forth

* He means the Bereans.

evermore. Amen. Out of prison, by yours in the Lord to command.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXVII.

To my dear friend and brother in the Lord, Master George Eaton.

ALMIGHTY God, our dear Father, give to you daily more and more the knowledge of his truth, and a love and life to the same, for ever in all things, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I should begin with thanksgiving to God, and to you as his steward, for the great benefits I have oftentimes received from you, and specially in this time of my greatest need, far above my expectation. But because thankfulness lies not in words or letters, and because you look not to hear of your well doing from man, I purpose to pass it over with silence, and to give myself at present to that which is more profitable unto you; that is, briefly to labour, as God shall lend me his grace, or at least to show my good will to help you, from God's gift to me, as you by your doing the like from God's gift unto you have already done and so occasioned me greatly hereto. I would gladly have done it heretofore, but I have been discouraged to write unto you, lest hurt might come unto you thereby, which is the only cause why I have not hitherto written, and now would not have done so, but that I stand in doubt whether ever hereafter I shall have liberty to write unto you. And therefore, whilst I may, I thought good to do thus much, to declare unto you, that I think myself much bound to God for you, and I desire to gratify* the same, as God shall enable me.

The days are come, and approach more and more, in which trial will be made of such as have unfeignedly read and heard the gospel; for all others will abide no trial but as the world will. But because I have better hope of you, I cannot but pray to God, to confirm you in him, and to beseech you to do the same. I know it will be a dangerous thing indeed to declare that which you have confessed in word and have believed in heart, especially concerning

* Recompense.

the papistical mass; but notwithstanding, we must not for dangers depart from the truth, except we will depart from God; for inasmuch as God is the truth, and the truth is God, he that departeth from the one departeth from the other.

Now, I need not tell you, what a thing it is to depart from God, because you know it is no less than a departing from all that is good, and not only so, but also a coupling of yourself to all that is evil. For there is no mean; either we depart from God, and cleave to the devil, or depart from the devil, and cleave to God. Some men there are, who, for fear of danger and loss of that which they must leave, when, where, and to whom they know not, deceive themselves after the just judgment of God, and believe the devil, (because they have no desire to believe God,) by hearkening to Satan's counsel of parting stakes with God, so as to be persuaded that it is not evil, or else no great evil, inwardly in heart to conceal the truth, and outwardly in fact to betray it. And therefore, though they know the mass to be abomination, yet they esteem it but a straw to go to it as the world do. In which the Lord knoweth they deceive themselves to damnation, and dream as they lust. For surely the body departing from the truth, and so from God, will draw and drown in damnation the soul also; for we shall receive according to that we do in the body, good or bad, and therefore the matter is more to be considered than men make of it, the more it is to be lamented. But I trust (my right dearly beloved) you will consider this with yourself, and call your conscience to account, as God's word maketh the charge.

Beware of false auditors, which, making a false charge, can get no quietness of the conscience according to God's word; therefore cast your charge, and there shall you see that no belief of the heart justifies, which has not confession of the mouth to declare the same. No man can serve two masters: he that gathers not with Christ (as no mass-seer,* unreproving it, does) scatters abroad. God's chosen are such as not only have good hearts, but also kiss not their hand, nor bow their knee to Baal. Christ's disciples are none but such as deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. He that is ashamed of Christ and of his truth in this generation, must look that Christ will be ashamed of him in the day of judgment; he that denieth

* Spectator of the mass.

Christ before men, shall be denied before God. Now there are two kinds of denial, yea, three kinds; one in heart, another in word, and the third in deed: in which three kinds all mass-gospellers are so bitten, that all the surgeons in the world can lay no healing plaster thereto, till repentance appear, and draw out the matter of using the evil, and resorting to the mass; for we should be pure from all spots, not only of the flesh, but also of the spirit.

And our duty is to depart not only from evil, that is, the mass, but also from the appearance of evil; that is, from coming to it. Wo unto them that give offence to the children of God; that is, which occasion by any means any to tarry in the church at mass-time; much more then they which occasion any to come thereto; most of all, they which enforce any thereto. Assuredly, a most heavy vengeance of God hangeth upon such. Such as decline to their crookedness, God will lead on with wicked workers, whose portion shall be snares, fire, brimstone, and stormy tempests, (Psal. xi.,) whose palace and home shall be hell-fire and darkness, whose cheers shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, whose song shall be Woe, woe, woe, from which the Lord of mercy deliver us.

My dearly beloved, I write not this as one that thinks not well of you, but as one that would you did well. And therefore, to help you thereto, I write as I write, beseeching God to open your eyes to see the dangers men are in that dissemble with God and man, to the end you do not the like, and also to open your eyes to see the high service you do to God, in adventuring yourself, and what you have, for his sake. Oh! that men's eyes were opened to see that the glory of God resteth upon them that suffer any thing for his sake! Oh! that we considered, that it is happiness to suffer any thing for Christ's sake, which have deserved to suffer so much for our sins and iniquities! Oh! that our eyes were opened to see the great reward they shall have in heaven, who suffer the loss of any thing for God's sake!

If we knew the cross to be as a purgation most profitable to the soul, as a purifying fire to burn away the dross of our dirtiness and sins, as an oven to bake us in, to be the Lord's bread, as soap to make us white, as a stew* to mundify and cleanse us, as God's framehouse, to make us like to Christ here in suffering, that we may be so in reigning;

* A pool of water.

then should we not so much care for this little short sorrow, which the flesh suffers in it, but rather in consideration of the exceeding endless joy and comfort which will ensue, we should run forwards in our race after the example of our captain Christ, who comfort us all in our distress, and give us the spirit of prayer, therein to watch and pray, that we be not led into temptation, which God grant to us for ever. Amen.

And thus much I thought good to write to you at this present, to declare my carefulness for the well doing of you and all your family, whom I commend with you into the hands and tuition of God our Father. So be it.

Your own in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Another letter to Master George Eaton.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, recompense abundantly into your bosom, my dearly beloved, here and eternally, the good which from him by you I have continually received since my coming into prison; otherwise I never can be able to requite your loving kindness here, than by praying for you, and, after this life, by witnessing your faith—which is declared to me by your fruits—when we shall come and appear together before the throne of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whither, I thank God, I am even now going; ever looking when officers will come and fulfil the precept of the prelates, wherof, though I cannot complain, because I have justly deserved a hundred thousand deaths at God's hands, by reason of my sins; yet I may and must rejoice, because the prelates do not persecute in me my iniquities, but Christ Jesus and his verity; so that they persecute not me, they hate not me, but they persecute Christ: they hate Christ. And because they can do him no hurt, for he sitteth in heaven, and laugheth them and their devices to scorn, as one day they shall feel, therefore they turn their rage upon his poor sheep, as Herod their father did upon the infants. (Matt. ii.) Great cause therefore have I to rejoice, that my dear Saviour Christ will vouchsafe amongst many, to choose me to be a vessel of grace, to suffer in me who have deserved so often and justly to suffer for my sins

that I might be most assured I shall be a vessel of honour, in whom he will be glorified.

Therefore, my right dear brother in the Lord, rejoice with me; give thanks for me; and cease not to pray, that God for his mercy's sake would make perfect the good he hath begun in me. And, as for the doctrine which I have professed and preached, I do confess unto you in writing, as to the whole world I shortly shall, by God's grace, in suffering, that it is the very true doctrine of Jesus Christ, of his church, of his prophets, apostles, and all good men; so that if an angel should come from heaven and preach otherwise, the same were accursed.

Therefore waver not, dear heart in the Lord, but be confirmed in it; and, as your vocation requires, when God so will, confess it, though it be perilous so to do. The end shall evidently show another manner of pleasure for so doing than tongue can tell. Be diligent in prayer, and watch therein; use reverent reading of God's word; set the shortness of this time before your eyes; and let not the eternity that is to come depart out of your memory. Practise in doing what you learn by reading and hearing: decline from evil and pursue good: remember them that are in bonds, especially for the Lord's cause, as members of your body and fellow-heirs of grace. Forget not the affliction of Sion, and the oppression of Jerusalem, and God, our Father, shall give you his continual blessing, through Christ our Lord. May he guide us, as his dear children, for ever. Amen. And thus I take my farewell of you, dear brother, for ever in this present life, till we shall meet in eternal bliss, whither may our good God and Father bring us shortly. Amen. God bless all your babes for ever. Amen. Out of prison, this 8th of February.

Your afflicted brother for the Lord's cause,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XXXIX.

Another letter to Mistress Ann Warcup.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, for his Christ's sake, increase in us faith, by which we may more and more see what glory and honour is reposed and safely kept in heaven for all them that believe with the heart, and confess Christ and his truth with the mouth. Amen.

My dearly beloved, I remember that once heretofore I wrote unto you a farewell upon conjecture, but now I write my farewell to you in this life, indeed upon certain knowledge. My staff standeth at the door. I continually look for the sheriff to come for me, and I thank God I am ready for him. Now go I to practise that which I have preached: now am I climbing up the hill—it will cause me to puff and to blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is steep and high, my breath is short, my strength is feeble; pray, therefore, to the Lord for me, that as I have now, through his goodness, even almost come to the top, I may by his grace be strengthened, not to rest till I come where I should be. Oh, loving Lord! put out thy hand, and draw me unto thee; for no man cometh but he whom the Father draweth. See, my dearly beloved, God's loving mercy; he knoweth my short breath and great weakness. As he sent a fiery chariot for Elijah, so sends he one for me; for by fire my dross must be purified, that I may be fine gold in his sight! O unthankful wretch that I am! Lord, do thou forgive my unthankfulness. Indeed I confess (right dear to me in the Lord) that my sins have deserved hell fire, much more then, this fire. But, lo! so loving is my Lord, that he converteth the remedy for my sins, the punishment for my transgressions, into a testimonial of his truth, and a testification of his truth, which the prelates persecute in me, and not my sins; therefore they persecute not me, but Christ in me, who, I doubt not, will take my part unto the very end. Amen.

Oh! that I had a heart so open that it could receive, as I should do, this great benefit and unspeakable dignity, which God my Father offereth to me. Now pray for me, my dearly beloved, pray for me, that I may never shrink. I shall never shrink, I hope: I trust in the Lord I shall never shrink; for he that always has taken my part, I am assured will not leave me when I have most need, for his truth and mercy's sake. O Lord help me! Into thy hands I commend me wholly. In the Lord is my trust; I care not what man can do unto me. Amen. My dearly beloved, say you Amen also, and come after, if so God call you. Be not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but keep company with him still. He will never leave you; but, in the midst of temptation, will give you an outscape, to make you able to bear the brunt. Use hearty prayer; reverently read and hear God's word; put it in practice; look for the cross;

lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh; know that the death of God's saints is precious in his sight; be joyful in the Lord; pray for the mitigation of God's heavy displeasure upon our country. God keep us for ever; God bless us with his spiritual blessings in Christ. And thus I bid you farewell for ever in this present life. Pray for me, pray for me. God make perfect his good work begun in me. Amen. Out of prison, the seventh of February.

Yours in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XL.

*To a certain godly gentlewoman, troubled and afflicted by her friends for not coming to the mass.**

I wish unto you, right worshipful, and my dearly beloved sister in the Lord, as to myself, the continual grace and comfort of Christ, and of his holy word, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who strengthens your inward man with the strength of God, that you may continue to the end in the faithful obedience of God's gospel, whereto you are called. Amen.

I perceived by yourself, the last day when you were with me, how that you are in the school-house and trial-parlour of the Lord, which to me is a great comfort, at the least it should be to see the number of God's elect by you increased, who are in that state to which God has not called many, as Paul saith; and as it is a comfort to me, so should it be a confirmation unto me, that the Lord, for his faithfulness' sake, will make perfect and finish the good he hath begun in you to the end.

If, then, your cross be to me, a comfort, or token of your election, and a confirmation of God's continual favour, my dearly beloved, how much more ought it to be so unto you, unto whom he hath not only given to believe, but also to come into the track of suffering for his sake; and that not commonly of common enemies, but even of your own father, mother, and all your friends; I mean kinsfolks, as you

* A certain gentlewoman, being troubled by her father and mother for not coming to mass, sent her servant to visit Master Bradford in prison; who, attending to the woful case of the gentlewoman, and to the intent partly to confirm her with counsel, and partly to relieve her oppressed mind with some comfort, directed this letter unto her.—*Fox.*

told me. By which, I see Christ's words are true: how he came to give his children such a peace with him, as the devil might not, nor may abide; and therefore stirreth up father and mother, sister and brother, rather than it should continue. But, my dear sister, if you cry with David, to the Lord, and complain to him, how that, for conscience to him, your father and mother have forsaken you, you shall hear him speak in your heart, that he has received you; and by this would have you to see, that he makes you here like to Christ, that elsewhere, in heaven, you might be like unto him. Of this you ought to be most assured, knowing that in time, even when Christ shall appear, you shall be like unto him; for he will make your body, which now you defile not with idolatrous service in going to mass, to be like unto his own glorious and immortal body according to the power whereby he is able to do all things. He will confess you before his Father, who do not deny his verity, in word or deed, before your father: he will make you reign with him who now suffer for him, and with him. He will reward you, with himself and all the glory he hath, who now for his sake deny yourself with all that you have; he will not leave you comfortless, that seek no comfort but at his hand. Though for a little time you are afflicted, yet therein will he comfort and strengthen you; and at the length make you to be joyful with him, in such joy as is infinite and endless. He will wipe all the tears from your eyes; he will embrace you as your dear husband; he will, after he has proved you, crown you with a crown of glory and immortality, such as the heart of man shall never be able to conceive in such sort as it is. He now beholds your steadfastness and striving to do his good will; and shortly he will show you how steadfast he is, and will be ready to do your will after you have fully resigned it to His will.

Pledge Christ in his cup of the cross, and you shall pledge him in the cup of his glory. Desire to drink it before it come to the dregs, whereof the wicked shall drink; and all those who for fear of the cross, and pledging the Lord, walk with the wicked, by betraying in fact and deed, that which their heart embraces for verity. Which if you should do, which God forbid, then, my dear mistress and sister in the Lord, you should not only lose all that I have before spoken, and much more infinitely of eternal joy and glory, but also be a castaway, and a partaker of God's most heavy displeasure in hell-fire eternally; and so for a

little ease, which you cannot tell how long it will last, would lose for ever and ever all ease and comfort. For he that gathers not with me, saith Christ, and no mass-gospeller does so, scattereth abroad. According to that we do in this body, we shall receive, be it good or bad. If of our words we shall be judged to condemnation or salvation, much more then of our facts and deeds. You cannot be a partaker of God's religion and antichrist's service, whereof the mass is most principal. You cannot be a member of Christ's church, and a member of the pope's church. You must glorify God, not only in soul and heart, but also in body and deed. You may not think that God requires less of you, his wife now, than your husband did of you. If your husband would have both heart and body, shall Christ have less, think you, who has so bitterly and dearly bought it? If your husband could not admit an excuse, that your heart is his only, if your body was not; do you think that Christ will allow your body at mass, although your heart consent not to it?

God esteems his children, not only by their hearts, but by their pure hands and works; and, therefore, in Elijah's time, he counted none to be his servants and people, but such as had not bowed their knees to Baal; as now he does not, in England, account any to be his dearlings, which know the truth in heart, and deny it in their deeds, as our mass-gospellers do.

We ought to desire, above all things, the sanctifying of God's holy name, and the coming of his kingdom; and shall we then see his name blasphemed so horribly as it is at mass, by making it a sacrifice propitiatory, and setting forth a false Christ, of the priests' and bakers' making, to be worshipped as God, and say nothing? The Jews rent their clothes asunder, at seeing or hearing any thing blasphemously done or spoken against God; and shall we come to church where mass is, and be mute? Paul and Barnabas rent their clothes, at seeing the people of Lycaonia offer sacrifice unto them; and shall we see sacrifice and God's service done to an inanimate creature, and be mute? What helpeth more, or so much, antichrist's kingdom, as doth the mass? And what destroys preaching, and the kingdom of Christ upon earth, more than it does? And how can we then say, Let thy kingdom come, and go to mass? How can we pray before God, Thy will be done on earth, when we will do our own will, and the will of

our father or friends? How pray we, Deliver us from evil, who, knowing the mass to be evil, come to it?

But why go I to light a candle in the noon-day; that is, to tell you that we may not go to mass, or to the congregation where it is, except it is to reprove it, since all men, in so doing, dissemble both with God and man? And is dissembling now to be allowed? How long will men yet halt on both knees? saith God. Halting, saith Paul, bringeth out of the way; that is to say, out of Christ, which is the way; so that he which is not in him, shall wither away, and be cast into hell-fire. For Christ will be ashamed of them before his Father, which are now ashamed of his truth before this wicked generation.

Therefore, my good mistress, take good heed, for it had been better for you never to have known the truth, and thereby to have escaped from papistical uncleanness, than now to return to it, making your members, being members of righteousness, members of unrighteousness, as you do, if you do but go to the church where mass is. Be pure, therefore, and keep yourself from all filth of the spirit and of the flesh: abstain not only from all evil, but from all appearance of evil.

And so the God of peace shall be with you; the glory of God shall govern you; the Spirit of God shall sanctify you, and be with you for ever, to keep you from all evil, and to comfort you in all your distress and trouble; which is but short, if you consider the eternity you shall enjoy in glory and felicity in the Lord; which undoubtedly you shall not fail, but inherit for ever, if you, as the elect child of God, put your trust in his mercy, call upon his name unfeignedly, and yield not to the wicked world, but stick still against it unto the end. God, for his holy name's sake, which is properly the God of the widows, be your good and dear Father for ever, and help you always, as I myself would be helped at his hands in all things, and especially in this his own cause. Amen, Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XLI.

To One by whom he had received much comfort and relief in his trouble and imprisonment.

THE mercy of God in Christ, peculiar to his children, be evermore felt of you, my dearly beloved in the Lord, Amen.

When I consider with myself the benefits which God has showed unto me by your means, if I had so good and thankful a heart as I would I had, I could not with dry eyes give Him thanks, for certainly they are very many and great; and now, being yet still the Lord's prisoner, I receive from him more benefits by you; for which I think myself so much bound to you, my good brother, although you were but the instrument by whom God wrought and blessed me, that I look not to come out of your debt, by any pleasure or service that I shall ever be able to do you in this life. I shall heartily pray unto God, therefore, to requite you the good you have done to me for his sake; for I know that which you have done, you have done simply in respect of God and his word. May he therefore give you daily more and more to be confirmed in his truth and word, and so plentifully pour upon you the riches of his Holy Spirit and heavenly treasures, laid up in store for you, that your corporeal and earthly riches may be used by you as sacraments and significations thereof—the more to desire the one, that is, the heavenly, and the less to esteem the other, that is, the earthly. For Satan's solicitation is, so to set before you the earthly, that therein and thereby you should not have access to the consideration of the heavenly; but, like one bewitched, should utterly forget them, and altogether become a lover and worshipper of the earthly mammon, and so fall to covetousness, and a desire to be rich. By that means he desires to bring you into many noisome and hurtful lusts; as now-a-days I hear of many which have utterly forsaken God, and all his heavenly riches, for antichrist's pleasure, and the preserving of their worldly pelf; which they imagine to leave to their posterity, whereof they are uncertain, though they may be most certain they leave to them God's wrath and vengeance, to be sent in his time by visitation, if they in time repent not heartily, and prevent not the same by earnest prayer. Wherein, my good brother, if you are diligent, hearty, and persevere, I am sure God will preserve you from evil, and from yielding yourself to do as the world now does, by allowing in bodily fact in the Romish service, that which the inward cogitation and mind disallows. But if you are cold in prayer, and consider earthly and present things only, then shall you fall into faithless follies, and wound your conscience; from which God evermore preserve you, with your good wife, and your babe Leonard, and all your

family, to which I wish the blessing of God, now and for ever, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I pray you give thanks for me to your old bed-fellow, for his great friendship, for your sake, showed to me when I was in the Tower.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XLII.

To a faithful friend and his wife, resolving their doubt why they ought not to go to auricular confession.

THE merciful God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which loveth us as a most dear father, and hath towards us the affection of a most tender mother towards her children, so that he can no less think upon us—although, of ourselves, we be most unworthy, and deserve nothing less, than she can think on her only begotten child in his distress; yea, if she should forget her child, as some unnatural mother will do, yet will he never forget us, although for a time he seem to sleep, that we might have occasion to call loud, and awake him. May this good God keep you, my dear brother Nathanael,* and your good yoke-fellow, my heartily beloved sister in the Lord, in all things, now and for ever, to his glory and your eternal comfort; and also, of his goodness, may he grant you both the feeling of that hope, which undoubtedly he hath laid up in store for you both, far surpassing the store and provision, not only which you have made, but all the world is able to make. I trust he has already wrought in you; but I beseech him to increase it more and more, and kindle in you a hearty longing for the enjoying of the same; which if once felt and had indeed, then the means by which we come thereto cannot be so greatly dreaded, as most men dread them; because either they want this feeling altogether, or else, because the sense of this present time, and things therein, are as a mist, to the hiding of those things from our sight, lest we should run and embrace them by hearty prayer; the spirit whereof God grant us, and, indeed, we should attain enough in this behalf, if we continued therein.

Respecting auricular confession, wherein you desire my

* Nathanael was not his proper name, but for his godly simplicity and singleness of heart in the way of the Lord, M. Bradford called him so. *See Fox.*

advice for your good yoke-fellow and family, my most dear brother, I am as ready to give it as you to desire it; yea, more glad, forasmuch as half a suspicion was in me, at the least with respect to my dear sister, your wife, of a loathing of my advice, as if too much had been given; where, indeed, I should lament my too little feeding you spiritually, as both out of prison and in prison you have fed me corporeally. But as I always thought of her, so I yet think, that she is the child of God, whom God dearly loves, and will, in his good time, to her eternal comfort, give her her heart's desire; in sure feeling, and sensible believing of this, which I would she had often in her mind, namely, that he is her God and Father, through Christ Jesus, our dear Lord and Saviour. A greater service to God she cannot give, than to believe this. If Satan say she believes not, let her not answer him, but the Lord; and say, "Yea, Lord, help my unbelief, and increase my poor faith, which Satan saith is no faith: make him a liar, Lord, as always he hath been, is, and shall be." Undoubtedly, sooner or later, God will graciously hear her groans, and keep all her tears in his bottle; yea, write them in his book of account, for he is a righteous God, and hath no pleasure in the death of his creatures. He loveth mercy; he will return, and show her his mercy; he will cast all her sins and iniquities into the bottom of the sea; and the longer he tarries, as he does it but to prove her, so the more liberally will he recompense her long looking, which no less pleases him, than it grieves now her outward Adam, for the mortification whereof God uses this cross; and, therefore, if she desire to bear the same, doubtless God will make her able to bear it; and, presuming upon his goodness and strength, let her cast herself wholly upon him; for he is faithful, and will assuredly confirm, and bring to a happy end, that good which he has graciously begun in her. Which I desire him to do for his own glory and name's sake. Amen, Amen.

And now to the matter. Confession auricular, as it was first used and instituted, which was by the way of counsel-asking, I take to be among those traditions which are indifferent, that is, neither unlawful, nor necessarily binding us, except the offence of the weak could not be avoided. But to consider it, as it is now used, I write to you but as I think, and what my mind is, which follow no further, than good men by God's word allow it—to consider it I

say, as it is now used, methinks it is plainly unlawful and wicked, and that for these causes:

First, because they make it a service of God; a thing which pleases God of itself; I will not say meritorious. The bringer of this, my brother, can tell you at large how great an evil this is.

Secondly, because they make it of necessity,* so that he or she that uses it not, is not considered to be a good Christian.

Thirdly, because it requires of itself an impossibility; that is, the numbering and telling of all our sins, which no man perceives, much less can utter.

Fourthly, because it establishes and confirms, at the least allows, praying to saints; *Precor Sanctam Mariam*,† you must say, or the priest for you.

Fifthly, because it is very injurious to the liberty of the gospel, to affirm which, in example and fact, I take to be a good work, and dear in God's sight.

Sixthly, because, as it is used, it is a note,‡ yea, a very sinew of the popish church; and therefore we should be so far from allowing the same, that we should think ourselves happy to lose any thing in bearing witness there-against.

Seventhly, because, instead of counsel, you would receive poison thereat, or, if you refuse it under Sir John's *Benedicite*,§ you should no less there be wounded in the briers.

Eighthly, because the end and purpose why we go thither is, for the avoiding of the cross, that is, for our own cause, and not for Christ's cause, or for our brethren's advantage; for since they make it so necessary a thing, and a worshipping of God, it cannot but be against Christ, and the freedom of his gospel; and the same thing teaches us, that it is against the advantage of our brethren, which either are weak, or strong, or ignorant, or obstinate. If they are weak, by your resorting to it, they are made more weak; if they are strong, you do what you can to weaken their strength; if they are ignorant, you help to keep them such by your act; if they are obstinate, your resorting to it cannot but rock them asleep in their obstinate error respecting the necessity of this rite and ceremony. These causes recited, show you what I think in this; but my

* Necessary for salvation.

† Notable point.

‡ I implore Saint Mary.

§ The Romish priest's blessing.

thinking must no further bind you than a man's thought should do, except the same is grounded upon God's word, which bindeth indeed, as I think it does herein. I doubt not but you, weighing these causes, and especially the two first and the last, if you pray to God for his Spirit to direct you, and thereto ask the advice of this my good brother, and other godly learned men, I doubt not, I say, but you would be guided to do that which is best in God's sight, although in the sight of the world, perhaps, you should be counted foolish and precise. But be at a point with yourselves, as the disciples of Christ, which had forsaken themselves, not to follow your own will, but God's will, as you daily pray in the Lord's prayer.

Be willing to carry the cross of Christ, lest you carry the cross of the world, the flesh, or the devil: one of these crosses you must carry: three of them bring to hell; and therefore the more part go that way, which is a broad way: only the first brings to heaven; and but few go that way, as well because the way is strait, as also because few walk in it. Howbeit, though it is strait, it is but short; and the few are many, if you consider the godly, as the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and Christ Jesus, with all his guard and train. Think not scorn to come after them which are gone before you, and after them which now go before me, in whose number I trust I am appointed to be one; and I beseech you pray for me, that God would vouch me worthy that honour. Our sins deserve plagues, prisons, and the loss of all that we have; therefore if God removes our sins out of sight, and sends us prison, or loss of goods and living for his name's sake, oh, how happy are we! My dear hearts in the Lord, consider this, and be assured, that he which loses any thing for Christ's sake, the same in his posterity shall find it here and in heaven elsewhere. As for being unable to answer for your faith, it shall be enough to desire them to dispute with your teachers. Faith standeth not in disputing; I think few of the unlearned, if it came to disputing, could defend the Godhead of Christ and many other articles. Pray for me. Lack of paper maketh this end. Commend me to my good brother R. B. and my good sister, his wife. I pray them to pray for me. I trust by this bearer to hear how you do.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XLIII.

A letter to N. and his wife.

God's mercy in Christ I wish you to feel, my dear brother, with my faithful sister, your wife, now and for ever. Amen.

Having this occasion, I could not but write something, as well to put myself in remembrance of my duty toward God for you both, in thankfulness and prayer, as to put you in remembrance of me, and your duty toward God for me, in praying for me, for I dare not say in thankfulness for me. Not that I would have you give no thanks to God for his wonderful great and sweet mercies towards me, and upon me, in Christ his Son, but because I have not deserved it at either of your hands; for you both know right well, at least my conscience accuses me, that I have not only not exhorted and taught you, as both my vocation and your deserts required, to walk worthy of that vocation which God has made you worthy of, and with trembling and fear to work out your salvation; that is, in the fear of God to give yourselves to great vigilance in prayer for the increase of faith, and to a wary circumspection in all your conversation, not only in works and words, but also in thoughts, because God is a searcher of the heart, and out of the heart cometh that which defileth us in God's sight. I have, I say, not only not done this, but also have given you example of negligence in prayer, watching, fasting, talking, and doing; so that woe to me for giving you such offence. Partly for this cause, dear brother and sister, God has cast me and keeps me here, that I might repent and turn to him, and that you might also by his correction of me be more diligent to redress these things and others, if they in your consciences do accuse you.

My dearly beloved, heavy is God's anger fallen upon us all, doleful is this day. Now antichrist has all his power again. Now Christ's gospel is trodden under foot. Now are God's people a derision and prey for the wicked. Now the greatest of all plagues is fallen,—the want of God's word;—and all these we, yea I alone, have justly deserved. Oh! that as I write, "I alone," I could with David, and with Jonah, in my heart say so! but I do not, I do not; I see not how grievously I have sinned, and how great a misery is fallen upon me for my unthankfulness

for God's word, for my hypocrisy in professing, preaching, hearing, and speaking of God's word; for my not praying to God for the continuance of it; for my not living it thoroughly as it requires, &c. I will speak nothing of my manifest evils, for they are known to you well enough.

Dear brother and sister, say the like with me for your own parts, and join your hearts with me, and let us go to our heavenly Father, and for his Christ's sake beseech him to be merciful unto us, and to pardon us. O good Father! it is we that have deserved the taking away of thy word; it is we that have deserved these thy just plagues fallen upon us; we have done amiss, we have dealt unjustly with thy gospel, we have procured thy wrath, and therefore just art thou in punishing us, just art thou in plaguing us, for we are very miserable. But, good Lord, and dear Father of mercy, whose justice is such that thou wilt not punish the poor souls of this realm, which have not yet thus sinned against thee, as we have done, (for many yet never heard thy word,) and whose mercy is so great, that thou wilt put our iniquities out of thy remembrance for Christ's sake, if we repent and believe; grant us, we beseech thee, true repentance and faith, that we, having obtained pardon for our sins, may through thy Christ get deliverance from the tyranny of antichrist, now oppressing us.

O good Father! which hast said, that the sceptre of the wicked should not long lie upon and over the just, lest they put forth their hands to iniquity also, make us just, we pray thee, in Christ's name, and cut asunder the cords of them that hate Sion; let not the wicked people say, Where is their God? Thou, our God, art in heaven, and dost whatsoever it pleaseth thee upon earth.

Oh! that thou wouldst in the mean while, before thou deliverest us, Oh! that, I say, thou wouldst open our eyes to see that all these plagues come from thee; and all others which shall come, whatsoever they are, public or private, they come not by chance nor by fortune, but they come even from thy hand, and that justly and mercifully; justly, because we have and do deserve them, not only by our birth-poison still sticking and working in us, but also by our former evil life past, which by this punishment and all other punishments thou wouldst have us to call to our remembrance, and set before us, that thou mightest put them from before thee; whereas they stand so long as they are not in our remembrance,—to put them away by repentance.

Mercifully, O Lord God, dost thou punish, in that thou dost not correct to kill, but to amend, that we might repent of our sins, ask mercy, obtain it freely in Christ, and begin to suffer for righteousness' sake; to be part of thy house, whereat thy judgment beginneth,—to be partakers of the afflictions of thy church and thy Christ, that we might be partakers of the glory of the same—to weep here, that we might rejoice elsewhere—to be judged in this world, that we might with thy saints judge hereafter the world—to suffer with Christ, that we might reign with him—to be like to Christ in shame, that we might be like to him in glory—to receive our evils here, that we might with poor Lazarus find rest elsewhere; rest, I say, and such a rest as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man is able to conceive.

Oh! that our eyes were open to see this, that the cross cometh from thee to declare thy justice and thy mercy, and that we might see how short a time the time of suffering is; how long a time the time of rejoicing is to them that suffer here; but to them that will not, how long and miserable a time is appointed and prepared; a time without time in eternal woe and perdition, too horrible to be thought upon. From the which keep us, dear Father, and give us more sight in our souls to see this, and that all thy dearest children have carried the cross of grievous affliction in this life; in whose company do thou place us, and lay upon us such a cross as thou wilt make us able to bear, to thy glory and our salvation in Christ; for whose sake we pray thee to shorten the days of this our great misery which is fallen upon us most justly; and in the mean season give us patience, repentance, faith, and thy eternal consolation. Amen. Amen.

And thus, dear hearts, I have talked (methinks) a little while with you, or rather we have all talked with God. Oh! that God would give us his Spirit of grace and prayer! My dearly beloved, pray for it, as for yourselves so for me, and that God would vouchsafe to make me worthy to suffer with a good conscience for his name's sake. Pray for me, and I shall do the like for you. This 20th of December. I pray you give my commendations to all that love me in the Lord. Be merry in Christ, for one day in heaven we shall meet and rejoice together for evermore. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XLIV.

*To my good brother Augustine Berneher.**

MINE own good Augustine, the Lord of mercy bless thee, my dear brother for ever. I have good hope, that if you come late at night, I shall speak with you, but come as secretly as you can; howbeit, in the mean season, if you can, and as you can, learn what master G. hath spoken to Doctor Story and others. The cause of all this trouble, both to my keeper and me,† is thought to come by him. It is said, that I shall be burned in Smithfield, and that shortly. The Lord's will be done. Behold, here I am, Lord send me. Ah, mine own dear friend! I am now alone, lest I should make you and others worse. If I should live, I would use the company of God's children more warily than ever I have done. I will bear the Lord's anger, because I have sinned against him. Commend me to my most dear sister, for whom my heart bleeds: the Lord comfort her, and strengthen her unto the end. I think I have taken my leave of her for ever in this life, but in eternal life we shall most surely meet and praise the Lord continually. I have now taken a more certain answer‡ of death than ever I did; and yet not so certain as I think I should do; I am now as a sheep appointed to the slaughter. Ah, my God! the hour is come, glorify thy most unworthy child. I have glorified thee, saith this my sweet Father, and I will glorify thee. Amen. Ah, my beloved, praise God for me, and pray for me; for I am his, I hope; I hope he will never forsake me, though I have above all others most deserved it; I am the most singular example of his mercy; praised be his name therefore for ever. Cause Mistress Perpoint to learn of the sheriff, Master Chester, what they purpose to do with me, and know, if you can, whether there is any writ forth for me.§ (Psalm ci.) I am like an owl in the house, and as a sparrow alone on the house-top. Ah, my Augustine! how

* Augustine Berneher was a foreigner and an attendant upon Bishop Latimer. He was a faithful minister, and in Queen Mary's reign attended very diligently upon those who were prisoners for the Lord's sake.

† Bradford was at this time in the Poultry Counter, the keeper of which treated him with a degree of kindness not usually shown to the martyrs.

‡ View.

§ Issued for his burning.

long shall God's enemies thus triumph; I have sent you this of the baptism of children to write out; when this is done, you shall have other things. Pray, pray, mine own dear heart, on whom I am bold. The keeper tells me, that it is death for any to speak with me, but yet I trust that I shall speak with you.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XLV.

To mine own good Augustine.

DEAR brother Augustine, I cannot but be beholden to you in my need, and therefore I write as I do. Come hither* betimes, I pray you, in the morning, and use so to do; for then I think you shall speak with me. Also come late in the evening, and let me know whether in the day time I may send for you. Pray Walsh to steal you in, as I hope he will do. If he bring you in, then shall this which follows not need: but I write this doubting the worst:—First, desire my man William to make all things ready for me, for I am persuaded I shall go into Lancashire there to be burned, howbeit they say I must first go to the Fleet. Then desire him to hearken early in the morning whether I am not conveyed away before men be aware. Also I pray you, desire Robert Harrington, who I hope will go with me, to look for that journey. Visit often my dear sister, and although I cannot now write unto her, as I would, (for all things are more strange here, and the case more and more perilous,) yet tell her that I am careful for her, desire her to be of good comfort—God shall give us to meet in his kingdom. In the mean season I will pray for her as my dearest sister. Of truth I never did love her half so well as I now do, and yet I love her not half so well as I would do: she is a true daughter of Abraham. I pray thee heartily be joyful my good brother, and desire all my friends so to be; for I thank God, I feel a greater benefit than all the bishops in England can take from me. Praise God and pray for me, mine own dear heart in the Lord, whom I hope I shall never forget.

Your poor brother in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* The Poultry Counter.

To these letters of Mr. Bradford above specified, here is adjoined a letter of the said Bradford, written to certain of his faithful friends, worthy of all Christians to be read; wherein is described a lively comparison between the old man and the new, also between the law and the gospel; containing much fruitful matter of divinity necessary for Christian consciences to read and understand.—*Fox.*

LETTER XLVI.

A letter of Master Bradford, describing a comparison between the old man and the new, &c.

A MAN that is regenerate and born of God, and that every one of us be so, our baptism, the sacrament of regeneration, requires under pain of damnation; therefore let every one of us with the Virgin Mary say, “Be it unto me, O Lord, according to thy word,” according to thy sacrament of baptism, wherein thou hast declared our adoption; and let us lament the doubting hereof in us; striving against it, as we shall be made able of the Lord — a man, I say, that is regenerate, consisteth of two men, (as it may be said,) namely, of the old man and of the new man. The old man is like a mighty giant, such a one as was Goliath, for his birth is now perfect; but the new man is like unto a little child, such a one as was David, for his birth is not perfect until the day of his general resurrection.

The old man therefore is more strong, lusty, and stirring than the new man, because the birth of the new man is but begun now, and the old man is perfectly born; and as the old man is more stirring, lusty, and stronger than the new man, so is the nature of him quite contrary to the nature of the new man, as the old man is earthly and corrupt with Satan’s seed; but the nature of the new man is heavenly, and blessed with the celestial seed of God. So that one man, inasmuch as he is corrupt with the seed of the serpent, is an old man; and inasmuch as he is blessed with the seed of God from above, he is a new man. And inasmuch as he is an old man, he is a sinner and an enemy to God, so inasmuch as he is regenerate, he is righteous and holy, and a friend to God, the seed of God

preserving him from sin, so that he cannot sin, as the seed of the serpent wherewith he is corrupt even from his conception inclineth him, yea, enforceth him to sin, and nothing else but to sin—so that the best part in man before regeneration, in God's sight, is not only an enemy, but enmity itself.

One man therefore, who is regenerate may well be called always just, and always sinful: just in respect of God's seed, and his regeneration; sinful in respect of Satan's seed, and his first birth. Betwixt these two men therefore there is continual conflict, and most deadly war. The flesh and old man, by reason of his birth that is perfect, often for a time prevails against the new man, which is but a child in comparison, and that in such sort, as not only others, but even the children of God themselves think that they are nothing else but of the old man, and that the Spirit and seed of God are lost and gone away; whereas yet notwithstanding the truth is otherwise. For the Spirit and the seed of God at length appear again, and dispel the clouds which cover the seed of the Son of God from shining, as the clouds in the air do the material sun; so that sometimes a man cannot tell by any sense, whether there is any sun, the clouds and winds so hiding it from our sight. Even so our blindness and corrupt affections often shadow the sight of God's seed in God's children, as though they were plain reprobates; whereof it comes, that they praying according to their sense, but not according to the truth, desire of God to give them again his Spirit, as though they had lost it, and he had taken it away; which thing God never doth, although he make us to think so for a time; for he always holdeth his hand under his children in their falls, that they lie not still, as others do which are not regenerate. And this is the difference between God's children, which are regenerate and elect before all time in Christ, and the wicked always, that the elect lie not still continually in sin, as the wicked do, but at length return again by reason of God's seed, which is in them hid as a spark of fire in the ashes; as we may see in Peter, David, Paul, Mary Magdalen, and others. For these, I mean God's children, God hath made all things in Christ Jesus, to whom he hath given this dignity, that they should be his inheritance and spouse.

This our inheritor Christ Jesus, God with God, light of

light, co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, to the end that he might become our husband, (because the husband and wife must be one body and flesh,) hath taken our nature upon him, communicating with it and by it in his own person, to all us his children, his divine majesty, (as Peter saith.) And so he is become flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones, substantially, as we have become flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone spiritually; all that ever we have pertaining to him, yea, even our sins, as all that ever he hath pertains unto us, even his whole glory. So that if Satan should summon us to answer for our debts or sins, in that the wife is not sueable, but the husband, we may well bid him enter his action against our husband Christ, and he will make him a sufficient answer.

For this end, I mean, that we might be coupled and married thus to Christ, and so be certain of salvation and at godly peace with God in our consciences, God has given his holy word which hath two parts, as now the children of God do consist of two men; one part of God's word being proper to the old man, and the other part of God's word being proper to the new man. The part properly pertaining to the old man is the law; the part properly pertaining to the new is the gospel.

The law is a doctrine which commandeth and forbiddeth, requiring doing and avoiding. Under it therefore are contained all precepts, threatenings, promises upon conditions of doing and avoiding, &c. The gospel is a doctrine which always offereth and giveth; requiring nothing on our behalf, as of worthiness, or as a cause, but as a certificate unto us, and therefore under it are contained all the free and sweet promises of God; as, "I am the Lord thy God, &c."

In those that are of years of discretion, it requires faith, not as a cause, but as an instrument, whereby we ourselves may be certain of our good husband Christ and of his glory; and therefore when the conscience feels itself disquieted for fear of God's judgment against sin, she may in no wise look upon the doctrine pertaining to the old man; but on the doctrine only that pertaineth to the new man. Not looking in it for that which it requires, that is, faith, because we never believe as we should; but only on what it offers, and what it gives, that is, on God's grace and eternal mercy and peace in Christ. So shall she be quiet,

when she looks for it altogether out of herself, on God's mercy in Christ Jesus; in whose lap if she lay her head with St. John, then is she happy, and shall find quietness indeed. When she seeleth herself quiet, then, let her look on the law, and upon such things as it requireth, thereby to bridle and keep down the old Adam, to slay that Goliath, from whom she must needs keep the sweet promises. For as the wife will keep herself only for her husband, although in other things she is contented to have fellowship with others, as to speak, sit, eat, drink, go, &c., so our consciences, which are Christ's wives, must needs keep themselves faithful to their husband, and be joyful together. If sin, the law, the devil, or any thing, would creep in, then complain to thy husband Christ, and forthwith thou shalt see him play Phineas's part. (Numb. xxv.) Thus my dearly beloved, I have given you in few words a sum of all the divinity which a Christian conscience cannot want.*

LETTER XLVII.

A letter written to his mother as a farewell, when he thought he should have suffered shortly after.

THE Lord of life and Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, bless you and comfort you, my good and dear mother, with his heavenly comfort, consolation, grace, and Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

If I thought that you did not cry daily, yea, almost hourly, unto God the Father, through Jesus Christ, that he would give me his blessing, even the blessing of his children, then would I write more hereabout. But forasmuch as I am certain you are diligent herein, and I beseech you, good mother, to continue so, I think it good to write something, whereby this your crying might be furthered; furthered it will be, if those things which hinder it are taken away; among the which, in that I think my imprisonment is the greatest and chiefest, I will thereabout spend this letter, and that briefly, lest it might increase the hinderance, as my good brother, this bringer, can tell you.† You shall

* Cannot exist without.

† He means the danger of more strict imprisonment that might hereby follow.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

know therefore, good mother, that for my body, though it be in a house, out of which I cannot come when I will, yet as I have conformed my will to God's will, I find herein liberty enough, I thank God, and for my lodging, bedding, meat, drink, godly and learned company, books, and all other necessaries, for my ease, comfort, and commodity, I am in much better case than I could wish; and God's merciful providence here is far above my worthiness. Worthiness? quoth I. Alas! I am worthy of nothing but damnation!

But, beside all this, I find much more advantage for my soul; for God is my Father, I now perceive, through Christ; therefore in imprisoning me for his gospel, he makes me like to the image of his son Jesus Christ here, that, when he comes to judgment, I might then be like unto him, as my trust and hope is I shall be. Now he makes me like to his friends the prophets, apostles, the holy martyrs, and confessors. Which of them did not suffer, at the least imprisonment or banishment for his gospel and word?

Now, mother, how far am I unfit to be compared to them! I (I say) which always have been, and am, so vile a hypocrite and so grievous a sinner. God might have caused me long before this time, to have been cast into prison as a thief, a blasphemer, an unclean liver, and an heinous offender of the laws of the realm. But, dear mother, his mercy is so great, upon both you, and all that love me, that I am cast into prison as none of these, nor for any such vices, but only for his Christ's sake, for his gospel's sake, for his church's sake, that hereby, I might learn to lament and bewail my ingratitude and sins, and might rejoice in his mercy, be thankful, and look for eternal joy with Christ, for whose sake, (praised be his name for it,) I now suffer, and therefore should be merry and glad. And, indeed, good mother, so I am, as ever I was; yea, never so joyful and glad was I, as now I should be, if I could get you to rejoice with me, to thank God for me, and to pray in this manner: "O good Father! which dost vouchsafe that my son, being a grievous sinner in thy sight, should find this favour with thee, to be one of thy Son's captains and men of war, to fight and suffer for his gospel's sake. I thank thee and pray thee, in Christ's name, that thou wouldst forgive him his sins and unthankfulness, and make perfect in him that good work which thou hast begun; yea, Lord, I pray thee,

make him worthy to suffer, not only imprisonment, but even death itself, for thy truth, religion, and gospel's sake. As Hannah did apply, and give her first child, Samuel, unto thee, so do I, dear Father, beseeching thee, for Christ's sake, to accept this my gift, and give my son, John Bradford, grace, always truly to serve thee and thy people, as Samuel did. Amen."

If on this sort (good mother) from your heart you would pray, I should be the most joyful man that ever was, and I am certain the hinderance of your prayer for my imprisonment would be taken away. Good mother, therefore, mark what I have written, and learn this prayer by heart, say it daily; and then I shall be joyful, and you shall rejoice, if you continue, as I trust you do, in God's true religion, even the same I have taught you, and my father Traves, I trust, will put you in remembrance of. My brother Roger, also, I trust, does so daily; go on, therefore, and learn apace. Although the devil cast divers hinderances in the way, God, in whom you trust, will cast them away for his Christ's sake, if you will call upon him; and never will he suffer you to be tempted above that he will make you able to bear. But how you should do herein, the other letter, which I have written herewith, shall teach you, which I would have none should read till my father Traves have read it; and he will give you, by God's grace, some instructions.*

Now, therefore, I will make an end, praying you, good mother, to look for no more letters; for if it were known that I have pen and ink, and did write, then should I want all the aforesaid commodities I have spoken of concerning my body, and be cast into some dungeon in fetters of iron; which thing I know would grieve you; and, therefore, see that these be burned, when this little prayer in it is copied by my brother Roger, for, perchance, your house may be searched for such things when you little think of it; and look for no more, sweet mother, till either God shall deliver me, and send me out, or else you and I shall meet together in heaven, where we shall never part asunder. Amen.

I require you, Elizabeth and Margaret, my sisters, that your fear God; use prayer; love your husbands, be obedient unto them, as God willeth you; bring up your

* This letter came not to our hands.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

children in God's fear, and be good housewives. God bless you both, with both your husbands, my good brethren, to whom, because I now cannot do good, I will pray for them and you. Commend me to my sister Ann, mother Pike, T. Sorocold and his wife, R. Shalcrosse and his wife, R. Bolton, J. Wild, M. Vicar, the parson Mottrom, sir Laurence Hall, with all that love, and, I trust, live in the gospel; and God turn sir Thomas's heart. Amen. I will daily pray for him. I need not to set to my name, you know it well enough.

Because you should give my letters to father Traves to be burnt, I have written here a prayer for you to learn to pray for me, good mother; and another for all your house, in your evening prayer, to pray with my brother. These prayers are written with my own hand; keep them still, but the letters give to father Traves to burn, and give father Traves a copy of the latter prayer.

LETTER XLVIII.

Another letter to his mother, as his last farewell unto her in this world, a little before he was burned.

God's mercy and peace in Christ, be more and more perceived of us. Amen.

My most dear mother, in the bowels of Christ I heartily pray and beseech you to be thankful for me unto God, who now thus takes me unto himself. I die not, my good mother, as a thief, a murderer, an adulterer, &c.; but I die as a witness of Christ, his gospel, and truth, which hitherto I have confessed, I thank God, as well by preaching as by imprisonment; and now, even presently, I shall most willingly confirm the same by fire. I acknowledge that God might most justly take me hence simply for my sins, which are many, great, and grievous; but the Lord, for his mercy in Christ, hath pardoned them all, I hope; but now, dear mother, he takes me hence, by this death, as a confessor and witness, that the religion taught by Christ Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles, is God's truth. The prelates do persecute in me Christ, whom they hate, and his truth, which they may not abide, because their works are evil, and may not abide the truth

and light, lest men should see their darkness. Therefore, my good and most dear mother, give thanks for me to God, that he has made the fruit of your womb to be a witness of his glory; and attend to the truth, which, I thank God for it, I have truly taught out of the pulpit at Manchester. Use often and continual prayer to God the Father, through Christ; hearken, as you may, to the Scriptures; serve God after his word, and not after custom; beware of the Romish religion in England; defile not yourself with it; carry Christ's cross, as he shall lay it upon your back; forgive them that kill me; pray for them, for they know not what they do; commit my cause to God our Father; be mindful of both your daughters, to help them as you can.

I send all my writings to you, by my brother Roger; do with them as you will, because I cannot as I would. He can tell you more of my mind. I have nothing to give you, or to leave behind me for you; only I pray God my Father, for his Christ's sake, to bless you and keep you from evil. May he give you patience; may he make you thankful, for me, and for yourself, that he will take your child to witness his verity; wherein I confess to the whole world that I die and depart this life, in hope of one much better, which I look for at the hands of God my Father, through the merits of his dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Thus, my dear mother, I take my last farewell of you in this life; beseeching the Almighty and eternal Father, by Christ, to grant us to meet in the life to come, where we shall give him continual thanks and praise for ever and ever. Amen. Out of prison, the 24th of June, 1555.

Your son in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER XLIX.

A letter sent with a supplication to Queen Mary, her council, and the whole parliament.

A poor subject, persecuted for the confession of Christ's verity, in most humble wise complaineth unto your Majesty and honours, which verity deserveth at your hands to be maintained and defended, as that by which you reign, and have your honours and authorities. Although

we that are professors, and, through the grace of God, the constant confessors of the same, are, as it were, the outswEEPINGS of the world; yet (I say) the verity itself is not unworthy for your ears to hear, for your eyes to see, and for your hands to handle, help, and succour, accordingly as the Lord hath made you able, and placed you where you are, for the same purpose. Your Highness and honours ought to know, that there is no innocence in words or deeds, where it is enough, and sufficeth, only to accuse. It behoveth kings, queens, and all that are in authority, to know that, in the administration of their kingdoms, they are God's ministers. It behoveth them to know that those are not kings, but plain tyrants, who reign not, that they may serve and set forth God's glory, after true knowledge. And therefore it is required of them that they would be wise, and suffer themselves to be taught to submit themselves to the Lord's discipline, and to kiss their Sovereign lest they perish. As all those potentates, with their principalities and dominions, cannot long prosper, but perish indeed, if they and their kingdoms be not ruled with the sceptre of God, that is, with his word; which whoso honoureth not, honoureth not God; and they that honour not the Lord, the Lord will not honour them, but bring them into contempt; and at length take his own cause, which he hath most chiefly committed unto them to care for, into his own hands, and so overthrow them, and set up his truth gloriously; the people, also, perishing with the princes. When the word of prophecy is wanting, much more is suppressed, as it is now in this realm of England, over which the eyes of the Lord are set to destroy it, your Highness, and all your honours, if in time you look not better to your office and duties herein, and not suffer yourselves to be slaves and hangmen to antichrist and his prelates, which have brought your Highness and honours already to let Barabbas loose, and to hang up Christ. As, by the grace and help of God, I shall make apparent, if it would first please your excellent Majesty, and all your honours, to take to heart God's doctrine, which, rather through the malice of the Pharisees, I mean the bishops and prelates, than your consciences, is oppressed; and think not the less of it, for our contemptible and execrable state in the sight of the world; for it (the doctrine I mean) is higher, and of more honour and majesty, than all the whole world. It standeth invincible,

above all power, being not our doctrine, but the doctrine of the ever-living God, and of his Christ, whom the Father hath ordained King, to have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the world. And, truly, so doth He, and will he reign, that he will shake all the whole earth with his iron and brazen power, with its golden and silvery brightness, only by the rod of his mouth, to shivers, in such sort as though they were pots of clay, according to that which the prophets write of the magnificence of his kingdom. And thus much for the thing, I mean the doctrine, and your duties, to hearken, to propagate, and defend the same.

But now will our adversaries mainly cry out against us, because no man may be admitted once to whisper against them—that we pretend falsely the doctrine and word of God; and call us the most wicked contemners of it, and heretics, schismatics, traitors, &c. All which their sayings, how malicious and false they are, though I might refer to that which is written by those men whose works they have condemned, and all that retain any of them publicly by proclamation; yet, here will I enable your Majesty and honours, by this my writing, to see that it is far otherwise than they report of us. May God, our Father, for his holy name's sake, direct my pen to be his instrument to put into your eyes, ears, and hearts, that which may most make to his glory, to the safeguard of your souls and bodies, and preservation of the whole realm. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER L.

To certain of his friends, N. Sheterden and R. Cole.

I WISH to you, my good brethren, the same grace of God in Christ, which I wish and pray the Father of mercies to give me, for his holy name's sake. Amen.

Though I have not read your letter myself, because I would not alienate my mind from conceived things, to write of others, yet I have heard the sum of it, that it is of God's election, wherein I will briefly write to you my faith, and how I think it good and meet for a Christian man to wade in it. I believe that man, made after the image of God, did fall from that blessed state, to the condemnation

of himself, and all his posterity. I believe that Christ for man, being thus fallen, did oppose himself to the justice of God as a mediator, paying the ransom and price of redemption for Adam and his whole posterity that refuse it not finally. I believe, that all that believe in Christ, I speak of such as are of years of discretion, are partakers of Christ and all his merits. I believe that faith and to believe in Christ (I speak not now of faith that men have by reason of miracles, John ii. 11, Acts viii., or by reason of earthly advantages, Matt. xiii., or custom and authority of men, which is commonly seen; for the hearts of them that so believe are not right and simple before God; but I speak of that faith which indeed is the true faith, the justifying and regenerating faith;) I believe, I say, that this faith and belief in Christ is the work and gift of God, given to none other than to those who are the children of God; that is, to those whom God the Father, before the beginning of the world, hath predestinated in Christ unto eternal life.

Thus do I wade in predestination in such sort as God hath patefied* and opened it. Though in God it is first, yet to us it is last opened; and therefore I begin with creation, from whence I come to redemption, so to justification, and so to election. On this sort I am sure, that warily and wisely, a man may walk in it easily by the light of God's Spirit, in and by his word, seeing this faith is not to be given to all men, (2 Thess. iii.,) but to such as are born of God, predestinate before the world was made, after the purpose and good will of God; which will we may not call into dispute, but in trembling and fear submit ourselves to it, as to that which can *will* no otherwise than what is holy, right, and good, how far soever otherwise it may seem to the judgment of reason, which must needs be beaten down to be more careful for God's glory, than for man's salvation, which dependeth only thereon, as all God's children full well see; for they seek not the glory which cometh of men, but the glory which cometh of God. (Jer. ix., John v.) They know God to be a God who doeth on earth, not only mercy, but also judgment, which is justice, and fullest justice, although our foolish reason cannot see it. And in this knowledge they glory and rejoice, though others, through vain curiosity, grudge and murmur thereagainst. Thus I have briefly sent you my mind and mean-

* Made plain.

ing concerning this matter; hereafter you shall have (I think) your letter particularly answered by Mr. Philpot, as also if I have time, and you so require it, I will do.*

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LI.

To Mistress J. Harrington, a faithful woman, and fearing God, whom he exhorteth to be patient under the cross, and not to fear death.

My dearly beloved, I beseech our merciful Father to comfort your heavy and pensive heart, with his own consolations in Christ; as I am assured, good sister, he will in his good time, which look for with patience, after the example of Job, Elias, Abraham, and all the dear saints of God, which are set forth unto us for patterns of patience. God grant that we may well cut our cloth after them; for God is the same God now, and the end will show that he is a merciful Lord and full of compassion. My dear sister, you shall unfeignedly feel it at the length, though at present it seemeth otherwise unto your sense; you shall, after you are a little exercised herein, find a quiet fruit of righteousness, (Heb. xii.,) the God of grace, which hath called you unto his eternal glory, confirming and strengthening you, who are somewhat afflicted, with your brethren and sisters that are in the world; for you suffer not alone, as I trust you know. It comforts me to read in your letters, that no displeasure of father, mother, husband, children, &c., moves you to be ruled after the counsel of the world; and therefore you desire me not to be afraid for you. Oh! my beloved, what thanks should I give to our God and dear Father, for this his exceeding kindness towards you! His name be magnified for you for ever, his mercy be more and more multiplied unto you, in you, and upon you, for

* For the certainty of this faith search your hearts. If you have it, praise the Lord, for you are happy, and therefore cannot finally perish: for then happiness were not happiness if it could be lost. When you fall, the Lord will put his hand under, that you shall not lie still. But if you feel not this faith, then know that predestination is too high a matter for you to be disputers about, until you have been better scholars in the school-house of repentance and justification, which is the grammar-school wherein we must be conversant and learned before we go to the university of God's most holy predestination and providence. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

ever and ever. Amen. God make me thankful herefor, but you add, that the fear of death now and then moves you a little. Howbeit, you say, that as I have counselled you, you will strive thereagainst. My good Joyce, I take you at your word; keep promise, I pray you, that is, strive against it; and I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that you shall have the victory, which I would wish you to set before your eyes also, and so shall the terror of death trouble you the less. Soldiers going to war set not before their eyes simply the stripe,* but rather the victory; and, my good sister, will not you herein follow them? In your travail with child, doth not the hope of the babe to be delivered mitigate the malady? Doth not the sick, when taking bitter and loathsome physic, set before him the advantage which will ensue? And, my dear sister, will not you learn somewhat by these? Consider what this life is, consider what death is, consider what is prepared for you after death. Concerning this life, you know that it is full of misery, vanity, and woe. It is an exile, and has nothing in it permanent. It is therefore compared to a vapour, to a smoke, to a shadow, yea, to a warfare, a wilderness, a vale of wretchedness, wherein we are compassed on every side with most fierce and fearful enemies; and should we desire to dwell here? Should we desire to live in this loathsome and laborious life? Should we wish to tarry in this wretchedness? Should we take pleasure to remain in this perilous state? Daniel's den is not so dreadful as is this dungeon we dwell in.

Concerning death, to them that are God's-dear children, as I know you are one, my tenderly beloved sister, what other thing is it, than the despatcher of all displeasure, the end of all travail, the door of desires, the gate of gladness, the port of paradise, the haven of heaven, the rail of rest and quietness, the entrance to felicity, the beginning of all blissfulness? It is the very bed of down, for the doleful bodies of God's people to rest in, and therefore well compared to a sleep, out of which they shall rise and awake most fresh and lusty to life everlasting. It is a passage to the Father, a chariot to heaven, the Lord's messenger, a leader unto Christ, a going to our home, a deliverance from bondage and prison, a dismissal from war, a security from all sorrows, and a manumission† from all misery. So that the very heathen in some places

* The danger.

† Setting free.

caused the day of their death to be celebrated with mirth, melody, and minstrels; and should we be dismayed at it? Should we be afraid of it? Should we tremble to hear of it? Should such a friend as it is be unwelcome? Should the foulness of his face frighten us from his good conditions? Should the hardness of his husk hinder us from his sweet kernel? Should the roughness of the tide tie us to the bank and shore, there to be drowned, rather than the desire of our home drive us to go aboard? Should the hardness of the saddle set us to walk, and so to perish by the way, rather than to leap up and endure the same a little, and so to be where we would be?

Concerning that which is prepared for you after death, if I should go about to express it, the more I should so do, the further I should be from it. For the eye hath not seen, neither hath the ear heard, nor the heart of man is able to conceive in any point the joy, mirth, melody, pleasure, power, wealth, riches, honour, beauty, fellowship, dainties, odours, glory, wisdom, knowledge, treasures, security, peace, quietness, and eternal felicity, which you shall have and enjoy, world without end, with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with the angels and arch-angels, with the patriarchs and prophets, with the apostles and evangelists, with the martyrs and confessors, and with all the saints of God, in the palace of the Lord in heaven, the kingdom of God, the glory of the Father. Oh! woe to the blindness of our eyes that see not this! Woe to the hardness of our hearts that feel not this! Woe to the deafness of our ears that hear not this as we should do, whereby we might be so far from fearing death, that rather we should wish for it, crying with Simeon, "Now let thy servant depart in peace;" with Paul, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;" with David, "When shall I come and appear before thee!" and again, "Oh! woe is me that my habitation is thus prolonged," &c. (Psal. cxx.) But, alas! dear sister, great is our unbelief; faint indeed is our faith, or else night and day tears should be our bread and drink, while it is said unto us, Where is your God? It is a token of little love to God if we are loth to go unto him when he calleth. If my dearest friend, of a special favour and tender good will, should send a horse for me to come unto him, should I be displeased thereat? Yea, should I not be willing and glad to come unto him? And, alas! yet if death, the Lord's palfrey, the Lord's messenger, should

come, I think I should not be so ready, but be fearful as you foresee yourself to be; whereby I doubt not you take occasion to lament the weakness of your faith, and, seeing your need, to prepare for remedy against the time of need, and to beg of God his aid, strength, and comfort against that pinch; which undoubtedly you shall have, and find his promise true, that in an acceptable time he has heard your prayer. Such as I, have no such foresight of death, and therefore are at present less dismayed, which will turn to our greater grief in the plunge, save that for my part, I hope he will never tempt me further than he will make me able to bear. Into his hands I offer myself, beseeching him, for his Christ's sake, to keep me, soul and body, to his kingdom and glory; and to lead me, order me, and dispose me as he will, in all things, in all places, and for ever, that at the length I may come whither I desire, that is, into his own blessed presence and the enjoyment of immortality, with you and his saints. Amen. Thus much I thought good to write unto you at present, to occasion you the less to fear death, which either needeth not or booteth not;* and therefore even reasonable men, much more spiritual men, labour to strive against the fear of that which they can by no means avoid. But of this hereafter I trust to speak with you mouth to mouth. Now as to my soul, I pray and wish unto you, my most dear sister in the Lord, whose grace guide you, and his mercy embrace you on every side for ever. Amen.

Yours,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LII.

To my good friend in God, Master Humphrey Hales.

As to my dear friend, I wish unto you, gentle Master Hales, health of soul and body, to God's glory and your everlasting comfort. Amen.

Although it is commonly spoken, and as commonly verified, that seldom seen is soon forgotten, yet it is not so commonly seen or experienced amongst those, whose friendship is in God the Father through Christ, as ours is, but in those whose friendship is begun in respect of some

* Matters not.

earthly advantage. And therefore, lest I should incur this suspicion at your hands, who have so many ways deserved the contrary, I thought it my duty to refresh, if it need refreshing, the amity in God, begun betwixt us, which I doubt not shall continue so long as we live, or else I should be sorry. In consideration whereof, being both mindful of my promise made unto you, and careful for your safety, I have caused a place to be provided for your wife's deliverance, where she may so quietly and safely remain, that for the avoiding of the perils and dangers of these days, I see none more convenient. I mean it in Hadley, at Dr. Taylor's house, where I trust there is no peril to youward, nor to any that feareth or regardeth any peril that thereby may happen. And herein out of love and good will I am the more familiar and bold to admonish you, not as distrusting you, God forbid, for I think of you as of a very child of God, but as one careful for you; lest you should at length, through the common infirmity of our frail flesh, and the manifold offences given by the world, do exteriorly as the world does; to save your sleeve and maim your arm for ever, as those do, which for the saving of their goods, jeopard goods of body and soul, in the peril of eternal damnation. If I suspected any such thing in you, gentle Master Hales, I then would go about to tell you what this life is, a smoke, a shadow, a vapour, &c.; what the glory of this life is, grass, hay; yea, how full of misery it is, and has more aloes than honey. (Job ix.) If I suspected your conscience, I would then set before you, on the one part, the judgment of Christ, which shall be most assuredly the terrible sentence to them which are ashamed to confess his gospel, and the eternal woe and misery which they shall be cast into, that will not obey his gospel here; also, on the other part, the most pleasant shout of the angel to summon all men to come before our Captain and Brother, Christ; the collection and catching of us up in the clouds to meet our Master; the eternal joy and felicity which we shall receive that here confess him, here suffer with him, here lose any thing for his sake. If I did in any respect so much as think that you would defile your body in the antichristian service now used, then I would go about to set forth these things more at large. But, as I said before, I say again, because I am as well persuaded of you, my dearly beloved brother, as of any in your profession and state, I cannot but pray God to make

perfect the good which he hath begun in you, and desire you, as you have begun in God, so to go forward. As your example hath done good to many, so cast not all down by a tip. Terrible is that woe which Christ threateneth to them by whom offences do come. You know the way to salvation is straiter than men make it; you know the soul is to be considered above all things. Happy is the loss of that bodily life, liberty, and goods, by which spiritual life, freedom, and felicity are purchased. What should it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul? Who would desire a two years' merry life for an eternal sorrow? as these mass-gospellers do, which after all are uncertain of two years' life, and God knoweth what wounds their consciences have. Hard is it to recover health to the conscience; and because I am careful for it to youwards, as to my own brother and dear friend, therefore I write thus. We are in God's power, and not in the power of our enemies; he it is that hath all our hairs numbered; before he say Amen,* no man shall once touch you. Into his hands commit yourself, cast your care upon him, have a care to please him, and then he will care to keep you. You know the oath the Athenians made, "I will fight for the defence of religion, both alone and with others:" which saying of the heathen will be to our condemnation, if for his holy word and gospel's sake we dare not adventure the loss of that he has lent us, keeps for us, and can, when he will, take away from us, or us from it. If worldly men dare jeopard a joint† with God, rather than they would lose worldly things as experience teaches, certainly it should be much to our shame, who in baptism have vowed and solemnly sworn to forsake the world; if we dare not jeopard a joint with man, rather than lose a good conscience and spiritual treasures. He that will not have God's blessing, it shall be taken from him, saith David.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, beware; you are now the temple of the Holy Ghost, defile it not for the Lord's sake, but keep it pure, not only from all uncleanness of the spirit, but also of the flesh, (2 Cor. vii.) as I trust you will; and cry upon your Father for his strength and aid, which I beseech him of his mercy always to give unto you, my own good friend, even as I desire for myself. If I could help you in any thing, you may be as assured thereof

* So be it.

† To oppose.

as of your brother. My prayer to God night and day you shall have, that for his holy name's sake he would bless you in all things, and keep you, with my good sister your wife, unto the very end, as his dear elect children. Amen, amen. From my lodging, you know where, this 5th of August, 1554.

By your own to use in the Lord for ever,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LIII.

Another letter to Master Humphrey Hales and his wife.

THE everliving and merciful God, our dear Father through Christ, be with you both, my most dearly and entirely beloved in the Lord, now and for ever. I cannot forbear, but signify unto you both, that my heart is careful and heavy for the cross which is come upon you by the heavy and fearful judgment of God, fallen upon your father justly, for his denying of God for fear of man, and love of those things, which he has left behind him unto you and others. God grant his fate may be so imprinted in the hearts of all men, especially of you both, that his fall may be unto you, I will not say rising, for I trust ye are not fallen, but an establishing in the verity of God, whereof whoso is ashamed shall at length feel such shame, as I beseech God keep us all from. Happy are they that mark the judgments of God upon others, and come and increase in repentance (Luke xiii.,) and fear God's wrath and judgments, which are always like himself, if we follow the steps of them whom he punishes. I need not to tell you the cause of this that has happened unto your father, if it is as I with sorrow have heard. For you know well enough that till he forsook God, gave ear to the serpent's counsel, began to mamber* of the truth, and to frame himself outwardly to do that which his conscience reproved inwardly; for that which he mingled with the love of God, I mean, the love of the world, cannot be in any man without the expulsion of God's love—till then, I say, God did not depart and leave him to himself, for the example of you, and me, and all others, that we should fear even ourselves and our own hands, more than man

* Hesitate about.

and all the powers of the world, if we therefore should do any thing which should wound our conscience; the conscience, I tell you, is soon wounded, yea, sooner than we are aware of. The devil uses all kinds of deceit to blind us from seeing that which might wound it; but when the stripe is given, then either he still shuts up our eyes with contempt, for our hardenings, or else opens them to bring us to utter despairing. In your father, as you may see the latter, so in many worldly gospellers you may, if you will, see the other. God might deal with all such, as he has now done with your father; but because the time of his judgment is not yet come, his wisdom has thought good to set your father forth as an example to all men; as he did in the first world Cain; in the second world Ham; in the third age Korah, &c.; in Christ's time Judas; in the apostles' time, Ananias, &c.; although none will heartily consider it, but such as are God's children indeed.

But here in comparing your father thus, my dearly and unfeignedly beloved in the Lord, I must pray you not to be offended, or think that I do determinately judge, (to God I leave all judgment,) but because the fruit to us declares no less, to the admonishing of us all, I trust you will accordingly consider my collation.* For your parts, as I think godly of you both, that indeed you are both the children of God, so I pray you comfort yourselves, as David did, though his son Absalom perished so desperately, and though his father-in-law, Ahithophel, father to Bathsheba, as the Hebrews write, perished so miserably. You know Jonathan was not the worse because his father slew himself, nor Bathsheba because of her father Ahithophel; they were both the children of God, and so I am assured, as man can be, that ye are. As they used God's judgments upon their parents, so do you fear God, and love God the more, and fly from those things which in your father you saw displeased God. Oh! that I were with you but one half hour, not only with you to lament, but also, as God should lend me his grace, to comfort you, who by this judgment tries your patience and faith to the comfort of you both, as you shall find I am assured. My dear hearts in the Lord, if I could by any means comfort you, certainly, if my life lay on it I think you should forthwith perceive it; but because I can do no more than I can, therefore as I can I do; that is, to write and to send

* Comparison. -

this messenger, my good friend and brother, with the same, to learn certainly the truth herein, and the condition of your estate. My other letter was made before I knew of this matter. I pray God this, which I understand by report, may be otherwise, but God's good will be done, who gives us patience and comfort in him. To whom I commend you both, even as heartily as any friends I have, in this life of your estate. From my lodgings, you know where, this 8th of August, 1554.

By your own to use in the Lord for ever,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LIV.

To Master Shalcrosse & his wife, dwelling in Lancashire.

THE peace of conscience in Christ, and through faith, in his blood, which surpasseth, and is far better than any worldly riches or joy, and is to be redeemed with the loss of the dearest treasures we have, rather than we should lose it; this peace I wish unto you, good Master Shalcrosse, and unto your yoke-fellow, my good sister in the Lord, now and for ever. Amen.

Although I could not hitherto write unto you, yet as I trust you pray for me, so I have not been forgetful of you in my poor prayers to Almighty God, my dear Father through Christ, to whom I give humble praises, that he has given you grace as yet (for so I hear) to keep yourself undefiled in his service, which far differs from the Romish rags, revived of late, and justly so for our sins and unthankful use of his true religion and holy ceremonies when once again in place and use amongst us. In token whereof (I mean that I have not been forgetful of you) I thought good now, when I may write, to signify the same, as well to renew our mutual love in God, and care one for another by hearty prayer, as to excite and provoke you both to thankfulness for God's graces hitherto, especially in the point before spoken of, and to be diligent and wary that you continue in the same unto the end; for you know that perseverance in godliness and purity is required of us, and that none shall be crowned, but such as fight lawfully. 2 Tim. ii.

Go on therefore, and fight a good fight stoutly and manfully! that is, as you know God is not to be worshipped and served but according to his written word, and not after unwritten verities,* or the device, fantasy, and pleasure of men or women, behave yourself inwardly in God's sight, and outwardly before your brethren. Seem not to approve by your outward man, that which the inward man detests. It is not enough to believe with the heart, except the mouth and fact confess the same: nor is it enough with the mouth to acknowledge a verity, and by our fact and deed to destroy the same. Paul speaks sometimes of deniers of God, not only with their lips and tongue, but also with their deed and life. Let not the world or the greater part of men be an example to you to follow, or do as they do, in the service of God. Christ saith, "Follow me," speaking of himself, who is the pattern and sampler we should set before us, and not the world or the more part, which follow the wide and broad way, whose end leads to perdition and everlasting woe; but rather let the example of such as walk in the narrow and strait way, which bringeth to endless life, encourage you to walk with them, although the number of them is but few, and the persons of them are utterly contemned with the world and in the world. The world cannot love, nor know the children of God, because it cannot receive the Spirit of God; and therefore as the ape thinks of her young ones, so the world thinks her own birds the fairest, contemning with deadly hate all others that will not follow her judgment. But what saith Christ? "Be of good cheer; although the world will persecute you, yet I have overcome the world." O! comfortable sentence! "I have overcome the world." This undoubtedly he means for you and me, and all others his children—that he hath overcome the world for us; but by what means? Surely, by suffering contempt, wrong, false reports, and even very shameful and most bitter death. If he went this way, and won the victory this way, as I trust we know he did, let us as his servants whose state ought not to be above our Master's, not be dismayed by contempt, or wrong, or loss of goods, or of life itself; but rather joyfully suffer the same as men, knowing we have better portions in heaven, and that this is the sure way to most victorious victory. For by many tribulations must we enter into the kingdom of heaven, if we will come thither,

* Traditions.

except for tribulation's sake we desire with ease and worldly quietness to go to hell. You know that Paul saith, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; wherefore since you are in Christ Jesus I dare say you will continue, though persecution come to you; being assured that it cannot come except God have so decreed: and if he have so decreed, then you cannot but receive it, or else a cross which will be much worse. Therefore take willingly whatever cross the Lord shall offer, and then the Lord will make you able to bear it, and never try you further than he will make you strong enough to bear. Yea, he will number and keep all the hairs of your head, so that one of them shall not perish. But if you refuse God's cross, especially to suffer the loss of any thing for his sake, who gives you all the good that ever you have, and keeps it—if, I say, you refuse, be certain the plagues of God will be poured down, first on your soul and conscience, by hardening your heart, and blinding your mind, either by bringing you into despair, or into a contempt and carnal security; from whence will ensue loss of the dearest things you have, if God love you, or else he will preserve the same to your eternal destruction. I write not this as distrusting your constancy in God's cause, God forbid, for methinks I am assured of your godly zeal, but I do it as I said, that you may be the more heedful, wary, diligent, and earnestly given to call upon the name of God for his help and grace of perseverance, who is more ready to give than we to ask.

I know this kind of writing is madness to the world, foolishness to reason, and sour to the flesh; but to you which are a man of God, and by profession in baptism have forsaken the world, and consider things according to the reach of faith, and have tasted of the good Spirit of God, and of the life to come; by such a one, I say, as I trust you are, this kind of writing is otherwise esteemed. For here you are but a pilgrim, your home is in heaven, your treasures are hoarded where thieves cannot come to steal them; there is your heart, and therefore you can and will say as the philosopher said, when he was robbed of all he had, "I carry all with me." If he being a heathen considered his riches to be the world's, rather than his, how much more should we so do?

Therefore, my dear brother, prepare yourself accordingly, as you have done, and do, I hope. Read the

second of Ecclesiasticus, see how he counsels them that will serve God, to prepare themselves for temptation. Often set before your eyes the judgment of Christ, his coming in the clouds, and the resurrection, which is now our comfort, especially in afflictions. I write to you none otherwise than I am persuaded, (I thank God,) and I purpose to go before you. I know there is an eternal life; I hope to be partaker of it through Christ; I know this is the way thither, I mean by suffering. I know, if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him; I know that by the cross, he maketh us like to Christ here, that we might be like to him elsewhere; therefore I write to you not words only. And hereupon I am the more earnest, to admonish and to pray you to cleave still to the Lord, and his true religion which you have received, and I for my part am sure that I have preached unto you. For the confirmation whereof, as I am in bonds, so I trust in the goodness of God and his power, to give my life in and for the same, that you and others may be certain, and follow as God shall call you and vouch you worthy. Remember, die you must; but when, you know not, and where and how, it is uncertain to you. Again, you must leave behind you all that you have, for nothing shall go with you but a good or an evil conscience. Moreover, it is hid from you to whom you shall leave your goods, for you may purpose, but God will dispose; therefore if God will have you to die, or to lose your goods for his cause, how much are you bound to bless God? You may be sure that then you cannot perish, for of all ways to heaven, it is the most sure way. God will preserve your goods, so that your children shall find them, although the wicked spoil every piece of them; for the righteous man's seed I have not seen, saith David, beg their bread, but God will bless them unto a thousand generations; which I pray God to remember towards your children for his name's sake. Amen.

Thus will I take you to God, and to his holy word, which is able to teach you which way to serve God, and to save you if you believe and love it. If I thought it might do you any good, I would send you a book which James Bradshaw already hath, to teach you how you should act, especially concerning the mass. I wrote it since my trouble. Commend me to T. Riddlestone, although I fear he has defiled himself in this false service. I would wish he would read that book, and as you

shall advertise me, so I will do in sending to him. I shall pray God to illuminate his eyes with his grace. Commend me to sir W. Charlton, who, I trust, has kept himself pure from idolatry. God grant he may so continue. Written in haste, (as it appears,) from the Counter in the Poultry.

By yours in Christ,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LV.

To my good friends in the Lord, Master R. and his Wife.

My dearly beloved, I heartily commend me unto you in our common Christ, whom I so call, not that I would make him as common things are, that is, nothing set by, but because by him we are brought into communion, and that as with him so with his Father, and as with his Father so with all God's people, if we are his people, as I trust we are. And therefore I write unto you as one careful, but not so much as I should be, for you, as for them whose well doing comforteth me, and is profitable to me, and whose evil doing makes me heavy and wounds me.

The days are come in which we cannot but declare what we are, if we are indeed as we should be, and as I trust we are—that is, if we are Christ's disciples. I mean, we cannot now do as the world does, or say as it says, but as God's church does and says. The world seeks itself, and speaks thereafter; the church of God seeks Christ's glory, and speaks accordingly: the worldlings follow the world, the church children follow their captain Christ; and therefore as they are not known of the world to be as they are, so they are hated, and, if God permit, they are persecuted and slain, which persecution is the true touchstone that separates the true church children from hypocrites, as the wind does the wheat from the chaff. And of this, our time and age set very many forth for example, doctrine, and fear, which once were hearty and very zealous, and now are so cold, that they smell nothing of the Spirit; for they are not only afraid to seem to speak with a church child, but also are ashamed, and that not only of them,

and so of that which they profess, but also they frame and fashion themselves in all outward behaviour, as in coming to church, and hearing mass, so that no man can accuse them for not allowing it or not honouring it as well as the papists, whereas in their hearts they disallow it, and know the same to be nought, at the least they have known it; but halting out of the way may perchance have brought them so far, that now they cannot see the way, they are so far and so long gone astray. For the further and longer a man goeth wide of the way, the harder shall it be to recover and see it; and therefore the apostle gives warning thereof, (Heb. xii.) as does Moses, (Deut. xxix.) speaking of men that bless themselves inwardly, while in truth they curse themselves. Read both the chapters, I pray you, and mark the example of Master Hales, who after he consented to seem to allow in outward fact, that which he *once* knew was evil, was fearfully left of God for our admonition.* For albeit, God hath not done thus to all that have indeed done that which M. Hales purposed to do, yet in this example he teaches us how fearful a thing it is to wound our conscience, and do any thing thereagainst, to offend the godly, and to the comfort of the obstinate.

I write not this to accuse you, or either of you; for as I cannot lightly be persuaded of any such thing of you, so I am assured you hitherto have not done any such thing, for there is yet no great penalty to punish you for not so doing, if you should have been accused thereof. For he that will do a thing unforced, I cannot hope any thing of him, but that he will run apace when he is forced. But of this enough to you, who are to be comforted and exhorted to continue in that pureness of religion which you have, as I think, hitherto received, and by your open conversation protested. Howbeit, considering how you have heard and read as much as in manner can be spoken herein, (for the Scriptures, which of themselves are most perfect herein, you have read and read again,) I think it good to exhort you to use earnest and hearty prayer, (as I trust you do,) and then doubtless God will so write what you have read in your hearts, as shall be both comfortable and profitable unto you and others. You shall rejoice in the strait way, which few find, and fewer walk in, but few indeed continue

* He refers to Judge Hales, who having been induced to profess popery, was so overcome with remorse and despair that he drowned himself.

therein to the end. (Matt. vii.) You shall suffer with joy the spoiling of your goods, because the best part of your substance is in heaven. You will set before you the example of Christ, the beginner and ender of your faith, who suffered much more than we can suffer, that we should not be faint-hearted. (Heb. x. xii.) You will rejoice, and greatly, because great is your reward in heaven. (Matt. v.) You will be glad that God accounts you worthy to suffer any thing for his sake. (Acts iv.) You will set before you the end of this your short cross, and the great glory which will follow the same. (2 Cor. iv.) You will know that it is no small benefit from God to suffer for his sake. (2 Thess. i.) You will know that your sorrow shall be turned to joy. You will know that as God makes you now like to Christ in suffering, so shall you be in reigning; and if you are partakers of affliction, you shall be also of his glory, &c. (Phil. i. John xiv. xvi. Rom. viii.) Lastly, you will know that this is the surest and safest way to heaven, which is called the kingdom of patience. (Rev. i.) But because I have written a little treatise hereof, and of the harm of halting with the world in coming to mass, I send them both unto you to peruse and read, and then at your leisure to redeliver them to this bringer, or my man, when I shall send to you for them. In the mean season, I shall as heartily as I can pray to God for you both, my most dear members in the Lord. What said I, as heartily as I can? God forgive me, for I do nothing so well as I might; in that I flatter myself too much, God lay it not to my charge. Indeed I have most cause to pray night and day, and to give thanks night and day for you both. The Lord of mercy in Christ bless you both, keep you both, and send you both to do as well as I wish for my dearest and best beloved friends and brethren in the Lord. I pray you continue to pray for me, as I doubt not you do, and so give thanks to God for me, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. The day will come when we shall meet together, and never part. God send it shortly. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LVI.

*To the worshipful Sir William Fitzwilliams, then being
knight marshal of the King's Bench.*

THE peace of God proper to his people, the Holy Ghost work daily and deeply in your heart through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I thank my Lord and God, through his Son our Mediator and Saviour, for his mercies and graces given to your mastership; which I beseech his goodness to increase in you continually for your everlasting comfort in him. By his mercies towards you, I mean not in your lands, possessions, offices, natural wisdom, riches, health, form, &c., which indeed are gifts of God given to you of his mercy without your deserts, and therefore he should be daily praised by you for the same, as I doubt not but he is, for else your ingratitude would provoke him to punish you in them and by them, if he love you. But I mean his mercies towards you in the knowledge and love of his truth in religion. Since you amongst the 'not many' of your estate and condition, as St. Paul witnesseth, (1 Cor. i.) have received this benefit as a very testimonial of your election in Christ, I would be sorry that you should need any such as I am, to move you to thankfulness; for I am not in a mammering* whether you are thankful to God for this great mercy, which is much more to be esteemed than all that ever you have. I humbly beseech God in his Christ to increase the same in you to the very end. And that he might do the same by me in some part, I thought it good and also my bounden duty deeply deserved on your behalf towards me, for the which I beseech the Lord to reward you, to send you this treatise of the doings of Master Ridley at Oxford, concerning his disputation about the sacrament. I know that divers copies have gone abroad, but none of them were as, I know, this is; for I have translated it out of the copy in Latin, which was corrected with his own hand, which came unto me with his consent, and therefore I dare be bold to say that it has not before been seen like this. In reading whereof you shall well see that this I speak is most true, and also that which causeth me to suppress commendations of it, (the excellency and worthiness thereof I mean,)

* A hesitation.

because I think I cannot speak any thing so worthily as undoubtedly these his doings deserve.* Unto your mastership I send them, as a token of my duty towards you, thereby to declare, that you deserve much of me, and I would show myself willing to recompense the same if I could; but since I cannot, and since also your doing is simply in respect of God and his cause, I will, according to your expectation, leave the recompense unto him. In the mean season praying him, that of his goodness he would increase the knowledge and love of his truth in you, and strengthen you after your vocation, both to walk purely, and manfully to confess his gospel, if he shall think it needful to call you to that honour; for surely, of all honours, it is the greatest to suffer any thing for Christ's sake. Most happy may that man think himself that has any thing to lose for his cause. As he shall be sure to find for his own part eternal felicity and honour endless, so shall his posterity even temporally prove this to be most true. I beseech you therefore, right worshipful sir, consider well this matter, and weigh it not as the world and your mother wit† will move you to do, but as the word of God teaches you; there shall you see that this I speak of is matter of much mirth, joy, and glory, though to the world it seem quite contrary. God's good Spirit always guide you to his glory, and give you the spirit of prayer, continually to pray that God may never tempt you further than he will make you able to bear. Amen. Since this copy is not so fair written as I wish and would have had it, I shall desire you to consider where I am, and how I cannot have things so done as I would, and therefore you have it as may be, when it may not be as I would it were and it should be.

From the King's Bench.

Your humble

JOHN BRADFORD.

* He refers to the public disputation at Oxford, in April, 1554, whither Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were sent as prisoners, and compelled to dispute respecting transubstantiation. The account drawn up by Ridley is given in *Fox's Acts and Monuments*, and shows the able reasonings of the Reformers, and the sophistries of their opponents.

† Natural understanding.

LETTER LVII.

To my good brother, Master Coker, at Maldon, in Essex.

ALTHOUGH I have at present both little time and less opportunity to write as I would, yet I thought it better to write something, as I may, than to be entirely silent. For if I should not do so, having so convenient a messenger, as I might incur the suspicion of ingratitude and forgetfulness towards you, and I might not satisfy the desire of this my poor brother and friend, John Searchfield, who comes unto you for help and comfort in this troublesome time. This dare I say, that the man fears God, and for God's sake, and conscience towards him, sustains both loss and labour. For our common Father's sake therefore in Christ, help him to some hole to hide himself in for a little time, if you may conveniently; and remember, that he that receiveth one of Christ's little ones, receiveth Christ, as he himself in the last day will acknowledge, which last day let us often look on and set before us, as the thing which most tends to our comfort. Now we sorrow and sigh to see the sea swell and rage in this manner as it does; and, to confess the truth, we have double cause, as well because we have deserved this sour sauce, by reason of our unthankfulness and many sins (which the Lord pardon,) as because God's glory is trodden under foot. But this comfort we have, that as God our good Father willeth not the death of a sinner, so will he order this most to his glory and our joy and comfort, if we repent now, and heartily lament our evils, use earnest, humble, and often, yea, continual prayer, and cast ourselves wholly on him and his goodness, still labouring to loathe this life, and longing for the life to come. For we should account this as it is, a very vale of misery, much to be mourned in, because the time of our habitation and our exile herein is prolonged. God grant us his Holy Spirit, to strengthen us in his truth professed, that we may persevere to the end, in the joyful and courageous confessing of his Christ. Amen.

I pray you continue, as I trust you do, to keep both soul and body pure in God's service; strive to enter in at the narrow gate, though you leave your lands and goods behind you. It is not lost which for Christ's sake we leave, but lent to a great usury. Remember that this time is come

only to try us. God make us faithful to the end. God keep us always as his children. Amen.

I pray you commend me to Master Osbourn, and to all our good brethren in the Lord. The peace of Christ be with us all.

Amen. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LVIII.

To mine own good brother, Master John Philpot, prisoner in the King's Bench.

My dear brother, God our Father be praised for the good he works in you and by you. Even now I have received your loving letters, wherein I see cause to bless God for the wisdom, love, and efficacy he has worked and does work in you and by you. Go on, for God's sake, to seek unity in Christ. If any will go to work dissemblingly, refuse it not; either it shall increase his damnation, or occasion the sooner his conversion. Judas's dissembling turned to the hurt of himself only. If once we come into unity and love, then shall we not respect* one another, neither take things in the worse part. Nothing hinders them more, than that they now hear all that we speak with prejudice,† where, if unity be had, this prejudice will be taken away, and so then shall they see the truth the sooner. Therefore, mine own dearest brother, go on, and bring it to a good end. God our Father be with thee for ever. Amen.

Pray, my good brother, and desire mine own fellow and beloved brother, J. Careless, to do the like. I shall pray for you, both in my prayers with others, and with myself alone, as for my most dear brother upon earth. I will not forget, by God's grace, to write in the behalf of our brethren in necessity. Jesus Christ, our sweet Saviour, be with us all, Einmanuel, for ever. Amen.

Your own in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* Examine.

† He means certain freewill men. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

LETTER LIX.

To my good brother, R. Cole.

MINE own good brother, our good and most merciful Father, more and more embrace us in the arms of his mercy, as his loving and own natural children, and give us one to embrace another in the arms of love as true brethren, that with one heart and mind we may praise his holy name in Christ our Saviour; and through the grace of his Spirit may every one fight mightily against sin, and all that is against the kingdom of Christ, whereunto, my beloved, we are called effectually to our everlasting felicity, (I doubt not,) praised be the name of our good God therefore, for ever and ever. Amen.

My own heart in the Lord, desire our brethren that every one would bend himself to bow; let us never break. Love suffereth long, and seeketh not herself. We all have one Father, we all are brethren. God keep us from dissension. If we cannot agree in all points, either the points perchance are not so necessary, or else by love we shall hereafter be brought to see that which yet is hid. If love appear in all our doings, and we seek one another with a simple and a single eye in God's sight, doubtless all prejudice, whereby we are hindered from seeing manifest things, will be had away, and we shall take things spoken and done in the best part, and so doubtless the name of our Father shall be sanctified in us and by us, as by instruments of grace; and God's kingdom shall increase apace in us and by us also, which may he grant for his mercy's sake. Amen.

Commend me heartily, I pray you, to both those good women; good I call them, because I am persuaded that God will deliver them, especially my good Mary. I will not cease, but even as for myself to pray to God for them, and for you, my right dear brother in the Lord. If you were acquainted with M. Robert Harrington, you would find a plain Nathaniel; you should see the worst at the first. I dare say for him, his only desire is to please God, and he is afraid to offend him. Pray for him, and for my good sister, J. H., as I know she does for you. The peace of God be with you, mine own in the Lord.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LX.

To Mistress Brown.

GOOD sister, I beseech God to make perfect the good he has begun in you unto the very end. Amen.

This life more and more becomes unto us as it should be, that is, a miserable life, a weeping life, a woeful life, and therefore let us long for our happy life, our laughing life, our joyful life, which we shall enjoy, and then have in very deed, when we depart by death out of this dangerous state, wherein we now are, by reason of this sinful flesh which we carry about us. Therefore let us prepare ourselves accordingly, and in misery and sorrow be glad through hope. Now we are dispersed, but we shall be gathered together again there, where we shall never part, but always be together in joy eternal. In hope hereof let us bear with better will our bitter burdens which we do feel, and shall feel in this miserable world: we have cause to thank God, that makes this world a wilderness unto us. If we are patient therein, kiss God's rod, and humble ourselves before God, assuredly we shall come into the most pleasant land of rest; wherefore, good sister, as I said, I say again, be merry with sorrow, rejoice in hope, be patient in trouble, pray in affliction; and, amongst others, I pray you pray heartily for me, that God would forgive me my unthankfulness, not only against you, which is great indeed, but also against all his people, but especially against his Majesty. As I can, I shall commend you unto the tuition of our shepherd Christ, who always keep us as his lambs, for his holy name's sake. Amen.

Your afflicted brother,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXI.

To certain godly men, relievers and helpers of him and others, in their imprisonment.

THE peace of Christ, which passeth all pleasure and worldly felicity, be daily more and more felt in your hearts (my right dearly beloved in the Lord,) by the inward

working of the Holy Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance, and guider of God's elect, with the which may God, our dear Father, more and more endue us all unto the end, for his beloved Son's sake, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Praised be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is a Father of mercy, and a God of all consolation, who hath blessed you with the knowledge and love of his truth, not only to your own comfort, but also the great ease and comfort of many, which, without the help of God by you hitherto, had been in much more misery. By your relieving the Lord's prisoners, I am brought to see the root whereof the work doth spring, even the knowledge and love of God's truth, for which we are in bonds. Which knowledge and love is a blessing of all blessings the greatest, (for it is even eternal life, John xvii.) and I cannot but praise God for you on this respect, that it has pleased him to vouch you worthy of so excellent and singular a benefit, which is more to be esteemed, desired, and cared for, than any thing else. The world, for all that ever it has, cannot attain by any means to this blessing, which God our Father has given you freely of his own good will through Christ, even before you were purposed to desire it; therefore, I beseech you all to be thankful with me, and to rejoice in the Lord. For if he has given us such a gift unasked, undesired, yea, unthought upon, how can he deny us any good thing now, which may be necessary for us? Will he, think you, sow his seed in the ground of your hearts, and not keep away the fowls from picking it up? Would he so bestow his seed in you as he has done, if he would not hedge in your hearts, as his field, from common paths, and from the breaking in of beasts to destroy it? Will he be more careless than a good husbandman to weed out the weeds which are in us, lest they should overgrow the corn of his word? Will not he bestow muck and marl upon us, that we may bring forth more fruit? If this be not lacking in a good husbandman, alas! why should we think but that the Lord God, a good husbandman, and nothing but good, and only good, how, I say, should it be, but that he is most careful to keep his seed already sown in your hearts, by the ministry of us and others his preachers, and that to the bringing forth of just and full fruits? Doubt not, my dearly beloved, but that he who has begun with you will happily make an end with you. He has begun to sow his

seed in you, as I dare say you feel; be sure then that all this will follow. First, he will have scarecrows in your hearts, I mean such sparkles of his fear he will drop, yea, he hath already dropped into you, that the birds of the air (vain and evil cogitations) shall not be cherished by you, but expelled, by crying to the Lord for his help. Secondly, he will make such hedges as shall keep you from by-paths of all evil customs and usages, and also preserve you from the power of evil and dominion of sin, which would have the upper hand on you. Thirdly, he will doubtless pour such showers upon you to supple you, so weed you, so muck and marl you by temptation and other exercises, that the sunshine of perseeution shall do more for the ripening his seed in you than to the withering of it away.

These things, my dearly beloved, the Lord God, which has begun them in you and for you, will continue with you, that in the end you may be brought into his barn, there to rest with him in eternal felicity. For God's sake therefore wait, and look for no less than I have told you at his hands: a greater service you cannot give him. If God keep not the order I have told you, but begin to muck and marl you, to pour his showers upon you, to nip you with his weeding-tongs, &c. rejoice and be glad that God will do that in you and with you at once, which he has been working in and for others a long time. Now undoubtedly great showers are fallen to supple our hearts, that God's word might enter therein, and take root. Now the Lord goeth a-weeding, to weed out of us our carnality, security, covetousness, self-love, forgetfulness of God, love of this world. Now the Lord doth muck and marl us, loading us with heaps and burdens of crosses, that our hearts might be made good ground to bring forth fruit to God's glory by patience, in suffering inward temptations and griefs, whereof we must complain to the Lord that his scarecrows may drive them forth from us; and also in suffering outward assaults, for which we must cry to our Master for his hedges and defence, which have two parts; the one concerning us, to help and deliver us; and the other concerning our, or rather His obstinate adversaries, to take vengeance upon them, which he will do in his time.

Therefore let us in patience possess our souls, knowing that they which persevere to the end shall be saved. Let us not be weary of well doing, for in our time we shall

reap the fruits thereof; but rather, whilst we have time, let us redeem it in doing well to all men, but specially to the household of faith. Which hitherto you have done (the Lord therefore be praised, and in the day of his coming may he recompense you,) and for the rest I hope well; I mean, that you have declared no less by confessing the truth planted in your hearts, by your words and works. After your vocation to the glory of God, I hope you have behaved yourselves godly, not being as too many are now-a-days, even mongrels, giving half to God, and half to the world, halting on both knees, going two ways; I mean the mass-gospellers, which are worse than any papists. In this point I hope well of you, my dearly beloved, that you have not contaminated yourselves, that you have both confessed the truth as often as need has required, and also have refrained from coming to church now, where is nothing but idolatrous service. I hope you have glorified God, both in soul and body. I hope you have gathered with Christ, and not scattered abroad. I hope you have drawn no yoke with unbelievers, nor communicated with other men's sins, but have abstained from all appearance of evil, confessing in heart, confessing in tongue, confessing in deed and act, the true knowledge of God, which he hath of his great mercy given unto you, not to be as a candle under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, to give light, that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

All this I hope of you, my beloved, and also all purity of life and godly conversation, not doubting but in this behalf also you have declared God's verity in your heart, and for the Lord's sake do so still in all points. That is, in your vocations be diligent and righteous, towards yourselves be sober and pure, towards your neighbours be charitable and just, towards God be faithful and thankful, loving and obedient. Use earnest and often hearty prayer; meditate much upon, and often hearken to the word of God.

If you are called, give with modesty an account of the hope which is in you. Be not ashamed of God's true service. Allow not *that* with your presence which is contrary to God's will. Make not the members of Christ's church, that is, yourselves, members of antichrist's church. Be not ashamed of the gospel, or of such as are bound therefore, but rather be partakers thereof, first inwardly by

compassion, prayer, &c., then outwardly by giving according to that the Lord hath lent you to that end; and, last of all, by suffering with us, if God so will, and if it is needful for you. For, my dearly beloved, be certain that no man can touch you, or lay hands upon you, but by the will of God, which is all good towards you, even as the will of a most dear Father, who cannot always be angry, or otherwise use his rod, than only to chastise and correct, not to destroy his children. Again, be certain that no cross shall come unto you before you need it; for God is our physician, and when he sees our souls in peril, he prevents the peril by ministering physic, which is the cross. As therefore for the body we follow the advice of the physicians for the health thereof, thankfully using their counsel, and obeying their precepts; so, for God's sake, let us for our souls, being sick, thankfully receive the heavenly Physician's physic and diet, so shall we wax strong men in God and in his Christ; which I beseech thee, O Holy Spirit, to work in us all. Amen.

My dearly beloved, this I have briefly written unto you, not as one who seeketh any gifts, as Paul saith (Phil. iv.) but as one that seeketh abundant fruits on your behalf, and to your advantage; for it is better to give than to receive, saith Christ by his apostle St. Paul, who testifies, that according to that we sow, so shall we reap. He that soweth little, shall reap little; he that soweth much, shall reap much. (2 Cor. ix.) Never should we forget, how that the Lord Jesus, being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we might be made rich by him. Again, never should we forget that we are dead to sin, and alive to righteousness: therefore should we live wholly unto God, and for God, and not for ourselves.

In all things therefore we must avoid the seeking of ourselves, as well in doing, as in leaving things undone. If the cross come upon us, then are we happy, for the Spirit of God and the glory of God rest upon us; therefore rejoice (saith Christ,) for your reward is great in heaven. (Matt. v.) In this we are made like to Christ here, therefore we shall be so elsewhere, even in eternal joy and endless glory. The highway to heaven, you know, is affliction, so that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. If we were of the world, the world would love us; but we are not of the world, but bear witness against the world, and therefore the world

hates us. But let us rejoice, for our Lord hath overcome the world, (John xv.); he suffered out of the city, bearing our rebuke, saith the apostle. Let us then go out of our tents, and bear his rebuke; that is, let us deny ourselves, take up our cross, which is his also, and follow him. (Heb. xiii.) Let us know and esteem this greater riches than all the treasures of the world, as Moses did. Let us know that he who saveth his life shall lose it. Let us know that the way to salvation is a strait way, and a way wherein we cannot carry our bags and chests with us. Let us know that no excuse of wife, farm-house, or children, will excuse us. Let us know that in this case we must be so far from loving father, mother, wife, and children, that we must hate them and our own selves also. (Luke xiv.)

Though this be a hard saying, yet we must not leave our guide for a little foul way; yea, rather we should know indeed, that it is hard only to the flesh, which if she be handled daintily will be imperious. She must be kept under, that the spirit, which is a precious thing in God's sight, may have her advantage. If we should follow the fancy of the flesh, we could not please God. We have made a solemn profession against it in our baptism, as also against the devil and the world; and shall we now look for easy things from our enemies? Shall we not look rather to be hardly entreated of them? Oh! that we considered often, and indeed, what we have professed in baptism, then the cross and we should be well acquainted together. For we are baptized into Christ's death, that is, as to be partakers of the benefit of his death, which is remission of sins, so to be made like thereunto continually by dying to sin.

Oh! that we considered what we are, where we are, whither we are going, who calleth us, how he calleth us, to what felicity he calleth us, whereby he calleth us; then, my dear hearts in the Lord, we should say to all worldly persuasions and persuaders, Get behind me, Satan; thou savourest not those things that are of God, but the things that are of men. Shall we not drink the cup which our heavenly Father has appointed for us? O Lord God, open thou our eyes, that we may see the hope whereunto thou hast called us. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand. In the favour thou bearest to thy people, remember us, visit us with thy saving health, that we may see the good things thou hast prepared for thy elect children, that we may have some sight of thy hea-

venly Jerusalem, and have some taste of the sweetness of thy house. O dear Father, kindle in us an earnest desire to be with thee in soul and body, to praise thy name for ever, with all thy saints in thy eternal glory. Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXII.

Another Letter to the Lord Russell.

THE eternal mercies of God in his dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, be more and more felt and heartily perceived of you, my good Lord, to your endless joy and comfort. Amen.

Because your Lordship looketh not for thanks from me for God's benefits ministered by you, and I cannot duly declare in few words what I would do; I will omit the same, praying God, our dear Father, in the day of his retribution to remember it, and in the mean season to assist, counsel, and comfort you, as his child for ever in all things. I doubt not, but that you have that child-like opinion, yea, persuasion of his goodness in Christ towards you, than which blessing (my good Lord,) none greater is given to man upon earth. For assuredly, he that hath it is the very child of God, elect before all time in Christ Jesus our Lord, and therefore shall enjoy everlasting felicity; although he is here afflicted and tossed in trouble and temptation for his trial, that when he is found faithful, he may receive the crown of glory.

The only thing that distinguishes the child of God from the wicked is this faith, trust, and hope in God's goodness through Christ, which I trust you have. May God increase it in you, and make you thankful. Certainly, such as enjoy it are happy; and if they are happy, and that happiness is not where any thing is to be desired, they cannot but for ever be most assured of perseverance to salvation. For if they fall, the Lord putteth under his hand, that they shall not perish. They are beloved of Christ, who loveth them to the very end. May God for his mercy sake in Christ open your eyes more and more to see his sweetness in Christ, to make you secure in him, and to awaken the flesh from her security, to be vigilant and heedful how you may best behave yourself in thankful obedience to God,

and careful help and service to his people. So that all your whole life may tend to this, how by example and otherwise you may do good to others, and still confirm his true service and religion by your constancy, wherein if you continue to the end, you shall receive an incorruptible crown of immortal and unspeakable glory. But if because of God's tarrying, which is only to prove you, you relent, which God forbid; thinking it enough to serve God in heart, and in body to do as may make most to your temporal advantage, as many do; then undoubtedly your standing hitherto, (wherefore God's holy name be praised,) shall make much more for the papistical kingdom and the glory thereof, than if you had never done as you have done.

Whereof, my good Lord, be not weary nor unthankful; for with the godly and in the church of God you are and shall be had as a worthy member of Christ, worthy of double honour, because God of his goodness has vouched you worthy, without your deserts. In the one, that is, for lands and possessions, you have many companions, but in the other, my good Lord, you are *A per se A*,* with us for our comfort and joy unspeakable, so long as you continue, as I trust you will do to the end, and to our most heavy sorrow, which God forbid, if you should relent in any point.

Therefore I beseech your Lordship, in the bowels and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to persevere and continue to the end. He that hath not tried you hitherto above your strength, will continue so to the end. If for a time he hide his face from you, yet he does it but for a moment, to make you cry to him the more heartily; and surely he will hear you, not only when you are crying, but also whilst you are thinking how to cry. He is with you in trouble, and will deliver you. The longer he tarries, the more pleasantly and comfortably he will appear. Only believe and look for his help, and you shall have peace, such peace as the world knoweth not, nor can know; which may God give us a true feeling of, and then we shall not be grieved with afflictions, but rather rejoice in them, because they are but exercises and trials of faith, to the increase of faith and patience, with many godly virtues, &c.

As concerning the number and charges of us here, which this day I heard your Lordship desired to understand, this is so much as I know, that we are four in number together,

* *A* by itself *A*.

whose names this bearer will tell you. The charges of the least is 12s. a week; there are five others, whose charges are not so great, but as they will themselves; I mean, they pay daily as they take, and that to the uttermost; these were never ministers. I trust there is no urgent need in any of us all, and (I think,) least in myself, through God my Father's providence, the which I have and do daily wonderfully feel, his name therefore be praised. Other things I would write, but because they may be more safely told by this bringer, I have omitted the same for that purpose. May God of his goodness ever be with you, and keep your Lordship to the very end as his dear child. Amen, Amen.

Your humble to command,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXIII.

To his godly friends, G. and N., encouraging them to prepare themselves to the cross, and patiently to endure afflictions for God's cause and his holy gospel.

THE God of all mercies, and the Father of all consolation, show unto you more and more the riches of his mercies in Christ Jesus our Lord, and grant you a lively faith to apprehend and pull unto yourselves the same, to your everlasting comfort. Amen.

Because my mind will not let me rest to think upon, and as it were to see, sore storms like to fall more felly* than any we have yet felt, (I should rather say, you have felt, and are like to feel, if you continue to confess Christianly as you have begun,) I thought it my duty to admonish you, that you should not therefore be dismayed, or think it any strange thing. For undoubtedly you, confessing Christ according to the truth taught you, yea, received of you, though trouble come, the same shall be so far from hurting you, that it shall profit you exceedingly, making you thereby like to Him who for your sakes suffered much greater sorrow than all men can sustain. As well that your sorrows and afflictions, whatsoever they are that shall come unto you, should be sanctified in his

* Severely.

cross, and that which he suffered; as also that in him you might both have example how to order yourselves in the cross, and how soon, shortly and gloriously, the end of your cross will be. Therefore, I say, be not dismayed that the cross cannot but conform and make us like unto Christ, not simply of itself, but by God's Spirit, which makes it his chief mean thereto. First, in putting us in mind of our corruption received of Adam, the cause of all care. Then by occasioning us to remember as well our most secret sins, as also our more manifest evils, that we thereby might be provoked to repentance, and asking of mercy; which undoubtedly God will give us for his Christ's sake, and thereto also his Holy Spirit to sanctify us, if we ask the same.

Now this Spirit will not cease more and more both to mortify the old man with his desires, and also to renew and repair the new man, daily with augmentation and increase; so that at the length we shall be made so like to Christ, that we cannot but be coupled unto him. I mean not by faith, as we now are, but even in deed, leaving here behind us, like Elias, our cloak, the flesh, which one day God will call and quicken again, to be like unto the glorious and immortal body of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; after that it hath suffered and slept, as his hath done, the afflictions and time which God hath already appointed.

My dear brethren and sisters, this is most certain; that God hath already appointed for you the afflictions and crosses which ye shall suffer, so that they are not in the power, choice, and will of your and his enemies. If you would fly them you cannot, but will ye, nill ye, needs must you have them. If you will not carry them in the love of God, you shall carry them in his displeasure. Therefore cast your care on him, which careth for you, and hath counted all the hairs of your heads, so that one shall not perish, if you commit yourselves to his ordering; whereas else your heads and bodies, yea souls too, shall perish, if you withdraw yourselves as unwilling to take his cup and drink of it. Not that I would have you thrust yourselves headlong and rashly to take or pull trouble unto you, or that I would not have you use such honest and lawful means as you may, in the fear of God and with good conscience, to avoid the cross, and give place to evil. But I would have you willing to put forth your hand to take it when God offers it in such sort, as that with good conscience ye cannot escape. Then take it, kiss it, and thank God for

it, for it is even a very sacrament* that God loves you; as he saith, Whom I love, them I chastise; and if you are not partakers of correction, surely you are not children. But if he once chastise you, and you kiss the rod, verily he will cast the rod into the fire, and embrace you and kiss you, as the mother does her child, when she perceives the child takes the correction in good part. But why do I compare God your Father's love to a mother's, for it far passeth it? For, saith he, though it be possible that a natural mother should forget the child of her womb, yet will not I forget thee, saith the Lord our good God and Father through Christ. Though he seem angry towards evening, yet in the morning we shall find him well pleased, if in Christ we come to him, and cry, Abba, dear Father, help us, and (as thou hast promised) try us not further than thou wilt make us able to bear.

Therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord, be of good comfort, be of good comfort in the Lord; confess him and his truth, and fear not prison, loss of goods, or life. Fear rather that prison, out of which there is no deliverance. Fear rather the loss of those goods which last for ever. Fear rather the loss of the life which is eternal, whereunto you are called, and the way by which God will bring you to it, since you know not certainly whether it will be by prison, fire, halter, &c.; whensoever these come, as I said before, let them not dismay you, nor seem strange to you. For no small number of God's children are gone that way, and we are a good company here together, which are ready to follow the same way through God's grace, if God so will. I beseech you make you ready, and go with us, or rather be ready, that when we come we may go with you. The journey is but short, though it is unpleasant to the flesh. Perchance, if we should die in our beds of a corporeal malady, it would be much longer, and also more painful. At the least in God's sight it cannot be so precious and gainful as I know this kind of death is, whereto I exhort you to prepare yourselves, mine own dear hearts in the bowels and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whose tuition, grace, governance, and protection, I heartily commend you all, and beseech you that you would do the like unto me in your hearty prayers. Out of the Tower of London, 1554.

By your own to use in the Lord for ever,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* Or sign.

LETTER LXIV.

To my dearly beloved in the Lord, Mrs. W. and Mrs. W.

ALMIGHTY God, our dear and most merciful Father, be always with you both my entirely beloved mother and sister in the Lord, and may he for ever keep you as his babes unto his eternal kingdom through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

I purpose not to render thanks to you for God's great goodness towards me by you, because I cannot. Each of you has so heaped benefits upon me, that it were hard for me to reckon the tenth part. He for whose sake you have done it, and all the good you do, one day recompense you after your heart's desire in him! In the mean season I beseech him to reveal unto you more and more the riches of his grace and love in Christ, by whom ye are beloved, and were so before the world was, and doubtless shall be world without end. According to the revelation and your sense or faith herein, so will you contend* to all piety and godliness; as St. John saith, He that hath this hope, will purify himself as Christ is pure. (1 John iii.) For how should it be otherwise, than that if we are certainly persuaded that heaven is ours, and we citizens thereof, then (I say) we should desire the dissolution of our bodies, and death to despatch us, and to do his office upon us?

If we certainly believed we were members of Christ and God's temples, how should we but fly from all impurity and corruption of the world which cometh by concupiscence? If we certainly believed that God indeed of his mercy in Christ is become our Father, since his good will is infinite, and his power according thereto, how could we be afraid of man or devil? How could we doubt of salvation, or any good thing, which might tend to God's glory and our own weal? Now mark whether all things teach us not that we should be certain and sure that we are God's children in Christ. Behold the creation of this world, and the gubernation† of the same; do not these teach us that God loveth us? And is God's love out of Christ the beloved? Is not his love, as he is, unchangeable? Does not St. John say, that he loveth to the end whom he loveth? (John xiii.) Therefore I say, the very creatures of God both as to their creation and preservation

* Strive for.

† Government and direction.

tell us that God loveth us; that is, that we in Christ are his children and dearlings, although in ourselves and of ourselves we are otherwise, namely, children of wrath. Again, look upon the law of God, and tell me whether it does not require this certainty of you, namely, that you are God's dear children in Christ? Does not God plainly affirm, and say, "I am the Lord thy God?" Does he not charge you to have none other gods but him? How then can you perish, if God be your God? Does not that make God no God? Does not David say, that those people are happy which have the Lord for their God? Psal. cxliv.

Besides this, look on your belief; do you not profess that you believe in God, your Father Almighty, who wants not power to help you, as he wanted no good will in Christ to choose you? Do you not say that you believe remission of sins, resurrection of the body, life everlasting, fellowship with the saints, &c.? But how do you say you believe this, and are not certain thereof? Is not faith a certainty? Is not doubting, against faith? as St. James saith. Pray in faith, and doubt not; for he that doubteth obtaineth nothing. When Peter began to doubt, he had like to have been drowned; (Mat. viii.) beware of it therefore.

Moreover, to certify your consciences that you are God's children, and shall never finally perish, through God's goodness in Christ, behold your Head, your Captain, I mean Christ Jesus. Wherefore came he into this world, but to redeem you, to marry you unto himself, to destroy the works of Satan, to seek and save that which was lost? Wherefore suffered he so great and bitter passions?* did he not do it to take away your sins? Wherefore did he rise from death? Did he not do it to justify you? Wherefore did he ascend into heaven? Did he not do it to take possession there for you, to lead your captivity captive, to prepare and make ready all things for you, to appear before the Father, always praying for you? If these are true, as they are most true, why then stand you in doubt? Do you not thereby deny Christ? Wherefore were you born of Christian parents, and in God's church, but because you were God's children by Christ before you were born? For this cause you were baptized, and hitherto the Lord hath thus dealt with you, sparing you, correcting you, and blessing you; but why? Verily

* Sufferings.

because you are his children, and shall be for ever through Christ. Tell me, why has God kept you till this time, but that he will for his sake have you, even here, be made like unto Christ, that elsewhere you may be so? Why hath he opened your eyes from popery, but because you are his children indeed? When you pray, do you not call him Father? Why then do you doubt of it? Why will you believe the devil more than God your Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? More than the holy word of God, both in the law and in the gospel, more than all the blessings and castigations of God? Do not all these preach to you and tell you, that you are God's babes through Christ? Therefore, my dearly beloved, believe it, and give not place to the devil, but withstand him strong in faith. Say with the poor man, I believe; Lord, help my unbelief. Say with the apostles, Lord, increase our faith. Mark ix. Luke xvii.

This, mine own hearts in the Lord, I write not that you should live more securely and carnally, doing as the spiders do, which gather poison where bees gather honey, but that, as the elect of God, you might live in all purity, godliness, and peace, which may God increase in us all for his Christ's sake. Amen.

I pray you heartily pray for us, that to the very end we may, as I hope we shall, go vigorously and cheerfully whithersoever our heavenly Father shall bring and lead us. His will, which is always good, be done in earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Your brother in bonds for the testimony of Jesus Christ,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXV.

To my good sister, M. H.

THE peace of God, with increase of faith and feeling of his mercy to your comfort in Christ, the Holy Ghost work in your heart now and for ever. Amen.

As it is much to my comfort, that God has given you such a love and zeal to his truth, so I exhort you my good sister, diligently to labour by continual reading and meditation of God's holy word, and by earnest prayer and other godly exercises to maintain and increase the same, that by

the feeling of God's gracious Spirit working in you good fruits as witnesses of your faith, you may grow in strength thereof, and certainty of God's favour and good will towards you. For, above all things, of this I would have you to be most assured, that you are beloved of God, that you are his dear child, and shall be for evermore through Christ, in whom you are by faith, and he in you. Out of this certainty, the cause whereof is God's own goodness, grace, and truth, springeth true love, and loving fear, and obedience to God continually and in all things. Where it is, I mean this faith, certainty and persuasion of God's eternal goodness to you in Christ, there no sins are imputed to you, or laid to your charge, to condemnation, nor shall be, though for correction's sake now and then your heavenly Father visit them fatherly, or rather you, for them. Where it is not, there is nothing that pleases God, be it ever so well done. Labour therefore for this certainty of faith through Christ;—whensoever you doubt, you heap sin upon sin. If Satan, your conscience, or God's law accuse you, confess your fault, and hide it not before the Lord: but when they would infer that because of your sin you are condemned, and cast away; then answer them, that it is only their office to accuse and witness, not to give sentence and judge; it only appertaineth to God to give judgment. Paul saith, It is God that absolveth, who then shall condemn us? God himself promises, before he demand any thing of us, that he is our Lord and our God; and are not they happy who have the Lord for their God? Is he God to any whose sins he remitteth not? 'Through Christ he is our Father, and therefore we are commanded so to call him; and can there want any fatherly kindness in him towards us, who are his children? No, verily; therefore be sure, and waver not of God's love and favour towards you in Christ. The cause of his love is his own goodness and mercy: this lasting for ever, his love lasteth for ever. How can you then but be quiet and happy? Use this to comfort the weak conscience, and not to unbridle the mighty affections of the flesh or old Adam, which must have other meat.

Your own in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXVI.

A letter concerning freewill, to certain men who were then prisoners with him in the King's Bench.

THE good Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of truth, and guide to God's children, be with us all and lead us into all truth. Amen.

Hitherto I have often resorted unto you (my friends, as I thought) and by all means sought to do you good even to my own charge and hinderance. But now I see it happeneth otherwise, and therefore I purpose till I know more than I do, to absent myself from you, but not to withhold my help, and by letters to supply that which by mouth you cannot patiently abide to hear. You report of me to my face, that I am a great slander* to the church of God. This may be understood two ways, by living and doctrine. But as for living, you yourselves (I thank God therefore) gave testimony of me. You therefore mean it is in doctrine. Now since there are many parts of the doctrine of Christ, I conclude that you mean not generally, but in particular points. For you have at different times given your commendation in my behalf as to generalities, both to my face and behind my back, for which I humbly praise my God through Christ. It is in some particulars therefore that you mean I am a slander, which, as far as I know, is only in this respect as concerning you—that I believe and affirm the salvation of God's children is so certain that they shall assuredly enjoy the same.

You say it depends partly upon our perseverance to the end, and I say it depends only and altogether upon God's grace in Christ, and not upon our perseverance in any point; for then grace would be no grace. You will and do in words deny our perseverance to be any cause, but yet in reality you do otherwise. For if perseverance is not a cause, but God's grace in Christ is the whole and only cause of salvation, then while the cause, that is to say grace, remains, the thing, that is to say salvation, cannot but remain also. Of which thing (salvation) if with the Scriptures you would make perseverance an effect or fruit, you would not be offended at the truth, but you would say as it saith, that the salvation of God's children is so certain that they shall never finally perish, the Lord putting

* Offence.

his hand under them, that if they fall they shall not lie still. For whom he loveth he leaveth not, but loveth them unto the end, (John xiii.) so that perseverance is proper to them, and distinguishes them from hypocrites, and such as seem to others, and sometimes to themselves also, that they are God's children, which if they once were indeed, then, as St. John saith, they should not sin the sin unto death, nor should they go out of God's church, but, as Paul saith, should persevere to the end. 1 John iii. v. ii. Heb. iii.

Now to be God's child is no less in all points above the power of man, than to be man's child is above our own power. But as it passes our ability in all respects to be God's child, by so much this dignity is greater. Again, if once God's child indeed, then God's child for ever. That is, he that is so shall not perish eternally, if God our Father be both of good will infinite, and also of power accordingly; and if the seed of God which remaineth in his children can keep them from sinning to death, for otherwise they sin, and therefore pray daily, Forgive us our debts,* and in 1 John iii. Matt. vi. Moreover God's children are under grace and not under the law, and therefore sin shall not condemn them. (Rom. vi.) For where no law is, there is no transgression, (Rom. iv.) I mean no transgression to final damnation. For the new covenant of God is, never to remember their sins, but to give them such hearts and minds, that, as they naturally lust and labour to do that which is evil, so their inward man being renewed, striveth to the contrary, and at length shall prevail, because he that is in them, is stronger than he that is in the world. And St. Paul saith, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, since God absolveth them for Christ's sake, by whom they are kept; so that it is not possible for them to perish on account of their Shepherd who is faithful over God's people. 1 John iv. Rom. viii. John vi. x. Matt. xxiv. Heb. xiii. iii.

Whoso feeleth in himself this certainty and assurance by the testimony of God's Spirit in deed and in truth, is happy for ever. And as he hopeth to be like Christ in his coming, he cannot but desire it and purify himself in all purity, so far will he be from carnal liberty. And as the elect of God, he will endue and clothe himself daily with the apparel of the elect, praying night and day, which is another property of God's children. To this certainty all the creatures of

* Trespasses.

God call us concerning their creation and use. God's first commandment requires this assurance, under pain of condemnation. The gospel of God and all his promises—the sacraments and the substance of them, which is Christ Jesus our Saviour, above all things require it of every one that is baptized and brought into God's church. There is nothing else God so requires of us as thus to be persuaded respecting him, for out of it flows all godliness towards God and man. So that it cannot be but that they take Satan's part, who go about to hinder or bind* this certainty in themselves and in others. I cannot but, as I have often done before, admonish you that you do this indeed, (however you mean,) that your blood may be upon your own heads if you persevere and do it obstinately and not ignorantly. From which I beseech Almighty God to deliver you. Amen. 1st January.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXVII.

To certain Men not rightly persuaded in the most true, comfortable, and necessary doctrine of God's holy election and predestination.

GRACE, mercy, and peace, with increase of all godly knowledge and living from God the eternal Father of all consolation, through the bloody death of our alone and full Redeemer Jesus Christ, by the mighty and lively working and power of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, I wish unto you now and for ever. Amen.

Although I look hourly for officers to come and have me to execution,† yet I cannot but attempt to write something unto you, my dearly beloved as always you have been, and however you have taken me; to occasion you the more to weigh the things wherein some controversy has been amongst us, especially the article and doctrine of predestination; whereof I have written a little treatise, therein briefly showing my faith, and answering the enormities gathered by some to slander the said necessary and

* Restrain or limit.

† At the time when this letter was written it was intended that Bradford should have been burned immediately. The truly Christian and sweet spirit it displays, renders it peculiarly worthy of attention.

comfortable doctrine. That little piece I commend unto you, as a thing whereof I doubt not to answer to my comfort before the tribunal-seat of Jesus Christ; and therefore I heartily pray you, and every of you, for the tender mercies of God in Christ, that you would not be rash to condemn things unknown; lest God's woe should fall upon you, for calling good evil, and evil good. For the great love of God in Christ, cavil not at things that are well spoken, and construe not things in an evil part when you have occasion otherwise. Do not suppose that any man by affirming predestination, as in that book I have truly set it forth according to God's word and the consent of Christ's church, either seeks carnality, or sets forth matter of desperation: only by the doctrine of it I have taught to myself, and to others, a certainty of salvation; a setting up of Christ only; an exaltation of God's grace, mercy, righteousness, truth, wisdom, power, and glory; and a casting down of man and all his power; that he that glorieth may glory only, and altogether, and continually, in the Lord.

Man consists of two parts—the soul and the body; and every man of God has (as a man would say) two men, an outward or old man, and an inward or new man. The devil's drift is to bring the one into carnality, and the other into doubt, and so to cause despair and hatred of God. But God for remedy hereof has ordained his word, which is divided into two parts. The one is a doctrine which demands of us our duty, but gives no power thereto; the other is a doctrine which not so much demandeth as giveth. The former is called the law, which has its promises, conditions, and comminations, or threats accordingly; the other is called the gospel, or rather the free promises, hanging not as conditions on our behalf, but simply on God's verity and mercy, (although they require conditions, but not as hanging thereon,) of which promises the gospel may well be called a publication. The former, that is, the law, with her promises and comminations, tells man what he is, and shows him what he can do. The latter, that is, the gospel, and free promises, tells and sets forth Christ, and what mercy at God's hand through Christ is offered and given unto us. The former part serveth to keep the old man from carnality and security, and to stir him up to diligence and solicitude: the latter part serveth to keep the new and inward man from doubting and despair, and

to bring us into an assured certainty and quietness with God through Christ. The old man and the field he resteth in may not be sown with any other seed than is agreeable to the former doctrine, (the law;) the new man and the field he resteth in may not be sown with any other than is agreeing to the latter doctrine, (the gospel.) By this means man shall be kept from carnality, and from desperation also, and brought into diligence and godly peace of conscience. It is forbidden in the old law to sow two kinds of seed in one field; to wear linsey woolsey garments; or to eat beasts that did not cleave the hoofs. (Deut. xiv. xxii.) God grant us to be wise husbandmen, to sow according as I have said. God grant us to be wise tailors, to cut our coats for two men of one whole cloth, as it is declared. God grant us to be clean beasts, to cleave the hoofs accordingly. That is, to give the old man meat proper for the mowers; that is, the law with its appurtenances—conditions, promises, and comminations; and to give to the new man the gospel and sweet free promises, as appertaineth, and then, doubtless, we shall walk in the right highway unto eternal life: that is, in Christ Jesus, the end of the law and the fulfilling of the promises, in whom they are yea and amen.

If this my poor advice is observed, my dear brethren in the Lord, I doubt not but all controversies for predestination, original sin, freewill, &c. shall so cease that there shall be no breach of love nor suspicion amongst us, which God grant, for his mercies' sake. I am persuaded of you, that you fear the Lord, and therefore I love you and have loved you in him, my dear hearts, though you have taken it otherwise, without cause on my part given, so far as I know. For hitherto I have not suffered any copy of the treatise above specified to go abroad, because I would suppress all occasions, so far as might be. Now am I going before you to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father, to my Christ and your Christ, to my home and your home. I go before, but you shall come after, sooner or later. Howbeit, I could not but, before I go, signify thus much unto you as I have done, that you might see my love, and thereby be occasioned to increase in love, and learn rather to bear than break. My poor and most dear sister to me that ever I had, with whom I leave this letter, I commend unto you all and every of you, beseeching

you, and heartily praying you, in the bowels and blood of Jesus Christ, to care for her, as for one which is dear in God's sight, and one which loveth you all in God, and hath done so, as I can and do bear her witness, although in the point of predestination it hath pleased God by my ministry to open unto her his truth. Wherein she is settled, and, I trust in God, confirmed; and if you cannot think with her therein as she doth, I heartily pray you, and as I can, in God's behalf charge you, that you molest her not nor disquiet her; but let love abound, and therein contend who can go most before. I commend also unto you my good sister M. C., making for her the like suit unto you all.

Ah! dear hearts, be not faint-hearted for these evil days which are come to try us and purify us, that we may the more be partners of God's holiness; so we shall be better known to ourselves, and to the world. Continue to walk in the fear of the Lord—you have begun well. Keep yourselves pure, as I hope you do, from this rotten, Romish, yea, antichristian religion. Reverently read God's word, thereto joining prayer, that as in reading you hear God speak unto you, so in praying you may speak unto him. Labour after your callings to help others. As you have done, do still; and I pray God give you grace to continue, as I doubt not but he will, for his goodness' sake. At length we shall meet together in Christ's kingdom, and there never part asunder, but praise the name of our good God and Father, with the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, angels, archangels, and all the saints of God. Oh, joyful place! Oh! place of all places desired!

My brethren, I think myself more happy than you, by how much I am now more near unto it. Elias's chariot I hourly look for to come and catch me up. My cloak, that is, my carcass, I shall leave behind me in ashes, which I doubt not my Lord will raise up and restore to me again in the last day, glorified even like unto his own most glorious body. The portion of the good Spirit which my Father hath lent me, I wish, yea, double and treble, unto you all. God, the Father of mercy, in the blood of his Christ, give to every of you, my dear hearts in him, his blessing, and pour plentifully upon you his Holy Spirit, that you may increase in all godly knowledge and godliness to your own comfort and the edification of many others. Amen. Yet once more I commend unto you my foresaid

most dear and beloved sister in the Lord, who always be unto her a most loving father, spouse, and pastor. Amen. Amen. Out of prison, (the Compter,) the 16th of February, 1554-5.

Your own heart,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXVIII.

*To Trewe and Abingdon, with other of their company, teachers and maintainers of the error of Man's Freewill.**

YET once more, beloved in the Lord, before pen and ink are utterly taken from me, as I look it will be this afternoon, I thought good to write unto you, because I stand in doubt whether at any time hereafter I shall see or speak with you, for within this sevensnight my Lord Chancellor bade me look for judgment. God knoweth I lie not, I never bore you malice, nor sought the hinderance of any one of you, but your good, both in soul and body, as when we shall all appear together before God, I am certain you shall then know, though now you doubt it. And of that I am right well assured; for mine own conscience can, and does bear witness with me, that I never defrauded you, or any of you, of the value of one penny, or pennyworth of any thing, but have sought to do you good with that which has been given, not only in common, but also unto me, and to mine own use, discretion, and distribution: therefore disdain not the good will of your lover in God; and in hope that you will not, I have even now sent unto you thirteen shillings and four-pence. If you need as much more you shall have it, or any thing else I have or can do for you. Though in some things we agree not,† yet let love bear away the bell, and let us pray one for another, and be careful one for another, for I hope we all are Christ's. As you hope yourselves to pertain to him, so think of me; and as you are his, so am I yours,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* Read 1 Cor. xiii. and compare these spirits with the spirit of humbleness, unity, and love, which here you see in this man of God, doing good even to his adversaries. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

† He means concerning freewill, original sin, predestination, &c. wherein they are plainly Pelagians and Papists. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

At this letter these men were offended, because he said he had hindered himself to further them, as though he had thereby upbraided them, and in displeasure they sent it to him again: whereupon he wrote unto them as follows:

LETTER LXIX.

HE that seeketh not to hinder himself temporally, that he may help his brother who is in more need, the same wanteth true love; I have done, do, and will (except you refuse it) hinder myself this way, that I may further you, and, indeed, myself also, that way, wherein I desire to be furthered. If I would seek mine own gains temporally, then I could have taken and used many portions of money which have been given me for mine own use.* I never intended to upbraid you, but that which I wrote of mine own hinderance was, that you might see I loved you, and sought your weal, as I do and will be glad to do it continually. The Lord of mercy hath forgiven us all, wherefore henceforth let us rather bear than break.

Yours in the Lord,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXX.

To the Lady Vane.

OUR dear and most meek Father always be with us, for his Christ's sake, and guide us as his children for ever. Amen.

Your comfortable and necessary letters last sent to me, right worshipful and dearly beloved, deserve at my hands, as your other benefits have done, that which I cannot give. May the Lord my God recompense you, as he can and will undoubtedly. Now am I going to my good Father and your Father: now am I going to my Christ and your Christ: now am I going to my home and your home. I go before, but you shall follow: howbeit, when or which way, I know not, the Lord knoweth. Unto his

* Though he distributed to them among other prisoners there, not only that which was given in common but also that which was given for his own use, yet they suspected him of evil dealing. Thus do not they in whom the love of God dwelleth. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

providence and will commend yourself, for it cannot but come to pass, and there is nothing so good to us as it is. Happy were we that ever we were born, that God might set forth his glory by us, howsoever he does it. Though I am led, as was said to Peter, whither I would not, yet give thanks with me and for me, that it pleases my Father thus to lead me. I have deserved, yea, even since I came into this prison, many a shameful death: such and so great are my ingratitude and sins. But lo, the tender kindness of my Father corrects me as a child and son, making the remedy for my sins an occasion for his glory, a witnessing of his truth, a confirmation of his true religion, heretofore set forth and preached by me; wherein, good madam, persist, and you shall be safe. Be not ashamed of it now, for though it seems to be overcome, yet by suffering it overcometh, that God's wisdom, which is foolishness to the world, and God's power, which is weakness to the reason of man, may triumph and confound that which the world thinks wise and mighty. Now I begin to be Christ's disciple. Now I begin to be fashioned like to my Master in suffering, that I may be so in reigning. Now I for ever take my farewell of you in this life. Now I commend myself into the hands of my Father, by whose providence I came into this world, by whose providence I have been kept in this world, and by whose providence I depart hence. And as his providence is towards me, so doubt you not but it is towards you, though not in such sort exteriorly, yet in such love, solicitude, and carefulness for you interiorly. God, our God, and Father of mercy, for the blood of his Christ, wash away all our sins, comfort his church, strengthen the weak, convert or confound, as may make most to his glory, his enemies, and be with us Emmanuel for ever. Amen. Amen.

In haste, out of prison, the 5th of February, 1555.

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXI.

To Mistress Wilkinson.

THE Lord of mercy, in Christ his Son our Saviour and only Comforter, be with you all now and for ever. Amen.

Although at present I have little time by reason of this

bringer's short departing, and less occasion to write unto you; yet since it has pleased God to offer me more liberty to write than before I had, (as this bearer can report,) I thought good to signify unto you the same with the acknowledging of the receipt of your tokens, for which I neither can nor will go about to flatter you with thanks; for I know you look for none at mine hands, God being the cause, and his word the end wherefore you did so. To him I know you would have me thankful, and I beseech you pray that I may be so, and not only thankful for myself and his benefits towards me, but also thankful for you, to whom God hath given to fear his name and love his truth. Which gifts far pass the riches of the world, for they shall perish and be left we know not unto whom; but these gifts of God as they last for ever, so they make the possessors of the same happy. Go on therefore, and pray God to increase them of his goodness, as of his mercy he has begun them in you, and indeed so he will. For to whom he gives the earnest to will, to them he will give the grace of continuing, if we reject not the same, as we do when we are double-hearted, and divide our fear and love, as the Samaritans did, which feared God and also their Adramelech,—loved God's religion and the old customs of their country. If this doubleness come on us, that we fear the world and unite it with the fear of God—if we love the muck of this earth and couple it with the love of God's religion, then we divide the stakes, then we mar the market, then the Spirit of God will depart, then we play as Ananias and Sapphira did, and sooner or later we shall fall into perdition with them. But, as I said, I think no such thing of you. I think of you as God's dear children, whose hearts are wholly with the Lord. And therefore I write not this as though you were such, but because it is of God's goodness that you are not such, because Satan would have you such, and because many, that were as you are, now are such. Therefore to make you thankful and careful to continue, but so that your care be all cast upon the Lord, is the only cause wherefore I write this, and would write more, but the bringer cannot tarry. And therefore I make an end hastily and abruptly, beseeching Almighty God in our Redeemer Jesus Christ to be with you, and comfort you all with his Holy Spirit.

By your own to use in the Lord for ever,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXII.*

To Father Traves, minister of Blackley, begging his prayers, and lamenting his own sinful condition.

GRACE and mercy from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, govern our minds, that sin have not dominion over us. Amen.

Yesternight, a little before supper, I was asked by a neighbour, my mother's friend, for to go this day to dinner. For that a refusal would have been imputed disdainful stateliness, I unwillingly, but not unadvisedly, yet foolishly granted the same; which I advertise you, as my excuse for not coming this day. And for mine absence yesterday, my vain looking for you to have come with your nearest neighbour, the rather for that I heard him commit to you the survey† of his will, has with some repentance deceived me, though to my hurt and loss, yet to your profit, which else by my coming and troubling you should have been contrary. If you come not hither to-morrow, send me word by the bringer; and if there is no sermon, I will come to you, to have your counsel in such things as I will not now write by letter.

In the mean season, in your communication with God, I pray you have me in remembrance, of all sinners a most negligent, unthankful, and wretched, (oh! that from the bottom of my heart I confessed the same unfeignedly!) that at length I might truly convert and return from these greasy fleshpots of Egypt, to feed with his manna, patiently and assuredly expecting his mercy, joyfully sighing for and bearing the badge of his disciples and servants, the cross. I mean to crucify this lucriferous‡ and gluttonous heart, more than most worthy of the rich Epulo's unquenchable thirst,§ and the gnawing worms of Herod.|| This paper, pen, and ink, yea the marble stone weepeth,

* The following letters were written by M. Bradford to Father Traves, the minister of Blackley, in Lancashire, his revered friend and spiritual counsellor. They were written before the preceding letters, but it appears best to adopt the arrangement of Fox, and place them here. They present an interesting view of a real follower of Christ, fleeing for refuge to the hope which is set before him; and like Zaccheus, not resting satisfied till he had made restitution for former misdeeds according to the utmost of his ability. This circumstance, to which he frequently alludes, is noticed in the sketch of his life prefixed to these letters.

† Examining.

‡ Covetous.

§ Luke xvi.

|| Acts xii.

to see my slothful security, and unthankful hardness to so merciful and long-suffering a Lord. I confess it, I confess it, though not tremblingly, humbly, or penitently, yet I confess it, oh! hypocritically I confess it!

Therefore pray,—pray for me, that I may repent, and be turned to God, not despising his wrath, and the death of his Son Jesus Christ, but that I may live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, evermore to bewail my carnal security and this self-love, that I may be made a new creature through grace, made meet to receive the new wine of the gospel into a new vessel, purified by faith, wrought by the Spirit of consolation, which may vouchsafe to lead us in all truth and godly living, that we may know God the Father to be in himself the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. To which most blessed Trinity, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

From Manchester. In haste, this Thursday in the morning.

Yours as his own,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXIII.

Another letter to Father Traves.

GRACE, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

If my heart were not altogether adamantine, your kind letters to me, unkind wretch, would cause me, from the bottom of the same, to confess mine ingratitude towards you; but as I act, so I write; and as I am unable in the one, so am I foolish in the other; in all those unkindnesses, rudeness, &c. whereof you accuse yourself, I am enforced to acknowledge myself most justly condemned. In your letters, as in a glass, I may learn by you, speaking humbly of yourself, to espy my nakedness, which before I thought was clothed with a double garment, but now find only with fig-leaves hypocritically gilded, of which humility wrought in you by the Holy Ghost, be not proud; for what have you that you have not received? But be thankful to the Lord not only therefore, but also for those surges* which you feel now, through the cares accompanying marriage, through education, and bringing up of your

* Trials.

children and family; through the cross of the common accustomed manner of living. For through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven; yea, they are the cognizances* of God's election, the instruments which work earnest sighings after eternal life, and therefore to be embraced. Believe me, it is the most excellent gift of God, for a man to deject and humble himself, and to feel the crosses of Christ, as crosses. But I, most hypocritical wretch, not worthy that this earth should bear me, am ever giving way to the world,† which is my greatest trouble. O Lord, help me and deliver me, for Jesus' sake, anoint mine eyes with ointment, that I may see. Oh give me not over unto a lewd‡ mind and reprobate sense, but awake my sleeping soul, that Christ may shine in me. You know the cross, the fatherly cross, the loving Lord has laid upon me; but I am little or nothing moved therewith. I work therein, yet not I, but God's Spirit, not of a repentant faithful mind, but, I cannot tell how, of a slothful, blind, reckless intent. O Lord! forgive me for saying so, it is thy gift, forgive me my unthankfulness for Jesus' sake; and, as I have blasphemed and dishonoured thy holy name herein, so do thou by thy Holy Spirit glorify by me the same. So be it. So be it.

Since my coming to London, I was with M. Latimer, whose counsel is as you shall hear, which I purpose by God's grace to obey; if it be thy will, O Lord, let it be done. He advises me, as I have done, to write to my master, who is in the country, and to show him, that if within a certain time, which I appointed, fourteen days, he does not set about to make restitution, that I will submit myself to my Lord protector and the king's majesty's council, to confess the fault, and ask pardon. This life is uncertain and frail, and when time is, it must not be deferred. And what should it profit me to win the whole world, and to lose my own soul? If, as I justly have deserved, I am put to death for it, God's will be done. At the least, slander, reproach, rebuke, loss of worldly friends, loss of living, &c., shall ensue: what then? Lord, thy will be done: thine I am; if death come, welcome be it, if slander, &c., even as thou wilt, Lord, so be it. Only grant me a penitent, loving, obedient heart, and of mere love to go forwards herein, and not to shrink,—to stand,

* Marks or badges.

† Rev. ii. 20.

‡ Ignorant.

and not to fall, that thy name only may be praised herein. Amen. Pray, pray for me, cry for me; and when you shall hear any thing, comfort my mother, to whom, since this bringer has not given me an hour's warning of his departure, I have not only written nothing, but also have thus prated to you, who I think will bear with me as no man else would. For, as God knoweth, to whose grace I commit you and your wife, with all your children and family, the shortness of time, and this bringer's haste, is the only hinderance why I neither send you spectacles, the price of the paraphrases, nor thanks for your cheese, as by the next that comes I will, God willing, send them to you, and a goodly testament for sir Thomas Hall, which is at the binding. But let it not be known that I have now written to you, for so I have prayed this bringer. God be with us, and pray for me, and abhor not my rude scribbling, which, if it were as well written as it is meant, would deserve pardon. Thus I make an end, imputing to the hastiness of this bringer all blame which you may lay unto me.

From the Temple, this Sunday, immediately after M. Latimer's famous sermon, which this bringer, as he says, did hear.

By your poorest friend,

JOHN BRADFORD.

It shall not be long, God willing, but you shall both have and hear from me. Keep with you Melancthon's Common-places, for I have another.

LETTER LXXIV.

Another letter of John Bradford to sir Thomas Hall, and Father Traves, of Blackley.

THE grace of God, our most merciful Father, keep your mind and soul in Christ Jesus, who alone is our full sufficient Saviour, for in him we are complete,—being made through his death, and one only oblation made and offered by himself upon the cross, the children of God, and fellow heirs with him of the celestial kingdom, which is the free gift of God, and cometh not of merits, but of the mere grace of God. Which is given to none that putteth

any manner of hope or trust in any other thing, visible or invisible, than in that oblation of sweet savour, which Christ himself offered upon Good Friday, as we call it. Which oblation is always recent and new in the sight of God the Father, and makes intercession for us; for us I mean, which think *that* only sacrifice then offered is sufficient, as it is, hath been, and ever shall be, for all the faithful; by which sacrifice if we believe, we have free pardon of all our sins. To Him, therefore, which was both the offerer and offering, be all honour and praise, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, blessed for ever. Amen.

Sir Thomas, my old friend, John Traves, shall declare unto you the occasion of this my long silence towards you, upon the knowledge whereof, I doubt not of your pardon. I have sent unto you an English and Latin Testament, both in one print and volume; the which, though it be not so beautiful without as I could have sent you, yet it is no less beautiful within, and more I think for your profit, and better for your eyes, your eyes, I mean, of the body. For undoubtedly it giveth light unto the soul, if she be not dead. Whereof take this for an argument, and a true proof. If your soul is not delighted in it, if your soul do not hunger for it, I mean not for the book, but for the doctrine in the book, surely your soul is sorely sick; for as the body which abhors meat is not well, even so must the soul be; for other meat has she none. Christ, whom you must believe before all men, affirms this to be true in the 4th of Matthew: "Not only in bread, but in every word of God, the soul doth live." Mark well, he says, not one or two words, as an epistle or a gospel, but he says, "every word." Take heed! believe Christ better than any man, be he ever so holy. For he that is of God (John viii.) heareth the word of God. Will you have a more plain mark whether you are the elect child of God or no, than this text? Christ says, he that is of God hears the word of God; but we have no other word of God than in the canon of the Bible; and all things written therein, are written for our learning, (saith St. Paul,) whereby he proves, that seeing it is a learning, yea, our learning, then we must learn it. Therefore woe be to all them which either persuade men, that there is other doctrine of like authority, or that dissuade men from embracing this word—this word of God, or that think this

word, especially the New Testament, is not above all other to be loved, to be read, to be chewed. This is the precious stone, which in the gospel Christ says, when a man hath found, he selleth all that ever he hath, and buyeth it. Mark now how necessary and precious Christ makes that which great learned men think not necessary. May God help them! Christ bade his disciples sell their coats, and buy a sword, which is no other thing than the word of God; for so St. Paul calleth it, the sword of the Spirit. Nay, say our learned men, (I lie, they have said so, but now they are ashamed,) fetch fire and burn it.*

This I say, Sir Thomas, to the intent, that no ungodly hypocrite should persuade or dissuade you from reading the holy word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Follow St. Paul's lesson: attend to reading it, and let the word of God dwell in you. How much? Plentifully, saith he. And to what end? To feed the flock of Christ, even as much as in you is, saith Peter, not once a year, or once a quarter, as a strawberry,† but as much as in you is. This word of God tries all doctrine; for we ought to have our conscience charged with nothing, as touching religion, except the word of God in the canon of the Bible set it out. I mean not only in allegories, but even in plain words: for no other foundation can any man lay besides that which is laid. St. Paul saith, the groundwork is already laid; even so saith he to the Ephesians; we are his workmanship, to do good works, which God hath created that we should walk in them. He saith not, they were to be made, but that they are made already. What shall we think then of such works as man's wit‡ has founded, which yet seem most holy? Let God's word be judge. Read the same, diligently and reverently with prayer, (I mean not the Latin service not understood, but with true hearty prayer,) and mark what the law requires; even that which we cannot give—the whole heart, and more if it were possible. But to this end, that we, seeing our abominable uncleanness and inability, might despair in ourselves, trembling at the justice of God and his anger, which we continually procure; and so embrace Christ, in whom God the Father is well pleased: which Christ is the end of the

* Bradford wrote this in King Edward the Sixth's reign; in a very few years afterwards, "they fetched fire and burned" not only the word of God, but also the faithful followers of it.

† A trifling matter or perhaps a dainty.

‡ Wisdom.

law, to justify all that believe, and continue not in their popish ignorance, justifying themselves, and treading Christ's blood under their feet, denying the Lord that bought them. All such, be they ever so well learned, ever so holy,* are nothing but hypocrites and plain antichrists, which may not abide the sword of God's mouth. For when the trumpets of the army blow, I still mean God's word, the high wall of Jericho, the figure of hypocrisy, falleth down. Embrace therefore God's holy word, and be not only a reader, but a doer; for your calling requires you to be apt to teach such proud, hypocritical, arrogant babblers, as I am now, which, if I may use this term, defile God's word. God forgive me, and pray you for me, and give God thanks for me, who spares me, which prate of God's holy word thus Lucifer-like, not of a true zeal, but of a foolish bragging. I know not what I do to confess it. So it is. I have sent to you other books, which I pray you read. I have written your name in them. The Holy Ghost keep you, with your brother George, his wife, and children; and with your brother James, &c., sir Lawrence, &c. This 20th of March.

A very painted hypocrite,

JOHN BRADFORD.

Yours in Christ for ever.

Pray for me, pray for me, give God thanks for me, and take John Traves's help to read this letter, written in haste.

If any thing but good be chanced to J. Traves, which God forbid, I pray you burn my letters out of hand.

LETTER LXXV.

Another Letter to Father Traves.

GRACE, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, with increase of all manner of godly knowledge and living, be with you and all your household, now and ever. Amen.

To excuse this my long silence, within five or six days after my letters written to you by John Moss, it pleased God to send my master hither to London, whom, as I lately had advertised by letters, I moved, you know

* Pretend to be such.

wherein, and prayed him to discharge the same, or else I would submit myself, &c. Whereunto he answered, that if the books would declare it, he would satisfy, &c. I showed the books, whereupon he promised as much as I could ask. But he was herein something more moved than he had cause, God be praised therefore, which of his mere good pleasure wrought it, at times, as I desired to know how and in what time he would discharge us both, he thinking me to be over-curious herein, was not contented, and hearing me allege the uncertainty of time and the fear of God's justice, (which, O gracious Lord, grant me to feel indeed as much as thou knowest good for me,) he answered me, that I was scrupulous, and of a superstitious conscience, (for the natural man perceiveth not the things which be of God,) and plainly said further, that I should not know when, nor by these words have his head so under my girdle.* And when I showed him that, as God witnesseth with me, I desired no such thing, he said, that, seeing he promised before the face of God to discharge me, and to pay the thing, there was no godly conscience but ought so to be quieted. And thus at divers and sundry times, moving often to know of him the way and time of discharging the debt, and having no other answers than before, I, doubting worldly wisdom, which causes delays to reign in him with this mammon, (the which, O merciful God, eradicate out of his heart, mind, and all others,) I was something more sharp, and told him, (not of myself indeed, but through thy grace, O Lord,) I would obey God more than man: the which he lightly regarding, as it seemed, I departed and went to M. Latimer to have had him brought me to my lord protector, whose grace then was purposed shortly to take his journey to visit the ports. M. Latimer willed me to stay until his return, which will not be long. In the mean time I bade my bedfellow, my master's son, whom my master had used as his instrument to move me by influence of worldly things, for my master discharged him of his exhibition,† telling him that he could not be able to keep either house or child, for I purposed to undo both him and all his, (untruly thou knowest, good Lord,) and bade him take that as a warning, that both he and his brethren should provide for themselves as they could. I bade, I say, my said bedfellow show my master, as of himself,

* Have him within my power. † Deprived him of his allowance.

my further purpose, which thing, when he knew it, so moved and alarmed him, that he began something to relent, and then made fair promises, that he would do what I should devise. I devised, but my devices pleased him not: and thus, but not vainly, I trust, (as I now do with you, but I know your gentleness, which ever hath borne with me,) I spent the time in which I have been silent to write,* nay babble to you. And he, departing out of London before I knew, sent me word by another of his said sons, not so given to the gospel and a good life as my bedfellow, and therefore more to be suspected,—this other brother, I say, told me, that my master would do all things, if his fame and ability only were preserved: but what shall it profit to gain the whole world, and lose the soul? And by the said brother my master sent me a little billet also, wherein he confessed, that he was contented within twelve months to deliver to my hands the whole money; which billet I, thinking not so good as it might have been, have devised another, and have sent it down to him in the country, with request that he will seal and sign it. For M. Latimer thinks this sufficient; but as yet I hear not of it, and am doubtful of worldly wisdom, which overcame Samson; moved David to slay Uriah; brought wise Solomon to idolatry; and crucified Christ; which also moved me to perpetrate this act, and worketh in my master's heart, having higher place there than the fear of the Lord. What say I? there yea, verily, with me, it sitteth in the holy place, (the Lord deliver us.) Doubting, I say, the effect of worldly wisdom, I remain in that same state now for this matter that I was in at my last writing unto you, though in worse for my soul, which is more to be lamented; pray therefore, I beseech you, pray with me, and for me, that I may do so earnestly. And as I then purposed, so I doubt not (grant it, Lord) but that I shall persevere, if in the mean season I shall not hear from my master accordingly. 'Thus I have, like myself, foolishly but truly, declared unto you, in many babbling words, what, if I had understanding, would have been shortly and briefly comprehended, (arrogant wretch, nay, unthankful of God's working,) my working in this matter, which is and which was the only cause I troubled you not afore, (as I now do,) to the intent I might advertise you some certainty in this thing. And though silence

* Since he had last written.

had been much better than this foolish prating, yet your fatherly kindness ever towards me, in expecting from you a correction, as I have herein given cause, may, though not to you, yet to me be profitable. In hope whereof, I proceed in requiring you to continue your remembrance of me, a most unkind wretch to God and you, in your prayers with the almighty merciful Lord, that I may more regard his will and pleasure herein, than all honour or shame in this life. But I must confess unto you, that my working in this matter is not of love, as I should do, nor of fear of God's justice; mine unthankfulness, mine unthankfulness, if there were nothing else, has not only deserved, but does deserve more than everlasting damnation: O Lord, be merciful unto me! I do not so repent it as I should do. Why say I *so*? as though this *so* were any thing. O hypocritical wretch that I am! Alas! father Traves, (let me call you so,) I am hard-hearted, there was never any so obstinate, so unkind, against so loving, so merciful, so gracious, so good, so beneficial a Lord, yea, a Father, wretch as I am, and most miserable sinner! This I speak, but not of humility, but of hypocrisy; yet I speak truly; I pray thee, good father, for Christ's sake, that I may think it truly, as I write it even of arrogancy;—so it is; therefore pray and cry for me. Here are goodly, godly, and learned sermons, which these uncircumcised ears of mine hear at the least thrice a week, which are able (the great loving mercy of God offered to me in them I mean) to burst any man's heart, to relent, to repent, to believe, to love, and to fear that omnipotent gracious Lord: But my adamantine, obstinate, most unkind, ingrate, unthankful heart, hears my Lord, which is the Lord over all lords, vouchsafe so graciously, so lovingly, by so many his instruments to speak, to call, to cry unto me; now by his law, now by his threats, now by his gospel, now by his promises, now by all his creatures, to come, to come even to himself. I hide me with Adam in the garden, I play not Samuel running to Eli, but I play Jonah running to the sea, and there I sleep upon the hatches, which is my greatest trouble, until it please God to anoint mine eyes with eye-salve, until it please him to raise up a tempest, to turn and look upon me, as Luke saith he did on Peter. For, O Lord! it is thy gift, and cometh of thee, and of thy mere grace; it cometh not of man, it cometh not of works, to repent, to believe, to

fear, and to love. Work thou therefore in me, for Jesus Christ's sake, which am thy creature, and most unthankful hypocritical servant; not when I will, not as I will, but when thou wilt, even that which may be most to the glory of thy name. Amen. What should I write? Nay, why do I not pluck these same words and paper in pieces? For I write altogether of hypocrisy and arrogant presumption. I will confess it, (thou wicked spirit, the Lord judge thee,) I will confess it; it is most true, John Traves, I only write it, for it is not I, it is hypocrisy. Knowledge (if I had it) puffeth up. O Lord, grant me thy grace, and leave me not to my own judgment and reason. Hypocrisy, arrogance, and obstinate security, environ me, yet I feel them not. The Lord deliver me. Pray, pray for me. Give God thanks for me. O Lord! even thy will be done; unlock this mine heart, thou which hast the key of David, who alone openest, that I may desire to have the desire of the glory of thy name, of repentance, faith, &c. Pray for me, and be thankful for me, O father Traves! and write to me. I desire to see your letters more than any man's living. Let me have them therefore as you may, but your prayer at all times, that God would open my heart to feed and taste of these comfortable places of Scripture, which to me are locked: "Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead." This text, as a text of most comfort, (as it is indeed, and when God will I shall feed on it,) Paul sent to Timothy, to be his comfort in all places. For our salvation (this day of resurrection) is nearer now than when we believed; therefore he that endureth to the end shall be saved. For he will accomplish the transgression, saith Daniel, he will make an end of sin, destroy iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness. For God will come and save us, he will come and will not tarry; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear; with him, in glory. For he was once offered, that he might bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him shall he appear without sin unto salvation, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words: O Lord! open mine eyes, which see nothing of the great comforts, in these thy most rich words; open mine eyes, good Lord, that I sleep not unto death. Pray for me, and commend me to your wife and all the brethren in Christ with a holy kiss. Thus I make an end, (for it

is time you may say,) and I pray you still water* sir Thomas Hall, unto whom I have sent a fair Testament, both in English and Latin, if this bringer will carry it. And I have herewith sent you a letter, which first peruse and read, and when you have so done, abhor not me, but my wickedness, and pray for me; and as you can see a meet time seal it, and deliver it to sir Nicholas Wolstoncross, by such policy as you can think of, by God's grace, through prayer. I confess unto you, God is my witness, to my knowledge, I never while in the country this winter at any time called it to remembrance; the Lord forgive me. I would by some occasion, if any could be had, afore the delivery of the letter, by some story or communication, that he did know that abomination to be sin; for I fear me he thinketh it to be no sin. The Lord open our eyes, and forgive us. Amen. The peace of God be with you. Amen. From the Temple, this 22d of March, 1547-8.

Yours in Christ most bounden,

JOHN BRADFORD.

I have sent you three pairs of good spectacles, I trow,† and other such books as have your name written in them, which take in good worth, and pray for me, and give thanks for me.

LETTER LXXVI.

Another Letter of Master Bradford to Father Traves.

GRACE, mercy, and peace, &c.

My chance is not to have any warning by this bringer of his farewell, so that I am constrained, time compelling me, to write not so much of things (which I will omit) as my desire was. Concerning the great matter you know of, it has pleased God to bring it to this end, that I have a bill of my master's hand, wherein he is bound to pay the sum before Candlemas next coming. This, Master Latimer thinks to be sufficient; therefore I pray you to give that gracious Lord thanks, and thanks, and thanks upon it, for me, a most wretched ungrateful sinner, which have also in other things no less cause to praise God's name; as for that

* Instruct in the truths of the gospel.

† Think.

I have and sustain my master's sore displeasure, which has brought me (God I should say through it) unto more contempt of worldly things, through the sequestration* of such his business, as formerly I had ado withal. I call it a contempt; well, take the word even as it is hypocritically and vain-gloriously spoken; for which fault, amongst my others innumerable, I trust you remember in your prayers, whereof I have (I would I knew how much) need. There is yet another thing, whereof I will advertise you even to this end, that you might pray, if it be God's will, that as I trust shortly to begin, so he may confirm what he has begun, as (if I am not deceived) I believe it is his working. If the thing that I presume seems by God's Spirit in you, then for the Lord's sake advertise me; for I am given to that disease, the Lord deliver me; I have moved my master therein by letters, to see if I shall have any living of him, as hitherto I have had; but I have thereof no answer, nor, as our natural speech is, any likelihood of any grant. Yet that I have already, I trust will suffice me for three years. You look what my purpose meaneth; I am so long afore I come to it; therefore I do it, because my long babbling should be less tedious. Now shall you have it. If God's will be so, (whereunto pray I may be obedient,) I am minded before Midsummer to leave London, to go to my book† at Cambridge, and, if God shall give me grace, to be a minister of his word. Thus you have of a fly an elephant. Well, take it in good part. A tumbling block‡ gathereth no moss, so therefore pray for me. Perchance I do foolishly to forsake so good a living as I have. I will say no more hereof, but pray for me. I trust, as I said, I have sufficient for three years' study, if my master take all from me; and when this is spent, God will send more. I do not write this, that you should think me to be in need of worldly help, and therefore, as the friars were wont, secretly to beg: no; in the Lord's name I require you not to take it so, for I had rather never send letter than I should be herein a cross to you, for sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. We are more set by than many sparrows. But if my mother, or sir Thomas Hall, murmur at it, or be offended with me, remedy it with your counsel as you can. Howbeit, as yet I will not write to them of it, until such time as I am going. I am something fickle-minded and inconstant, therefore pray for me, that my hand being put to the

* Taking away,

† To study.

‡ A roller.

plough, (presumptuously spoken,) I look not back. You may gather by my words in this letter, the heroical heart which lieth in me.

I have sent you a book of Bucer against Winchester, lately translated into English, which I never read, therefore I cannot praise it. And as I call to remembrance, I sent you with the other books more than you received, at the least one of them I remember, which is called the Common Places, or the Declaration of the Faith, by Urbanus Rhegius. Ask for it, or send me word in whom the default is you have it not. Hereafter, and that shortly, by God's grace I will send you a work or two, which I have translated into English, so soon as they are printed, which will be before Whitsuntide. Pray for me, good father Traves, and God send you health of soul and body, as I would mine own or any man's living. But yet to warn you of that you know not; in writing your letters to me, you hit me home, and give me that I look for. You are deceived, and so are all that know me. I never came to any point of mortification, therefore a little tickling* sets me afloat. God help me, and give God thanks for me, as all men are most bounden. Thus, when I once begin to write to you, I run on as the priest saith matins, for I think I may be bold with you. The Holy Ghost preserve you, your wife, and family, and persevere his grace in you even to the end. I pray you, pray for me, a most (what should I call me) miserable and blasphemous sinner. The peace of God be with us. From the Temple, this 12th of May, 1548.

Sir Thomas Hall has deceived me, but himself most. I desire to speak with him, as this winter I may chance to see him, if I discharge not myself of mine office. Pray for him and for me,

A very hypocrite,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXVII.

Another Letter of Master Bradford to Father Traves.

THE perseverance of God's grace, with the knowledge of his good will, increase with you unto the end. To declare myself as I am, a carnal man which understandeth

* Praise.

not the things that are of the Spirit. These my letters, though I counterfeit and mix amongst them spiritual words, as the devil did in his temptations to Christ, will declare no less. For I begin with carnal things in effect, and no marvel if I so end; for how can a man gather figs of briers? These words, as they seem, so they are spoken, for a cloak to make you think otherwise; but, Father Traves, you cannot think so evil of me as I am. But to the matter: this present day, by God's grace, I take my journey towards Cambridge, where I pray God, and so earnestly I pray you to pray for me, that I may circumspectly redeem this time which God hath appointed (to me unknown) to lend me. For, alas! I have spent the time past most wickedly, for which I must account even for every hair breadth, as they say; for God has not given here time to sin. But if I considered this, as I do nothing less, for custom of sin and pleasing myself hath so hardened my heart, I should then come to the feeling of myself; then I should hate sin, which I now love; then I should fear God's wrath, which I now contemn. Then should I cry out, and weep, and continually pray; whereas now I am dry as a stone, as dumb as a nail, as far from praying, as he that never knew any taste of it; which thing once I felt, thanks to the Lord, but now for mine unthankfulness I am almost (but most worthily) deprived. I fear God will take his grace from me, I am so unthankful. Alas! why do I lie, in saying I fear, nay, God grant I may do so, for then should I pray and pray; but seeing I cannot, speak you for me, pray for me, that the Lord would remember his old compassion towards me, and for his mercy's sake draw me, yea, compel me to serve, to fear, and to love him. Thus may you see how I presume, for my intent was to have been a minister of God's word, to have been his instrument, to call *from* as I have called *to* sin; but you see that God punishes my arrogance. Alas! what shall I do? I am an unprofitable and idle member; I thought I should have been therein profitable; but Physician, heal thyself. How should I, or what should I do? I cannot labour with my hands. Well, I trust God will give me grace and knowledge to translate; I fear me, yea, I distrust me, that I shall never be minister of God's word: yea, if arrogance were not in me, how should I, of all wretches the greatest, think to look to the highest room* and vocation that is upon earth; wherefore

* Place or office.

I desire you to pray for me speedily, that God's will may be done in me whether I live or die, so that his name be honoured. My master, that was, has denied me all his beneficence; but I have more than enough for this life, thanks be to God; as this winter I intend, by God's favour, to declare more unto you. This book, which I have sent, take it in good part; it is the first, but I trust it shall not be the last God hath appointed me to translate.* The print is very false; I am sorry for it; I pray you, be not offended at my babbling in the prologues, &c.

JOHN BRADFORD.

I will lie, God willing, this summer at Catherine's Hall, in Cambridge; write to me.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Another letter to Father Traves.

THE loving kindness and abundant mercy of God the Father, poured plentifully upon all the faithful, in the blood of that meek lamb Jesus Christ, our only satisfaction and Mediator, through the working of the most Holy Spirit, be increased and perceived in you daily more and more, to the glory of God, &c.

Because I stand both in doubt of the reading and delivery of such letters as I write and send unto you, dearly beloved father Traves, I am constrained to leave off telling you of such griefs and spiritual wants, as, thanks unto the Lord, I unwillingly feel. For the flesh, as you know, loveth nothing so much as security, which is, of all enemies, the most perilous, and not a little familiar with me; from which, with vain-glory, hypocrisy, &c., and worldliness, the Lord deliver me! I had not thought to have written thus much, but these I cannot keep, but commit them to your prayers. And to the intent I would you should not think any ingratitude in me, as also that I might give you occasion to write to me again, as heretofore I have done, even so do I interrupt and trouble you with my babbling; but yet, having this advantage, that I babble not so much as I wont to do. The cause I have declared which had almost been the cause I had not written at all. I wrote unto you from London, when I came hither; send me

* It was called *Primitiæ* or *Translations*.

word what letters you have received, for from you I have received but two, and both by John Mosse; and in the latter I perceived that the Lord had visited you with sickness, his fatherly rod, whereby he declares his love upon you, and that he cares for you, wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season you are in heaviness, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, &c. (1 Pet. i.) forasmuch as you are hereunto called, to suffer with Christ, that you may be glorified with him; for this is certain, if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

You know that Christ, although the Son of God, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing; and does not patience come of probation? The one you had, so that you were going to school to learn the other, which being learned, what want you? The end of all God's proving is, as Paul saith, that you may be partakers of his holiness; therefore give thanks to God the Father, who has made you meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, &c. For he has afflicted you in the same manner, to renew, support, strengthen, settle you; and the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of tribulation, and that in the proper time, even shortly; for he will not delay, who has promised, yet a little while, and ye shall see me; he will surely come, and will not tarry. Therefore rejoice, that you are partakers of the cross of Christ, (saith Peter,) that when his glory is revealed, you may rejoice with exceeding joy. Oh! how does my will overrun my wit.* Why, Bradford, whom writest thou unto? Thou showest thyself. Thus, father Traves, you may see my rashness to rabble out the Scripture without purpose, rhyme, or reason. I will not blot it out, as I thought to have done, for that you shall hereby see my need of your prayer. Well, I look for a watchword from you. Write, I beseech you, and pray for me, that I may be in something profitable to the Lord's congregation; that I may be no stumbling-block, that they who expect it from me may not be confounded. Send me such counsel as the Lord's Spirit shall move you to study. My desire is in something to be profitable, if it were the Lord's will—to be a minister of the word. Alas! I am unmeet, and my time, yea, the Lord's time, I have hither-

* Wisdom.

to evil, yea, most wickedly mispent it, &c. Thus will I end. The Lord be with you and your wife, to whom have me heartily commended, and to all your children and family; which I beseech the Lord to lighten his countenance over, and grant you his peace. Pray for me. I long for winter, to speak with you; I beseech you to write; pray for me. This Assumption-day, in Catherine's Hall, in Cambridge.

Yours, with all I have and can,
JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXIX.

Another letter to Father Traves.

THE plentiful grace of God the Father, through our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ, increase in us daily, to the glory of his name. Amen.

Forasmuch as I have often written to you, good father Traves, and yet have not once heard from you since Pentecost, I cannot now be so bold, either in writing much or often, as I would have been: howbeit, this I say, that I much marvel that I hear not from you. But not so, for I am so wretched a sinner, that the Lord's Spirit, I am certain, doth not move you to write to me; yet for God's sake, pray for me, and in the Lord's name I desire you to give thanks to God for me. And when it may please God to move you, write to me, though it be but two words; and counsel me how to study the word of life, the ministry whereof I desire, if it be the Lord's pleasure, to profess; and that I may do it, both in living and learning, pray for me. My master has entirely disowned me; those things he at first granted he now refuses to pay, and is become altogether mine enemy. I know not when I shall see you in body, therefore let me hear from you. I write not this, that you should think me in want, or that I am distressed: no, father, the Lord gives me to abound in all things, and will do. I trust I shall shortly have a fellowship here, I am so promised, and therefore I have taken the degree of Master of Arts, which else I could not have attained. If I get a fellowship, I shall not need to be anxious for the morrow, as hereafter I shall more write to you, by God's grace. I pray you write again, and often pray for me.

In haste, as appeareth, this 22d of October. Let not my mother know how hardly my master deals with me.

A most miserable sinner,

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXX.

Another letter to Father Traves.

THE peace and plenteous mercy of God our heavenly Father, in his Christ, our only Lord and Saviour, be ever increased in you, by the Holy Spirit; who worketh all things in all men. Amen.

Father Traves, though I might think myself more happy if you would often write unto me; yet because I ought to have respect to your pains, which now that old man cannot so well sustain as it might, I had rather lose my happiness in that behalf, than desire your grief; forasmuch as it can be no happiness unto me, which turneth to your pain. Yet because pain is not painful when it is joined with gain, I therefore desire you earnestly to pray often for me; for if I shall not be worthy of your prayer, as the Lord who knows all things doth right well see, and so my conscience witnesses; yet your good prayer shall return into your own bosom. And know this, that whoso converteth a sinner by prayer, (whether it be by prayer, preaching, or writing letters, &c.) the same hath saved a soul. Use therefore, for God's sake I ask it, that pains whereunto is joined profit. I mean prayer to God for me, a miserable and most wretched sinner; and as for the gainless pain in writing to me, use it yet as you may; and surely God, for whose sake you do it, since he will reward a cup of cold water, will in something requite you. And I know certainly, that if you saw what spiritual profit I receive by your letters, I am certain you would not think all your labour lost. For Christ's sake therefore begin again to write unto me and reprove me sharply, for my horrible unthankfulness to God. You know how God hath exonerated my laden conscience of the great weighty burden; for so I did write to you, yea, the Lord hath in a manner unburdened me of the lesser burden also; for I have an assurance of the payment of the same by Candlemas. Lo! thus you see what a good God the Lord is unto me. O father Traves! give thanks for me, and pray

God to forgive me my unthankfulness. But what! should I rehearse the benefits of God towards me? Alas! I cannot, I am too little for all his mercies; yea, I am not only unthankful, but I am too far contumelious against God; for where you know the sun, the moon, and the seven stars forsook me,* and would not shine upon me, you know what I mean, (my master and my master's friends,) yet the Lord has given me here in the university as good a living as I would have wished. For I am now a fellow of Pembroke Hall; for which neither I, nor any other for me, ever made any suit; yea, there was a contention betwixt the Master of Catherine's Hall and the Bishop of Rochester, who is master of Pembroke Hall, which should have me. Thus you may see the Lord's carefulness for me. My fellowship here is worth seven pounds a year, for I have allowed me eighteen pence a week, and as good as thirty-three shillings and fourpence a year in money, besides my chamber, launder, barber, &c.; and I am bound to nothing, but once or twice a year to keep a problem. Thus you see, what a good Lord God is unto me. But, I pray you, what do I now to God for all this? I will not speak of the great mercies he showeth upon my soul. Surely, Father Traves, I have clean forgotten God; I am all secure, idle, proud, hard-hearted, utterly void of brotherly love; I am envious, and disdain others; I am a very stark hypocrite, not only in my words and works, but even in these my letters to you; I am all sensual, without the true fear of God, another manner of man than I have been since my calling. Alas! father Traves, I write this to put myself in remembrance; but I am without all sense, I only write it. I beseech you, pray for me, which am only in name a Christian; in very deed, a very worldling, and, to say to you the very truth, the most a worldling of all other.† I pray you exhort my mother now and then, with my sister Margaret, to fear the Lord. If my mother had not sold the foxes' fur which was in my father's gown, I would she would send it me; she must have your advice in a piece of cloth.

Yours for ever,

JOHN BRADFORD.

* Gen. xxxvii. 9.

† Thus the real follower of Christ will think and speak humbly of himself. Bradford here refers to the inward warfare and to the sinful inclinations of his heart; his outward conduct was exceedingly correct, so that he was called "Holy John Bradford."

LETTER LXXXI.

Another Letter to Father Traves.

THE abundant grace and rich mercy of God in Christ, our only Saviour and high Bishop, be increased in your heart, through the lively Worker of all goodness, the Holy Spirit, until the day of the Lord, &c.

I have received your two letters, good father Traves, since I wrote unto you, wherefore, though I would make an excuse, yet truth bids me otherwise; and saith, it is better with shame to confess the fault, for therein is, as a man might say, half the deserving of pardon, than to lie without shame. I might have written unto you twice, notwithstanding some business wherein I have been occupied, but yet I have not. Now the cause is, because I would not. And why would I not, but because I could not? I mean, because my canning* is taken away by sin, for my sins do forbid goodness unto me. Indeed, if my sinning were of infirmity, there were good hope of recovery of that which I have lost; but seeing, that both willingly and knowingly, I have yielded too much, and do still yield to my infirmities, I justly deserve, that because I have cast away and rejected the word of the Lord behind my back, the Lord should reject me. And because I would not have blessing, I deserve, as David saith, that it be taken away from me. I now at length experience that for a man to lose God's favour, is easier when he has received all things abundantly, than when need, or the cross, pinches. Before it pleased God to work the restitution (you know what I mean,) and before it pleased God to provide for me, as he has done, so that I can say nothing where any want is, as pertaining to my body, I was another manner of man than now I am, and yet God's deserts† have otherwise bound me; but the Scripture is true; "I have advanced my children, and nourished them, but they have contemned me; I have fed them, that they were fat and gross; and they spurned against me." Perchance you will ask me, Wherein? Oh, father Traves! I warrant you, this carnal and not spiritual writing something shows unto you; but in comparison of other things, it is nothing. For where the life of man is such, that either it repaireth or amendeth, as Paul saith,

* Ability.

† Mercies.

the outward man is corrupted* day by day, and therefore, except the inward man be renewed, the shoe goeth awry, every building in Christ grows to a holy temple, as the wicked, on the contrary part, shall proceed to worse. (2 Tim. iii.) I have made a change in going back far otherwise than I think I can persuade you by letters. Wherein—will you say? For the first, second, and third, and, to be brief, in all things. As for an example: God's true fear is flown away from me, love to my brethren is exiled from me, faith is utterly taken away. Instead whereof distrust and doubtfulness bear rule, also contempt of God's honour, and of my brethren's authority: and instead of true fear, an imaginary fear, according to my brain,† holding the rule. For I extenuate‡ sin, and I do not consider what a Christian ought to consider in sin, that sin being not forgiven, is a thing for which God alway casts away his creatures, as the examples not only of Saul, of Judas, of the Israelites (which were beloved indeed, and yet for sin are rejected,) but also of others, on whom lately, for my warning, God has showed the same, do admonish me. But it is only my pen which writes this; for the wicked, saith Solomon, when they come into the depth of their sins, grow more secure. I am I cannot tell what;—I fear, but it is but blindly, or else I should awake otherwise than I do. I fear that I am entangled of the devil, after his desire. Pray for me, that the Lord would give me repentance, that I may escape out of his snares. Alas! the spirit of prayer, which beforetime I have felt plentifully, is taken clean away from me. The Lord be merciful unto me! I am sold under sin; I am the bond-slave of sin; for whom I obey, his servant I am. I am often ashamed to speak; no, I shame not at all, for I have forgot to blush; I have given over to weep. And truly I obey, I obey, I say, mine own lusts, namely, in eating, in drinking, in jangling, and idleness; I will not speak of vain-glory, envy, disdain, hypocrisy, desire of estimation, self-love, and who can tell all? Is this the reward thou renderest to God? O Bradford! it is true, yea, too true; thou knowest it. O Lord, for thy mercy's sake, pardon me. In your letters you touch me home, how that there is no man's heart, but that, considering the ingratitude of this world, this belly-cheer,§ &c., his eyes should gush out tears. The Lord be praised, which work-

* Perishes.

† Excuse.

‡ Fancy.

§ Selfishness.

eth so in you, for it is with me, as with them of whom you complain. Indeed it may be so again, but oh! it is very unlikely, for mine enemies are become old, and are made by custom more than familiar; for they are, as it were, converted into nature in me. Yet I am not grieved therefore, although I cannot persuade myself that God will help me. O Lord, be merciful unto me, for thy Christ's sake. This day I received the Lord's supper, but how I have welcomed him, this night, which I have spent in prodigality, obeying my flesh and belly,* so declares, that what to say, or write any more, I know not; sleep weighs down mine eyes, and to pray I am altogether unapt. All this is come through the occasion of making the bringer of this a supper in my chamber; the Lord pardon me; I trust no more to be so far overseen. But this I write, not that the anger of God, which I have deserved, so makes me to fear, thou knowest it, O Lord; but of this, perchance, too much.

For God's sake, pray for me, good father Traves, and write unto me, as your weakness allows,—your letters do me good. By this which I have now written, you may consider more; touch me therefore home in your letters; and the Lord, I trust, shall and will reward you. If God lend me life, of which I am most unworthy, I will trouble you with my letters more than I have done; but bear with me, I do it not out of any evil will; I take the Lord to judge, there is none whose company and talk I more desire than yours; I speak it before God. Prove my mother's mind how she can bear it; if when I shall come down, I shall show myself another man outwardly, but, alas! feignedly, than I have done before. But when my coming will be, I know not. Indeed two things move me sore,† the one for my mother's sake, concerning her better instruction, if the Lord would thereto use me as his instrument: the other is, to talk with you, and to trouble you as I have hitherto ever done, but always to my profit. Pray for me, for I never had so much need. This Sunday at night following St. Andrew's day, at Pembroke Hall.

The most miserable, hard-hearted, unthankful sinner,
JOHN BRADFORD.

* See note, page 220.

† Make me anxious to come.

LETTER LXXXII.

Another Letter to Father Traves.

THE self-same mercy, grace, and peace, which heretofore I have felt plenteously, though now through mine unthankfulness and wilful obedience to the pleasure of this outward man, I neither feel, neither can be persuaded, that I possess; yea, if I shall truly write, I in fact care not for the same, so far am I fallen, (the Lord help me!) the same mercy, &c., I say, I wish unto you as I can, with all increase of godliness; hypocritically with my pen and mouth beseeching you, in your earnest prayers to God, to be an earnest suitor unto God for me, who am fallen into such a security, and even a hardness of heart, that I neither sorrow at my state, nor with any grief or fear of God's rejection write this: before the Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, I lie not. Consider, for Christ's sake therefore, good father Traves, my necessity, though I myself do it not; and pray for me, that God cast me not off, as I deserve most justly. For where I ought to have well proceeded in God's school by reason of the time, I confess it to my shame, I am so far gone back, as, alas! if shame were in me, I might be ashamed to write it; but much more to write it, and think it not; such is the reward of unthankfulness. For whereas God wrought the restitution of the great thing you know of; the which benefit should bind me to all obedience, alas! father Traves, I am too unthankful, I find no will in heart, (though by my writing it will be hard to persuade you,) either to be thankful, or to begin a new life, in all things to mortify this outward man, and heartily to be well content to serve the Lord in spirit and verity, and withstand mine affections. Especially my sensuality in meat and drink, wherewith I was troubled at my being with you; but now, through my licentious obeying, I am fallen so that a whole legion of evil spirits possesses me. The Lord, whom I only with mouth call upon, my heart still abiding both in hardness and wilfulness, deliver me and help me; and for God's sake, give you hearty thanks for the great benefit of restitution. Pray to the Lord, that at the length I may once return to the obedience of his good will. Amen.

I thank you for your cheese, and so doth father Latimer, although unknown: for I gave it him, and he saith he did

never eat better cheese, and so I dare say he did not. I thank him I am as familiar with him as with you; yea, God so moves him towards me, that his desire is to have me come and dwell with him whensoever I will, and welcome. This I write yet once more, to occasion you to be thankful for me to the Lord, who by all means shows nothing but most high love to me, and I again a very obstinate rebellion. Pray therefore for me. In haste.

The sinful

JOHN BRADFORD.

LETTER LXXXIII.

To a faithful and dear friend of his, treating of this place of St. Paul to the Romans: "The fervent desire of the creature waiteth when the children of God shall be delivered. (Rom. viii.)"

GRACE and peace, with increase of all godliness in Christ, I wish unto you, my dearly beloved.

Because this morning I had some knowledge more than I had before, that my life stood in great danger, and that even this week, so far as men might, both by the doings and sayings of such as are in authority concerning me, judge and perceive; I thought good, my right dearly beloved in the Lord, to go about something which might be on my behalf a swan's song,* and towards you both a monument of my love, and also a help, or, at the least, an occasion for you to profit in that which I bear you record you most desire,—I mean, everlasting life, and the state thereof. And this will I attempt, referring to the last talk we had betwixt us, when you were here with me. I know you have not forgotten that we talked together of the place of St. Paul to the Romans, chap. viii., concerning the groanings of the *creature*, and his desire of the revelation of the children of God. You demanded whether this word *creature* was to be understood of man or no; I told you, that though some took *creature* there for man, because there is no kind of creature which may not be acknowledged in

* That is, which might be a special comfort to him, being then ready to be burned, as the swan's song is said to be sweetest a little before his death.—*Letters of the Martyrs.*

man; yet, said I, the text itself considered with that which the apostle writeth of Christ, (Eph. i. Col. i.) as the restorer and reformer of all things that are, both in heaven and earth, and with the argument which St. Paul then was considering, enforces a godly mind, to take every *creature* there (as also St. Chrysostom and St. Ambrose do) for the whole world, and every creature both heavenly and earthly. I told you all things were made for man, and according to man's state so are they. When man was without sin, and in God's favour, there was no malediction, curse, or corruption; but when man by sin was cast out of favour, then was the earth cursed. For the wickedness of the inhabitants, fruitful lands are turned into salt ground; as for their piety, barren countries are made fruitful. (Psal. cvii.) The angels themselves do rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, thereby giving us notice that after their manner they lament over the impenitent. In reading the prophets you may see how all things depend upon man. When they prophesy any great blessing or plague to come on God's people, they communicate the same both to heaven and earth, and to every thing else: as, for example, when the prophets foreshow the overthrow of realms and people, they say that the whole shape of the world shall be moved thereat! Look upon Isaiah, how he, when he prophesies the fall of Babylon, says that the stars shall not shine from heaven, the sun shall be darkened in his rising, the moon shall not give her light; and afterwards he says, I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall be moved out of his place. (Isaiah xiii.) But the histories witness, that there are wonderful changes of all creatures, both heavenly and earthly, in the overthrow and destruction of realms and people.

Again, when Isaiah prophesies of the kingdom of Christ, he promises new heavens and a new earth, and that so excellent and new, that the former heavens and earth are to be utterly forgotten, (Isaiah lxiii.;) whereto the apostle agrees, making Christ the repairer of all things in heaven and earth. (Eph. i. Col. i.) How did both heaven and earth give their service to the Israelites coming forth of Egypt, as well in preserving them, as in destroying their enemies? How did the sun shine longer than it was wont to do, for Joshua to overcome his enemies? How did even the very angels fight for Hezekiah against the Assyrians? Read the 30th of Isaiah, and behold the history of Christ;

consider how the angels rejoiced; how a star brought the wise men to Christ; how the angels were ministers unto him in the wilderness; how the devils confessed him. At his death, how did all the whole world show compassion. The sun was darkened, the earth did quake, the rocks clave asunder, the veil of the temple rent asunder. When he arose, both heaven, (for the angels appeared with great heavenly brightness,) and earth which was moved, did rejoice, the angels were preachers of it. In his ascension also, did not a bright cloud receive him and take him up? Did not the angels testify of his return, when he sent the Holy Ghost, and made his new covenant of grace? Did not all the whole world serve thereto by thunder, smoke, fire, earthquake?

Now how wonderfully they will do their service to Christ coming to judgment, is more plain than I need to rehearse. And inasmuch as we are the members of Christ, he being our head, we may soon see that all things have a certain compassion* with man, and, after their kind, as the apostle writes, look for a deliverance from vanity, which they shall obtain in their restoration. I therefore told you that I take the apostle to mean by every creature simply, even all the whole shape and creatures in the world. He attributes unto them, that they look for the perfection of our salvation, that they are subject to vanity, that they are subject in hope, that they groan and travail, attributing these things unto the senseless creature by translation from man, to signify the society, cognation,† and consent, which all and every creature hath with man, that as every and all things were made for man, so by the man Christ, all and every thing, both earthly and heavenly, shall be restored.

These things you know in effect I spake unto you, to stir up both myself and you to a deeper consideration of our blessed state, which now we enjoy in hope, which will never deceive us, and the more to occasion us to desire the full fruition of the same. But I remember, that you were something troubled with some doubtfulness hereabout; therefore I purpose now to write of this more at large, thereby to occasion us both to see better through the help of God's Spirit what we desire, and which I pray God may grant unto us both, for his mercy's sake. I mean the felicity of his children, and the happy state which one day

* Or common feeling.

† Relationship.

in very deed we shall fully possess, and both together praise the Lord with all his saints, world without end. Amen, Amen.

This was your doubt—whether St. Paul meant by all creatures, simply, (as I have spoken,) that they shall be delivered from corruption into such a state, as shall adorn the freedom of God's children, whether plants, beasts, and other things, having life, shall be restored? If yea, then you would know whether all things that have been, shall be restored also. And after this you will perchance ask in what place they shall be, what they shall do, and so forth. As I think upon this matter, and as I am accustomed to answer such questions coming to me, I will here write for an answer unto you also, not doubting but that you will be satisfied therewith, because I know your heart is satisfied with godly and sufficient answers.

Thus I think all and every creature groaneth and travaileth as yet, hoping and looking for my restoration, for they are subject to corruption for my sin's sake; but they all shall be delivered by my Christ from the bondage of corruption when he shall restore us his members. This will I muse on and weigh with myself, that I may duly know both in me and in all other things, the atrocity and bitterness of sin which dwelleth in me, and so may the more heartily give over myself wholly to the Lord Christ my Saviour, that he may with what cross soever shall please him, slay sin in me, and bring me after his own will and way to newness of life. Whereunto, that I for my part may faithfully and with all my whole heart do my diligence, in mortifying the desires of my flesh, and in labouring to obey the desires of the Spirit to live a life acceptable to him, I beseech him of his grace.

And that I may do this cheerfully, and continue in this purpose and diligence, I will fasten my mind as much as the Lord shall enable me, to consider this my so great happiness, whereunto I shall be restored in the resurrection, which resurrection doubtless shall be adorned by the whole of the world being delivered from corruption. These things will I think upon, these things will I pause upon; herein will I, as it were, drown myself, being careless of this point, I mean, as to what parts of the world the Lord Christ will restore with me, or how he will do it, or what state or condition he will give it. It is enough, and enough for me,

that I and all the world with me shall be much more happy, than now I can by any means conceive.

By reason hereof I will praise and glorify my Lord, and by his grace I will study to please him with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, singing unto him; that he both doth well, and hath done and made all things well: to him be eternal glory for ever. This is my cogitation in this matter, and not mine only, but the cogitation of one who was my father in the Lord;* and now I am assured is with the Lord at home, while we yet are from home, by reason of these our corruptible habitacles, wherein we abide the Lord's leisure.

If you would know the reason that moveth me to answer as I have done to the aforesaid doubts or questions, it is this. You see that the apostle, in this place to the Romans, speaks of the deliverance of every creature from the bondage of corruption, and that to the beautifying of the glory of God's children. This is so manifest, that no man can well deny it. It is but a simple shift to say that the apostle means in this place by every creature, man only; he is not wont to speak on that sort; neither dare I say, that the apostle speaks here hyperbolically or excessively, although some think so.

But, as I said, I say again, that the apostle here simply affirms that there shall be a renovation and deliverance from corruption, not only of man, but also of all and of every part of the whole world; of every part, (I say,) meaning parts indeed, and not such as rather are vices, and added for plagues, than for parts. For by reason of sin, many spots and corruptions are come into the world, as is all that is hurtful and filthy in the creatures; also all that cometh of corruption.

This renovation of all things, the prophets seem to promise, when they promise new heavens and new earth. For a new earth seems to require no less renovation of earthly things, than new heavens do of heavenly things. Both these things the apostle plainly affirms that Christ will restore, even whatsoever are in heaven and in earth. (Col. i.) Therefore methinks it is the duty of a godly mind, to acknowledge, and thereof to glory in the Lord, that in our resurrection all things shall be repaired for eternity, as for our sin they were made subject to corruption.

* He means that most godly and learned father, Martin Bucer. *Letters of the Martyrs.*

The ancient writers have as it were agreed to this sentence of Peter, (2 Pet. iii.) that the shape of this world shall pass away, through the burning of earthly fire, as it was drowned with the flowing of earthly waters. These are St. Augustine's words, and he further saith, "The qualities of the corruptible elements, which agreed with our corruptible bodies, shall utterly be burned with that same worldly conflagration and burning, as I said; but the substance itself, by a marvellous change, shall have those qualities which agree with our bodies; that the world changing into the better, may openly be made fit for man, when returned in the flesh into the better state." These are his words, whereby it is plain that this good man believed that the elements should be renewed, but of other things he speaketh not, except it be of the sea; by occasion of that which is in the Apocalypse; howbeit, he says that he cannot well tell whether it also shall be changed into the better; adding, "But we read there shall be a new heaven and a new earth." For he understood the place of Isaiah to be concerning the new heaven and new earth; of other things he expresses nothing.

But Thomas Aquinas treats this question more exactly, or rather curiously, affirming the celestial bodies, the elements, and mankind, are to be renewed, but not beasts, plants, &c. And this is his principal reason,—the renovation of the world shall be for man, therefore such shall be the renovation as shall be conformable to the renovation of man. But the renovation of man shall be from corruption to incorruption, from moving to rest; the things therefore that shall be renewed with man must be brought also to incorruption. Now the celestial bodies and the elements were made for incorruption, the one wholly, and in every part; the other, that is, the elements, though in part they are corruptible, yet concerning the whole they are incorruptible, as man is incorruptible, concerning part, that is, the soul. But beasts, plants, &c. are corruptible, both wholly and in every part, therefore they were not made for incorruption, and so they are not conformable to the renewing, that is, they cannot receive incorruption, and therefore they shall not be restored.

This reasoning is true so far that it affirms things shall be restored with man, and with him shall be brought to perpetuity, and, as the apostle says, be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Again, this reasoning is true

herein also, that man's reason may sooner be persuaded that things now partly incorruptible shall be restored altogether to incorruption. But now to say, that by no means those things may be brought to perpetuity, which now both wholly and partly are temporal and momentary; how can he prove it? For the nature and being of all things depend on the omnipotence of God, who after his own pleasure gives to things which he hath made, their being; and all is one to him, to make a thing temporal, and to make it eternal. For he made all things of nothing, and therefore heaven and the celestial bodies have no more of themselves, that they should be perpetual, than those things have that last but a day; wherefore this reasoning of Thomas Aquinas, is not firm, in that it wholly leans to that which now seemeth and appeareth in things. Indeed, (as I said,) it has some show or probability that these things shall be renewed to eternity, for the glory of God's children, which now something are partakers of the same.

But now, seeing that both it which they now have, and also shall have, depends upon the beck and pleasure of God, whom has God made of council with him, concerning the renovation of the world and of all things, that he can tell what parts of things and what kinds of things God will renew? Yea, even Aristotle acknowledged that physical, or natural knowledge, because it bringeth reasonings from the disposition and nature of things, has not full necessity of* his reasonings, for nature is nothing else than the ordinary and wonted will of God; as a miracle, a portent, or a monster, is the rare and unwonted will of God. We say that the nature of stones and all heavy things is to sink downwards, which is nothing else but the pleasure of God so depelling them and putting them down; for else of themselves nothing is either heavy or light; all would alike be carried downwards or upwards. Who may make God subject to his work? Cannot he that made all things of nothing, give hereafter to the things that he has made, that whereof now in themselves they have no capacity?

These things I therefore rehearse, to the end I might declare, that when we dispute what God will do concerning his works, it is not seemly for us to conclude according to that which seemeth and appeareth to us in things, but rather,

* Authority for.

as godliness requireth, to refer all things to the will of God. If this will be expressed in Holy Scripture, then we may simply determine that which we read expressed there. But if it is not so, then ought we freely to confess our ignorance, and not prescribe to God what he ought to do of his works, by that which he hath already done. God is of power infinite, and he did not only make all things of nothing, but also will do what pleases him, both in heaven and in earth, as saith David.

The aforesaid Thomas Aquinas brings forth also other reasons, but which he himself counts not for invincible. . . . This is a truth that all things of themselves are nothing, much more then they cannot do anything. Now men may conjecture, that the moving of heaven shall cease, but yet they cannot prove it by the certain word of God. In like manner is his last reasoning of the end of beasts and plants, but which end he knows not. Beasts and plants, says he, were made for the mutual sustentation of the life of man; but this life shall cease, therefore shall they also. But here he has no answer, if a man should demand, Who knows whether God has made them for no other end or use?

Seeing therefore these things are as you see, I suppose it pertains not to a godly man, to deny the beasts and plants may be restored; for the apostle here expressly says that every creature which is now subject to vanity shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Since the Holy Ghost affirms this of every creature, by what reason dare a godly mind exempt any part from this deliverance to come? Howbeit, the godly mind will not contend whether every creature shall be renewed; for the Holy Ghost spake of the creature generally, and not particularly; and therefore we may not affirm otherwise, because we must not speak but according to God's word.

Therefore it is the part of a godly man, and of one that hangeth in all things upon the word of God, to learn out of this place, that whatsoever corruption, death, or grief he seeth in any thing, wheresoever it be,—that he should ascribe it wholly unto his sins, and thereby provoke himself to true repentance. Now as soon as repentance compels him to go to Christ, let him think thus, "But this my Saviour and my Head Jesus Christ died for my sins, and therewith, as he took away death, so has he taken

away all the corruption and labour of all things, and will restore them in his time, wheresoever they are, in heaven or in earth. Now every creature travaileth and groaneth with us, but we being restored, they also shall be restored. There shall be new heavens, new earth, and all things new."

I wish that our minds might thus stay in this generality of the renovation of the world, and not curiously search what parts of the world shall be restored, and what shall not, or how all things shall be restored. Much more I would not have them curious or inquisitive of their place where they shall be, of their actions what they shall do, or of their properties and such like. For if to have foreknown these things would have tended to godliness, surely the Holy Ghost would most plainly have told them; for according to Christ's promise, he bringeth us into all truth: all truth, (I say,) such as the knowledge of would profit us. All the Scripture is given to us for this purpose, that the man of God might be made perfect and instructed to all good works; and truly that can be no good work, which we do, except God teach us the same. He has prepared the good works wherein we walk. (Eph. ii.) But the certain and bottomless fountain of good work is, in all things to hang on the beck and pleasure of God, and through our Lord Jesus Christ to look for remission of sins, and life everlasting, and the glory of the resurrection. To the end therefore that we may more fully know our sins, and make more of our redemption from them by Christ, let us set before our eyes death, the hire* of sin, and that not only in ourselves, but also in every creature of the world. Howbeit, let us do this, with the hope of a restoration so ample, and never enough to be marvelled at, which shall even be in all things for our renovation by the Lord Jesus Christ, the renewer of all things whatsoever, in heaven or in earth.

He that with true faith weigheth and considereth these things, will be, as it were, swallowed up in the admiration of such exceeding great benevolence and love of God, our heavenly Father, that he can never yield to this curiosity of searching what kind of things shall be renewed, and how they shall be renewed, or what state or condition they shall be in when they are renewed. These are the things of the life to come, whereof this foreknowledge is sufficient, that all these things shall be more perfect and happy than

* Wages, Romans vi. 23.

the reach of reason is able to look upon for the glory of them; for the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor can it ascend into man's heart, what God hath prepared for them that love him.

For concerning our resurrection, what do we know beforehand, but that we shall be most happy? Even so, therefore, let us not doubt but that there shall be a deliverance of the creature from the servitude of corruption. And let us consider these things so, that we may wholly bend ourselves to put away all the oldness of our flesh, whence indeed come corruption and death, and that we may provoke ourselves to the newness of the spirit, and the life of Christ; wherein all is incorruption, and the true taste of the resurrection, for to this end the Holy Ghost wrote this by the apostle. Let us pray, therefore, that this spirit might lead us hereunto, and then we shall understand this place of Paul with profit.

If perchance it troubles you that the apostle speaks not of this deliverance of the creature from corruption in any other place but here, neither does any other holy writer; I would you should think that the mystery of the restoration of Israel, also of antichrist, is not expounded except in the apostle's writings, and that only in one place; yea, the manner of our resurrection is not written but in two places. We ought to know, that whatsoever the apostle hath left to us written, are the words of the Lord.

Again, the simplicity of this place, (Rom. viii.) is plain; and thus, my dearly beloved, I have written to you as much as I think is sufficient about this matter, and therefore need not to tarry herein any longer, or spend any more time about the answering of that which is but curiosity. May God our Father now give us his Holy Spirit, to lead us into this and all other necessary truth, so that we may have a lively feeling of eternal life begun in us, that we may become first new, and so look for new heaven and earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth; which may God impute to us, and begin in us for his Christ's sake. Amen, Amen.

Your own for ever in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

SERMONS AND TRACTS,

BY THAT WORTHY MARTYR OF CHRIST,

JOHN BRADFORD.

SERMONS, &c.

To the Christian reader, John Bradford wishes the true knowledge and peace of Jesus Christ, our alone and all-sufficient Saviour.

GREAT and heavy is God's anger against us, as the most grievous plague of the death of our late king,* (a prince the most peerless of all that ever were since Christ's ascension into heaven, in any region,) now fallen upon us doth prognosticate. For when God's judgment has begun with his child, this our dear dearling, let other men think as they can, I surely cannot be persuaded otherwise, but that a grievous and bitter cup of God's vengeance is ready to be poured out for us Englishmen to drink of. Judgment is begun at God's house. In God's mercy towards him he is taken away, that his eyes should not see the miseries which we shall feel. (Heb. xi.) He was too good to tarry with us, a generation so wicked, so froward, so perverse, so obstinate, so malicious, so hypocritical, so covetous, unclean, untrue, proud, and carnal. I will not go about to paint us out in our colours. All the world which never saw England, by hearsay seeth England; God by his plagues and vengeance, I fear, will paint us out, and point us out. We have so mocked with him and his gospel, that we shall feel it is no bourding† with him.

We have long covered our covetousness and carnality under the cloak of his gospel, so that all men shall see us to our shame, when he shall take his gospel away, and give it to a people that will bring forth the fruits of it. Then shall we appear as we are. Let his gospel tarry with us, he cannot; for we despise it, contemn it, are glutted with it. We disdain his manna, it is but a vile meat as we think. We would be again in Egypt, and sit by the greasy fleshpots, to eat again our garlic, onions, and leeks. Since God's gospel came among us, we say now, we never had

* Edward VI.

† Trifling, jesting.

plenty, therefore again let us go and worship the queen of heaven. (Jer. vii. xlv.) Children begin to gather sticks, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women make the cakes, to offer to the queen of heaven, and to provoke the Lord to anger. The earth now cannot abide the words and sermons of Amos; the cause of all rebellion is Amos, and his preaching. (Amos vii.) It is Paul and his fellows that make all out of order; the gospel is now the outcast and curse of the realm, and so are the preachers, therefore out of the doors with them. So that I say God cannot let his gospel tarry with us, but must needs take it away to do us some pleasure therein, for so shall we think for a time; as the Sodomites thought, when Lot departed from them; as the old world thought, when Noah crept into his ark; as the Jerusalemites thought, when the apostles went thence to Peltis;* then were they merry, then was all pastime; when Moses was absent, then went they to eating and drinking, and rose up again to play, (Exod. xxxii. ;) then was all peace, all was well, nothing amiss. But, alas! the flood came suddenly, and drowned them; God's wrath waxed hot against them; then was weal away, † mourning, and woe; then was crying out, wringing of hands, rending of clothes, sobbing and sighing, for the miseries out of which they could not escape. But oh! ye mourners and cryers out, ye renders of clothes, why mourn ye? What is the cause of your misery? The gospel is gone, God's word is little preached, you were not disquieted with it; Noah troubled you not, Lot is departed, the apostles are gone. What now is the cause of these your miseries? Will you at length confess it is your sins? Nay, now it is too late, God called upon you, and you would not hear him, therefore yell and cry out now, for he will not hear you. You bowed your ears from hearing of God's law; therefore your prayer is execrable.

But to come again to us Englishmen. I fear me, I say, that for our unthankfulness' sake, for our impiety and wickedness, as God hath taken away our king, so will he take away his gospel; yea, many think so we would have it, then should all be well. Well, if he take that away, for a time perchance we shall be quiet, but at length we shall feel the want to our woe; at length he will have at us, as at Sodom, at Jerusalem, and other places. And now he beginneth to brew such a brewing, wherein one of

* Pella.

† Happiness departed.

us is likely to destroy another, and so to make an open gap for foreign enemies to devour us, and destroy us.* The father is against the son, the brother against the brother, and with what conscience! Oh, Lord! be thou merciful unto us! and in thine anger remember thy mercy; suffer thyself to be entreated, be reconciled unto us, nay, reconcile us unto thee. Oh! thou God of justice! judge justly. Oh! thou Son of God! who comest to destroy the works of Satan, destroy his furies now smoking, and almost set on fire, in this realm. We have sinned, we have sinned, and therefore thou art angry. Oh! be not angry for ever. Give us peace, peace, peace in the Lord; set us to war against sin, against Satan, against our carnal desires, and give us the victory this way. This victory we obtain by faith; this faith is not without repentance, as her gentleman-usher before her. Before her, I say, in discerning true faith from false faith; lip faith, Englishmen's faith; for else it springs out of true faith.

This usher then, Repentance, if we truly possessed, we should be certain of true Faith, and so be assured of the victory over death, hell, and Satan. His works then, which he has stirred up, would quail. God would restore us political peace, right should be right, and have right; God's gospel should tarry with us, religion should be cherished, superstition suppressed, and so we should yet be something happy, notwithstanding the great loss of our most gracious liege sovereign lord. All this would come to pass, if the gentleman-usher I speak of, I mean, Repentance, were present with us. As if he be absent, we may be certain that lady Faith is absent. Wherefore we cannot but be vanquished by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and so will Satan's works prosper, though not in all things to blear our eyes, yet in that thing which he most of all desires. Therefore let us to repentance for ourselves privately, and for the realm and church publicly; every one should labour to stir up both themselves and others. This to the end that for my part I might help, I have now put forth a Sermon of Repentance, which has lain by me half a year at the least, as to the most part of it. For, the last summer, as I was abroad preaching in the country, my chance was to make a Sermon of Repentance, which was earnestly by divers desired of me, that I should give it them written, or

* He refers to the hostilities which then appeared likely to ensue between the partisans of queen Mary and lady Jane Grey.

else put it forth in print. The which as I could not grant, for I had not written it, I told them so, who had so earnestly desired it. But when no way would serve, but I must promise them to write it as I could, I consented to their request that they should have it at my leisure. This leisure I prolonged so long that as, I think, I offended them, so I pleased myself, as one more glad to read other men's writings, than to publish my own for other men to read; not that I would others should not profit by me, but that I, knowing how slender my store is, would be loth that the enemies should have just occasion for evil speaking, and wresting that which is simply spoken. But when I considered this present time, to occasion men now to look upon all things in such sort as might move them to godliness, rather than to any curious questioning, I, for the satisfying of my promise, and profiting of the simple, ignorant, and rude, have now caused this sermon to be printed; which I beseech God, for his Christ's sake, to use as a mean, whereby of his mercy it may please him to work in me and many others true hearty repentance for our sins, to the glory of his name.

Thus fare thou well in the Lord. This 12th of July 1553.*

* Thomas Sampson, in his preface to this Sermon on Repentance, remarks, "Our Bradford had his daily exercises and practices of repentance. His manner was to make for himself a catalogue of all the grossest and most enormous sins which he had committed in his life of ignorance, and to lay the same before his eyes when he went to private prayer, that by the sight and remembrance of them he might be stirred up to offer to God the sacrifice of a contrite heart, seek assurance of salvation in Christ by faith, thank God for his calling from the ways of wickedness, and pray for increase of grace, to be conducted in holy life, acceptable and pleasing to God. Such a continual exercise of conscience he had in private prayer, that he did not count himself to have prayed to his contentation, unless in it he had felt inwardly some smiting of heart for sin, and some healing of that wound by faith, feeling the saving health of Christ, with some change of mind into the detestation of sin, and love of obeying the good will of God, which things require that inward entering into the secret parlour of our hearts, of which Christ speaks, and is that smiting of the breast which is noted in the publican." (Luke xviii.)

A fruitful Sermon of REPENTANCE, made by the constant martyr of Christ, John Bradford, 1553.

THE life we have at this present is the gift of God, in whom we live, move, and are, and therefore he is called JEHOVAH. For this life we should be thankful, and we may not in any wise use it after our own fancy, but only to the end for which it is given and lent us; that is, to the setting forth of God's praise and glory, by repentance, conversion, and obedience to his good will and holy laws; whereunto his long-suffering, as it were, even draws us, if our hearts were not hardened by impenitency. And therefore our life in the Scripture is called a walking; for as the body daily draweth more and more near its end, that is, the earth, even so our soul draweth daily more and more near unto death, that is, to salvation or damnation, to heaven or hell!

Since we are most careless of this, and very fools, (for we, alas! are the same to-day we were yesterday, and not better or nearer to God, but rather nearer to hell, Satan, and perdition; being covetous, idle, carnal, secure, negligent, proud, &c.) I think my labour cannot be better bestowed, than with the Baptist, Christ Jesus, and his apostles, to harp on this string, which of all other is most necessary, and most especially in these days. What string is that? says one. Truly, brother, it is the string of repentance, which Christ our Saviour used first in his ministry; and as his minister at this present time, I will use it to you all, "REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND." Matt. iv.

This sentence, thus pronounced and preached by our Saviour Jesus Christ, as it commands us to repent, so to the doing of the same, it shows us a sufficient cause to stir us up thereunto, namely, because the kingdom of heaven, which is a kingdom of all joy, peace, riches, power and pleasure, is at hand, to all such as do repent. So that the meaning hereof is, as though our Saviour should thus speak at present: "Sirs, since I see you all walking the wrong way, even to Satan and unto hell-fire, by following the kingdom of Satan, which now is coloured under the vain pleasures of this life, and foolishness of the flesh most subtilly, to your utter undoing and destruction—behold and

mark well what I say unto you, The kingdom of heaven, that is, another manner of joy and felicity, honour and riches, power and pleasure, than you now perceive or enjoy, is even at hand, and at your backs; as, if you will turn again, that is, repent you, you shall most truly and pleasantly feel, see, and inherit. Turn again therefore, I say, that is, REPENT; for this joy I speak of, even THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.

Here we may note, first, the corruption of our nature, since to this commandment, Repent you, he adds a clause, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; for by reason of the corruption and sturdiness of our nature, God unto all his commandments commonly either adds some promise to provoke us to obedience, or else some sufficient cause which cannot but excite us to hearty labouring for doing the same; as here, to the commandment of doing penance, he adds this cause, saying, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Again, since he joins the cause to the commandment, saying, "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand," we may learn, that of the kingdom of heaven, none, to whom the ministry of preaching doth appertain, can be a partaker, but such as repent, and do penance. Therefore, dearly beloved, if you regard the kingdom of heaven, as you cannot enter therein, except you repent, I beseech you all, of every estate, as you desire your own weal, to repent and do penance: the which that you may do, I will do my best now to help you by God's grace.

But first, because we cannot well tell what repentance is, through ignorance and for lack of knowledge and false teaching, I will show you what repentance is. Repentance, or penance, is no English word, but we borrow it of the Latinists, to whom penance is 'forethinking' in English; in Greek, it means 'being wise afterwards;' in Hebrew, 'conversion or turning;' which conversion or turning, cannot be true and hearty, unto God especially, without some good hope or trust of pardon for that which is already done and past. I may well in this sort define it, namely, that penance is a sorrowing or thinking upon our sins past, an earnest purpose to amend, or turning to God, with a trust of pardon.

This definition may be divided into three parts; first, a sorrowing for our sins—secondly, a trust of pardon, which otherwise may be called a persuasion of God's mercy by the merits of Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins—and

thirdly, a purpose to amend, or conversion to a new life; which third or last part cannot properly be called a part; for it is but an effect of penance, as towards the end you shall see by God's grace. But lest such as seek for occasion to speak evil should have any occasion, though they tarry not out the end of this sermon, I therefore divide penance into the three aforesaid parts: I. Of sorrowing for our sins: II. Of good hope or trust of pardon: and III. Of a new life. Thus you now see what penance is, a sorrowing for sin, a purpose to amend, with a good hope or trust of pardon.

I.—This penance not only differs from that which men commonly have taken to be penance, as saying and doing our enjoined lady psalters, seven psalms, fastings, pilgrimages, alms-deeds, and such like things, but also from that which the more learned have declared to consist of three parts, namely, contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Contrition they call a just and a full sorrow for their sin. For this word, just and full, is one of the differences between contrition and attrition.

Confession they call a numbering of all their sins in the ear of their ghostly father; for as, say they, a judge cannot absolve without knowledge of the cause or matter, so the priest or ghostly father cannot absolve from other sins, than those which he hears.

Satisfaction they call amends-making unto God for their sins, by their undue works, or *opera indebita*, works more than they need to do, as they term them. This is their penance which they preach, write, and allow. But how true this their plan is, how it agrees with God's word, how it is to be allowed, taught, preached, and written, let us a little consider. Dearly beloved, if a man repent not until he have a just and full sorrowing for his sins, when shall he repent? For inasmuch as hell-fire, and the punishment of the devils, is a just punishment for sin—inasmuch as in all sin there is a contempt of God, who is all goodness, and therefore there is a deserving of all illness,* alas! who can bear or feel this just sorrow, this full sorrow for our sins, this their contrition, which they do so discern† from their attrition? Shall not man by this doctrine rather despair than come by repentance? If a man repent not until he has made confession of all his sins in the ear of his ghostly father—if a man cannot have

* Suffering.

† Distinguish.

absolution of his sins until his sins are told by tale and number in the priest's ear—since, as David saith, none can understand, much less, then, utter all his sins, who can understand his sins? Since David complains of himself elsewhere, how his sins have flowed over his head, and as a heavy burden do depress him, alas! shall not a man by this doctrine be utterly driven from repentance? Though they have gone about something to make plaster for their sores, of confession or attrition to assuage their pain, bidding a man to hope well of his contrition, though it be not so full as is required, and of his confession, though he have not numbered all his sins, if so be that he do so much as in him lieth. Dearly beloved, since there is none but that herein he is guilty; for who doth as much as he may? trow ye,* that this plaster is not like salt for sore eyes? Yes, undoubtedly, when they have done all they can for the appeasing of consciences in these points, this is the sum, that we yet should hope well, but yet so hope that we must stand in a mammering† and doubting whether our sins are forgiven. For to be certain of forgiveness of sins, as our creed teaches us, they count it a presumption. Oh! abomination, and that not only herein, but in all their penance as they paint it.

As concerning satisfaction by their *opera indebita*, undue works, that is, by such works as they need not to do, but of their own voluntariness and wilfulness, (wilfulness indeed,) who sees not here monstrous abomination, blasphemy, and even open fighting against God? For if satisfaction can be done by man, then Christ died in vain for him that so satisfieth; and so he reigneth in vain, so is he a bishop and a priest in vain. God's law requires love to God with all our heart, soul, power, might, and strength, (Dent. vi. Matt. xxii. Mark xii. Luke x.) so that there is nothing can be done toward God which is not contained in this commandment, nothing can be done over and above this. Again, Christ requireth of men, "that we should love one another as he loved us." (1 John iv.) And trow we that we can do any good thing toward our neighbour which is not herein comprised?

Yea, let them tell me when they do any thing in the love of God and their neighbour, so that they had not need to cry, "Forgive us our sins?" (Matt. vi.) So far are we off from satisfying, doth not Christ say, "When you have

* Do you suppose?

† Hesitating.

done all things that I have commanded you, "say that you are but unprofitable servants." (Luke xvii.) "Put nothing to my word," saith God. (Deut. iv.) Yes, works of supererogation, (yea, superabomination,) say they. "Whatsoever things are true, (saith the apostle Paul,) whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things pertain to love, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, have you them in your mind, and do them, and the God of peace shall be with you." I mean, this well looked on will pull us from popish satisfactory works, which do deface Christ's treasure and satisfaction.

In heaven and in earth was there none found that could satisfy God's anger for our sins, or get heaven for man, but only the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who by his blood hath wrought the work of satisfaction, and alone is worthy all honour, glory, and praise, for he hath opened the book with the seven seals.

Dearly beloved, therefore abhor this abomination, even to think that there is any other satisfaction toward God for sin, than Christ's blood only. Blasphemy it is, and that horrible, to think otherwise. "The blood of Christ purifieth (saith St. John) from all sin," and therefore he is called the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, because there never was sin forgiven of God, nor shall be, from the beginning unto the end of the world, but only through Christ's death, though the pope and his prelates prate as please them, about their pardons, purgations, placeboes, trentals, dirges, works of supererogation, superabomination, &c.

"I am he (saith the Lord) which putteth away thine offences, and that for mine own sake, and will no more remember thine iniquities. Put me in remembrance, (for we will reason together,) and tell me what thou hast for thee, to make thee righteous. Thy first father offended sore," &c. (Isa. xliii.) And thus writeth St. John: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation, or satisfaction, for our sins." As in chapter iv. he says, that God hath sent his Son to be a propitiation or mean for the taking away of our sins, according to that which Paul writeth, where he calls Christ a merciful and faithful priest, to purge the people's sins, (Heb. ii. ;) so that blind buzzards and perverse papists are they, which yet will prate of our

merits or works to satisfy for our sins, in part or in whole, before baptism or after. For to omit the testimonies I brought out of John and Paul, which the blind cannot but see, I pray you remember the text out of Isaiah, which even now I rehearsed, being spoken to such as were then the people of God, and had been a long time, but yet were fallen into grievous sins after their adoption into the number of God's children. "It is for mine own sake (saith God) that I put away thy sins." Where is your parting of the stake now? If it is for God's own sake, if Christ is the propitiation; then recant, except you will become idolaters, making your works God and Christ. Say as David teaches us, "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to thy name be the glory."

And it is to be noted, that God casts in their teeth, even the sin of their first father, lest they should think that perchance for the righteousness and goodness of their good fathers, their sins might be the sooner pardoned, and so God accept their works.

If they had made satisfaction for that which is done to the congregation, publicly, by some notable punishment, as in the primitive church was used to open offenders, sparkles whereof and some traces yet remain, when such as have sinned in adultery go about the church in their shirts with a taper. Or if they had made satisfaction for restitution toward man of such goods as wrongfully are gotten, which true penance cannot be without; or if by satisfaction they had meant a new life to make amends to the congregation thereby, as by their evil life they offended the congregation, in which sense the apostle seems to take that which he writeth in 2 Cor. vii., where the old interpreter calleth apologium, satisfaction, which rather signifies a defence or answering again; if, I say, they had taken satisfaction any of these ways, then they had done well, so that the satisfaction to God had been left alone to Christ.

Again, if they had made confession either that which is to God privately, or that which is to the congregation publicly, either that which is a free consultation with some one learned in God's book, and appointed thereto, as first it was used, and I wish were now used amongst us; or that which is a reconciliation of one to another, it had been something. Yea, if they had made it for faith, because it is a true demonstration of faith, as in Paul we may see, when he calleth Christ the captain of our confession, that

is, of our faith, and so confessors were called in the primitive church—such as manfully did witness their faith with the peril of their lives; if, I say, they had taken it thus, then had they done right well.

And so contrition, if they had left out their subtle distinction between it and attrition, by this word just or full, making it a hearty sorrow for their sins, then we would never have cried out against them therefore. For we say penance has three parts; contrition, if you understand it for a hearty sorrowing for sin; confession, if you understand it for faith of free pardon in God's mercy by Jesus Christ; and satisfaction, if you understand it not to be towards God, (for that must be left alone, only to Christ,) but toward man in restitution of goods wrongfully or fraudulently gotten, of name hindered by our slanders, and in newness of life; although, as I said before, and presently will show more plainly, by God's grace, that this last is no part of penance indeed, but a plain effect or fruit of true penance.

I might here bring in examples of their penance, how perilous it is to be embraced; but let the example of their grandsire Judas serve, in whom we see all the parts of their penance, as they describe it, and yet notwithstanding he was damned. He was sorry enough, as the effect showed; he had their contrition fully, out of the which he confessed his fault, saying, "I have betrayed innocent blood;" and thereunto he made satisfaction, restoring the money he had received. But yet all was but lost, he hanged up himself, his bowels burst out, and he remaineth a child of perdition for ever. I would wish that this example of Judas, in whom we see the parts of their penance, contrition, confession, and satisfaction, would move them to penance, and to describe it a little better, making hope or trust of God's free mercy a piece thereof, or else with Judas they will mar all.

Perchance these words contrition, confession, and satisfaction, were used at the first as I have expounded them. But as we see so much danger and hurt by using them without expositions, either let us always join to them open expositions, or else let us not use them at all, but say as I write, that penance is a hearty sorrow for our sins, a good hope or trust of pardon through Christ, which is not without an earnest purpose to amend, or a new life. This penance is the thing whereto all the Scripture calls us.

This penance I now call you all unto; this must be continually in us, and not for a Lent season, as we have thought; this must increase daily more and more in us; without this, we cannot be saved.

Search therefore your hearts, all ye swearers, blasphemers, liars, flatterers, filthy or idle talkers, jesters, bribers, covetous persons, drunkards, gluttons, whoremongers, thieves, murderers, slanderers, idle livers, negligent in their vocation, &c. All such and all other as lament not their sins, as hope not in God's mercy for pardon, as purpose not heartily to amend, to leave their swearing, drunkenness, fornication, covetousness, idleness, &c.; all such, I say, shall not and cannot enter into God's kingdom, but hell-fire is prepared for them, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, whereunto, alas! I fear, very many will needs go, since very many will be as they have been, let us even, to the wearying of our tongue to the stumps, preach and pray ever so much to the contrary; and that even in the bowels of Jesus Christ, as now I beseech you all, and every one, to repent and lament your sins, to trust in God's mercy, and to amend your lives.

Now methinks you are somewhat astonished, whereby I gather that at present you desire this repentance, that is, this sorrow, good hope, and newness of life; to the which that you may the rather attain, and get to your comforts, as I have gone about to be a mean to stir up in you, by God's grace, this desire of repentance, so through the same grace of God will I now go about to show you, how you may have your desire in this behalf.

And first, concerning this part, namely, sorrow for your sins and hearty lamenting of the same; for this, if you desire the having of it, you must beware that you think not that of yourselves, or of your own free will, you can by any means get it. You may easily deceive yourselves, and mock yourselves, thinking more of yourselves than is seemly. All good things, and not pieces of good things, but all good things, saith St. James, come from God, the Father of light. If therefore penance is good, as it is good, then the parts of it are good: from God therefore do they come, and not of our free will. It is the Lord that mortifieth, that bringeth down, that humbleth, saith the Scripture in sundry places. "After thou hadst stricken my thigh (saith Jeremiah, xxxi.) I was ashamed." Lo! he saith, "After thou hadst stricken me," and therefore pray-

eth he; even in the last words almost he writeth, "Turn us, Lord, and we shall be turned," which David uses very often. Wherefore, first of all, if thou wouldst have this part of penance, as the whole is God's gift, so for this part go thou unto God, and make some little prayer, as thou canst, unto his mercy for the same, in this or the like sort:

"Merciful Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, because I have sinned, and done wickedly, and through thy goodness have received a desire of repentance, whereto this thy long-sufferance doth draw my hard heart, I beseech thee, for thy mercy's sake in Christ, to work the same repentance in me, and by thy Spirit, power, and grace, so to humble, mortify, and fear my conscience for my sins, to salvation, that in thy good time thou mayest comfort and quicken me again, through Jesus Christ, thy dearly beloved Son. Amen."

After this sort, I say, or otherwise, as thou thinkest good, if thou wilt have this first part, contrition or sorrow for thy sins, do thou beg it of God through Christ. And when thou hast asked it, as I have laboured to drive thee from trusting in thyself, so now I go about to move thee from flattering of thyself, from sluggishness and negligence, to be diligent to use these means following.

First unto prayer, which I would thou shouldst use as thou canst; secondly, get God's law as a glass to look in, for in it and by it cometh the true knowledge of sin, without which knowledge there can be no sorrow. For how can a man sorrow for his sins, who knows not his sins? As when a man is sick, the first step to health is to know his sickness; even so to salvation, the first step is to know that thy damnation is due for thy sins.

The law of God therefore must be gotten and well looked in, that is, we must look in it spiritually, and not corporeally or carnally, as the outward word or letter declares and utters; and so our Saviour teaches us in Matthew, expounding the sixth and seventh commandments, not only after the outward deed, but also after the heart; making there the anger of the heart a kind of murder, and lusting after another man's wife, a kind of adultery.

And this is one of the differences between God's law and man's law; that of this, man's law I mean, I am not con-

dennable, so long as I outwardly observe the same. But God's law goes to the root, and to the heart, condemning me for the inward motion, although outwardly I live most holily. As for example: if I kill no man, though in my heart I hate, man's law condemns me not, but God's law doth otherwise. And why? for it sees the fountain whence the evil doth spring. If hatred were taken out of the heart, then loftiness in looks, detraction in tongue, and murder by hand, could never ensue. If lusting were out of the heart, curiosity in countenance, wantonness in words, indecent boldness in body, would not appear.

Since therefore this outward evil springs out of the inward corruption, seeing God's law also is a law of liberty, as saith St. James, (chap. i.) and spiritual, as saith St. Paul, (Rom. vii.) it is to be understood perfectly and spiritually, if we will truly come to the knowledge of our sins. For of this inward corruption, reason knows but little or nothing. "I had not known," saith Paul, (Rom. vii.) "that lusting," (which to reason, and to them which are guided only by reason, is thought but a trifle,) "I had not known," saith he, "this lusting to have been sin, if the law had not said, Thou shalt not lust."

To the knowledge therefore of our sins, without which we cannot repent, or be sorry for our sin, let us secondly get us God's law as a glass to look in, and that not only literally, outwardly, or partly, but also spiritually, inwardly, and thoroughly. Let us consider the heart, and so shall we see the foul spots we are stained withal, at least inwardly; whereby we may the rather be moved to hearty sorrow and sighing. For, as St. Austin saith, it is a glass which feareth* nobody; but even look, as thou art, so it paints thee out.

In the law we see it is a foul spot, not to love the Lord our God with all, all, I say, our heart, soul, power, might and strength; and that continually.

In the law it is a foul spot, not only to make to ourselves any graven image or similitude, to bow thereto, &c., but also not to frame ourselves wholly after the Image† whereto we are made, not to bow to it, to worship it.

In the law we see that it is a foul spot, not only to take God's name in vain, but also not earnestly, heartily, and even continually to call upon his name only; to give

* Affrights.

† Of God, Gen. i. 26.

thanks unto him, to believe, to publish, and live according to his holy word.

In God's law we see it is a foul spot to our souls, not only to be an open profaner of the Sabbath-day, but also not to rest from our own words and works, that the Lord might both speak and work in us and by us. Also not to hear his holy word, not to communicate his sacraments, not to give occasion to others to holiness by our example in godly works, and reverent esteeming of the ministry of his word.

In God's law we see it is a foul spot to our souls, not only to be an open disobeyer of our parents and magistrates, masters, and such as are in any authority over us, but also not to honour such even in our hearts, not to give thanks to God for them, not to pray for them, to aid, to help, or relieve them, to bear with their infirmities, &c.

In God's law we see it is a foul spot in our souls, not only to be a mankiller in hatred, malice, proud looks, brags, backbiting, railing, or bodily slaughter, but also not to love our neighbours, yea, our enemies, even in our hearts, and to declare the same in all our gestures, words, and works.

In God's law we see it is a foul spot to our souls, not only to be a whoremonger in lusting in our hearts, in wanton looking, in unclean and wanton talking, in actual doing dishonestly with our neighbour's wife, daughter, servant, &c.; but also not to be chaste, sober, temperate in heart, looks, tongue, apparel, deeds, and to help others thereunto accordingly, &c.

In God's law we see it is a foul spot to our souls, not only to covet in heart—to flatter in look or word, lie, colour, &c. in deed, and to take away any thing which pertains to another, but also in heart, countenance, word, and deed, not to keep, save, and defend that which pertains to thy neighbour, as thou wouldst thine own.

In God's law we may see it is a foul spot, not only to lie or bear false witness against any man, but also not to have as great care over thy neighbour's name, as over thine own.

Sin in God's law we may see it is, and a foul spot, not only to consent to evil, lust, or carnal desires, but even the very natural or carnal lusts and desires themselves, (for so I may call them, nature itself being now so corrupted,) are sin; as self-love, and many such. By reason whereof

I trow there is none that looketh well herein; but though he is blameless to the world, and fair to the show, yet certainly inwardly his face is foul arrayed, and so shameful, proud, diseased, and loathsome, that he cannot but be sorry at the contemplation thereof, and that so much more, by how much he continueth to look in this glass accordingly.

And thus much concerning the second mean to the stirring up of sorrow for sin, that next unto prayer we should look in God's law spiritually; the which looking, if we use with prayer, as I said, let us not doubt but at length God's Spirit will work as now, to such as believe; for to the unbelievers all is in vain, their eyes are stark blind, they can see nothing; to such as believe, (I say,) I trust something is done even already. But if neither by prayer, nor by looking in God's law spiritually, as yet thy hard unbelieving heart feels no sorrow nor lamenting for thy sins; thirdly, look upon the penalty attached to God's law: for as to man's law there is a penalty affixed, so is there to God's law a penalty, and that no small one, but such a great one as cannot but make us fear if we believe it, for all is in vain if we are faithless so as not to believe before we feel.

This penalty is God's malediction or curse: "Lo! accursed," saith he, "is all," no exception, all, saith God, "which continueth not in all things, (for he that is guilty of one is guilty of the whole, saith St. James,) in all things therefore (saith the Holy Ghost) which are written in the book of the law to do them." He saith not to hear them, to talk of them, to dispute of them, but to do them.

Who is he now that doth these? *Rara avis*,* few such birds, yea none at all. For all are gone out of the way, though not outwardly by word or deed, yet inwardly, at least by default and wanting of that which is required; so that a child of one night's age is not pure, but (by reason of birth-sin) in danger of God's malediction; much more then we, which, alas! have drunken in iniquity, as it were water, as Job saith. (Chap. xv.) But yet, alas! we quake not.

Tell me now, good brother, why do you so lightly consider God's curse that for your past sins you are so careless, as though you had made a covenant with death and damnation, as the wicked did in Isaiah's time? What is

* A rare bird.

God's curse? At the pope's curse with book, bell, and candle, oh! how we trembled which heard it, and though the same was not directed unto us, but unto others. For this God's curse, which is incomparably more fell and importable,* and is directed to us, yea, hanging over us all by reason of our sins, alas! how careless are we! Oh! faithless hard hearts! oh! Jezebel's guests! rocked and laid in a sleep in her bed! (Rev. ii.) Oh! wicked wretches! which being come into the depth of sin, do contemn the same. Oh! sorrowless sinners, and shameless harlots!

Is not the anger of a king death? And is the anger of the King of all kings a matter to be so lightly regarded as we do regard it, who are so reckless for our sins that we slug and sleep it out? As wax melteth away at the heat of the fire, (saith David,) so do the wicked perish at the face or countenance of the Lord. If, dearly beloved, his face is so terrible and intolerable for sinners and the wicked, what think we his hand is? At the face or appearing of God's anger, the earth trembleth, but we, earth, earth, yea, stones, iron, flints, tremble nothing at all. If we will not tremble in hearing, woe unto us, for then we shall be crushed in pieces, in feeling. If a lion roar, the beasts quake; but we are worse than beasts, which quake not at the roaring of the lion; I mean the Lord of hosts. And why? because the curse of God, hardness of heart, is already fallen upon us, or else we could not but lament and tremble for our sins, if not for the shame and foulness thereof, yet at least for the malediction and curse of God, which hangeth over us for our sins.

Lord, be merciful unto us, for thy Christ's sake, and spare us; in thine anger remember thy mercy towards us. Amen.

And thus much for the third thing to the moving of us to sorrow for our sins, that is, for the penalty affixed to God's law, I mean, for the malediction and curse of God. But if our hearts are so hard, that we feel not yet hearty sorrow for our sins, let us, fourthly, set before us examples past and present, old and new, that thereby the Holy Spirit may be effectual to work in his time this work of sorrowing for our sin.

Look upon God's anger for sin in Adam and Eve, for eating a piece of an apple. Were not they, the dearest creatures of God, cast out of paradise? Were not they

* Severe and unbearable.

subject to mortality, travail, labour, &c.? Was not the earth accursed for their sins? Do not we all feel the same, men in labour, women in travailing with child, and all in death, mortality, and misery, even in this life? And was God so angry for their sin, and will he, being the same God, say nothing to us for ours, (alas!) much more horrible than the eating once of one piece of one apple?

In the time of Noah and Lot, God destroyed the whole world with water, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Zeboim and Admah, with fire and brimstone from heaven for their sins; namely, for their whoredoms, pride, idleness, unmercifulness to the poor, tyranny, &c. In which wrath of God even the very babes, birds, fowls, fishes, herds, trees, and grass perished; and think we that nothing will be spoken to us, who are much worse and more abominable than they? For all men may see, if they will, that the whoredoms, pride, unmercifulness, tyranny, &c. of England in this age far passes any age that ever was before. Lot's wife looking back was turned into a salt stone; and will our looking back again, yea, our running back again to our wickedness do us no hurt? If we were not already blind, we should blush. Pharaoh's heart was hardened, so that no miracle could convert him; if ours were any thing soft, we should begin to sob.

Of six hundred thousand men, only two entered into the land of promise, because they had ten times sinned against the Lord, as he himself saith, (Numb. xiv. ;) and think we that God will not swear in his wrath, that we shall never enter into his rest, which have sinned so many ten times as we have hairs of our heads and beards, (I fear,) and yet we repent not.

The man that sware, and he that gathered sticks on the Sabbath-day, were stoned to death; but we think our swearing is no sin, our bibbing,* rioting, yea, fornication on the Sabbath-day, pleases God, or else we would something amend our manners.

Eli's negligence in correcting his sons, brake his neck in two; but ours, which pamper up our children like puppets, will put us to no plunge.† Eli's sons, for disobeying their father's admonition, brought over them God's vengeance; and will our stubbornness do nothing?

Saul's malice to David, Ahab's displeasure against Naboth, brought their blood to the ground for dogs to eat;

* Drinking.

† Difficulty.

yea, their children were hanged up and slain for this; but we continue in malice, envy, and murder, as though we were able to wage war with the Lord.

David's adultery with Bathsheba was visited on the child born; on David's daughter, defiled by her brother; and on his children, one slaying another; his wives defiled by his own son; on himself driven out of his realm in his old age, and otherwise also, although he most heartily repented his sin. But we think we are more dear unto God than David, which yet was a man after God's own heart, or else we could not but tremble, and begin to repent.

The rich glutton's gay paunch-filling, what did it? It brought him to hell; and have we a placard* that God will do nothing to us?

Achan's subtle theft provoked God's anger against all Israel; and our subtilty, yea, open extortion, is it so fine and politic that God cannot espy it?

Gehazi's covetousness brought the leprosy upon him and on all his seed. Judas also hanged himself. But the covetousness of England is of another cloth and colour. Well, if it were so, the same tailor will cut it accordingly.

Ananias and Sapphira, by lying, linked to themselves sudden death; but ours now prolongeth our life, the longer to last in eternal death.

The false witnesses of the two judges against Susanna lighted on their own pates; and so will ours do at length.

But what go I about to avouch ancient examples, where daily experience teaches? The sweating sickness of the other year, the storms the winter following, call upon us to weigh them in the same balances. The hanging and killing of men themselves, which are (alas!) too rife† in all places, require us to register them in the same rolls. At the least in children, infants, and such like, which cannot yet utter sin by word or deed, we see God's anger against sin in punishing them by sickness, death, mishap, or otherwise, so plainly that we cannot but groan and lament again, in that we have gushed out this more abundantly in word and deed.

And here with me a little look on God's anger yet so fresh, that we cannot but smell it, although we stop our noses never so much; I pray God we smell it not more fresh hereafter; I mean it forsooth, for I know you look for it, in our dear late sovereign lord the king's majesty.‡ You

* A notice or declaration. † Frequent. ‡ King Edward VI.

all know he was but a child in years; defiled he was not with notorious offences. Defiled, quoth I? nay, rather adorned with so many goodly gifts and wonderful qualities, as never prince was from the beginning of the world; should I speak of his wisdom, of his ripeness in judgment, of his learning, of his godly zeal, heroical heart, fatherly care for his commons, nurse-like solicitude for religion, &c. Nay, so many things are to be spoken in commendation of God's exceeding graces in this child, that, as Sallust writeth of Carthage, I had rather speak nothing than too little, for too much is too little. This gift God gave unto us Englishmen before all nations under the sun, and that of his exceeding love towards us. But, alas, and well away, for our unthankfulness' sake, for our sin's sake, for our carnality, and profane living, God's anger has touched not only the body, but also the mind of our king by a long sickness, and at length has taken him away by death, death, cruel death, fearful death.

Oh! if God's judgment is begun in him, which, as he was the chiefest, so I think he was the holiest and godliest in the realm of England, alas! what will it be on us, whose sins are overgrown to our heads, so that they are climbed up into heaven! I pray you, my good brethren, know that God's anger towards us for our sins cannot but be great; yea, we see it was so great, that our good king could not bear it. What followed to Jewry after the death of Josias? May God save England, and give us repentance! My heart will not suffer me to tarry longer herein. I think this will thrust out some tears of repentance.

If therefore prayer for God's fear, the looking in God's glass, and the penalty thereto, will not burst open thy blockish heart, yet I think the tossing to and fro of these examples, and especially of our late king, and this troublesome time, will tumble some tears out of your heart, if you still pray for God's Spirit accordingly. For who are you, (think always with yourself,) that God should spare you more than them whose examples thou hast heard? What friends have you? Were not these kings, prophets, apostles, learned, and come of holy stocks? I deceive myself (think you with yourself) if I believe that God, being the same God that he was, will spare me, whose wickedness is no less, but much more than some of theirs. He hates sin now as much as ever he did. The longer he spares,

the greater vengeance will fall; the deeper he draws his bow, the sorer will the shaft pierce.

But if yet your heart is so hardened, that all this will not move you, surely you are in a very evil state, and remedy now know I none. What! said I, none? know I none? Yes; there is one which is sure to serve, if anything will serve. You look to know what this is; it is the passion and death of Jesus Christ. You know that the cause why Christ became man, and suffered as he suffered, was the sins of his people, that he might save them from the same. Consider the greatness of the sore, I mean sin, by the greatness of the Surgeon and of the remedy. Who was the Surgeon? No angel, no saint, no archangel, no power, no creature in heaven or in earth, but only He by whom all things were made, all things are ruled, also even God's own darling and only beloved Son becoming man.

Oh! what a great thing is this that could not be done by the angels, archangels, potentates, powers, or all the creatures of God, without his own Son, who yet must needs be thrust out of heaven, as a man would say, to take our nature and become man. Here have you the Surgeon; great was the cure that this mighty Lord took in hand.

Now what was the remedy? It was purchased dearly and of many compositions; I cannot recite all, but rather must leave it to your hearty consideration. Three-and-thirty years was he curing our wounds: he sought it earnestly by fasting, watching, praying, &c. The same night that he was betrayed, I read how busy he was about a remedy in the garden, when he, lying flat on the ground, praying with tears, and that of blood, not a few, but so many as flowed down on the ground, crying in this sort: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup depart from me;" that is, if it be possible that the sin of mankind can be otherwise taken away, grant that it may be so. Thou heardest Moses crying for the idolaters; thou heardest Lot for the Zoarites; Samuel, David, and many others, for the Israelites; and, dear Father, I only am thine own Son, as thou hast said, in whom thou art well pleased, wilt thou not hear me? I have by the space of three-and-thirty years done always thy will; I have so humbled myself, that I would become an abject among men to obey thee; therefore, dear Father, if it be possible, grant my request, save mankind now with-

out any further labour or remedy." But yet, (saith he,) "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

But, sirs, what heard he? Though he sweat blood and water in making his remedy for our sore of sin, yet it framed* not. 'Twice he cried without comfort; yea, though God sent an angel to comfort him, we yet know that this remedy was not allowed for sufficient, until Christ Jesus was betrayed, forsaken of all his disciples, forsworn of his dearly beloved, bound like a thief, belied, buffeted, whipped, scourged, crowned with thorns, derided, crucified, racked, nailed, hanged up between two thieves, cursed and railed upon, mocked in misery, and had given up the ghost. Then bowed down the head of Christ, that is, God the Father, which is the head of Christ; then he allowed the remedy to be sufficient and good for the healing of our sore, which is sin. Now God would abide us, because the damnation or guiltiness was taken away by this Lamb, thus offered once for all.

So that here, dearly beloved, we as in a glass may see God's great judgment and anger against sin for the bruising of our blockish hard hearts. The Lord of lords, the King of kings, the brightness of God's glory, the Son of God, the darling of his Father, in whom he is well pleased, hangeth between two thieves, crying for thee and me, and for us all, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh! hard hearts that we have, which make light of sin. Look on this; look on the very heart of Christ, pierced with a spear, wherein you may see and read God's horrible anger for sin. Woe to thy hard heart that pierced it.

And thus much for the first part of repentance; I mean, for the means of working contrition: first, use prayer; then look on God's law; thirdly, see his curse; fourthly, set examples of his anger before you; and, last of all, set before you the death of Christ. From this and prayer cease not until you feel some hearty sorrow for your sin; which when you feel, then labour for the SECOND part, that is, for faith, on this sort.

II.—As first, in contrition, I willed you not to trust to your free will for the attaining of it, so do I will you in this. Faith is so far from the reach of man's free will, that to reason, it is plain foolishness; you must first go to

* Sufficed.

God, whose gift it is; you must, I say, get you to the Father of mercy, whose work it is, that, as he has brought you down by contrition, and humbled you, so he would give you faith, raise you up, and exalt you.

On this manner therefore with the apostles, and the poor man in the gospel, that cried, "Lord, increase our faith; Lord, help my unbelief;" pray you and say, "O merciful God, and dear Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom as thou art well pleased, so hast thou commanded us, to hear him; forasmuch as he often biddeth us to ask of thee, and thereto promises that thou wilt hear us, and grant us that which in his name we shall ask of thee: lo! gracious Father, I am bold to beg of thy mercy, through thy Son Jesus Christ, one sparkle of true faith, and certain persuasion of thy goodness and love towards me in Christ, wherethrough I, being assured of the pardon of all my sins, by the mercies of Christ, thy Son, may be thankful to thee, love thee, and serve thee, in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life."

On this sort I say, or otherwise, as God shall move you, pray first of all, and look for your request at God's hand, and without any doubting, though forthwith you feel not the same; for oftentimes we have things of God given us long before we feel them as we would do. Now unto this prayer, use these means following:

After prayer for faith, which I would should be first; secondly, because the same springs out of the hearing, not of masses, matins, canons, councils, doctors, decrees, but out of the hearing of God's word; get God's word, but not that part which serves especially to contrition, that is, the law, but the other part, which serves especially to consolation and certain persuasion of God's love towards thee, that is, the gospel or publication of God's mercy in Christ; I mean the free promises.

But here you must know, that there are two kinds of promises; one, which is properly of the law, another, which is properly of the gospel. In the promises of the law we may indeed behold God's mercy, but so that it hangeth upon the condition of our worthiness; as, if thou love the Lord with all thy heart, &c., thou shalt find mercy. This kind of promises, though it declare unto us God's love, which promises where he need not, yet unto him that feeleth not Christ, which is the end of the law, they are so far from comforting, that with the law they utterly bring

man to deep despair, so greatly are we corrupted, for none loveth God as he ought to do. From these therefore get thee to the other promises of the gospel, in which we may see such plenty and frank liberality of God's goodness, that we cannot but be much comforted, though we have very deeply sinned.

For these promises of the gospel do not hang on the condition of our worthiness, as the promises of the law do, but they depend and hang on God's truth; that as God is true, so they cannot but be performed to all them which lay hold on them by faith—I had almost said, which cast them not away by unbelief.

Mark in them therefore two things, namely, that they are free promises without any condition of our worthiness, as also that they are universal, offered to all; all, I say, who are not so stubborn, as by unbelief, to keep their hands still, whereby they should receive this alms in their bosom. As concerning infants and children, you know I now speak not, but concerning such as are of years of discretion; and now you look that I should give you a taste of these promises, which are both free and universal, excepting none but such as except themselves. Well, you shall have one or two for a say.*

In the third of John, saith our Saviour, "So God loved the world, that he would give his darling, his own only Son, that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Lo! sir, he saith not that some might have life; but all, saith he. And what all? All that love him with all their hearts, all that have lived a godly life? Nay, all that believe in him; although thou hast lived a most wicked and horrible life, if now thou believe in him, thou shalt be saved. Is not this sweet?

Again, saith Christ, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are laden, and I will refresh you." Let us a little look on this letter. "Come unto me." Who should come? Lords, priests, holy men, monks, friars; yea, cobblers, tinkers, harlots, thieves, murderers also, IF they lament their sins. "Come unto me (saith he) all ye that labour and are laden," that is, which are afraid of your sins. And what wilt thou do, Lord? "And I will refresh you," saith he. Oh! what a thing is this, "And I will refresh you." Wot† you who spake this? He that

* Specimen.

† Know.

never told a lie; he is the truth, there was never guile found in his mouth, and now will he be untrue to you, good brother, who are sorry for your grievous sins? No, truly! Heaven and earth shall pass and perish, but his word shall never fail. Saint Paul saith, "God would have all men saved." Lo! he exempteth none. And to Titus, "The grace of God bringeth salvation to all men." As from Adam all have received sin to damnation, so by Christ all have grace offered to salvation, if they reject not the same. I speak not now of infants, I say, and I need not enter into the matter of predestination. In preaching of repentance, I would gather where I could with Christ. "As surely as I live, (saith God,) I will not the death of a sinner." Art thou a sinner? Yea. Lo! God sweareth he desireth not thy death. How canst thou now perish? Consider with yourself what profit you should have to believe this to be true to others, if not to yourself also. Satan does so. Rather consider with Peter, that the promise of salvation pertains not only to them which are nigh, that is, to such as are fallen a little, but also to all whom the Lord hath called, be they ever so far off.

Lo! now by me the Lord calleth thee, thou man, thou woman, that art very far off. The promise therefore pertaineth to thee: needs must thou be saved, except thou with Satan say God is false; and yet if thou do so, God is faithful, and cannot deny himself, as thou shalt feel by his plagues in hell, for so dishonouring God as to think that he is not true. Will he be found false now? The matter hangeth not on your worthiness; but it hangeth on God's truth. Take hold on it, and I warrant you Christ is the propitiation for our sins, yea, for the sins of the whole world; believe this, man, I know you believe it; say therefore in your heart, still, Lord, increase my faith; Lord, help my unbelief. Blessed are they which see not this by reason, but yet believe;—hope, man, past all hope, as Abraham did.

And thus much for a taste of these promises which are every where not only in the New Testament, but also in the Old. Read the latter end of Leviticus, xxvi., the prophet Isaiah, xxx., where he saith, God tarrieth, looking for thee to show thee mercy; also the 40th, and so on to the 60th. Read also Psal. xxxii., Joel ii., &c.

Howbeit, if this will not serve, if yet thou feelest no

faith, no certain persuasion of God's love, then unto prayer add diligent considering of the free and universal promises of the gospel. Thirdly, set before thee those benefits which God hath heretofore given thee, and at present gives thee. Consider how he has made you a man or a woman, who might have made you a toad, a dog. And why did he this? Verily, because he loved you. And do you think, that if he loved thee when thou wast not, to make thee such a one as he most graciously hath made thee, will he not now love thee, being his handywork? Does he hate any thing that he has made? Is there unableness with him? Does he love for a day, and so farewell? No, indeed, he loveth to the end, his mercy endureth for ever. Say therefore with Job, "To the work of thy hands put thy helping hand." Again, has he not made you a Christian man or woman, whereas if he would, he might have made you a Turk or pagan? This you know he did of love. And do you think his love is lessened, if you lament your sin? Is his hand shortened for helping you? Can a woman forget the child of her womb? And though she should do it, yet will not I forget thee, saith the Lord. He has given you limbs to see, hear, go, &c.; he has given you wit, reason, discretion, &c.; he has long spared you, and borne with you, when you never purposed to repent; and now you repent, will he not give you mercy? Wherefore does he suffer you to live at this present to hear me speak this, and suffer me to speak this, but of love to us all? Oh! therefore let us pray him, that he would add to this, that we might believe these love-tokens that he loves us, and indeed he will do it. Lord, open our eyes, in thy gifts to see thy gracious goodness. Amen.

But tarry in this I will not. Let every man consider God's benefits past and present, public and private, spiritual and corporeal, to confirm his faith concerning the promises of the gospel, for the pardon of his sins. I will now endeavour to show you a fourth means to confirm your faith in this, even by examples. Of these there are in the Scriptures very many, as also daily experience diversely teaches the same, if we were diligent to observe things accordingly; wherefore I will be more brief herein, having respect to time, which stealeth fast away.

Adam in paradise transgressed grievously, as the painful punishment, which we all as yet do feel, proves, if

nothing else did. Though by reason of his sin he displeased God sorely, and ran away from God, for he would have hid himself, yea, he would have made God the causer of his sin, because he gave him such a mate, so far was he from asking mercy; yet notwithstanding all this, God turned his fierce wrath neither upon him nor Eve, who also required not mercy, but upon the serpent Satan, promising unto them a seed, Jesus Christ, by whom they at length should be delivered. In token whereof, though they were cast out of paradise for their nurture,* to serve in sorrow since they would not serve in joy; yet he made them apparel to cover their bodies, a visible sacrament and token of his invisible love and grace concerning their souls. If God was so merciful to Adam, who so brake his commandment, and rather blamed God than asked mercy; thinkest thou, O man, that he will not be merciful to thee, which blamest thyself, and desirest pardon?

To Cain he offered mercy, if he would have asked it. "What hast thou done? (saith God:) the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me out of the earth." O merciful Lord, Cain should have said, I confess it! But, alas! he did not so, and therefore said God, "Now," that is, in that thou desirest not mercy, now, "I say, be thou accursed," &c. Lo! to the reprobate he offered mercy, and will he deny it to thee, which art his child?

Noah,—did not he sin, and was drunk? Good Lot also both in Sodom dissembled a little with the angels, prolonging the time, and out of Sodom he fell very foully, (Gen. xix.) as did Judah and the patriarchs against Joseph; but yet I went† they found mercy. Moses, Miriam, Aaron, though they stumbled a little, yet they received mercy; yea, the people in the wilderness often sinned and displeased God, so that he was purposed to have destroyed them. Let me alone, saith he to Moses, that I may destroy them; but Moses did not let him alone, for he prayed still for them, and therefore God spared them. If the people were spared through Moses's prayer, they not praying with him, but rather worshipping their golden calf, eating, drinking, and making good cheer, why shouldst thou doubt whether God will be merciful to thee, having, as indeed thou hast, One much better than Moses to pray for thee (Numb. xiv.)

* Support.

† Doubt not.

and with thee, even Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of his Father, and prayeth for us, being no less faithful in his Father's house, the church, than Moses was in the synagogue? David the good king had a foul foil* with Bathsheba, whereunto he added also a mischievous murder, causing her husband, his most faithful soldier, Uriah, to be slain with an honest company of his most valiant men of war, and that with the sword of the uncircumcised.

In this his sin, though he lay asleep a great while, (as many do now-a-days, God give them good waking!) thinking, that by the sacrifices he offered, all was well, and that God was content; yet at length, when the prophet by a parable had opened the poke, and brought him in remembrance of his own sin in such sort, that he gave judgment against himself, then he quaked. His sacrifices had no more taken away his sins, than our sir John's trentals† and wagging of his fingers over the heads of such as lie asleep in their sins, out of the which, when they are awaked, they will well see that it is neither mass nor matins, blessing nor 'crossing, will serve. Then, I say, David cried out, saying, "I have sinned against my Lord and good God, which hath done so much for me; indeed I caused Uriah to be killed; I have sinned, I have sinned. What shall I do? I have sinned, and am worthy of eternal damnation." But what saith God by his prophet? "The Lord hath taken away thy sins; thou shalt not die." "O good God," he said, "but I have sinned," but he said so from his heart and not from the lips only, as Pharaoh and Saul did, and he speedily heard, "Thou shalt not die; the Lord hath taken away thy sins," or rather, hath laid them upon another, yea, translated them upon his Son Jesus Christ, who bare them, and not only them, but thine and mine also, if we will now but cry, FROM OUR HEARTS, "We have sinned, good Lord, we have done wickedly, enter not into judgment with us, but be merciful unto us after thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of thy compassions do away our iniquities," &c. For indeed God is not the God of David only; he is the God of all, so that he or she, whosoever they are, that call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. In confirmation whereof this history is written, as are also the others which I have recited, and many more which I might recite. As of Manasses, the wicked king,

* Fall.

† Romish priests' services.

who slew Isaiah the prophet, and wrought very much wickedness, yet the Lord showed mercy upon him, being in prison, as his prayer doth teach us. Nebuchadnezzar, though for a time he bare God's anger, yet at length he found mercy. The city of Nineveh also found favour with God, as did many others, which I will omit for time's sake, and will bring forth one or two out of the New Testament, that we may see God is the same God in the New Testament that he was in the Old.

I might tell you of many, if I should speak of the lunatic, such as were possessed with devils, lame, blind, dumb, deaf, lepers, &c., but time will not suffice me; one or two therefore shall serve. Mary Magdalen had seven devils, but yet they were cast out of her; and of all others she was the first that Christ appeared unto after his resurrection. Thomas would not believe Christ's resurrection, though many told him which had seen and felt him, by reason whereof a man might have thought that his sins would have cast him away. "Except I should see and feel," saith he, "I will not believe." Oh! wilful Thomas, "I will not," said he. But Christ appeared unto him, and would not loose him, as he will not loose you, good brother, if with Thomas you will keep company with the disciples, as Thomas did. Peter's fall was ugly; he accursed himself if ever he knew Christ, and that for fear of a girl, and this not once, but even three divers times, and that in the hearing of Christ his Master; but yet the third time Christ looked back, and cast on him his eye of grace, so that he went out, and wept bitterly. And after Christ's resurrection, not only did the angels direct the women to tell Peter that Christ was risen, but Christ himself appeared to him alone, such a good Lord is he. The thief hanging on the cross said but this: "Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom, remember me;" and what answer had he? "This day," said Christ, "shalt thou be with me in paradise." What a comfort is this! since he is now the same Christ to you, and to me, and to us all, if we will run unto him; for he is the same Christ to-day, and to-morrow, and until he come to judgment. Then indeed he will be inexorable, but now is he more ready to give than you are to ask. If you cry, he hears you, yea, before you cry. (Isaiah.) Cry therefore, be bold, man; he is not partial. "Call," saith he, "and I will hear thee. Ask, and thou shalt have;

seek, and thou shalt find, though not at the first, yet at the length." (Matt. vii.) If he tarry awhile, it is but to try you; he is coming, and will not be long. (Heb. x.)

Thus have you four means which you must use to the attainment of faith or certain persuasion of God's mercy towards you, which is the second part of penance, namely, 1, Prayer. 2, The free and universal promises of God's grace. 3, The remembrance of the benefits of God, past and present. 4, The examples of God's mercy. Which, although they might suffice, yet will I put one more to them, which alone of itself is fully sufficient: I mean the death of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, which, if thou set before the eyes of thy mind, it will confirm thy placard;* for it is the great seal of England as they say, yea, of all the world, for the confirmation of all patents and perpetuities of the everlasting life, whereunto we are all called.

If I thought these which I have before recited were not sufficient to confirm your faith of God's love towards such as do repent, I would tarry longer herein; but because both I have been long, and also I trust you have some exercise of conscience in this daily, (or else you are to blame,) I will but touch and go. Consider with yourselves what we are, miserable wretches, and enemies to God. Consider what God is, even he which hath all power, majesty, might, glory, riches, &c., perfectly of himself, and needeth nothing, but hath all things. Consider what Christ is—concerning his Godhead, coequal with his Father, even him by whom all things were made, are ruled and governed—concerning his manhood, the only darling of his Father, in whom is all his joy. Now, sirs, what a love is this, that this God, which needeth nothing, should give wholly his own self to thee his enemy, wreaking his wrath upon himself in this his Son, as a man may say, to spare you, to save you, to win you, to buy you, to have you, to enjoy you for ever. Because thy sin had separated thee from him, that thou mightest come speedily into his company again, and therein remain, he himself became, as a man would say, a sinner, or rather sin itself, even a malediction or curse, that we sinners, we accursed by our sin, might, by his oblation or offering for our sins, by his curse be delivered from sin and malediction. For by sin he destroyed sin, killing death, Satan, and sin, by their own weapons,

* Grant.

and that for thee and me, (O man!) if we cast it not away by unbelief. Oh! wonderful love of God! Who ever heard of such a love, the Father of heaven, for us his enemies, to give his own dear Son Jesus Christ! And that not only to be our brother, to dwell among us, but also to the death of the cross for us! Oh, wonderful love of Christ to us all! He was content and willing to work this feat for us. Was there any love like to this love?

God indeed has commended his charity and love to us herein, that when we were very enemies unto him, he would give his own Son for us;—that we, being men, might become, as you would say, gods, God would become man;—that we, being mortal, might become immortal, the immortal God would become mortal man;—that we, earthly wretches, might be citizens of heaven, the Lord of heaven would become, as a man would say, earthly;—that we, being accursed, might be blessed, God would be accursed;—that we, by our father Adam being brought out of paradise into the puddle of all pain, might be redeemed, and brought into paradise again, God would be our Father and an Adam thereunto;—that we, having nothing, might have all things, God having all things, would have nothing;—that we, being vassals and slaves to all, even to Satan the fiend, might be lords of all, and of Satan; the Lord of all would become a vassal and a slave to us all, and in danger of Satan. Oh, love incomprehensible! If the gracious good Lord disdained not to give his own Son, his own heart's joy, for us his very enemies, before we thought to beg any such thing at his hands, yea, before we were; who can think otherwise, but that with Him he will give us all good things? If when we hated him and fled away from him, he sent his Son to seek us, who can think otherwise than that now, we loving him and lamenting because we love him no more, he will for ever love us? He that giveth the greater to his enemies, will not he give the lesser, think you, to his friends? God hath given his own Son, than which nothing is greater, to us his enemies; and we now being become his friends, will he deny us faith and pardon of our sins, which, though they are great, yet in comparison they are nothing at all? Christ Jesus would give his own self for us when we willed it not, and will he now deny us faith, if we will it? This will is his earnest, that he has given us truly to look indeed for the thing willed. And look thou

for it indeed; for as he hath given thee to will, so will he give thee to do.

Jesus Christ gave his life for our evils, and by his death delivered us. Oh then, since he liveth now, and cannot die, will he forsake us? His heart's blood was not too dear for us when we asked it not; what then can be now too dear for us asking it? Is he a changeling? Is he mutable as man is? Can he repent of his gifts? Did he not foresee our falls? Paid not he the price therefore? Because he saw we should fall sorely, therefore he would suffer sorely, yea, if his suffering had not been enough, he would yet once more come again. I am sure that God the Father, if the death of his Son incarnate would not serve, would himself and the Holy Ghost also become incarnate, and die for us.* This death of Christ, therefore, look on as the very pledge of God's love towards thee, whosoever thou art, how deeply soever thou hast sinned. See God's hands are nailed, they cannot strike thee; his feet also, he cannot run from thee; his arms are wide open to embrace thee, his head hangs down to kiss thee, his very heart is open, so that therein see, look, spy, behold, and thou shalt see nothing therein but love, love, love to thee; hide thee therefore, lay thy head there with the evangelist.

This is the cleft of the rock where Elias stood. This is the pillow of down for all aching heads. Anoint your head with this oil, let this ointment embalm your head and wash your face. Tarry thou here, and quite sure art thou, I warrant thee. Say with Paul, What can separate me from the love of God? Can death, can poverty, sickness, hunger, or any misery persuade you now that God loveth thee not? Nay, nothing can separate you from the love wherewith God has loved you in Christ Jesus; whom he loveth he loveth to the end: so that now where abundance of sin hath been in you, the more is the abundance of grace. **BUT TO WHAT END?** Even that as sin hath reigned to death, as thou seest, to the killing of God's Son, so now grace must reign to life, to the honouring of God's Son, who is now alive, and cannot die any more.

So that they which by faith feel this, cannot any more die to God, but to sin, wherunto they are dead and buried with Christ. As Christ therefore liveth, so do they, and that to God, to righteousness and holiness. The life which

* It is better to avoid such suppositions. *Ed.*

they live is in the faith of the Son of God; whereby you see that now I am slipt into that which I made the **THIRD** part of penance, namely, newness of life, which I could not so have done if it were a part of itself indeed, as it is an effect or fruit of the second part, that is, of faith or trust in God's mercy. For he that believeth, that is, he who certainly is persuaded sin is such a thing that it is the cause of all misery, and of itself so greatly angers God, that in heaven or in earth nothing could appease his wrath, save only the death and precious bloodshedding of the Son of God, in whom is all the delight and pleasure of the Father; he, I say, that is persuaded thus of sin, the same cannot but in heart abhor and quake to do or to say, yea, to think any thing willingly which God's law teaches him to be sin.

Again: he that believeth, that is, he who certainly is persuaded God's love to be so much towards him, that whereas through sin he was lost, and made a firebrand of hell; yet the eternal Father of mercy, who is the all-sufficient God, and needeth nothing of us, or of any thing that we can do, to deliver us out of hell, and to bring us into heaven, sent even his own most dear Son out of his bosom, out of heaven into hell, as a man would say, to bring us, as I said, from thence into his own bosom and mercy, we being his very enemies. He, I say, that is thus persuaded of God's love towards him, and of the price of his redemption, by the dear blood of the Lamb immaculate, Jesus Christ, the same man cannot but love God again, and of love do that which might please God, and heartily desire to do still better. Think you, that such a one as knows this by faith will willingly welter and wallow in his wilful lusts, pleasures, and fantasies? Will such a one as knoweth by faith Christ Jesus to have given his blood to wash him from his sins, play the sow, to wallow in his puddle of filthy sin and vice again? Nay, rather than he will be defiled again by wilful sinning, he will wash often the feet of his affections, watching over that vice still sticking in him, which as a spring continually sendeth out poison enough to drown and defile him, if the sweet water of Christ's passion did not wash it in God's sight, and his blood satisfy the rigour of God's justice due for the same. This blood of Christ, shed for our sins, is so dear in the sight of him that believeth, that he will abhor sin in his heart, and stamp it and tread it under his feet. He knows

now by his belief that it is too much, that hitherto he has set too little by it, and is ashamed thereof; therefore for the residue of his life he purposes to take better heed to himself than he did before: because he sees by his faith the grievousness of God's anger, the foulness of his sin, the greatness of God's mercy, and of Christ's love towards him, he will now be heedful* to pray to God to give him his grace accordingly; that as with his eyes, tongue, hands, feet, &c., he has displeased God, doing his own will, even so now with the same eyes, tongue, ears, hands, feet, &c., he may displease his own self, and do God's will. He will not willingly do that which might renew the death of the Son of God. He knoweth he has too much sin in him unwillingly, so that thereto he will not add willing offences.

This willing and witting† offending and sinning, whosoever flatters himself therein, evidently demonstrates and shows that he never yet tasted of Christ truly; he never was truly persuaded or believed how foul a thing sin is, how grievous a thing God's anger is, how joyful and precious a thing God's mercy in Christ is, how exceeding broad, wide, high, and deep Christ's love is. Perchance he can write, prate, talk, and preach of this; but yet he in part by faith never felt this. For if he once felt this indeed, then would he be so far from continuing in sin willingly and wittingly, that he would wholly and heartily give himself over to that which is contrary; I mean, to a new life, renewing his youth, even as the eagle.

For, as we, being in the servitude of sin, demonstrated our service by giving over our members to the obeying of sin, from iniquity to iniquity; even so we, being made free from sin by faith in Jesus Christ, and endued with God's Spirit, a spirit of liberty, must needs demonstrate this freedom and liberty, by giving over our members to the obedience of the Spirit; by which we are led and guided from virtue to virtue, and all kinds of holiness. As the unbelievers declare their unbelief by the evil spirit working in them outwardly the fruits of the flesh, even so the believers declare their faith by the working of God's good Spirit in them outwardly the fruits of the Spirit. For as the devil is not dead in those which are his, but worketh still to their damnation; so is not God dead in those who are his, but he worketh still to their salvation; which working is not

* Careful.

† Knowing.

the cause of the one or the other being in any, but only a demonstration, a sign, a fruit of the same, as the apple is not the cause of the apple-tree, but a fruit of it. (Matt. vii.)

Thus, then, you see briefly that newness of life is not indeed a part of penance, but a fruit of it, a demonstration of justifying faith, a sign of God's good Spirit possessing the heart of the penitent; as the old life is a fruit of impenitency, a demonstration of a lip-faith or unbelief, a sign of Satan's spirit possessing the heart of the impenitent, which all those are that are not penitent. For I know no middle state. He that is not penitent, the same is impenitent; he that is not governed by God's Spirit, the same is governed by Satan's spirit; for all that are Christ's are governed by the Spirit of Christ, which Spirit hath his fruits. All others that are not Christ's, are the devil's. He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad.

Therefore, dearly beloved, I beseech you to consider this, and deceive not yourselves; if you are not Christ's, then you pertain to the devil, of which the fruits of the flesh assure you, as whoredom, adultery, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, envy, strife, contention, wrath, sedition, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, blasphemy, slothfulness, idleness, licentious talking, slandering, &c. If these apples grow out of the apple-trees of your heart, surely, surely the devil is at inn* with you; you are his birds, whom, when he has well fed, he will broach† you and eat you, chew you and chump you, world without end, in eternal woe and misery. But I am otherwise persuaded of you all; I trust you are all Christ Jesus's people and children, yea; brethren by faith.

As you see your sins in God's law, and tremble, sigh, sorrow, and sob for the same, even so you see his great mercies in his gospel and free promises, and therefore are glad, merry, and joyful, that you are accepted into God's favour, have your sins pardoned, and are endued with the good Spirit of God, even the seal and sign manual of your election in Christ before the beginning of the world; the which Spirit, for that he is the Spirit of life, is given to you, to work in you, with you, and by you, here in this life, sanctification and holiness, whereunto you are called, that you might be holy, even as your heavenly Father is holy. I beseech you all, by admonishing and warning

* Abiding.

† Spit.

you, that you would stir up the gift of God given to you, generally and particularly, to the edifying of his church; that is, I pray you that you would not molest the good Spirit of God, by rebelling against it when it excites and calls you to go on forwards, that he which is holy, might yet be more holy; that he which is righteous, might be more righteous; as the evil spirit moves and stirs up the filthy to be yet more filthy, the covetous to be more covetous, the wicked to be more wicked.

Declare now your repentance by works of repentance; bring forth fruits, and worthy fruits; let your sorrowing for your evils demonstrate itself by departing from the evils you have used. Let your certainty of pardon of your sins through Christ, and your joy in him, be demonstrated by pursuing the good things which God's word teaches you. You are now God's workmanship in Christ Jesus, to do good works, which God has prepared for you to walk in. For the grace of God, which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, and teacheth us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the mighty God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness, and to purge us a peculiar people unto himself, fervently given unto good works. Again, (Titus iii.,) for we ourselves also were in times past unwise, disobedient, deceived, serving lusts and divers pleasures, living in maliciousness and envy, full of hatred, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by the deeds of righteousness which we wrought, but of his mercy, He saved us by the fountain of the new birth, and with the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that we being once justified by his grace should be heirs of eternal life through hope. This is a true saying; but I will make an end, for I am too tedious.

Dearly beloved, repent your sins, that is, be sorry for that which is past; believe in God's mercy for pardon, how deeply soever you have sinned, and both purpose and earnestly pursue a new life, bringing forth worthy and true fruits of repentance. As you have given over your members from sin to sin, to serve the devil, your tongues to

swear, to lie, to flatter, to scold, to jest, to scoff, to lewd talk, to vain jangling, to boasting, &c.; your hands to picking, groping, idleness, fighting, &c.; your feet to skipping, going to evil, to dancing, &c.; your ears to hear fables, lies, vanities, and evil things, &c.; so now give over your members to godliness, your tongues to speak, your ears to hear, your eyes to see, your mouths to taste, your hands to work, your feet to go about such things as may make to God's glory, sobriety of life, and love to your brethren, and that daily more and more diligently; for you cannot stand still, you are either better or worse to-day than you were yesterday. But better I trust you are, and will be, if you mark well my theme, that is, REPENT YOU; which I have humbly besought you to do, and yet once more I do again beseech you, and that for the tender mercies of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, "REPENT YOU, REPENT YOU, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" (that is, a kingdom full of all riches, pleasures, joy, beauty, sweetness, and eternal felicity) "IS AT HAND." The eye hath not seen the like, the ear hath not heard the like, the heart of man cannot conceive the treasures and pleasures of his kingdom, which is now at hand, to such as repent, that is, to such as are sorry for their sins, believe God's mercy through Christ, and earnestly purpose to lead a new life. The God of mercy, through Christ his Son, grant us his Holy Spirit, and work in our hearts this sorrow, faith, and new life, which through his grace I have spoken of, both now and for ever. Amen.

A SERMON

UPON

THE SUPPER OF THE LORD.

THERE are two sacraments in Christ's church; the one of initiation, that is, wherewith we are enrolled, as it were, into the household and family of God, which sacrament we call baptism; the other wherewith we are conserved, fed, kept, and nourished, to continue in the same family, which is called the Lord's supper, or the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, broken for our sins, and shed for our transgressions.

Of the former sacrament, that is, of baptism, I do not design to speak now.—But of the Lord's supper I purpose at present to speak, through the help of God, because we are assembled in Christ (I hope) to celebrate the same. Now that what I shall speak may be better observed and retained by you, I will tell you how and in what sort I will speak of it. Three things I would have marked, as the principles and scopes whereto I will refer all that I shall at this time speak of it. They are these: Who,—What,—and Wherefore. That is, First: Who instituted this thing which we are about to celebrate? Secondly, What the thing is which is instituted? And, Thirdly, Wherefore and to what end it was instituted? whereby we shall be taught how to use it.

First, Who instituted this sacrament and supper? You all know that things are more esteemed sometimes for the dignity and authority of the person, sometimes for the wisdom of the person, sometimes for the power and magnificence of the person, and sometimes for the tender love and kindness of the person.

If need were, I could by examples set forth each of these; but I hope it is not necessary. Now then, how can the thing, which we are about to celebrate, but be highly esteemed of every one, since the Author of it doth want no dignity, no authority, no wisdom, no power, no magnificence, no holiness, no tender love and kindness, but has all dignity, authority, wisdom, power, magnificence, holiness, tender love, mercy, glory, and absolutely

all that can be wished. He is God eternal, coequal and substantial with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost, the Image of the substance of God, the Wisdom of the Father, the Brightness of his glory, by whom all things were made, are ruled, and governed. He is the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords. He is the Messiah of the world, our most dear and loving Brother, Saviour, Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor, Husband, Priest. So that whatever comes from Him cannot but be esteemed, loved, and embraced, if dignity, authority, wisdom, power, glory, goodness, and mercy please us. Yea, if any thing that can be wished please us, then cannot this which our Lord instituted but please us, and that so much the more, by how much it is one of the last things which he instituted and commanded. May God open our eyes to see these things accordingly, so shall we come with more reverence to this table of the Lord, which may he grant for his mercy's sake. Amen. And thus much for the first, Who instituted this sacrament.

Second, What the sacrament is? If we ask our eyes, our nose, our mouth, our taste, our hands, and the reason of man, they will all make the same answer—that it is bread and wine. And verily, herein they speak the truth and lie not, as by many things may be proved, although the papists prate their pleasure to the contrary.

And here, my dearly beloved, I think I shall not be either tedious or unprofitable unto you, if I tarry a little in showing this verity, that the substance of bread and wine remains in the sacrament after the words of consecration (as they call them) are spoken: whereby we may learn how shameless they are, who would force men to believe transubstantiation, which is an error whereupon in a manner all popery depends. For it is the stay of their priesthood, which is neither after the order of Aaron, nor after the order of Melchisedeck, but after the order of Baal, as is partly seen by their number. For the false prophets and priests of Baal were always many more in number, when the wicked were in authority, than the true priests and prophets of the Lord, as the holy histories of the Bible teach. Read 1 Kings, xviii.

The supper of the Lord, or the sacrament of Christ's body, which the papists call the sacrament of the altar, as though that were Christ's sacrament, which they can never prove; for it being perverted and used to a contrary end (as sacrificing propitiatorily for the sins of the quick

and of the dead, and idolatry, by adoring or worshipping it by godly honour, &c.) is no more Christ's sacrament, but a horrible profanation of it. And therefore as Christ called God's temple, which was called a house of prayer, a den of thieves, because of the abusing and profaning of it by the priests; so this which the papists call the sacrament of the altar, we may truly call an abominable idol; and therefore I would all men should know that the sacrament of the altar, as the papists now do abuse it, omitting certain substantial points of the Lord's institution, and putting in the stead thereof their own dregs and dreams, is not the sacrament of Christ's body, nor the Lord's Supper, whereof, when we speak reverently, as our duty is, we would not that men should think we speak of the popish mass. I say, therefore, in the supper of the Lord, or in the sacrament of Christ's body, there remaineth the substance of bread and wine, as our senses and reason teach, and these many things also teach the same.

First, the Holy Ghost plainly tells us so, by calling it often bread, after the words of consecration, as 1 Cor. x. "Is not the bread which we break a partaking of the body of Christ?" saith Paul. Lo! he plainly says, *the bread which we break*, not only calling it bread, but adding thereto "breaking," which cannot be attributed either to Christ's body, whereof no bone was broken, nor to any accident,* but must needs be of a substance, which substance, if it is not Christ's body, must be bread. As in the 11th chapter four times he plainly calls it so. "He that eateth of this bread, he that receiveth this bread," &c. And in the Acts of the Apostles, we read how that (in speaking of the communion) "they met together to break bread," &c. So that it is plain that the substance of bread and wine remains in the supper after the words of consecration, as also may appear plainly by Christ's own words, who calls that which he gave them in the cup, wine, or the fruit of the vine, as both Matthew and Mark write: whereby we see that there is no transubstantiation of the wine, and therefore we may also see, that there is no transubstantiation of the bread.

As for the papist's cavilling, that it has the name of bread, because it was bread, as Simon the leper was still called leprous, though he was healed, or as Moses's rod, being turned into a serpent, was still called a rod, (Matt.

* Or mere appearance without substance.

xxvi. Exod. vii.,) it proves nothing; for there was in the one a plain sight, and the senses certified, that Simon was no leper, and in the other plain mention that the rod was turned into a serpent. But concerning the sacrament, neither the senses see any other thing than bread, neither is there any mention made of turning; and therefore their cavil is plainly seen to be but a cavil, and of no force. But to bring more reasons against transubstantiation,

Secondly, that the substance of bread remains still, the very text teaches, (Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., Luke xxii., 1 Cor. xi.) For the evangelist and the apostle St. Paul witness that Christ gave *that* to his disciples, and called it his body, which he took, for which he gave thanks, and which he brake; but he took bread, gave thanks on bread, and broke bread; therefore he gave bread, and called bread his body, as he called the cup the New Testament; so that it followeth by this, that there is no transubstantiation. And this reason I myself have promised in writing to prove by the authority of the fathers, namely, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Jerome, Augustine, Theodoret, Cyril, Bede, if I may have the use of my books.

Thirdly, that in the sacrament there is no transubstantiation of the bread, I prove by this reason. As by our Saviour Christ, the Spirit of truth spake of the bread, "This is my body," so saith the same Spirit of truth of the same bread, that we being many are one body and one bread, &c. (1 Cor. x.) So that as it appears the sacrament is not the church by transubstantiation, even so is it not Christ's natural body by transubstantiation.

Fourthly, I prove that there is no transubstantiation, by Luke and Paul's words spoken over the cup. For they are no less effectual to transubstantiate the cup, than their words spoken of the bread are operative and mighty to transubstantiate the bread. For as they say of the bread, "This is my body," so say they of the cup, "This cup is the New Testament," which is absurd to be spoken or thought either of the cup, or of the thing in the cup, by transubstantiation; yea, rather in saying these words, "This cup is the New Testament," we are taught by their coupling the word *cup* to the demonstrative *this*, how we should in the words, "This is my body," know that the word *this* there demonstrates bread.

Fifthly, as the reasons before brought forth prove, that the substance of bread remains in the sacrament, so does

the definition of a sacrament. For the fathers affirm it to consist of an earthly thing and of a heavenly thing, of the word and of the element, of sensible things and of things which are perceived by the mind. But transubstantiation wholly takes away the earthly thing, the element, the sensible thing, and so makes it no sacrament; and therefore the definition of a sacrament teaches, that bread, which is the earthly thing, the sensible thing, and the element, remains still, as St. Augustine saith. The word comes to the element, (he saith not, takes away the element,) and so it is made a sacrament.

Sixthly, the nature and property of a sacrament teaches also what I have affirmed. For as Cyprian writes, that sacraments bear the names of the things which they signify, so St. Augustine teaches, that if sacraments have not some signification with the things whereof they are sacraments, then they are no sacraments. Now in the Lord's Supper this similitude is first in nourishing, that as bread nourishes the body, so Christ's body broken feeds the soul; secondly, in bringing together many into one, that as in the sacrament many grains of corn are made one bread, many grapes are made one liquor and wine, so the multitude, which worthily receive the sacrament, are made one body with Christ and his church. Last of all, in a still stronger likeness or similitude, that as bread eaten turneth into our nature, so we, rightly eating the sacrament by faith, turn into the nature of Christ; so that it is plain to them that will see, that to take the substance of bread away is quite against the nature and property of a sacrament.

I will speak nothing how this their doctrine of transubstantiation, besides the manifold absurdities it has in it, (to rehearse which I omit,) utterly overthrows the use of the sacrament, and is quite contrary to the end wherefore it was instituted, and so is no longer a sacrament, but an idol, and is the cause of much idolatry, converting the people's hearts from a heavenly conversation to an earthly, and turning the communion into a private action, and a matter of gazing and peeping, adoring and worshipping the work of men's hands for the living God, who dwelleth not in temples made with men's hands, much less lies he in pixes,* and chests,† whose true worship is in spirit and verity,

* The box or case in which the consecrated wafer is carried.

† Or tabernacle, a repository upon the altar in which the wafer is kept.

which may God grant us all to render unto him continually. Amen.

The sacrament of baptism also teaches us, that as the substance of the water remains there, so in the Lord's Supper the substance of bread remains after consecration. For as by baptism we are engrafted into Christ, so by the supper we are fed with Christ. These two sacraments the apostle gladly unites together, 1 Cor. x. and xiii. "We are baptized into one body, (saith he,) and have drunk all of one spirit," meaning by it the cup, as Chrysostom and other great and learned men well interpret it. As therefore in baptism is given unto us the Holy Ghost, and pardon of our sins, which yet lie not lurking in the water, so in the Lord's Supper is given unto us the communion of Christ's body and blood, that is, grace, forgiveness of sins, innocency, life, immortality, without any transubstantiation, or including of the same in the bread. By baptism the old man is put off, and the new man put on; yea, Christ is put on, but without transubstantiating the water. (Gal. iii.) And even so it is in the Lord's Supper. We, by faith, spiritually in our souls, feed on Christ's body broken, eat his flesh and drink his blood, dwell in him and he in us, but without transubstantiation.

As for the cavil they make, that we are baptized into one body, meaning thereby the mystical body, and not the natural body of Christ, whereby they would enforce that we are fed with the natural body of Christ, while we are not engrafted into it, but into the mystical body, and so would put away the reason aforesaid—as for this cavil, I say, we may soon avoid* it, if we consider that Christ, who is the head of the mystical body, is not separate from the body; and therefore to be engrafted into the mystical body, is to be engrafted into the natural body of Christ, to be a member of his flesh, and bone of his bones, as pope Leo well doth witness, in saying, that "the body of the regenerate is made the flesh of Christ crucified." And hereto I could add some reasons for the excellency of baptism. I trow,† it is rather to be begotten than to be nourished. As for the excellent miracle of the manifestation of the Trinity, and the descending of the Holy Ghost in baptism in a visible form, the like whereto was not seen in the Lord's Supper, I will omit to speak of it further than that I would you should know that it were not difficult to

* Refute.

† Think.

set forth the excellency of this sacrament, as well as of the supper.

It is a plain sign of antichrist, to deny that the substance of bread and wine is in the Lord's Supper after consecration; for in so doing and granting transubstantiation, the property of the human nature of Christ is denied; for it is not of the human nature, but of the divine nature, to be in many places at once. Now grant transubstantiation, and then Christ's natural body must needs be in many places, which is nothing else but to confound the two natures in Christ, or to deny Christ's human nature, which is the self-same that St. John saith is to deny Christ to be come in the flesh. And this whoso doth, by the testimony of St. John, is an antichrist in his so doing, whatsoever otherwise he may say. Read St. Augustine in his epistle to Dardanus, and his thirty-first treatise upon St. John, and you shall easily see that Christ's body must needs be in one place, but his truth is in all places.

If there is no substance of bread in the sacrament but transubstantiation, then Christ's body is received of the ungodly, and eaten with their teeth, which is not only against St. Augustine, who calls this expression, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man," &c. a figurative speech; but also against the plain Scriptures, which affirm them to dwell in Christ and Christ in them, and they to have everlasting life that eat him, which the wicked have not, although they eat the sacrament. He that eateth of this bread (saith Christ) shall live for evermore: therefore they eat not Christ's body, but (as Paul saith,) they eat in judgment and damnation, which I think is another thing than Christ's body. And this St. Augustine affirms, saying, None eat Christ's body who are not in the body of Christ, that is, (as he expounds it,) in whom Christ dwelleth not, and he in Christ: which thing the wicked do not, because they want faith and the Holy Spirit, which are the means whereby Christ is received.

Besides the things which I have here brought forth to impugn transubstantiation, I could bring the fathers, who succeeded continually many hundred years after Christ, to confirm the same. Also I could show that transubstantiation is only a new doctrine, not established before satan, who was tied for a thousand years, was let loose: also I could show that ever hitherto, since it was established, in all times it has been resisted and spoken

against; yea, before this doctrine, the church was by no means so endowed with goods, lands, and possessions, as it has been ever since. It has brought no small gain, no small honour, no small ease to the clergy, and therefore no marvel that they strive and fight for it. It is their *Maozim*,* it is their *Helen*.† May God destroy it with the breath of his mouth, as shortly he will for his name's sake. Amen.

If time would serve, I could and would here tell you of the absurdities which come by this doctrine, but for time's sake I must omit it. Only, I beseech you, see this; already I have proved that this their doctrine of transubstantiation is an untruth; and forget not that it is the whole stay of all popery, and the pillow of their priesthood, whereby Christ's priesthood, sacrifice, ministry, and truth is hindered, yea, perverted and utterly overthrown. May God our Father, in the blood of his Son Christ, open the eyes and minds of all our magistrates, and all others that bear the name of Christ, to see it in time, to God's glory and their own salvation. Amen.

Now to return to the second matter, What the sacrament is? you see that to the senses and reason of man it is bread and wine, which is most true, as by the Scriptures and otherwise I have already proved, and therefore away with transubstantiation.

But here, lest we should make it no sacrament, for a sacrament consists of two things, and lest a man should by this gather, that we make it none other thing but bare bread and a naked sign, and so rail at their pleasure on us, saying, How can a man be guilty of the body and blood of Christ by unworthy receiving of it, if it is but bare bread, and so forth? For this purpose I will now speak a little more about it, by God's grace, to stop their mouths, and to stir up your good hearts more to the worthy estimation and perception of this holy mystery. When a loving friend gives to you a thing, or sends to you a token, even though it be of small account, I think you do not as you should do, if with the thing you consider not the mind of your friend that sends or gives it, and esteem and receive it accordingly. And so of this bread, I think, that if you do not rather consider the mind of Christ than the

* Dan. xi.

† An allusion to the Trojan war. Bradford means that transubstantiation is the leading object with the church of Rome, which it will not relinquish, and for which it will hazard all other things.

thing which you see; yea, if you do not altogether consider Christ's mind, you deal dishonestly and harlot-like with him. For it is the property of harlots to consider the things given and sent them, rather than the love and mind of the giver and sender; whereas, true lovers do not consider in any point the things given or sent, but the mind of the party: so we, if we are true lovers of Christ, must not consider merely the outward thing which we see, and our senses perceive, but rather altogether we must and should see and consider the mind of Christ, and thereafter and accordingly esteem the sacrament.

But how shall we know the mind of Christ? Even as a man's mind is best known by his word, so by Christ's word shall we know his mind. Now his words are manifest and most plain. "This (saith he) is my body," therefore should we esteem, take, and receive it accordingly. If he had spoken nothing, or if he had spoken doubtfully, then might we have been in some doubt. But since he speaketh so plainly, saying, "This is my body," who can, may, or dare be so bold as to doubt of it? He is the truth, and cannot lie; he is omnipotent, and can do all things, therefore it is his body. This I believe, this I confess, and pray you all heartily to beware of thinking these and such like words, to be but a sign or a figure of his body; except you will discern betwixt signs which signify only, and signs which also represent, confirm, and seal up, or (as a man may say) give with their signification. As for example: an ivy-bush is a sign of wine to be sold; the budding of Aaron's rod signified Aaron's priesthood allowed of the Lord; the reservation of Moses's rod signified the rebellion of the children of Israel; the stones taken out of Jordan, Gideon's fleece of wool, &c.; such as these are signs significative, and show no gift. But in the other signs, which some call exhibitivè, there is not only a signification of the thing, but also a declaration of a gift, yea, in a certain manner, a giving also. As baptism signifies not only the cleansing of the conscience from sin by the merits of Christ's blood, but also is a very cleansing from sin; and therefore it was said to Paul, that he should arise, and wash away his sins, and not that he should arise, and take only a sign of washing away his sins. In the Lord's supper the bread is called a partaking of the Lord's body, and not only a bare sign of the Lord's body.

This I speak not as though the elements of these sacra-

ments were transubstantiated, which I have already impugned, neither as though Christ's body were in the bread or wine, or were tied to the elements otherwise than sacramentally and spiritually, nor that the bread and wine may not and must not be called sacramental and external figures, but that they might be discerned from significative and bare signs only, and be taken for signs exhibitivè and representative.

By this means a Christian conscience will call and esteem the bread of the Lord as the body of Christ; for it never will esteem the sacraments of Christ after their exterior appearance, but after the words of Christ, whereof it cometh that the fathers, as Chrysostom and others speak with so full a mouth, when they speak of the sacrament, for their respect was to Christ's words. If the schoolmen who followed them had possessed the same spirit which they had, then would they never have consented to transubstantiation. For with great admiration some of the fathers do say that the bread is changed, or turned into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood, meaning it of a mutation or change, not corporeal, but spiritual, figurative, sacramental, or mystical. For now it is not common bread nor common wine, being ordained to serve for the food of the soul. The schoolmen have understood it as the papists now preach, of a substantial changing, as though it were no great miracle that common bread should now be assumed into that dignity, that it should be called Christ's body, and serve for a celestial food, and be made a sacrament of his body and blood.

As therefore I have before spoken, I would wish that this sacrament should be esteemed and called by us Christian men, after Christ's words, namely, Christ's body, and the wine Christ's blood, rather than otherwise. Not that I mean any other presence of Christ's body than a presence of grace, a presence to faith, a presence spiritually; and not corporeally, really, naturally, and carnally, as the papists mean. For in such a manner Christ's body is only in heaven, on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, whither our faith in the use of the sacrament ascends, and receives the whole Christ accordingly.

Yea, but one will say, that to call the sacrament on that sort is to give an occasion of idolatry to the people, who will take the sacrament which they see simply for Christ's

body, as we are well taught by experience; and therefore it were better to call it bread, and so should there be less harm, especially in this age.

To this objection I answer, that indeed great idolatry is committed to and about this sacrament, and therefore men ought, as much as they can, to avoid occasioning or confirming it. But inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is wiser than man, and had foresight of the evils that might be, and yet notwithstanding calls it Christ's body, I think we should do evil, if we should take upon us to reform his speech. If ministers did their duties in catechising and preaching, then doubtless to call the sacrament Christ's body, and to esteem it accordingly could not give occasion to idolatry, and confirm it; therefore woe unto them that preach not.

There are two evils about the sacraments, which the Holy Ghost has taught us to avoid. For lest we should with the papists think Christ's body present in or with the bread really, naturally, and corporeally to be received with our bodily mouths (whereas there is no other presence of Christ's body than spiritual and to the faith,) in many places he keeps still the name of bread, as in the epistle to the Corinthians, the tenth and eleventh chapters. And lest we should make too light of it, making it but a bare sign, and no better than common bread, the Holy Ghost calls it Christ's body, whose speech I wish we would follow, and that not only as well to avoid the evil which is now-a-days most to be feared concerning the sacrament, I mean the contemning it, as also because no faithful man comes to the sacrament to receive bread simply, but rather, yea, altogether to communicate with Christ's body and blood; for to eat and drink (as Paul saith,) they have houses of their own. The contempt of the sacrament in the days of king Edward caused these plagues upon us at present; the Lord be merciful unto us. Amen. And thus much for the objection of calling the sacrament by the name of Christ's body.

But some may say, "To call the sacrament Christ's body, and to make no other presence than by grace or spirituality to faith, which is of things hoped for, and of things which to the bodily senses do not appear, is to make no presence at all, or to make him no otherwise present, than he is in his word when it is preached, and therefore what

need have we to receive the sacrament; inasmuch as by this doctrine a man may receive him daily in the field, as well and as much as in the church, in the celebration and use of the sacrament?"

To this objection I first answer, that indeed neither the Scripture nor Christian faith will give us leave to suppose there is any carnal, real, natural, corporeal, or any such gross presence of Christ's natural body in the sacrament; for it is in heaven, and the heavens must have it (as saith Peter,) till Christ's coming to judgment; except we would deny the humanity of Christ, and the verity of man's nature in him. The presence therefore which we believe and confess, is such a presence as reason knows not, and the world cannot learn, nor any that look at this matter with other eyes, or hear with other ears, than with the ears and eyes of the Spirit and of faith; which faith, though it is of things hoped for, and so of things absent to the corporeal senses, yet this absence is not an absence indeed, except to reason and the old man; the nature of faith being a possession of things hoped for; therefore to grant a presence to faith, is not to make no presence at all, except to such as know not faith. And this the fathers taught, affirming Christ to be present by grace, and therefore there was not only a signification, but also an exhibition and giving of the grace of Christ's body, that is, of life, and of the seed of immortality, as Cyprian writeth. We eat life, and drink life, saith St. Augustine. We feel a presence of the Lord by grace or in grace, saith Chrysostom. We receive the celestial food that cometh from above, saith Athanasius. We receive the property of the natural conjunction and knitting together, saith Hilarius. We perceive the nature of flesh, the blessing that giveth life, in bread and wine, saith Cyrillus: and elsewhere he saith, that with the bread and wine we eat the virtue of Christ's proper flesh, life, grace, and the property of the body of the only begotten Son of God, which he himself expoundeth to be life. Basilus says, that we by the sacrament receive the mystical advent of Christ, grace, and the very virtue of his very nature. Ambrose says, that we receive the sacrament of the true body. Epiphanius says, we receive the body of grace. And Jerome says, that we receive spiritual flesh, which he calls other flesh than that which was crucified. Chrysostom says, that we receive influence of grace, and the

grace of the Holy Ghost. St. Augustine says, that we receive grace and verity, the invisible grace and holiness of the members of Christ's body. All these sayings of the fathers confirm this our faith and doctrine of the sacrament, we granting all things herein according to them, and they in like manner unto us. And therefore the lying lips, which belie the doctors, as though they granted a carnal and real presence of Christ's body naturally and coporeally according to the papists' declaration and meaning, and which belie us also, as though we denied all presence of Christ, and so made it but a bare sign,—these lying lips the Lord will destroy, if they repent not, and with us believe and teach the truth, that the sacrament is a food of the soul and a matter of faith, and therefore spiritually and by faith to be talked of and understood; which faith they want and therefore they err so grossly, since they would have such a presence of Christ as is contrary to all the Scriptures, and to our Christian religion; whereby cometh no such advantage to the receiver as by the spiritual presence which we teach and affirm, according to God's word.

For we teach these benefits to be had by the worthy receiving of this sacrament, namely, that we abide in Christ, and Christ in us: again, that we attain by it a celestial life, or a life with God; moreover, that by faith and in spirit we receive not only Christ's body and blood, but also whole Christ, God and man. Besides these, we grant that by the worthy receiving of this sacrament we receive remission of our sins, and confirmation of the New Testament. Last of all, by worthy receiving we get an increase of incorporation with Christ, and amongst ourselves which are his members, than which what more can be desired? Alas! that men consider nothing at all how that the coming* of Christ's body and blood to the sacrament is a spiritual thing, and therefore there needs no such carnal presence as the papists imagine. Who will deny a man's wife to be one body and flesh with her husband, although he be at London, and she at York? But the papists are carnal men, guided by carnal reason only, or else they would know that the Holy Ghost, because of our infirmity, useth metaphorically the words of abiding, dwelling, eating, and drinking of Christ, that the unspeakable conjunction of Christ with us might partly be known.

* Or union.

May God open their eyes to see it: and thus much for this.

Now to that part of the objection which says, that we teach Christ to be none otherwise present in the sacrament than in his word. I wish that the objectors would well consider what a presence of Christ is, in his word. I remember that St. Augustine writes that Christ's body is received sometimes visibly, and sometimes invisibly. The visible receiving he calls that which is by the sacrament; the invisible receiving he calls that which we receive by the exercise of our faith with ourselves. And St. Jerome, in the third book upon Ecclesiastes, affirms, that we are fed with the body of Christ, and we drink his blood, not only in mystery, but also in the knowledge of holy Scripture; wherein he plainly shows that the same meat is offered in the words of Scripture, which is offered in the sacraments; so that Christ's body and blood is no less offered by the Scriptures than by the sacraments. Upon the 147th Psalm he writes also, that though these words, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," may be understood as a mystery, yet he says it is more true to take Christ's body and his blood for the word of the Scriptures and the doctrine of God. Yea, upon the same Psalm he says plainly, that Christ's flesh and blood is poured into our ears by hearing the word, and therefore great is the peril if we yield to other cogitations while we hear it. And therefore St. Augustine saith, that it is no less dangerous to hear God's word negligently than so to use the sacrament. But hereof may no man gather, that therefore it needs not to receive the sacrament, or to affirm that a man by himself meditating the word in the field may as much receive Christ's body as in the Church, in the right use of the sacrament. For Christ ordaineth nothing in vain or superfluously; he ordaineth nothing whereof we have not need, although his authority is such, that without any questioning, his ordinances are to be observed.

Again, though in the fields a man may receive Christ's body by faith in the meditation of the word, yet I deny that a man ordinarily receives Christ's body by the meditation of Christ's death only, or by hearing of his word, with so much sight and by such sensible assurance (whereof God knoweth our infirmity has no small need,) as he does by the receiving of the sacrament. Not that Christ is not so much present in his word preached as he

is in or with his sacrament, but because there are in the perception of the sacrament more windows open for Christ to enter into us, than by his word preached or heard. For there, I mean in the word, he has an entrance into our hearts, but only by the ears through the sound and voice of the words; but here in the sacrament he hath an entrance by all our senses, by our eyes, by our nose, by our taste, and by our handling also; and therefore the sacrament well may be called seeable, sensible, tasteable, and touchable words. As therefore when many windows are opened in a house, more light may come in than when there is but one opened, even so by the perception of the sacrament a Christian man's conscience has more help to receive Christ, than simply by the word preached, heard, or meditated. And therefore I think the apostle rightly calls the sacraments obsignations or sealings of God's promise. Read Rom. iv. of circumcision. And thus much for the answer to the objection aforesaid.

Now to return from whence we came, namely, to the consideration of the second thing, What the sacrament is? I have told you that it is not simply bread and wine, but rather Christ's body, so called by Christ, and so to be called and esteemed by us. But here let us mark what body and what blood Christ called it. The papists still dabble, "This is my body, this is my blood;" but what body it is, what blood it is, they show not. Look therefore, my dearly beloved, on Christ's own words, and you shall see that Christ calleth it "his body broken," and "his blood shed." Mark, I say, that Christ calleth it his body, which is broken, his blood, which is shed at present, and not which was broken, or shall be broken, which was shed, or shall be shed, even as the Greek texts plainly show, thereby teaching us, that as God would have the passover called, not "which was the passover," or "which shall be the passover," but plainly "the passover," that in the use of it the passing over of the striking angel* should be set before their eyes as present; so in the celebration of the Lord's supper, the very passion† of Christ should be beholden with the eyes of faith as if present: for which end Christ our Saviour especially instituted this supper, saying, "Do ye this in remembrance of me;" or, as Paul saith, "Show you the Lord's death till he come." The supper of the Lord then is not simply Christ's body and blood, but

* Exod. xii. 23.

† Sufferings.

Christ's body broken and his blood shed. Wherefore broken, wherefore shed? Forsooth, Christ himself teacheth that, saying, "Broken for you, shed for your sins, and for the sins of many." Here then we have occasion in the use of the sacrament to call to mind the greatness and grievousness of sin, which could not be taken away by any other means than by the shedding of the most precious blood, and the breaking of the most pure body of the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ; by whom all things were made, all things are ruled and governed, &c. Who, considering this, shall not be touched to repent? Who in receiving this sacrament, thinking that Christ saith to him, "Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for thee; this is my blood, which is shed for thy sins;" can but tremble at the grievousness of his sins, for which such a price was paid? If there were no plague at all else to admonish man of sin, to show how grievous a thing it is in God's sight, surely that one were enough. But, alas! how are our hearts bewitched through Satan's subtilties, and the custom of sin, that we make sin a thing of no moment! May God open our eyes in time, and give us repentance, which we see this sacrament, as it were, enforces us unto, in the reverence and true use of the same.

Again, in hearing that this which we take and eat is Christ's body broken for our sins, and his blood shed for our iniquities, we are occasioned to call to mind the infinite greatness of God's mercy and truth, and of Christ's love towards us. For what a mercy is this, that God would, for man, being lost through his wilful sins, be content, yea, desirous to give his own only Son, "the image of his substance, the brightness of his glory," being in his own bosom, to be made man for us, that we men by him might be, as it were, made gods! What a mercy is this, that God the Father should be so merciful to us, that he would make this his Son, being coequal with him in divinity, a mortal man for us, that we might be made immortal by him! What a kindness is this, that the Almighty Lord should send to us his enemies, his dearly beloved Son, to be made poor, that we by him might be made rich! What compassion was this, that the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth would deliver his own only beloved Son, for his creatures, to be not only flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones, that we might by him through the Holy Ghost

be made one with him, and so with the Father by communicating the merits of his flesh, that is, righteousness, holiness, innocency, and immortality;—but also to be a slain sacrifice for our sins, to satisfy his justice, to convert or turn death into life, our sin into righteousness, hell into heaven, misery into felicity for us. What a mercy is this, that God raised up this his Son Christ, not only to justify and regenerate us, but also in his person to demonstrate unto us our state which we shall have; for in his coming we shall be like unto him. Oh! wonderful mercy of God, which would assume* this his Christ, even in human body, into the heavens, there to take and keep possession for us, to lead our captivity captive, to appear before him, always praying for us; to make the throne of justice a throne of mercy, the seat of glory a seat of grace; so that with boldness we may come and appear before God, to ask and find grace in time convenient! Again, what a verity and constant truth in God is this, that he would, according to his promise made first to Adam, and so to Abraham and others, in his time accomplish it, by sending his Son so graciously! Who would doubt hereafter of any thing that he has promised? And as for Christ's love, oh! whose heart can be able to think of it at all as it deserveth? He being God would become man, he being rich would become poor, he being Lord of all the world, became a servant to us all; he being immortal, would become mortal, miserable, and last of all, endure God's curses for us. His blood was nothing too dear, his life he nothing considered, to bring us from death to life. But this his love needeth more hearty weighing than many words speaking, and therefore I omit and leave it to your consideration; so in the receiving of this supper, as I desire you would tremble at God's wrath for sin, so would I have you to couple to that terror and fear, true faith, by which you might be assuredly persuaded of God's mercy towards you, and Christ's love, though all things else preached to the contrary.

Does every one of you surely think when you hear these words, "Take, eat, this is my body, broken for your sins; drink, this is my blood, shed for your sins;" that God the eternal Father, embracing you, Christ calleth and embraceth you most lovingly, making himself one with you, and you one with him, and one with another

* Take up.

amongst yourselves? You ought no less to be certain now that God loveth you, pardoneth your sins, and that Christ is all yours, than if you heard an angel out of heaven speaking so unto you. And therefore rejoice and be glad, and make this supper *Eucharistiam*, a thanksgiving, as the fathers named it. Be no less certain that Christ and you now are all one, than you are certain the bread and wine is one with your nature and substance after you have eaten and drunk it. Howbeit, in this it differs, that you by faith are, as it were, changed into Christ, and not Christ into you, as the bread is; for by faith he dwelleth in us, and we in him. May God give us faith in the use of this sacrament to receive Christ, as he gives us hands to receive the element, symbol, and visible sacrament. May God grant us, not to prepare our teeth and belly, (as St. Augustine saith,) but rather of his mercy may he prepare and give us true and lively faith to use this, and all his other ordinances, to his glory and our comfort. May he sweep the houses of our hearts, and make them clean, that they may be a worthy harbour and lodging for the Lord. Amen.

Now let us come and look on the third and last thing, namely, Wherefore the Lord instituted this sacrament? Our nature is very oblivious* of God and all his benefits: and again, it is very full of dubitation and doubting of God's love, and his kindness; therefore that these two things might be somewhat reformed and helped in us, the Lord hath instituted this sacrament. I mean, that we might have in memory the principal benefit of all benefits, that is, Christ's death, and that we might be on all parts assured of communion with Christ, of all kindness the greatest that ever God gave unto man. That the former is the end wherefore Christ instituted this sacrament, he himself teaches us, saying, "Do ye this in remembrance of me." The latter the apostle no less sets forth in saying, "The bread which we break, is it not the partaking or communion of the body of Christ? Is not the cup of blessing which we bless, the partaking or communion of the blood of Christ?" So that it appears that this sacrament was instituted for the reformation and help of our forgetfulness of that which we should never forget, and our dubitation of that whereof we ought to be most certain.

* Apt to forget.

Concerning the former, namely, the memory of Christ's death, what advantage it bringeth with it, I will purposely, for time's sake, omit. Only a little will I speak of the advantages coming unto us by the partaking and communion we have with Christ. First, it teaches us, that no man can communicate with Christ, but the same must needs communicate with God's grace and favour, wherethrough sins are forgiven; therefore this advantage cometh herethrough, namely, that we should be certain of the remission and pardon of our sins; which we may also perceive by the cup, in that it is called the cup of the new testament, to which testament is properly attributed on God's behalf, oblivion or remission of our sins. First, I say, therefore the supper is instituted to this end, that he which worthily receives should be certain of the remission and pardon of his sins and iniquities, how many and great soever they are. How great a benefit this is they only know who have felt the burden of sin, which of all heavy things is the most heavy. Again, no man can communicate with Christ's body and blood, but the same must communicate with his Spirit, for Christ's body is no dead carcass. Now he that communicates with Christ's Spirit, communicates, as with holiness, righteousness, innocency, and immortality, and with all the merits of Christ's body; so does he with God and all his glory, and with the church, and all the good that ever it or any member of it had, hath, or shall have. This is the communion of saints, which we believe in our creed, which has waiting on it remission of sins, resurrection of the flesh, and life everlasting.

To the end that we should be most assured and certain of all these, Christ our Saviour instituted this his supper, and therefore would have us use it; so that, I think, there is no man who sees not great cause for giving thanks to God for this holy sacrament of the Lord, whereby, if we worthily receive it, we ought to be certain that all our sins, whatsoever they are, are pardoned clearly;—that we are regenerate, and born again unto a lively hope, unto an inheritance immortal, undefiled, and which can never wither away;—that we are in the fellowship of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;—that we are God's temples, at one with God, and God at one with us;—that we are members of Christ's church, and fellows with the saints in all felicity;—that we are certain of immortality

in soul and body, and so of eternal life, than which what more can be demanded? Christ is ours, and we are Christ's; he dwelleth in us, and we in him. Oh! happy eyes, that see these things, and most happy hearts, that feel them! My dear brethren, let us pray unto the Lord to open our eyes to see these wonderful things, to give us faith to feel them. Surely we ought no less to be assured of them now in the worthy receiving of this sacrament, than we are assured of the exterior symbols and sacraments. If an angel from heaven should come and tell you these things, then you would rejoice and be glad. And, my dear hearts in the Lord, I even now, though most unworthy, am sent of the Lord to tell you no less, but that you, worthily receiving this sacrament, shall receive remission of all your sins, or rather a certainty that they are remitted, and that you are even now God's darlings, temples, and fellow-inheritors of all the good that ever he hath; wherefore see that you give thanks unto the Lord for this his great goodness, and praise his name for ever.

Oh, saith one, I could be glad in very deed, and give thanks from my very heart, if I worthily received this sacrament. But, alas! I am a very grievous sinner, and I feel in myself very little repentance and faith, and therefore I am afraid that I am unworthy.

To answer this objection, I think it necessary to speak something of the worthy receiving in this sacrament, with as great brevity and plainness as I can. The apostle willeth all men to prove and examine themselves before they eat of the bread, and drink of the cup, for they that eat and drink unworthily, eat and drink damnation; therefore this probation and examination is necessary. If men will try their gold and silver whether it is copper or no, is it not more necessary that men should try their consciences? Now how this should be, the papists teach amiss, in sending us to their auricular confession, which is impossible. The true probation and trial of a Christian conscience consists altogether in faith and repentance. Faith has respect to the doctrine and articles of our belief; repentance has respect to manners and conversation. Concerning the former, I mean faith, we may see the apostle teaches us (1 Cor. ii.) concerning the latter, or our conversation, those sins, which are commonly called mortal or deadly, are to be removed. These sins are discerned from other sins by the apostle (Rom. vi.) in saying, "Let not sin reign and

bear sway in your mortal bodies.” For truly we sin deadly when we give over to sin, and let it have the bridle at liberty, when we strive not against it, but allow it and consent to it. Howbeit, if we strive against it, if it displease us, then truly, though sin be in us, (for we ought to obey God without any resistance or unwillingness,) yet our sins are not of those sins which separate us from God, but for Christ’s sake shall not be imputed unto us believing.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, if your sins do now displease you; if you purpose unfeignedly to be enemies to sin in yourselves and in others as you may, during your whole life; if you hope in Christ for pardon; if you believe according to the Holy Scriptures and articles of the Christian faith set forth in your creed. If, I say, you now trust in God’s mercy through Christ’s merits; if you repent and earnestly purpose before God to amend your life, and to give yourselves over to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life, although before this present you have most grievously sinned; I publish unto you, that you are worthy guests for this table, you shall be welcome to Christ, your sins shall be pardoned, you shall be endued with his Spirit, and so with communion with him and with the Father, and the whole church of God, Christ will dwell in you, and you shall dwell in him for evermore. Wherefore, behave yourselves accordingly with joyfulness and thanksgiving. Do you now appear before the Lord? Make clean your houses, and open the doors of your hearts by repentance and faith, that the Lord of hosts, the King of glory, may enter in; and for ever hereafter beware of all such things as might displease the eyes of his Majesty. Flee from sin as from a toad; come away from popery and all antichristian religion; be diligent and earnest in prayer; hearken to the voice of God in his word, with reverence; live worthy of your profession. Let your light so shine in your life, that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. As you have been darkness, so now henceforth be light in the Lord, and have society with the works of light. Now has God renewed his covenant with you: in God’s sight now you are as clean and healed from all your sores of sins. Go your way, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto you. See that your house is new swept, and furnished with godliness and virtue, and beware of idleness, lest the devil come with seven spirits worse than himself, and so

take his lodging, and then your latter end will be worse than the first.

God our Father, for the tender mercy and merits of his Son, be merciful unto us, forgive us all our sins, and give us his Holy Spirit, to purge, cleanse, and sanctify us; that we may be holy in his sight through Christ, and that we now may be made ready and worthy to receive this holy sacrament, with the fruits of the same, to the full rejoicing and strengthening of our hearts in the Lord. To whom be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

A

FRUITFUL TREATISE,

AND

FULL OF HEAVENLY CONSOLATION

AGAINST THE

FEAR OF DEATH.

Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for suddenly shall his wrath come, and in the day of vengeance he shall destroy thee. Stand fast in the way of the Lord, be steadfast in thine understanding, and follow the word of peace and righteousness.—ECCLESIASTICUS.

BEING minded, through the help of God, for my own comfort and the encouraging of others, to speak something of death, at whose door, though I have stood a great while, yet, according to man's judgment, never so near as I do now, I think it most requisite to call and cry for thy help, O blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast destroyed death by thy death, and brought in place thereof life and immortality, as appeareth by the gospel. Grant to me true and lively faith, whereby men pass from death to eternal life; that of practice, and not of mere speculation, I may write something concerning death, which is dreadful out of thee, and in itself, to the glory of thy holy name, to my own comfort in thee, and to the edifying of all them, to whom this my writing shall come, to be read or heard. Amen.

There are four kinds of death; one which is NATURAL, another which is SPIRITUAL, a third which is TEMPORAL, and a fourth which is ETERNAL. Concerning the first and the last, what they are I need not declare; but the second and third, perchance, are not so soon espied by the simple,* for whose sake especially I write.

By a SPIRITUAL death, I mean such a death as when though the body is living, the soul is dead. This the apos-

* Uninstructed.

He mentions in speaking of widows, who living daintily, being alive in body, are dead in soul. (1 Tim. v.) Thus you see what I mean by the spiritual death. Now, by a TEMPORAL death, I mean a death whereby the body and the affections thereof are mortified, that the spirit may live: of which kind of death the apostle speaks when exhorting us to kill our members. Col. iii. And thus much concerning the kinds of death, wherein the judgment of the world is not to be approved, for it cares less for spiritual death than for a natural death, it is less apprehensive of eternal death than temporal death, or else men would leave sin, which procures both the one and the other, I mean spiritual and eternal death, and would choose temporally to die, that, by natural death, they might enter into the full fruition of eternal life, which none can enjoy nor enter into, that will not here temporally die, that is, mortify their affections, and crucify their lusts and concupiscences; for by obeying them at the first came death, as we may read, Gen. iii. If Eve had not obeyed her desire in eating the forbidden fruit, whereby she died spiritually, none of these kinds of death had ever come unto man, nor been known by us. Therefore, as I said, here we must needs temporally die, that is, mortify our affections, to escape the spiritual death, and by natural death, not only escape eternal death of soul and body, but also by it, as by a door, enter into eternal life, which Christ Jesus our Saviour hath procured and purchased to and for all that are in him, changing eternal death into a deliverance of soul and body from all kind of misery and sin. By reason whereof we may see, that to those who are in Christ, that is, to such as believe, which believers are discerned from others by their not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit, to those I say, death is no damage, but an advantage; no dreadful thing, but rather desirable, and of all messengers the most joyful, whilst looked upon with the eye of faith in the gospel. But more of this hereafter.

Thus I have briefly showed the kinds of death, what they are, whence they come, and what is the remedy for them. But now, as I purpose to treat only of the first kind of death, that is, of natural death, something to comfort myself and others against the dread and pains of the same, I will speak of it as God shall instruct me, and as I accustom myself to muse on it now and then, the better to be prepared against the hour of trial.

I have shown that this natural death came by spiritual death, that is, by obeying our affections in the transgression of God's precepts. But through the benefit of Christ, it is no destruction to such as are in him and die temporally, that is, to such believers as labour to mortify their affections, but only a plain dissolution, both of soul and body, from all kind of perils, dangers, and miseries; and therefore by such it is not to be dreaded, but to be desired, as we see in the apostle, who desired to be dissolved, (Phil. i.) and in Simeon, who desired to be loosed, saying, Dismiss, or loose me, O Lord. (Luke ii.) By which words he seems plainly to teach, that this life is a bondage, and nothing to be desired, as now I will partly show.

First, consider the pleasures of this life what they are,—how long they last,—how painfully we come by them,—what they leave behind them, and thou shalt even in them see nothing but vanity. As for example: how long lasts the pleasure of licentiousness? How it leaves behind a certain loathsomeness. I will speak nothing of the sting of conscience, if pleasures are come by unlawfully. Who, well seeing this, and forecasting it aforehand, would not desire to forego unlawful pleasures?

Put the case, that the pleasures of this life were permanent during this life, yet since this life itself is as nothing, and therefore is full well compared to a candle-light, which is soon blown out; to a flower, which fadeth away; to a smoke, to a shadow, to a sleep, to running water, to a day, to an hour, to a moment, and to vanity itself; who would esteem pleasures and commodities,* which last so little a while? Before they are well begun, they are gone and past away. How much of our time we spend in sleeping, in eating, in drinking, and in talking! Infancy is not perceived, youth is shortly overblown, middle age is nothing, old age is not long; and therefore, as I said, this life, even in the consideration of the pleasures and advantages of it, should little move us to love it, but rather to loath it. God open our eyes to see these things, and to weigh them accordingly. Secondly, consider the miseries of this life, so that if the pleasures and commodities in it should move us to love it, yet the miseries might countervail and make us take it as we should do; I mean, rather to desire to be loosed and dismissed hence than otherwise. Look upon your bodies, and see

* Advantages.

in how many perils and dangers you are. Your eyes are in danger of blindness and blear-eyedness; your ears in danger of deafness; your mouth and tongue of cankers, toothache, and dumbness; your head in danger of rheums, and megrims; your throat in danger of hoarseness; your hands in danger of gout, palsies, &c. But who is able to express the number of diseases whereof man's body is in danger, seeing that some have written that more than three hundred diseases may happen unto man? I speak nothing of the hurt that may come to our bodies by poisons, venomous beasts, water, fire, horses, men, &c.

Again, look upon your soul—see how many vices you are in danger of, as heresy, hypocrisy, idolatry, covetousness, idleness, security, envy, ambition, pride, &c. How many temptations may you fall into! But this you shall better see by looking upon your old falls, folly, and temptations; and by looking on other men's faults, for no man hath done any thing so evil but you may do the same. Moreover, look upon your name,* and see how it is in danger of slanders and false reports. Look upon your goods, see what danger they are in from thieves, from fire, &c. Look upon your wife, children, parents, brethren, sisters, kinsfolks, servants, friends, and neighbours, and behold how they also are in danger, both in soul, body, name, and goods, as you are. Look upon the commonweal and country. Look upon the church, upon the ministers and magistrates, and see what great dangers they are in, so that if you love them, you cannot, but for the evil which may come to them, be heavy and sad. You know it is not in your power, nor in the power of any man, to hinder all evil that may come. How many perils is infancy in danger of! What danger is youth subject unto! Man's state is full of cares; age is full of diseases and sores. If thou art rich, thy care is the greater; if thou art in honour, thy perils are the more; if thou art poor, thou art the more in danger from oppression. But, alas! what tongue is able to express the miserableness of this life, which, if considered, should make us little to love it!

I can compare our life to nothing so fitly as to a ship in the midst of the sea. In what danger is the ship and they that are in it! Here are they in danger of tempests, there of quicksands; on this side of pirates, on that side of rocks; now it may leak, now the mast may break, now

* Reputation.

the master may fall sick, now diseases may come among the mariners, now dissension may arise among themselves. I speak nothing of want of fresh water, meat, drink, and such other necessaries. Even such is this life. Here is the devil, there is the world; on this side is the flesh, on that side is sin; which throughly cleaveth unto our ribs, and will do so as long as we are in this flesh, and natural life. So that none but blind men can see this life to be much and greatly desired; but rather as sailors are most glad when they approach to the haven, even so should we be most glad when we approach to the haven, that is, to death, which setteth us to a land whose commodities no eye hath seen, no tongue can tell, no heart can conceive, in any point as it should do. (1 Cor. ii.) Happy, oh! happy were we, if we saw these things accordingly! God open our eyes to see them. Amen.

If any man would desire testimonies of these things, although experience, a sufficient mistress, is to be credited, yet I will here mark certain places whereunto the reader may resort, and he will find no less than I say, but rather much more, if he read and weigh the places with diligence. Job (x.) calls this life a warfare. In the eighth chapter he paints it out in a lively manner, under divers similitudes. St. James compares it to a vapour. (James iv.) All the book of Ecclesiastes teaches that it is but vanity. St. John saith it is altogether put in evil. (1 John viii.) David* saith, the best thing in this life is but vanity, labour, and sorrow. (Psal. xc.) But why go I hereabout, seeing that almost every leaf in the Scripture is full of the brevity and misery of this life; so that I think, as St. Austin writes, that there is no man who has lived so happily in this world, that he would be content, when death comes, to go back again by the same steps whereby he has come into the world and lived, except he is in despair, and looks for nothing after this life but confusion.

Thus I trust you see, that though the commodities of this life were such as could cause us to love it, yet the brevity, vanity, and misery of it is such, as should make us little regard it, who believe and know, death is the end of all miseries to them that are in Christ, as we all ought to take ourselves to be, (being baptized in his name, for our baptism requireth this faith under pain of damnation,) although we have not observed our profession as we should

* Or rather Moses.

have done, if we now repent, and come to amendment. By such I say as are in Christ, death is to be desired, even in this respect, that it delivers us from so miserable a life and so dangerous a state as we are now in. So that I may well say they are senseless, without understanding, void of love to God, void of all hatred and sense of sin wherewith this life floweth, who desire not to depart hence out of all these miseries, rather than still to remain here to their continual grief.

But if these things will not move us, I would yet that we beheld the commodities whereunto death brings us. If we are not moved to leave this life in respect of the miseries whereof it is full, yet we should be moved to leave it in respect of the infinite goodness which the other life, whereto death brings us, hath most plentifully. Men, though they love things, yet can be content to forego them for other things which are better; even so we now, for the good things in the life to come, if we consider them, shall and will be content to forego the most commodious things in this present life. Here we have great pleasure in the beauty of the world, and of the pleasures, honours, and dignities of the same; also in the company of our friends, parents, wife, children, subjects; also in plenty of riches, cattle, &c.; and yet we know that not one of these is without its discommodity, which God sendeth, lest we should love them too much, as, if you will weigh things, you shall easily perceive. The sun though it is fair and cheerful, yet it burneth sometimes too hot. The air, though it is generally light and pleasant, yet sometimes it is dark and troublous; and so of other things. But be it so, that there were no discommodities mingled with the commodities, yet as I said before, the brevity and short time that we have to use them should assuage their sweetness.

But even if the pleasures of this life were without discommodity, if they were permanent and without peril, whereof they are full, yet are they nothing at all to be compared to the commodities of the life to come. What is this earth, heaven, and shape of the world, wherein beasts have places, and wicked men, God's enemies, have abiding and liberty, in comparison of the new heaven and earth wherein righteousness shall dwell? In comparison of the place where angels and archangels, and all God's people, yea, God himself, hath his abiding and dwelling? What

is the company of wife, children, &c. in comparison to the company of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the saints of God? What is the company of any in this world, in comparison to the company of the angels, archangels, cherubims, seraphims, powers, thrones, dominions, yea, of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost? What are the riches and pleasures of this life, in comparison of the felicity of everlasting life, which is without all discommodities, perpetual, without all peril and jeopardy, without all grief and molestation? Oh, the mirth and melody! oh, the honour and glory! oh, the riches and beauty! oh, the power and majesty! oh, the sweetness and dignity of the life to come! The eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, and the heart of man is not able to conceive in any thing, any part of the eternal felicity and happy state of heaven: therefore the saints of God have desired so earnestly and so heartily to be there. "Oh! how amiable are thy tabernacles!" said David. (Psal. lxxxiv.) "My soul hath a desire to enter into the courts of the Lord; my heart and my soul rejoice in the living God. Blessed are those that dwell in thy house, that they may always be praising thee; for one day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness; for the Lord God is a light and defence." And again, (Psal. xlii.,) "As the hart desireth the waterbrooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?" And (Psal. lxiii.,) "My soul thirsteth for thee in a barren and dry land, where no water is. They, God's people I mean, (Rom. viii.,) desire the day of their redemption, and they still cry, "Let thy kingdom come;" they cry, (Rev. xxii.,) "Come, Lord Jesus, come;" they lift up their heads looking for his appearing, who will make their vile bodies like to his own glorious and immortal body, (Phil. iii.;) for when he shall appear, they shall be like unto him; the angels will gather them together, and they shall meet him in the clouds, and be always with him; they shall hear this joyful voice, (Matt. xxv.,) "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning." Then shall they be like unto his angels, (Rev. vii.:) then shall

they shine like the sun in the kingdom; then shall they have crowns of glory, and be endued* with white garments of innocence and righteousness, and palms of victory in their hands. Oh! happy, happy is he who may with them see that immortal and incorruptible inheritance, which then we shall enjoy for ever!

Thus you see (I hope) sufficiently, that in respect of heaven and eternal bliss, (whereunto by the haven of death we land,) this life, though there were no evil in it, is not to be loved, but rather, we that are pilgrims in it should desire with Paul and Simeon to be loosed and dissolved, that we might be with God. Here our bodies, as before is spoken, are in danger of innumerable evils; but there our bodies shall be, not only free from all danger, but also be like the glorious and immortal body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now our bodies are dark, then shall they be most clear and light, as we see Christ's face did shine in his transfiguration, like to the sun. (Matt. xvii.) Now our bodies are vile, miserable, mortal, and corruptible; but then shall they be glorious, happy, immortal, and incorruptible. (1 Cor. xv.) We shall be like unto Christ our Saviour; even as he is, so shall we be. (1 John iii.) As we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. Here our souls are in great darkness, and in danger of many evils; but there they shall be in great light, safe security, and secure felicity. We shall see God face to face, where now we see him but as in a glass through a dark speaking, there shall we behold him even as he is, and be satisfied with his presence; yea we shall be endued with most perfect knowledge. Where now we know but partly, there shall we know as we are known. Here our commodities are measurable, short, uncertain, and mingled with many incommunities. But there is bliss without measure, all liberty, all light, all joy, rejoicing, pleasure, health, wealth, riches, glory, power, treasure, honour, triumph, comfort, solace, love, unity, peace, concord, wisdom, virtue, melody, meekness, felicity, beatitude, and all that ever can be wished or desired; and that in the greatest security and perpetuity that may be conceived or thought, not only of men, but also of angels; as he witnesses that saw it, (I mean Paul,) who was carried up into the third heaven. The eye hath not seen, (saith he,) the ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the

* Clothed.

felicity that God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Cor. ii.) There the archangels, angels, powers, thrones, dominions, cherubims, seraphims, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, virgins, confessors, and righteous spirits, cease not to sing night and day, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts; honour, majesty, glory, empire, and dominion, be unto thee, O Lord God the Creator, O Lord Jesus the Redeemer, O Holy Spirit the Comforter." (Rev. iv.) For the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, even as the light of seven days (Isa. lx.) in his blessed kingdom, where and when he will bind up the wounds of his people, and heal their plagues. Oh! that we might have some lively sight hereof, that we might rejoice over the undefiled and immortal inheritance, whereunto God hath called us, and which he keeps for us in heaven; that we might hear the sweet song of his saved people, crying, "Salvation be unto Him that sitteth on the throne of our God, and unto the Lamb." That we might with the elders and angels sing and say, "Praise, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be to thee our God for evermore." That we might be covered with a white stole,* and have a palm in our hands, to stand before God's throne night and day, to serve him in his temple, and to have him dwell in us; that we might hear the great voice saying from heaven, "Behold the tabernacle of the Lord is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, their God." Oh! happy were they that now might have a little glimpse of that holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from heaven, prepared of God as a bride decked for her husband, which he showed to his servant John. (Rev. xxi.) Truly this should we see, if we were with him in the Spirit; but this cannot be, so long as we are in the flesh. Alas then, and well away, that we love this life as we do! It is a sign that we have little faith, for else how could we fail night and day to desire the messenger of the Lord, death I mean, to deliver us out of all miseries, that we might enter into the enjoyment of eternal felicity.

But here some man will say, "Oh! sir, if I were certain that I should depart from this miserable life into that so great felicity, then could I be right glad and rejoice, as

* Robc.

you tell me, and bid death welcome. But I am a sinner, I have grievously transgressed and broken God's will, and therefore I am afraid I shall be sent into eternal woe, perdition, and misery." Here, my brother, thou dost well that thou dost acknowledge thyself a sinner, and to have deserved eternal death; for doubtless, if we say we have no sin, we are liars, and the truth is not in us. (1 John i.) A child of a night's birth is not pure in God's sight. (Job xxv.) In sin we were born, and by birth or nature we are the children of wrath, and firebrands of hell; therefore confess ourselves to be sinners we needs must. For if the Lord will observe any man's iniquities, none shall be able to abide it; yea, we must needs all cry, "Enter not into judgment, O Lord; for in thy sight no flesh nor man living can be saved." (Psal. cxxx. cxliii.) In this point, therefore, thou hast done well to confess that thou art a sinner.

But now where thou standest in doubt of pardon of thy sins, and thereby art afraid of damnation, my dear brother, I would have thee answer me, whether thou desirest pardon or no? Whether thou dost repent or no? Whether thou dost unfeignedly purpose, if thou shouldst live, to amend thy life or no? If thou dost even before God so purpose, and desirest his mercy, then hearken, my good brother, to what the Lord saith unto thee: "I am he, I am he, that for my own sake will do away thine offences; if thy sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; for I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner. (Isa. xliii. 1.) As surely as I live, I will not thy death, but rather that thou shouldst live, and be converted. (Ezek. xxxiii.) I have so loved the world, that I would not spare my dearly beloved Son, (John iii.) the image of my substance, and brightness of my glory, by whom all things were given; but gave him for thee, not only to be man, but also to take thy nature, and to purge it from mortality, sin, and all corruption, and to adorn and endue it with immortality and eternal glory, not only in his own person, but also in thee and for thee, whereof now by faith I would have thee certain, as in very deed thou shalt at length feel and fully enjoy for ever. (Phil. ii.) This, my Son, I have given to death, and that a most shameful death, even of the cross, for thee, to destroy death, to satisfy my justice for thy sins; therefore believe, and according to thy faith, so be it unto thee. Hearken what my Son himself saith unto thee,

(Matt. xi.) Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. (John iii.) I came not into the world to condemn the world, but to save it. (Luke v.) I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I pray not (saith he) (John xvii.) for these mine apostles only, but also for all them that by their preaching shall believe in me. Now what prayed he for such? Father, (saith he,) I will that where I am they also may be, that they may see and enjoy the glory I have, and always had with thee. Father, save them, and keep them in thy truth. Father, (saith he,) I sanctify myself, and offer up myself for them. Lo! thus thou hearest how my Son prayeth for thee. Mark now what my apostle Paul saith: We know, saith he, (Heb. v.) that our Saviour Christ's prayers were heard. (1 Tim. i.) Also this is a true saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Hearken what he said to the jailor, (Acts xvi.) Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. (Heb. ix.) For he by his own self hath made purgation for our sins. To him, saith Peter, (Acts x.) all the prophets bear witness, that whosoever believeth in his name shall receive remission of their sins. Believe man; pray, (Mark ix.) Lord, help mine unbelief. (Luke xvii.) Lord, increase my faith: ask, and thou shalt have. Hearken what St. John saith: If we confess our sins, God is righteous to forgive us all our iniquities, and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ shall wash us from all our sins; for if we sin, we have an Advocate (saith he) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, (1 John i. ii.) Hearken what Christ is called, (Matt. i.) Call his name Jesus, saith the angel, for he shall save his people from their sins; so that where abundance of sin is, there is abundance of grace; say therefore, Who shall lay any thing to my charge? It is God that absolveth me; who then shall condemn me? It is Christ who is dead for my sins, yea, who is risen for my righteousness, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and prayeth for me. (Rom. viii.) Be certain, therefore, and sure of pardon of thy sins; be certain and sure of everlasting life. Do not now say in thy heart, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, doubt not of pardon of thy sins, for that is to fetch up Christ; neither say thou, Who shall ascend up into heaven? that is, doubt not of eternal bliss, for that is to put Christ out of heaven: but mark what the

Lord saith unto thee, The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, and this is the word of faith which we preach: if thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and believe with thy heart, that God raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be safe. (Rom. x.) If thou believe that Jesus Christ died, and rose again, even so shalt thou be assured (saith the Lord God) that, dying with Christ, I will bring thee again with him. (1 Thess. iv.)

Thus, dear brother, I thought good to write to thee in the name of the Lord, that thou, fearing death for nothing else but because of thy sins, mightest be assured of pardon of them, and so embrace death as a dear friend, and insult against his terror, sting, and power, saying, Death, where is thy sting? hell, where is thy victory? (1 Cor. xv.) Nothing in all the world so displeases the Lord as to doubt of his mercy. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, we should be content; therefore, since thou hast heard from so many witnesses, how that in deed desiring mercy with the Lord, thou art not sent empty away, give credit thereto, and say with the good virgin Mary, "Behold thy servant, O Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." (Luke i.) Upon which word, see thou set thine eye only and wholly. For here thou seest not God thy Father, except in his word, which is the glass wherein now we behold his grace and fatherly love towards us in Christ; and therefore herewith we should be content, and give more credit to it, than to all our senses, and to all the world besides. The word, saith our Saviour, (John xii.) shall judge. According to it, therefore, and not according to any exterior or interior show, judge both of thyself and of all other things else, concerning thyself, if thou desire indeed God's mercy, and lament that thou hast offended. Lo! it pronounces that there is mercy with the Lord for thee, and plenteous redemption. (Psal. cxxx.) It tells thee who wouldst have mercy at the Lord's hand, that the Lord willeth the same, and therefore thou art happy, for he would not thy death. It tells thee, that if thou acknowledge thy faults unto the Lord, he will cover them in his mercy. Again, concerning death, it tells thee, that it is but a sleep, that it is but a passing unto thy Father, that it is but a deliverance out of misery, that it is but a putting off mortality and corruption, that it is a putting on immortality and incorruption; that it is a putting away of an earthly tabernacle, that thou mayest receive a

heavenly house or mansion, (2 Cor. v. ;) that this is but a calling of thee home from the watching and standing in the warfare of this miserable life. According to this, (the word I mean,) do thou judge of death, and thou shalt not be afraid of it, but desire it as a most wholesome medicine, and a friendly messenger of the Lord's justice and mercy. Embrace him, therefore, make him good cheer, for of all enemies he is the least. An enemy, said I? nay, rather of all friends he is the best; for he brings thee out of all danger of enemies into that most sure and safe place of thy unfeigned Friend for ever.

Let these things be often thought upon. Let death be premeditated, not only because he cometh uncertainly, I mean as to the time, for else he is most certain; but also because he helpeth much to the contempt of this world, out of which, as nothing will go with thee, so canst thou take nothing with thee.—Because it helpeth to the mortifying of the flesh, which when thou feedest, thou dost nothing else but feed worms.—Because it helpeth to the well disposing and due ordering of the things thou hast in this life.—Because it helpeth to repentance, to bring thee unto the knowledge of thyself, that thou art but earth and ashes, and brings thee the better to know God. But who is able to tell the commodities* that come by the frequent and true consideration of death? Whose time is left unto us uncertain and unknown, (although to God it be certain, and the bounds thereof not only known, but appointed of the Lord, over the which none can pass, Job xiv. ;) that we should not prolong and put off from day to day the amendment of our life, as the rich man (Luke xii.) did under hope of long life. And seeing it is the ordinance of God, and comes not but by the will of God, even unto a sparrow; much more then unto us, who are incomparably much more dear than many sparrows; and since this will of God is not only just, but also good, for he is our Father, let us, if there were no other cause but this, submit ourselves, our senses, and judgments, unto his pleasure, being content to come out of the room† of our soldiership, whenever he shall send for us by his pursuivant,‡ death. Let us render to him, that which he has lent us so long, (I mean life,) lest we be counted unthankful. And since death cometh not but by

* Advantages.

† Place or appointed station.

‡ Messenger.

sin, forasmuch as we have sinned so often, and yet the Lord hath ceased from exacting this tribute and punishment of us until this present time, let us with thankfulness praise his patience, and pay our debt, not doubting but that he, being our Father and our Almighty Father, can and will, if death were evil unto us, as God knoweth it is a chief benefit unto us by Christ, convert and turn it into good. But death being, as I have before showed, not to be dreaded, but to be desired, let us lift up our heads in thinking on it, and know that our redemption draweth nigh. (Luke xxi.) Let our minds be occupied in the consideration, or often contemplation of the four last articles of our belief, that is, the communion of saints or holy catholic church; remission of sins, resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

By faith in Christ, be it ever so faint, little, or cold, we are members in very deed of the catholic and holy church of Christ, that is, we have communion or fellowship with all the saints of God that ever were, are, or shall be. Whereby we may receive great comfort; for though our faith be feeble, yet the faith of that church, whereof our Saviour Christ is the head, is mighty enough. Though our repentance be little, yet the repentance of the church, wherewith we have communion, is sufficient. Though our love be languishing, yet the love of the church and of the Spouse of the church is ardent, and so of all other things we want. Not that I mean this, as though any man should think that our faith should be in any, or upon any other, than only upon God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; neither that any should think I mean thereby any other merits or means to salvation, than only the merits and name of the Lord Jesus. But I would that the poor Christian conscience, which by baptism is brought into God's church, and made a member of the same through faith, should, not for his sin's sake, or for the want of any thing he hath not, despair; but rather should know, that he is a member of Christ's church and mystical body; and therefore cannot but have communion and fellowship with both; that is, with Christ himself, being the Lord, husband, and head thereof, and of all that ever have been, are, or shall be members of it, in all good things that ever they have had, have, or shall have. Still doth the church pray

for us by Christ's commandment: Forgive us our sins, lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil; yea, Christ himself prays for us, being members of his body, as we are indeed, if we believe, though it is ever so little. God grant this faith unto us all, and increase it in us. Amen. Out of this church no pope nor prelate can cast us, or excommunicate us indeed, although exteriorly they separate us from the society of God's saints. But enough of this.

As I would have us often muse upon the catholic church, or communion of saints, so would I have us to meditate upon the other articles following, that is, remission of sins, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. It is an article of our faith to believe, that is, to be certain that our sins are pardoned; therefore doubt not thereof, lest thou become an infidel. Though thou hast sinned ever so sorely, yet now despair not, but be certain that God is thy God, that is, that he forgives thee thy sin. Therefore, as I said, doubt not thereof, for in so doing thou puttest a sallet* on the head of thy soul, so that the dew of God's grace cannot drop into it, but slips by as fast as it drops. Therefore be without that sallet or soul-nightcap; be bareheaded; that is, hope still in the mercy of the Lord, and so mercy shall compass thee on every side. (Psalm v.)

In like manner, often have the article of the resurrection of the body in thy mind, being assured thereby that thy body shall be raised up again in the last day, when the Lord shall come to judgment, and that it shall be made incorruptible, immortal, glorious, spiritual, perfect, light, and even like to the glorious body of our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Phil. iii.) For he is the first fruits of the dead; and as God is all in all, so shall he be unto thee in Christ. Look therefore upon thine own estate; for as he is, so shalt thou be. As thou hast borne the image of the earthly Adam, so shalt thou bear the image of the heavenly, (1 Cor. xv. ;) therefore glorify thou God now, both in soul and body. Wait and look for this day of the Lord with groaning and sighing. Gather together testimonies of this, which I omit for time's sake.

Last of all, often have life everlasting in thy mind, whereunto thou art even landing. Death is the haven that carries thee unto this land, where is all that can be wished, yea, above all wishes and desires; for in it we

* A covering, or scull-cap.

shall see God face to face, which now we can in no wise do, but must cover our faces, with Moses and Elias, till the face or fore-parts of the Lord be gone by. (Exod. xxxiv.) Now must we look on his back-parts, beholding him in his word, and in his creatures, and in the face of Jesus Christ our Mediator; but then we shall see him face to face, and we shall know, even as we are known. (1 Cor. xiii.) Therefore let us often think on these things, that we may have faith lustily* and cheerfully to arrive at the happy haven of death, which you see is to be desired, and not to be dreaded, by all those that are in Christ: that is, by such as believe indeed, who are discerned† from those that only say they do believe, by their dying temporally, that is, by labouring to mortify through God's Spirit the affections of the flesh: not that they should not be in them, but that they should not reign in them, that is, in their mortal bodies, to give themselves over to serve sin, whose servants we are not, but are made servants unto righteousness, (Rom. vi.,) being now under grace, and not under the law, and therefore God hath mercifully promised that sin shall not reign in us; the which may he continually grant for his truth, power, and mercy's sake. Amen.

* Heartily.

† Distinguished.

AN EXHORTATION

TO

THE PATIENT SUFFERING OF TROUBLE AND AFFLICTION
FOR CHRIST'S CAUSE.*Written to all the unfeigned Professors of the Gospel
throughout the realm of England.*

BY JOHN BRADFORD,

AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS IMPRISONMENT, A. D. 1554.

MAY the Holy Spirit of God, who is the earnest and pledge of God given to his people for their comfort and consolation, be poured into our hearts by the mighty power and mercies of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.

Because I perceive plainly, that to the evils fallen upon us who profess Christ's gospel, greater are most likely to ensue, and after them greater, till the measure of iniquity is heaped up, except we shrink, and having put our hands to the plough look back, and with Lot's wife, and the Israelites desiring to return into Egypt, fall into God's heavy displeasure incurable, Gen. xix. Luke ix.; all which God forbid; and because I am persuaded of you, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, throughout the realm of England, which have professed unfeignedly the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (for unto such do I write this epistle,) that as ye have begun to take part with God's gospel and truth, so through his grace ye will persevere, and go on forwards, notwithstanding the storms which have risen and are to arise; I cannot but write something unto you, to go on forwards with earnestness in the way of the Lord, and not to become as the faint-hearted or fearful, whose place St. John appointeth (Rev. xxi.) with the unbelievers, murderers, and idolaters in eternal perdition, but cheerfully to take the Lord's cup, and drink of it before it draw towards the dregs and bottom, whereof at length they

shall drink with the wicked to eternal destruction, who will not receive it at first with God's children, and with whom God begins his judgment, that as the wicked world rejoices when they lament, so they may rejoice when the wicked world shall mourn, and find woe intolerable without end. (Psal. lxxv., 1 Pet. iv., John xvi.)

First therefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord, I beseech you to consider, that though you are *in* the world, yet you are not *of* the world. (John xiv.) You are not of them which look for their portion in this life, (Psal. xvii. whose captain is the God of this world, Even Satan, who now ruffeth it apace, as if he were wood,* because his time on earth is not long. (2 Cor. iv., Rev. xii.) But you are of them that look for a city, of God's own blessing. You are of them that know yourselves to be here but pilgrims and strangers; for here you have no dwelling-place. (Heb. xi. xii. xiii., 1 Pet. ii.) You are of them whose portion is the Lord, and which have their hope in heaven, whose captain is Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and governor of heaven and earth. Unto him is given all power, yea, he is God Almighty, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, praiseworthy for ever. (Matt. xxviii., Rom. ix.) You are not of them which receive the beast's mark, which here rejoice, laugh, and have their heart's ease, joy, paradise, and pleasure; but you are of them which have received the angel's mark, yea, God's mark, which here lament, mourn, sigh, sob, weep, and have your wilderness to wander in, your purgatory, and even hell to purge and burn up your sins. (Rev. xiii., Luke vi., Ezek. ix.) You are not of them which cry, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. You are not of that number which say, they have made a covenant with death and hell not to hurt them. You are not of them which take it for a vain thing to serve the Lord. (Matt. v., 1 Cor. xv., Isaiah xxii. xxviii.) You are not of them which are lulled and rocked asleep in Jezebel's bed—a bed of security. (Rev. iii.) You are not of the number of them which say, Tush, God is in heaven, and seeth us not, nor careth for what we do. (Psal. lxxiii.) You are not of the number of them which will fall down for the muck of the world to worship the fiend, or for fear of displeasing men worship the golden image. (Matt. iv., Dan. iii.) Finally, you are not of the number of them

* Enraged, distracted.

which set more by your swine than by Christ, (Matt. viii.) which, for ease and rest in this life, say and do as Antiochus bids you do or say, (Maccabees,) and will follow the multitude to do evil, with Zedechias and the three hundred false prophets; yea, Ahab, Jezebel, and the whole court and country. (Matt. viii., 1 Kings xxii.) But you are of the number of them which are dead already, or at least are dying daily to yourselves and to this world. You are of them which have made a covenant with God, to forsake yourselves in this world, and Satan also. You are of them which say, Nay, the Lord hath all things written in his memorial book, for such as fear him, and remember his name. (Rom. vi. vii., Col. iii., Luke xii., Mal. iii.) You are of them which have their loins girded about, and their lights burning in their hands, like unto men that wait for their Lord's coming. (Luke xii.) You are in the number of them that say, The Lord looketh down from heaven, and beholdeth the children of men: from the habitation of his dwelling, he considereth all them that dwell upon the earth, (Psal. xxxiii. xiv. i.) You are of the number of them which will worship the Lord God only, and will not worship the work of man's hands, though the oven burn never so hot. You are of the number of them to whom Christ is precious and dear, which cry out rather because your habitation is prolonged here, as David did. (1 Pet. ii., Psal. cxx.) You are of them which follow Mattathias and the godly Jews, which knew the way to life to be a strait way, and that few go through it, which will not stick to follow poor Micaiah, although he is racked and cast into prison, having the sun, moon, seven stars, and all against him. (Matt. vii., 1 Kings xxii.)

Thus therefore, dearly beloved, remember, first, that, as I said, you are not of this world; that Satan is not your captain: your joy and paradise is not here; your companions are not the multitude of worldlings, and such as seek to please men, and live here at ease in the service of Satan. But you are of another world; Christ is your captain, your joy is in heaven, where your conversation is; your companions are the fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, virgins, confessors, and the dear saints of God, which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; dipping their garments in his blood, knowing this life and world to be full of evil, a warfare, a smoke, a shadow, a

vapour, replenished and environed with all kinds of miseries. (Heb. xiii., Rev. vii., Job vii. viii. xiv., Psal. ix., James iv.) This is the first thing which I would have you often and diligently with yourselves consider and muse well upon, namely, what you are, and where you are.

Now, secondly, forget not to call to mind that you ought not to think it a strange thing if misery, trouble, adversity, persecution, and displeasure come upon you. For how can it be otherwise, but that trouble and persecution must come upon you? Can the world love you, which are none of his? Can worldly men, which are your chief enemy's soldiers, regard you? (1 Pet. iv. v., John xiv.) Can Satan suffer you to be at rest, who will do no homage unto him? Can this way be chosen by any that account it so narrow and strait as they do? Will you look to travel, and to have no foul way or rain? Will shipmen shrink, or sailors on the sea give over, if storms arise? Do they not look for such? and, dearly beloved, did not we enter into God's ship and ark of baptism at the first? will you then count it strange, if perils come or tempests blow? Are not you travelling to your heavenly city of Jerusalem, where is all joy and felicity, and will you tarry by the way for storms and showers? The morn and fair will then be past; the night will so come upon you, that you cannot travel; the door will be barred, and the bride will be at supper. (John ix., Matt. xxv.) Therefore away with dainty niceness. Will you think that the Father of heaven will deal more gently with you in this age than he hath done with others, his dearest friends, in other ages? What way, yea, what storms and tempests, what troubles and disquietness Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and good Joseph found! Which of these had so fair a life, and such restful times, as we have had? Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David the king, and all the good kings, priests, and prophets in the Old Testament, at one time or other, if not throughout their lives, felt a thousand times more misery than we have felt hitherto. (Gen. iv. vi. vii. viii. ix. &c., Exod. ii. iii. iv. v. &c.)

As for the New Testament, how great was the affliction of Mary, of Joseph, of Zacharias, of Elizabeth, of John the Baptist, of all the apostles and evangelists, yea, of Jesus Christ our Lord, the dear Son and darling of God! And since the time of the apostles, how many and great are the numbers of martyrs, confessors, and such as have

suffered the shedding of their blood in this life, rather than they would be stayed in their journey, or lodge in any of Satan's inns, lest the storms or winds which fell in their travellings might have touched them! And, dearly beloved, let us think what we are, and how far unfit to be matched with these, with whom yet we expect we are to be placed in heaven. But with what face can we look for this, who are so fearful and unwilling to leave that, which, will we nill we, we must leave, and so shortly that we know not the time when? Where is our renouncing and forsaking of the world and the flesh, which we solemnly took upon us in baptism? Ah! shameless cowards that we are, which will not follow the trace of so many fathers, patriarchs, kings, priests, prophets apostles, evangelists, and saints of God, yea, even of the very Son of God! (1 Pet. v.) How many now go with you heartily, as I and all your brethren in bonds and exile for the gospel! Pray for us, for, God willing, we will not leave you now. We will go before you; ye shall see in us, by God's grace, that we preached no lies nor idle tales, but even the very true word of God. For the confirmation whereof we by God's grace, and the help of your prayers, willingly and joyfully give our blood to be shed, as already we have given our livings, goods, friends, and natural country. For now we are certain that we are in the highway to heaven's bliss; as St. Paul saith, By many tribulations and persecutions we must enter into God's kingdom. (Acts xiv.) And because we would go thither ourselves and bring you thither also, therefore the devil stirreth up the coals. And forasmuch as we all loitered in the way, he hath therefore received power of God to overcast the weather, and to stir up storms, that we, God's children, might more speedily go on forwards, and make more haste, (Matt. viii. xiv.,) as the counterfeits and hypocrites will tarry and linger till the storms are past; and so when they come, the market will be done, and the doors barred, as it is to be feared. Read Matt. xxv. This wind will blow God's children forward, and the devil's darlings backward. Therefore, like God's children, let us go on forward apace, the wind is on our backs, hoist up the sails, lift up your hearts and hands unto God in prayer, and keep your anchor of faith to cast out in time of trouble on the rock of God's word and mercy in Christ, by the cable of God's verity, and I warrant your safety. And thus much for you secondly to

consider, that affliction, persecution, and trouble are no strange thing to God's children, and therefore it should not dismay, discourage, or discomfort us, for it is no other thing than all God's dear friends have tasted in their journey heavenwards.

As I would in this troublesome time that ye would consider what you are by the goodness of God in Christ—even citizens of heaven, though you are at present in the flesh, even in a strange region on every side full of fierce enemies—and what weather and way the dearest friends of God have found; even so would I have you, thirdly, to consider for your further comfort, that if you shrink not, but go on forwards, pressing to the mark appointed, all the power of your enemies shall not overcome you, nor in any point hurt you. (Phil. iii.) But this you must not consider according to the judgment of reason, and the sense of old Adam, but according to the judgment of God's word and the experience of faith and the new man, for else you mar all. For to reason, and to the experience of our sense, or of the outward man, we poor souls which stick to God's word, to serve him as he requires, are only accounted to be vanquished and to be overcome; for we are cast into prison, lose our livings, friends, goods, country, and life also at length, as concerns this world. But, dearly beloved, God's word teaches otherwise, and faith feels accordingly. Is it not written, Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Rom. viii.) As it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long, and are counted as sheep appointed to be slain. (Psal. xlv.) Nevertheless, in all these things we overcome through Him that loved us: for I am sure that neither death, nor life, neither angels, nor rule, nor power, neither things present, nor things to come, neither high nor low, neither any creature, shall be able to part us from that love wherewith God loveth us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus spake one who was in affliction, as I am, for the Lord's gospel sake; his holy name be praised therefore, and may he grant me grace with the same to continue in like suffering unto the end. This (I say) one spake who was in affliction for the gospel, but yet so far from being overcome, that he rejoiced rather for the victory which the gospel had. For though he was bound, yet the gospel was not bound,

(2 Tim. ii.,) and therefore he gives thanks unto God, which always giveth the victory in Christ, and openeth the savour of his knowledge by us, and such as suffer for his truth, although they shut us up never so much, and drive us never so far out of our own natural country in every place. (2 Cor. ii.)

The world for a time may deceive itself, thinking it has the victory, but the end will try the contrary. Did not Cain think he had the victory when Abel was slain? (Gen. iv.) But how say you now—is it not found otherwise? Thought not the old world and men then living, that they were wise and well, and Noah a fool, who would creep into an ark, leaving his house, lands, and possessions, for I think he was in an honest* state for the world. But I pray you who was wise when the flood came? Abraham was considered a fool to leave his own country, friends, and kin, because of God's word; but, dearly beloved, we know it proved otherwise. (Gen. xii.) I will leave all the patriarchs, and come to Moses, and the children of Israel. Tell me, were not they thought to be overcome and stark mad, when for fear of Pharaoh, at God's word, they ran into the Red Sea? (Exod. xiv.) Did not Pharaoh and the Egyptians think themselves sure of the victory? But it proved clean contrary. Saul was thought to be well, but David in an evil case, and most miserable, because he had no hole to hide him in; yet at length Saul's misery was seen, and David's felicity began to appear. (1 Sam. xvi. xvii. xviii. xix.) The prophet Micaiah being cast into prison for telling Ahab the truth, was thought to be overcome by Zedekiah and the other false prophets; but, my good brethren and sisters, the holy history tells otherwise. (1 Kings, xxii.) Who did not think the prophets unhappy in their time? For they were slain, prisoned, laughed to scorn, and jested at of every man. (Jer. xx., Isa. viii., 2 Kings ii.) And so were all the apostles, (1 Cor. iv.) yea, the dearly beloved friend of God, than whom among the children of women none arose greater, I mean, John Baptist, who was beheaded, and that in prison, even for a dancing damsel's desire. As all these by the judgment of reason were then counted heretics, runagates, unlearned fools, fishers, publicans, &c., so now were they unhappy and overcome indeed, if God's word and faith did not show the contrary. (Rom. viii.)

* Prosperous.

But what speak I of these? Look upon Jesus Christ, to whom we must be like fashioned here, if we will be like him elsewhere. Now, say you, was not he taken for a fool, a seditious person, a new fellow, a heretic, and one overcome of every body; yea, even forsaken, both of God and men? But the end told them, and tells us another tale; for now is he in majesty and glory unspeakable. When he was led to Pilate or Herod, or when he was in prison in Caiaphas's house, did not their reason think that he was overcome? When he was beaten, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, hanged upon the cross, and utterly left by all his disciples, taunted by the high-priests and elders, cursed by the commons, railed on by the magistrates, and laughed to scorn by the lewd* heathen, would not a man then have thought that he had been out of the way, and that his disciples were fools to follow him, and believe him? Think you, that whilst he lay in his grave, men did not point with their fingers, when they saw any that had followed and loved him, or believed in him and his doctrine, saying, "Where is their master and teacher now? What! is he gone? Forsooth, if they had not been fools, they might have well known that the learning he taught could not long continue. Our doctors and Pharisees are no fools now, they may see." On this sort men either spoke, or might have spoken, against all such as loved Christ or his doctrine; but yet at length they and all such were proved fools and wicked wretches. For our Saviour arose, maugre their beards,† and published his gospel plentifully, in spite of their heads, and the heads of all the wicked world, with the great powers of the same; always overcoming, and then most of all, when he and his doctrine were thought to have had the greatest fall. As now, dearly beloved, the wicked world rejoices, the papists are puffed up against Christ and his people after their own kind, now they cry out, Where are these new-found preachers? Are they not in the Tower, Marshalsea, Fleet, and beyond the seas? Who would have thought that our old bishops, doctors, and deans, were fools, as they would have made us to believe, and indeed have persuaded some already, which are not of the wisest, especially if they come not home again to the holy church?

These and such-like words they have, to cast in our

* Ignorant.

† In spite of their opposition.

teeth, as triumphers and conquerors; but, dearly beloved, short is their joy; they beguile themselves; this is but a lightening before their death. As God, after he had given the Jews a time to repent, visited them by Vespasian and Titus, most horribly to their utter subversion, delivering first all his people from among them, even so, my dear brethren, will he do with this age, when he hath tried his children from amongst them, as now he begins to do, and by suffering, has made us like to his Christ, and, by being overcome, to overcome indeed, to our eternal comfort. Then will he, if not otherwise, come himself in the clouds: (1 Thess. iv.) I mean, our dear Lord, whom we confess, preach, and believe on; he will come (I say) with the blast of a trump, and shout of an archangel, and so shall we be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air: the angels gathering together the wicked wretches, which now welter and wallow as the world and wind bloweth, to be tied in bundles, and cast into the fire, which burneth for ever most painfully. (Matt. xiii.) There and then shall they see who has the victory, they or we, when they shall see us afar off in Abraham's bosom. (Luke xvi.) Then will they say, "Oh! we thought these folks fools, and had them in derision; we thought their life madness, and their end to be without honour; but look how they are counted among the children of God, and their portion is with the saints. (See the book of Wisdom.) Oh! we have gone amiss, and would not hearken." Such words as these shall the wicked say one day in hell, whereas now they triumph as conquerors. And thus much for you, thirdly, to look often upon; namely, that whatsoever is done unto you, yea, even death itself, shall not hurt you, any more than it did Abel, David, Daniel, John Baptist, Jesus Christ our Lord, with other dear saints of God, who suffered for his name's sake. Let not reason therefore be judge in this matter, nor present sense, but faith and God's word, as I have shown; in the which, let us set before our eyes the shortness of this present time wherein we suffer, and consider the eternity to come, when our enemies and persecutors, shall be in intolerable pains, helpless; and we, if we persevere to the end, shall be in such felicity and joys, dangerless, as the very heart of man in no point is able to conceive. (1 Cor. ii., Isa. lxiv.) If we consider this, (I say,) we cannot but contemn and set

nothing by the sorrows and gresses of* the cross, and lustily go through thick and thin with good courage.

Thus have I declared unto you, things necessary to be mused on by every one who will abide by Christ and his gospel in this troublesome time, as I trust you all will. Namely, first to consider that we are not of this world, nor of the number of the worldlings, or retainers to Satan; that we are not at home in our own country, but of another world, of the congregation of the saints, and retainers to Christ, although in a region replete and full of untractable enemies. Secondly, that we may not think it a strange thing to be persecuted for God's gospel, from which the dearest friends of God were in no age free, as indeed it is impossible that they should for any long time be, their enemies being always about them to destroy them if they could. And thirdly, that the assaults of our enemies, be they never so many and fierce, in no point shall be able to prevail against our faith, albeit to reason it seems otherwise, wherethrough we ought to conceive good courage and comfort; for who will be afraid when he knows the enemies cannot prevail? Now I will, for the more encouraging you to the cross, give you a further memorandum, namely, of the commodities† and profits which come by the trouble and affliction now risen and to arise to us, which are God's children, elect through Jesus Christ. But look not here to have repeated all the commodities which come by the cross to such as are well exercised therein, for that were more than I can do; I will only speak of a few, thereby to occasion you to gather and at the length to feel and perceive more.

First, That there is no cross which cometh upon any of us without the counsel of our heavenly Father; for as to the fancy about Fortune, it is wicked, as many places of the Scriptures do teach, Amos iii. Matt. x. Isa. xlv. And we must needs, to the commendation of God's justice (for in all his doings he is just,) acknowledge in ourselves that we have deserved at the hands of our heavenly Father this his cross or rod which is fallen upon us—we have deserved it, if not by our unthankfulness, slothfulness, negligence, intemperance, uncleanness, and other sins committed often by us, whereof our consciences can and will accuse us if we call them to counsel, with the examination of our

* Steps towards.

† Advantages.

former life, yet at least by our original and birth sin. Also by doubting of the greatness of God's anger and mercy; by self-love, concupiscence, and such-like sins, which as we brought them with us into this world, so the same always abide in us, and even as a spring always bring something forth in act with us, notwithstanding the continual fight of God's Spirit in us against it. Psal. l. Heb. xii. Gal. v.

The first advantage therefore that the cross brings is knowledge, and that both of God and of ourselves. Of God, that he is just, pure, and hateth sin. Of ourselves, that we are born in sin, and are from top to toe defiled with concupiscence and corruption, out of which have sprung all the evils that ever at any time we have spoken and done. (Psal. li. Gen. viii. Jer. xvii.) The greatest and most special whereof we are occasioned by the cross to call to mind, as the brethren of Joseph did their evil deed against him when the cross once came upon them. (Gen. xlii.) And so by it we come to the first step to get health for our souls, that is, we are driven to know our sins, original and actual, by God's justice declared in the cross.

Secondly, the end wherefore God declares his justice against our sin both original and actual, and would by his cross have us consider the same, and call to mind our former evil deeds, the end whereof is this, that we might lament, be sorry, sigh, and pray for pardon, that so doing we might obtain the same by means of faith in the merits of Jesus Christ his dear Son. And further, that we, being humbled because of the evil that dwelleth in us, might become thankful for God's goodness and love, in continual watching and wariness to suppress the evil which lieth in us, that it bring not forth fruit to death at any time. (James i.) This second advantage of the cross therefore we must not count to be a simple knowledge only, but a great gain of God's mercy, with wonderful, rich, and precious virtues of faith, repentance, remission of sins, humility, thankfulness, mortification, and diligence in doing good. Not that properly the cross worketh these things of itself, but because the cross is the mean and way by which God worketh the knowledge and feeling of these things in his children; as many, both testimonies and examples in the Scriptures, are easily found of them that diligently weigh what they read therein.

To these two advantages of the cross, join the third of

God's singular wisdom that it may be coupled with his justice and mercy. On this sort therefore let us conceive when we see the gospel of God and his church persecuted and troubled, as now it is with us, that because the great, learned, and wise men of the world use not their wisdom to love and serve God, though he openeth himself manifestly by his visible creatures to natural wisdom and reason, (Rom. i.,) therefore God both justly infatuates and makes them foolish, giving them up to insensibleness especially herein; for on this manner they reason concerning the affliction which cometh for the gospel: "If," say they, "this were God's word, if these people were God's children, surely God would then bless and prosper them and their doctrine. But now since there is no doctrine so much hated, no people so much persecuted as they are, therefore it cannot be of God. Rather this is of God, which our Queen and old bishops have professed; for how hath God preserved them and kept them! What a notable victory hath God given unto her, where it seemed impossible that things should have come to pass so as they have done! And did not the great captain confess his fault, that he was out of the way, and not of the faith which these gospellers profess?*" How many are come again, from that which they professed to be God's word? The most part of this realm, notwithstanding the diligence of preachers to persuade them concerning this new learning, which now is persecuted, never consented to it in heart, as experience teaches. And what plagues have come upon this realm since this gospel, as they call it, came in amongst us? Afore, we had plenty, but now there is nothing like as it was. Moreover, all the houses of the parliament have overthrown the laws made for the stablishing of this gospel and religion, and new laws are erected for the continuance of the contrary. How miraculously God confounds their doctrine, and confirms ours! For how was Wyat overthrown! How prosperously came in our King! How hath God blessed our Queen with fruit of womb!† How is the Pope's Holiness restored again to his right! All these things teach plainly that this their doctrine is not God's word."—Thus reason the worldly wise, which see not

* The Duke of Northumberland the father of Lady Jane Grey, who opposed Queen Mary, and, being condemned to die, professed to be a papist.

† It was then supposed that Queen Mary was with child.

God's wisdom; for else, if they considered that there was with us unthankfulness for the gospel, no amendment of life, but all kind of contempt of God, and that all kind of shameless sinning ensued the preaching of the gospel; they must needs see, that God could not but chastise and correct; and as he let Satan loose, after he had bound him a certain time for unthankfulness of men, so he let these champions of Satan run abroad, by them to plague us for our unthankfulness. (Rev. xx.) Great was God's anger against Ahab, because he saved Benhadad, king of Syria, after God had given him into his hands, and afterwards it turned to his own destruction. (1 Kings xx.) God would that double sorrow should have been repaid to them, because of the sorrow they did to the saints of God. Read the 18th of the Revelation.

As for the victory given to the Queen's Highness, if men had any godly understanding, they might see many things in it. First, God has done it to win her heart to the gospel. Again, he has done it, as well because they that went against her put their trust in horses and power of men, and not in God, as because in their doing they sought not the propagation of God's gospel, which thing is now plainly seen. Therefore no marvel why God fought against them, seeing they were hypocrites, and under the cloak of the gospel would have debarred the Queen's Highness of her right, but God would not so cloak them.*

Now for the relenting, returning, and recanting of some, from that which they once professed or preached. Alas! who would wonder at it? for they never came to the gospel, but for commodity and gain's sake, and now for gain they leave it. The multitude, is no good argument to move a wise man; for who knows not how to love this world better than heaven, and themselves better than their neighbours? "Wide is the gate, saith Christ, (Matt. vii.,) and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; but strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." All the whole multitude cried out upon Jesus, Crucify him, Crucify him, but they were not to be believed because they were the bigger part. All

* Many of the most sincere followers of the truth assisted Queen Mary against Lady Jane, considering that she was rightful heir to the throne. She also promised that she would not oppose the Protestant religion as established by Edward VI.

Chaldea followed still their false gods, Abraham alone followed the true God. (Gen. xii.) And where they say that greater plagues are fallen upon the realm, in poverty and such other things, than before, it is no argument to move others, except such as love their swine better than Christ, (Matt. viii. ;) for the devil chiefly desireth his seat to be in religion. If it is there, then he will meddle with nothing we have, all shall be quiet enough; but if he be raised* thence, then will he beg leave to have at our swine. Read Matt. viii. of the Gergesites. As long as with us he had the ruling of religion, which now he hath gotten again, then was he Robin Goodfellow, he would do no hurt: but when he was tumbled out of his throne by preaching of the gospel, then he ranged about as he hath done, but secretly. Finally, effectual he has not been, but in the children of unbelief. (Eph. ii.) Them indeed has he stirred up to be covetous, oppressors, blasphemers, usurers, whoremongers, thieves, murderers, tyrants, and yet perchance he suffers them to profess the gospel, the more thereby to hinder it, and cause it to be slandered. How many now appear to have been true gospellers? As for the parliament and statutes thereof, no man of wisdom can think otherwise, but that, look what the rulers will, the same must there be enacted; for it goeth not in those houses by the better part, but by the bigger part. And it is a common saying, and no less true, that the greater part overcomes the better; so they did in condemning Christ, not regarding the counsel of Nicodemus. (John vii.) So they did also in many general councils; but all wise men know that acts of parliament are not for God's law in respect of God's law, but in respect of the people. Now what we are God knoweth, and all the world is more pleased a great deal, to have the devil's decrees than God's religion, so great is our contempt of it. And therefore justly for our sins (as Job saith) God has set hypocrites to reign over us, which can no more abide God's true religion, than the owl the light, or bleared eyes the bright sun; for it will have them to do their duties, and walk in diligent doing of the works of their vocation. If God's word had place, bishops could not play chancellors and idle prelates as they do; priests should be otherwise known than by their shaven crowns and tippetts: but enough of this. As for miracles of success against Wyat and others,

* Driven.

of the king's coming in, &c., I would men would consider there are two kinds of miracles, one to prepare and confirm men in the doctrine which they have received, and another to prove and try men how they have received it, and how they will stick unto it. Of the former kind, these are not miracles; but of the second, by this success given to the queen, God tries whether we will stick to his truth, simply for his truth sake, or no. This is a mighty illusion, which God sends to prove his people, and to deceive the hypocrites, which receive not God's truth simply, but in respect of gain, praise, estimation. Read how Ahab was deceived, 1 Kings xxii. 2 Thess. ii. Deut. xiii.

But I will now return to the third advantage coming by the cross. Here let us see the wisdom of God in making foolish the wisdom of the world, which knows little of man's corruption; how foul it is in the sight of God, and how it displeases him. Which knows little what the portion of God's people is in another world. Which knows little of the Pattern of Christians, Christ Jesus. Which knows little of the general judgment of God, the greater malice of Satan to God's people, and the price and estimation of the gospel; and therefore in the cross it sees not, as God's wisdom would we should see; namely, that God, in punishing them which sin least, would have his anger against sin seen most, and to be better considered and feared. In punishing his people here, he kindles their desire towards their celestial home. In punishing his servants in this life, he conforms and makes them like to Christ, that, as they are like in suffering, so shall they be in reigning. (Phil. i.) In punishing his church in the world, he gives a demonstration of his judgment which shall come on all men, when the godly shall there find rest, though now they are afflicted, and the wicked now wallowing in wealth shall be wrapped in woe and smart. In punishing the professors of his gospel in earth, he sets forth the malice of Satan against the gospel and his people; for the more confirming of their faith, and the gospel to be God's word indeed, and that they are God's people, for else the devil would let them alone. (Acts xvi.) In punishing the lovers of his truth more than others, which care not for it, he puts them in mind how they have not valued, as they should have done, the jewel of his word and gospel. Before such trial and experience came, perchance they thought they had believed

and had faith, which now they see was but a lip-faith, a mock faith, or an opinion; all which things we see are occasions for us to take better heed by means of the cross. Therefore, thirdly, let us consider the cross to be commodious for us to learn God's wisdom, and what is man's foolishness, God's displeasure at sin, and desire to be with God, the conformity with Christ, the general judgment, the malice of Satan, hatred of sin, that the gospel is God's word, and how it is to be esteemed, &c. Thus much for this.

Now will I, fourthly, briefly show you, that the cross or trouble is profitable for us to learn and behold better the providence, presence, and power of God, that all these may be coupled together as in a chain to hang about our necks, I mean God's justice, mercy, wisdom, power, presence, and providence. When all things are at rest, and men are not in trouble, then they commonly are forgetful of God, and attribute too much to their own wisdom, policy, providence, and diligence, as though they were the procurers of their own fortune, and workers of their own weal. But when the cross cometh, and that in such sort as their wits, policies, and friends cannot help, though the wicked despair, run from God to saints, and such other unlawful means, yet the godly therein behold the presence, the providence, and power of God. For the Scripture teaches that all things come from God, both weal and woe, and that the same should be looked upon as God's work, although Satan, the devil, be often an instrument by whom God worketh justly and mercifully; justly to the wicked, and mercifully to the godly; as by the examples of wicked Saul and godly Job we may easily see God's work by Satan, his instrument in them both. The children of God, therefore, which before forgot God in prosperity, now in adversity are awakened to see God in his work, and no more depend on their own forecast, power, friends, wisdom, riches, &c., but learn to cast themselves on God's providence and power, whereby they are so preserved and governed, and very often miraculously delivered, that the very wicked cannot but see God's providence, presence, and power, in the cross and affliction of his children, as they (his children I mean) to their joy do feel, thereby learning to know God to be the governor of all things. He it is that giveth peace, he it is that sendeth war, he giveth plenty and poverty, he setteth up and casteth down, he bringeth to

death and afterwards giveth life. His presence is every where, his providence is within and without, his power is the pillar whereby the godly stand, and to it they lean, as no less able to set up than to cast down. (Isa. xlv., Hosea i., Luke i., Psal. cxxxix., 1 Pet. v.) Which the apostle saw in his afflictions, and therefore rejoiced greatly in them, that God's power might singularly be seen therein. (2 Cor. iv.) Concerning this, I might bring forth innumerable examples of the affliction of God's children, both in the Old and New Testament, wherein we may see how they felt God's presence, providence, and power, plentifully. But I will omit examples, because every one of us, that has been or is in trouble, cannot but by the same remember God's presence, which we feel by his hand upon us; his providence which leaves us not unprovided for, without any of our own provisions, and his power which both preserves us from many other evils, which else would come upon us, and also makes us able to bear more than we thought we could have done. So very often he delivers us by such means, as have been thought most foolish, and to have been little regarded; and therefore we shake off our sleep of security, and forgetting of God, our trust and shift are in our own policies, our hanging on men, or on our own power. So the cross, you see, is advantageous, fourthly, for to see God's presence, providence, and power, and our negligence, forgetfulness of God, security, self-love, trust and confidence in ourselves, and that the things in this life are to be cast off, as the others are to be taken hold on. And this shall suffice for the commodities which come by the cross, wherethrough we may be in love with it for the commodities' sake, which at length we shall find, though at present in sense we feel them not. No castigation or punishment is sweet for the present instant, saith the apostle, but afterward the end and work of the thing is otherwise. (Heb. xii.) As we see in medicines, the more wholesome they are, the more unpleasant is the taste thereof, as in pills, potions, and such like bitter stuff, yet we will, on the physician's word, drink them gladly for the benefit which cometh of them. And, dearly beloved, although to lose life, and goods, or friends, for God's gospel sake seems a bitter and sour thing, yet in that our Physician, which cannot lie, Jesus Christ I mean, tells us, that it is very wholesome, howsoever it be loathsome, let us with good cheer take the cup at his hand, and drink it cheerfully. If the cup seem unpleasant, and the

drink too bitter, let us put some sugar therein, even a piece of that which Moses cast into the bitter water, and made the same pleasant: (Exod. xv.) I mean an ounce, yea, a dram of Christ's afflictions and cross, which he suffered for us. (1 Pet. iv.) If we call this to mind, and cast of them into our cup, considering what he was, what he suffered, of whom, for whom, to what end, and what came thereof, surely we cannot loath our medicine, but we shall wink and drink it lustily.* Lustily, therefore, drink the cup which Christ giveth, and will give unto you, my good brethren and sisters; I mean, prepare yourselves to suffer whatever God will lay upon you for the confessing of his holy name. If not, because of these three things, that ye are not of the world, ye suffer not alone, your trouble shall not hurt you, yet for the commodities which come of the cross, I beseech you heartily to embrace it. The fight is but short, the joy is exceeding great. *We must pray alway;* (Luke xviii.) then shall we undoubtedly be directed in all things by God's Holy Spirit, which Christ hath promised to be our doctor, teacher, and comforter; and, therefore, we need not fear what man or devil can do unto us, either by false teaching or cruel persecution; for our Pastor is such a one, that none can take his sheep out of his hands. John xiv. xv. xvi.

Thus much, my dear brethren and sisters in our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I thought good to write unto you for your comfort. From which, if ye, for fear of man, loss of goods, friends, or life, swerve or depart, then you depart and swerve from Christ, and so snare yourselves in Satan's sophistry to your utter subversion. Therefore, as St. Peter saith, "Watch, be sober; for as a roaring lion, he seeketh to devour you." Be strong in faith; that is, mammer not,† waver not in God's promises, but believe certainly that they pertain to you; that God is with you in trouble; that he will deliver you; and glorify you, (Heb. xiii., 1 Pet. ii. v., John x., Acts ii.) But see that you call upon him, specially, that you enter not into temptation, as he taught his disciples even at such time as he saw Satan desire to sift them, as now he has done to sift us. (Psal. xciii., Matt. xxvi., Luke xxii.) O dear Saviour, prevent him now as thou didst then, with thy prayer, I beseech thee, and grant that our faith faint not, but strengthen us to confirm the weak, that they deny not thee and thy gospel,

* Heartily.

† Hesitate not.

that they return not to their vomit, stumbling on those sins from which there is no recovery, causing thee to deny them before thy Father, making their latter end worse than the beginning, as was the case with Lot's wife, Judas Iscariot, Francis Spira, and many others. But rather strengthen them and us all in thy grace, and in those things which thy word teaches, that we may here hazard our life for thy sake, and so shall we be sure to save it, as, if we seek to save it, we cannot but lose it; and that being lost, what profit can we have, if we win the whole world? (2 Pet. ii., Matt. x., Heb. vi. x., Mark viii., Luke xi., Matt. vi.) Oh, set thou always before our eyes, not as reason does, this life, the pleasure of the same, death of the body, imprisonment, &c. but everlasting life, and those unspeakable joys which undoubtedly they shall have, which take up the cross and follow thee; and they must needs at length fall into eternal hell fire and destruction of soul and body for evermore, which are afraid for the hoar frost of adversity that man or the devil stirreth up to stop or hinder us from going forwards our journey to heaven's bliss, to which do thou bring us for thy name's sake. Amen.

Your own in the Lord,

JOHN BRADFORD.

A SHORT AND PITHY DEFENCE
OF
THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY ELECTION
AND
PREDESTINATION OF GOD,

Gathered out of the First Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

ADDRESSED TO A DEAR FRIEND,

BY JOHN BRADFORD;

AND TREATING BRIEFLY BUT MOST PERFECTLY, GODLY, SOUNDLY, AND
PITHILY, OF GOD'S HOLY ELECTION, FREE-GRACE,
AND MERCY IN JESUS CHRIST.



A letter written to a dear friend of his, wherein he treats briefly, but most perfectly, godly, soundly, and pithily, of God's holy election, free-grace, and mercy in Jesus Christ. Dated October 22, 1554.

FAITH in God's election, I mean, to believe that we are in very deed the children of God through Christ, and shall be for ever inheritors of everlasting life through the grace alone of God our Father in the same Christ, is of all things which God requires of us, not only the principal, but also the whole sum. So that without this faith there is nothing we do that can please God. And therefore God first requires it by saying, I am the Lord thy God, &c., (Exod. xx.) that is, I remit thy sins, and give thee my Holy Spirit, and I will keep thee for ever. And our Saviour would have us persuaded of this when we come to pray, and therefore teaches, yea, he commands us to call God our Father, whose power were not infinite, as we profess in the first article of our belief, where we expressly call him our Almighty Father, if we doubt his final favour. And therefore I cannot but marvel at some men, who seem to be godly, and yet are in this behalf too malicious both to God and man. For what is more seemly to God, than mercy, which is most magnified by the elect children of God? And what is more seemly for man than humility, which is not and

cannot be truly, except in the elect of God; for they alone reckon nothing at all due to themselves but damnation, that their whole glory may be in God, only and for ever. But notwithstanding this, there are those who have gone about together, to set abroad enormities from the doctrine of God's most holy and comfortable election and predestination, although that doctrine has more advantages than all the whole world are able to conceive, much less to express. For what destroys enormities so much as it does? It overthrows the most pestilent papistical poison, the doubting of God's favour, which is the very dungeon of despair and contempt of God. It destroys the heathenish opinion of fortune.* It comforts most comfortably under the cross, and casts down all cogitations, which would else cover us with sorrow and grief, by telling us that all things shall turn for the best. (Rom. viii.) It makes us modest, and puts away pride in prosperity, by pulling from men the thought of their meriting or deserving. It forces men to love, and carefully to labour for their brethren, utterly preventing the despising of any. It excites to piety, and is the greatest enemy of ungodliness that can be, by teaching us of what dignity we are, of what value even our bodies are, as temples of the Holy Ghost and members of Christ. It causes a real desire for our home in heaven, and so leads us to despise this world, and the things which this world values. It makes man wholly and continually be careful not for himself but for others, and for the things which are for God's glory. It helps very much to the true understanding of the Scriptures, and preserves from errors, by causing us to know what is to be attributed to the law, to the gospel, to the ministry, to the vocal word,† to the Old Testament, to the New Testament, to the sacraments, to faith, to works, to prayer, to penance, to God, to man, &c. For by the Spirit of election we see and know Christ, in whom dwells all the riches and treasures of knowledge. It setteth up Christ's kingdom, and entirely overthrows the wisdom, power, choice, and ability of man, that all glory may be given to God alone.

But why do I try to reckon the advantages proceeding from the doctrine of God's election, for they are innumerable? This is the sum;—that where a Christian man's life has respect to God, to man, and to himself, to live godly, justly, and soberly,—all is grounded upon

* Or chance.

† The spoken word.

predestination in Christ. For who liveth in a godly manner but he that believeth? And who believeth but such as are ordained to eternal life? (Acts xiii.) Who liveth justly but such as love their neighbours? And whence springeth this love but from God's election before the beginning of the world, that we might be blameless by love? Who liveth soberly but such as are holy? And who are they but those alone who are endued with the spirit of sanctification, which is the seal of the election of us who believe? (Eph. i., 2 Cor. ii.)

Wherefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord, I have undertaken to write something to you and for your sake in this matter, which I have sent you herewith, as well to be a help to you therein, as also to be a pledge of my anxious love and hearty desire which I have for your continuance in the truth, (wherein I trust you stand at present,) when I am dead and burned, as I fully expect as soon as God shall give leave to his enemies, for my benefit and endless joy in Christ. To Him, as to a most faithful Pastor, from the bottom of my heart I commend and bequeath you, beseeching him to watch over you night and day as over one of his poor lambs, and to keep you out of the claws of the lion, and the mouth of the wolves, to his glory and your eternal joy and comfort in him. Amen.

There is neither Virtue nor Vice to be considered according to any outward action, nor according to the will and wisdom of man, but according to the will of God. Whatsoever is conformable thereto is Virtue, and the action that springs thereof is laudable and good, however otherwise it appear to the eyes and reason of man, as was the lifting up of Abraham's hand to have slain his son. (Gen. xxii.) Whatever is not conformable to the will of God, is Vice, and the action springing thereof is to be disallowed and taken for evil; and that so much the more and the greater evil, by how much it is not consonant and agreeing to God's will, although it seems far otherwise to man's wisdom, as was Peter's wish of making three tabernacles, (Matt. xvii.) and the request of some who would have had fire to have come down from heaven from a zeal to God, &c. (Luka ix.)

Now the will of God is only known as it is set forth in his word; therefore according to it must vice and virtue,

good and evil, be judged; and not according to the judgment, wisdom, reason, and collection of any man, or of the whole world, if all the angels in heaven should take their part.

But this word of God, which is written in the canonical books of the Bible, plainly sets forth unto us, that God has of his own mercy and good will, and to the praise of his grace and glory in Christ, elected some and not all, whom he hath predestinated unto everlasting life in the same Christ; and in his time calleth them, justifieth them, and glorifieth them, so that they shall never perish and err to damnation finally.

Therefore to affirm, teach, and preach this doctrine, has in it no hurt, no vice, no evil; much less then hath it any enormity (as some affirm) to the eyes and spirit of them which are guided, and will be, by the word of God.

That God, the eternal Father of mercies, before the beginning of the world, hath of his own mercy and good will, and to the praise of his grace and glory, elected in Christ some, and not all of the posterity of Adam, whom he hath predestinated unto eternal life, and calleth them in his time, justifieth them, and glorifieth them, so that they shall never perish or err to damnation finally; that this proposition is true, and according to God's plain and manifest word, by the help of his Holy Spirit—which in the name of Jesus Christ I humbly beseech his mercy plenteously to give to me at this present and for ever, to the sanctification of his holy name;—is what by the help, I say, of his Holy Spirit, I trust so evidently to declare, that no man of God shall be able by the word of God ever to impugn it, much less to confute it.

In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle saith thus: "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath blessed us with all manner of blessings in heavenly things by Christ; according as he hath elected or chosen us in him before the foundation of the world was laid, that we should be holy and without blame before him through love; and hath predestinated us (or ordained us) through Jesus Christ, to be heirs unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherewith he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, by whom we have received redemption through his blood, and the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace. Which grace

he hath shed on us abundantly in all wisdom and understanding, and hath opened unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself, to have it declared when the time was full come, that he might gather together all things by (or in) Christ, as well the things that are in heaven, as the things that are in earth, even in (or by) him. By (or in) whom we are made heirs, being thereto predestinated, according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the decree (or counsel) of his own will, that we which hoped before you in Christ, should be unto the praise of his glory; in whom ye also hoped after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; wherein ye also believing, were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption (or full fruition) of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory."

These are the words of Paul, which I have faithfully translated according to the very text in the Greek, as by the judgment of all that are learned, I desire to be tried, out of which words of Paul we may well perceive every thing affirmed in my proposition, as I will give occasion plainly to them that will to see it.

First, the apostle shows that the cause of God's election is of his good will, in saying, that it is through his love whereby we are holy and without blame, also "according to the good pleasure of his will, according to his good pleasure purposed in himself, according to his purpose which worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Secondly, the apostle plainly shows, that election was before the beginning of the world, in saying, that we were "chosen before the foundation of the world" was laid; and afterwards in calling it "the mystery of his will purposed with himself in time to be declared."

Thirdly, the apostle so flatly and plainly sets forth that election is in Christ, that I need not here repeat it. "We (saith he) are chosen in him; we are heirs by him; we are accepted by him; we are gathered together in him," &c.

Fourthly, that election is of some of Adam's posterity, and not of all; we may plainly see, if we consider, that he makes the true demonstration of it, believing, hoping, and having the earnest of the Spirit. "In whom ye hoped (saith he) after ye heard the word," &c.; in whom ye believed, were sealed up, &c. Again, in attributing to the elect, for-

giveness of sins, holiness, blameless living, being in Christ, &c. "That we should be holy, saith he, &c., we have received forgiveness of sin," &c. Who seeth not that these are not common to all men? "All men have not faith," saith Paul, 2 Thess. iii. "None believed (saith Luke) but such as were ordained to eternal life," (Acts xiii.) none believe but such as "are born of God;" (1 John v.) none believe truly but such as have good hearts, and keep God's seed, to bring forth fruits by patience. (Matt. xiii.)

So that it is plain (faith being a demonstration of God's election to them that are of years of discretion) that all men are not elect, because all men believe not; for "he that believeth in the Lord, shall be as Mount Sion," (Psalm cxxv.) that is, he shall never be removed; for if he be removed, that is, finally perish, surely he never truly believed. But why go I about to light a candle in the clear sunlight, when our Saviour plainly saith that all are not chosen, but only few? "Many are called, (saith he, Matt. xx.) but few are chosen." And in the second chapter to the Ephesians the apostle plainly saith, that the great riches of God's mercies, through his exceeding great love hath saved them, before their parents and many other Gentiles, which were excluded from Christ, and strangers from the promise, hopeless, godless, &c. Wherethrough we may be occasioned to cry, Oh! the depths of the judgments of God, (Rom. ii.) who is just in all his doings, and holy in all his works, extending his mercy after his good pleasure and will over all his works. (Psalm cxlv.)

Fifthly, that God has predestinated these, who are thus elect unto everlasting life in Christ, the apostle also declares in the words before written, in saying, "And hath predestinated us through Jesus Christ to be heirs unto himself." Again, "By him (saith he) ye are made heirs, and predestinated to the praise of his glory." So saith the apostle, (Rom. viii.) "Whom he hath predestinated, them he hath predestinated to be like fashioned unto the shape of his Son." And Christ therefore saith, "Rejoice in this, your names are written in heaven." (Luke x.)

Sixthly, that the end of election is to the praise of God's glory and grace, the apostle shows in saying, we are predestinated to be holy and without blame before God, &c.; in saying, we are predestinated to the glory of his grace; and in saying also, "unto the praise of his glory," so that nothing can be more manifest.

Seventhly, that predestination is not without vocation in God's time, and justification, the apostle here teaches, in bringing us to the consideration of hearing the word of truth, believing and receiving the Holy Spirit, remission of sins, &c. "In whom" (saith he) "ye have hoped, after that ye heard the word of truth," &c. Again, "By whom ye have redemption, that is, remission of sins, through the shedding of his blood," &c.; also, "He hath in his full time declared the mystery of his will, &c. Unto the Romans the apostle shows it most manifestly, in saying, "Whom he hath predestinated, them he calleth, whom he calleth, them he justifieth;" whereby we may see that predestination or election is not universal or of all, for all are not justified.

Eighthly, and last of all, the apostle here also very plainly shows, that election is so certain, that the elect and predestinate to eternal life shall never finally perish or err to damnation, in saying, that they are predestinate to the praise of God's grace. He saith not, to the praise of his justice, to the praise of his wisdom, to the praise of his power, although he might most truly say so; but he saith, "to the praise of his grace," which were not grace, if there were any respect at all of works on our behalf; for then were grace not grace. (Rom. xii.) If there should be any condemnation of the elect and predestinate to eternal life, it must needs be because of their sins; but where would be the praise of God's grace then, which is the end of God's election? Shall we not by this means make God's election without an end, and so without a head, and so no election at all, as some would have it further than they elect themselves? Let such fear they shall not find the benefit of God's election, because they seek it as the Israelites did, and not as the elect, which not only find it, but also obtain it. (Rom. xi.) The others are blinded, as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of unquietness, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, even to this day, &c. (Psalm lxix.) Again, he shows the certainty of salvation to them that are elected, in saying, that they are accepted in the Beloved,—once accepted and beloved in Christ, and ever beloved; for whom he loveth, he loveth to the end. (John xiii.) And God's gifts are such that he cannot repent him of them, (Rom. xi.) and therefore, saith Christ, "I know whom I have chosen," attributing to election the cause of final perseverance. By which

Judas was seen not to be elected to eternal life, although he was elected to the office of an apostle, as Saul was elected to the office of a king: which kind of election is to be discerned* in reading the Scriptures, from this kind of election which I speak of now, that is, from election to eternal life in Christ. Thirdly, he shows the certainty of the salvation of the elect, by calling them heirs. For if we are heirs of God, then are we fellow-heirs with Christ, to be afflicted and glorified with Christ, (Rom. viii. ;) and therefore saith he, "according to the decree of his own will." Lo! he calls it a decree or counsel, which shall stand; as Isaiah saith, "the counsel of the Lord shall stand." (Isa. xli.) Fourthly, he shows this certainty, by saying, that "they are elect and predestinated to the praise of God's glory, which we should more care for, than for the salvation of all the world." This glory of the Lord is set forth, as well in them that perish, and are reprobates, as in the elect: and therefore St. John, bringing in the place of Isaiah, speaking of the reprobate, saith, (John xii.) that Isaiah spake that when he saw the glory of the Lord. This glory of the Lord to be set forth by us, is a great mercy and benefit of God: I am assured, that if the very devils and reprobates did not repine hereat, but were thankful that they might be ministers in any point to set forth God's glory; I am assured (I say) that they should find no hell nor torments: their hell and torments come of the love they have to themselves, and of the malice, envy, and hatred they have against God and his glory. Let them tremble and fear, that may not away with† the glory of the Lord, in election and reprobation.

Let not their eyes be evil, because God is good, and doth good to whom it pleaseth him. (Rom. ix.) He doth wrong to no man, nor can do, for then he were not righteous, and so no God. He cannot condemn the just, for then were he untrue, because his word is contrary; he cannot condemn the penitent and believer, for that were against his promise. Let us, therefore, labour, study, cry, and pray for repentance and faith; and then we cannot be damned, because we are the blessed of the Father before all worlds; and therefore we believe, therefore we repent. (Matt. xxv.) And forasmuch as it pertaineth to us who are within, to see and to speak of those things which are given unto us of God in Christ, (1 Cor. ii.) let us labour hereabouts, and leave

* Distinguished.

† Who cannot endure.

them that are without to the Lord, who will judge them in his time. (1 Cor. v.) The apostle prayed for the Ephesians, for no other wisdom and revelation from God than that whereby they might know God, (Eph. i.) and have their minds illuminated to see what they should hope for by their vocation, and how rich the glory of his inheritance is in his saints. Further than this I think it unseemly for us to search, until we have sought out how rich God's goodness is, and will be to us his children—which we can never do fully; but the more we go thereabout, and the more we taste his goodness, the more we shall love him, and loath all things that displease him. This, I say, let us do, and not be too busy in searching the majesty and glory of God, or in nourishing in any wise the doubting of our salvation, whereunto we are ready enough, and the devil goes about nothing else so much as that; for by it we are dull to do good to others, we are so careful for ourselves. By it we are more dull to do good to ourselves, because we stand in doubt whether it profits us or not; by it we dishonour God, either in making him as though he were not true, or else as though our salvation came not only and altogether from him, but hanged partly on ourselves; by it the devil will bring men at length to despair and hatred of God. Doubt once of thy salvation, and continue to do so, and surely he will ask no more. It was the first thing wherewith he tempted Christ: "If thou be the Son of God," &c. (Matt. iv.) It is the first and principal dart that he casts at God's elect; but as he prevailed not against Christ, no more shall he prevail against any of his members, for they have the shield of faith, which quenches his fiery darts. (Eph. vi.) They praise God night and day, (Luke xviii.) how then should they perish? The angels of the Lord pitch their tents round about them, (Psal. xxxiv.) how then should Satan prevail. They are borne in the hands of the angels, lest they should hurt their feet at any stone; God has given commandment to his angels over them, (Psal. xci.) the angels are ministers unto them, (Heb. i.) their names are written in the book of life, and therefore Christ bade them rejoice, (Luke x.) as Paul does the Philippians, in the fourth chapter, for nothing shall separate them from the love wherewith God loveth them in Christ Jesus, (Rom. viii.) who saith, that it is impossible for them to err finally to damnation, (Matt. xxiv.) for he is their light to illumine their darkness, (Psal.

xviii.) they are given to him to keep, and he is faithful over all God's children. He saith he will keep them so that they shall never perish. (John vi. x.) After they believe, they are entered already into everlasting life, (Heb. iii.,) Christ has set them there already, (John v. vi.,) he has committed them into his Father's hand by prayer, which we know is sure, (John xvii. Heb. v.,) and therefore neither death, hell, devils, nor all power, sins, nor mischief, shall ever pull us out of our Head's hands, (Rom. viii. John x.) whose members we are; and therefore receiving of his Spirit, as we do, we cannot but bring forth the fruits thereof, though now and then the flesh fail us. But the Lord, even our Lord, be praised, who is stronger in us than he which is in the world. (1 John iv.) He always putteth under his hand, that we lie not still as the reprobates, whose piety is as the morning dew, (Hosea vi.) soon come, and soon gone, and therefore they cannot continue to the end. Cannot! no, they will not if they could, because they hate God and his glory, and therefore hate all them that seek it and set it forth; whereas the elect love all men, and seek to do all men good in God, suspending their judgments of others, that they may stand or fall to the Lord, and not to them, (Rom. xiv.)

If the matter of election and predestination be so fully set forth to God's glory, and to the comfort of his church, out of this one place of Paul to the Ephesians, how may we suppose this matter is set forth in the whole body and books of the canonical Scripture, whereto I had rather send thee, good reader, with this candle-light which I have now given thee, than in a matter so manifest make more ado than needeth.

JOHN BRADFORD.

A BRIEF SUMMARY

OF THE

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION.

GOD'S foresight is not the cause of sin, or excusable necessity to him that sinneth; the damned therefore have not nor shall have any excuse, because God foreseeing their condemnation, or through their own sin, did not draw them, as he doth his elect, unto Christ. But as the elect have cause to thank God for ever for his great mercies in Christ, so the others have cause to lament their own wilfulness, sin, and contemning of Christ, which is the cause of their reprobation, and wherein we should look upon reprobation—as the goodness of God in Christ is the cause of our election and salvation, wherein we should look upon God's election. He that will look upon God or any thing in God, simply and barely as it is in God, the same shall be stark blind. Who can see God's goodness, as it is in God? Who can see his justice, as it is in him? If therefore thou wilt look upon his goodness, not only look upon his works, but also upon his word; even so if thou wilt look upon his justice, do the like. Then shalt thou see that election is not to be looked on but in Christ, nor reprobation but in sin. When the second cause is sufficient, should not we think that they are too curious that will run to search the first cause, further than God gives them leave by his word? which first cause, because they cannot comprehend, therefore they deny it. God be merciful to us for his name's sake, and give us to love and to live his truth, to seek peace and pursue it; because God of his goodness, for the comfort of his children and certainty of their salvation, opens unto them in some degree the first cause of their salvation, that is, his goodness before the beginning of the world to be looked upon in Christ; a man may not therefore be so bold as to wade so in condemnation further than God revealeth it. And forasmuch as he has not revealed condemnation except in sin, therefore let us not look on it otherwise. Seek to be delivered from sin, and fear not reprobation; but if thou wilt not, thou shalt find no excuse in the last day. Say not that thou art not warned.

GODLY MEDITATIONS
UPON
THE LORD'S PRAYER, THE BELIEF,
AND THE
COMMANDMENTS;
WITH OTHER
COMFORTABLE MEDITATIONS, PRAYERS, AND EXERCISES:
BY THE CONSTANT MARTYR OF GOD,
JOHN BRADFORD,
IN THE TIME OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

TO THE READER.

HERE thou hast (good reader) such godly meditations, prayers, and other exercises of that worthy witness of God, John Bradford, as God by his singular providence has hitherto preserved, and now at length brought to light, for thy comfort and advantage. Daily and hourly was this his exercise, to talk with God by faithful and hearty meditation and prayer, with power piercing the heavens: and many such godly exercises did he leave behind him, which either time has consumed, or else such as keep them in store to their own private use, do little consider what benefit they withhold from the church of God, which, if they shall yet brotherly communicate, there shall not lack good will and diligence to set them abroad. In the mean season, let us with thankfulness receive, read, and practise these as means to quicken our spirits, to stir up our dull hearts to a more fervent invocation of God's holy name: which how far it is from what it should be in us, and what need we have thereof, if our dead senses cannot feel, here may we see and perceive. Here may we learn to flee unto God by prayer, that we run not on still with this unthankful world into for-

getfulness of his great benefits poured upon us, especially for the liberty of his gospel, which we (in much mercy restored now unto us again) so unthankfully receive, so ungodly neglect, so wickedly abuse. God grant us his good Spirit to work in us this good work; to look about us in time; to consider our state past and present, as indeed we have great cause to do, and so with hearty prayer flee unto God to prevent the plagues that are at hand, lest with double woe we find the latter end worse than the beginning.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BE OBSERVED CONCERNING PRAYER.

There are nine things that pertain to the knowledge of true prayer:

- 1, To know what prayer is.
- 2, How many sorts of prayer there are.
- 3, The necessity of prayer.
- 4, To whom we ought to pray.
- 5, By whom we must pray.
- 6, Where to pray.
- 7, What to pray.
- 8, The excellency of prayer.
- 9, What we must do, that our prayers may be heard.

1. What prayer is.

Prayer is a simple, unfeigned, humble, and ardent opening of the heart before God; wherein we either ask things needful, or give thanks for benefits received. Paul (1 Tim. ii.) calls it by four sundry names in one sentence, namely, prayer, supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving: whereof the first is, for the avoiding and preventing of evil; the second is an earnest and fervent calling upon God for any thing; the third is an intercession for others; the fourth is a praising of God for things received.

2. There are two manner of ways how we should pray.

First, publicly, and that is called common prayer; second, privately, as when men pray alone, and that is called private prayer; and how both these two are allowed before God, the Scripture bears testimony by the example of all the holy men and women before and after Christ.

3. Of the necessity of prayer.

There are four things that provoke us to pray: first, the commandment of God; secondly, sin in us, which drives us, from necessity, to God for succour, life, and mercy; thirdly, our weak nature being unable to do any good, requires prayer to strengthen it, even as a house requires principal pillars for the upholding of it; fourthly, the subtlety of the enemy (who privily lurketh in the inward parts,

waiting to overthrow us even in those things we think are best done) stirs us vehemently thereunto.

4. To whom we ought to pray.

Three things pertain to Him that must be prayed unto: first, that he have such ears as may hear all the world at once: secondly, that he be in all places at once: thirdly, that he have such power that he may be able to help, and such mercy that he will deliver.

5. By whom we should pray.

Christ is the only way by whom we have free access unto the Father, and for whom our prayers are accepted (our infirmities notwithstanding,)—without whom all our prayers are abominable.

6. Where to pray.

As touching the place where we should pray, seeing all places are one, there is none forbidden; only the common prayer must be made in what place soever the congregation of Christ assembles.

7. What to pray. This is according to the necessity of every man; and forasmuch as we need both spiritual and corporeal things, we may boldly ask them both: for as to ask spiritual gifts, is profitable and commanded, so to ask corporeal, is necessary and allowed.

8. Of the excellency of prayer.

The worthiness of prayer consists in two things; in the dignity of the commander, who is God, the fountain of all goodness, who commandeth only good things; and in the effect that follows it, which is the obtaining of whatsoever we desire faithfully, according to the will of God.

9. What to do that we may be heard.

First, we must put off our own righteousness, pride, and estimation of ourselves, and put on Christ with his righteousness; secondly, an earnest faith and fervent love, with the putting off all rancour, malice, and envy, is required; finally, true repentance knitteth up the knot, for in it are contained all the virtues aforenamed.

JOHN BRADFORD.

I. OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR FATHER.

THOU, good Lord, who madest heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein, (Gen. i.) together with thy dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and with thy holy Spirit: thou, the same God which openedst thyself to Adam by thy promise; (Gen. iii.): thou, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; (Gen. xii. xxii. xxiii. xxiv. xxv.): thou, who broughtest thy people of Israel forth of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched-out power; (Exod. xiii. xiv. xv. &c.): thou, who gavest thy law upon mount Sinai; (Exod. xix. xx.): thou, who spakest by thy prophets, and, last of all, in these latter days by thy dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, (Heb. i.) whom thou wouldst should be made a second Adam; (1 Cor. xv.) that as by the first we are children of wrath, carnal, and full of concupiscence, so by him we might be made children of grace and spiritual; (Rom. v.) by communicating with him the quality, merits, virtues, and grace of his flesh, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, as he communicated with us the substance of our flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, (Matt. i.) by the operation of the same Holy Spirit; (Luke i.) being that blessed Seed which was promised to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, which should bruise the serpent's head, (Gen. iii. xii. xxvi. xxviii.) which should bring the blessing on all nations, which should reign over thy house for ever, (Psal. lxxxix.) and mightily overcome thine and our enemies; as indeed he did by his incarnation, nativity, circumcision, exile, baptism, fasting, temptation, doctrine, deeds, miracles, workings, agonies, bloody prayer, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension; (Luke i., Psal. cx:;) and he yet still doth by his mediation and intercession for us; (Rom. viii.) and at the length he will on all parts fully accomplish by his coming to judgment; (Matt. xxiv.) which will be suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, with the blast of a trumpet, and shout of an archangel; (1 Cor. xv., 1 Thess. iv., 2 Cor. v.) when he shall be seen with thousands of saints, and innumerable thousands of angels, all the whole world being on fire, and all people that ever

were, are, or shall be, then standing before his tribunal or judgment-seat, to render an account of that they have done in this body, be it good or bad. (Exod. xxxii. xxxiii., Psal. v., Joel ii.) Thou, I say, this God who art holy, righteous, true, wise, pure, mighty, merciful, good, gracious, a hater of sin, an avenger of unrighteousness, &c., wouldst that I, which am born in sin, and conceived in iniquity, which by nature am a child of wrath, (Psal. li., Eph. ii.) (for my heart is so unsearchably evil, that out of it springs corrupt concupiscence, so that the inclination thereof is prone to evil, always even from my youth up; Gen. viii. ix., Jer. xvii. my understanding and mind are so darkened, that I cannot perceive those things that are of God. (2 Cor. ii. iii.) of myself, or by all the wisdom which I receive from Adam naturally or otherwise attain by labour or study before regeneration; I cannot think a good thought, much less wish it, or consent unto it, and least of all do it,)—thou, I say, yet wouldst that I, being such a one, in whom dwelleth continual enmity against thee; (Rom. viii.) that I, which am nothing but sin, and one that doeth evil always before thee, should call thee and believe thee, this God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to be in very deed my Father. That is, thou wouldst I should be most assured, that thou of thine own good will which thou barest towards me before I was, yea, before the world was, hast in Christ chosen me to be thy child, and through him art become my most loving Father. (Eph. i.) From whom I should look for all good things, and be most certainly persuaded, that by how much thou art more than man, so much thy love and fatherly providence towards me passeth the love and providence of any father towards his child, in loving me, caring how to help me, providing for me, nurturing me, and helping me in all my needs. So certain thou wouldst have me to be of this, that to doubt of it, does most displease thee and dishonour thee, as if either thou wert not true, or not able to do these things, or else becamest not my father in respect of thine own goodness in Christ only, but also in respect of my worthiness and deserts. And that I should not waver or doubt of this, that thou art my dear Father, and I thy child for ever through Jesus Christ, is required in the first commandment, which saith, “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but me.” Again, thy Son here

commands me to call thee by the name of Father; moreover, in the first article of my belief, I profess the same in saying, I believe in God, the Father Almighty. Besides this, there are many other things to confirm me herein, as the creation and government of the world generally, and of every creature particularly; for all is made and kept for man, and so for me, to serve me for my advantage, necessity, and admonition. Again, the creation of me, in that thou hast made me after thy image, having a reasonable soul, body, shape, &c., whereas thou mightst have made me a toad, a serpent, a swine, deformed, frantic, &c.: moreover, thy wonderful preservation, nourishing, and keeping of me hitherto in my infancy, childhood, youth, &c.—all these, I say, should confirm my faith of thy fatherly love. But of all things, the opening of thyself by thy word and promise of grace, made after man's fall, first to Adam, then to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so to others, being published by the prophets from time to time; and, last of all, accomplished by thy dear Son Jesus Christ, in whom thy promises are yea and amen. (2 Cor. i.) The opening of thyself thus, I say, in and by Christ, is the chief and most sure certificate, that thou art my Father for his sake, and I thy dear child, although of myself I am most unworthy. For thou, according to thy promises, hast not spared thy dear Son Jesus Christ, but hast given him to the death of the cross for my sins. (John iii.) Thou wouldst that he should be made flesh of our flesh, and blood of our blood, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; (Eph. v.) that we, by the working of the same Spirit, through the merits of his flesh and blood, might be made flesh of his flesh, and blood of his blood. That is, as he hath the substance of our flesh and blood, even so we might have and for ever enjoy in him, and through him, the qualities, virtues, and gifts of righteousness, holiness, innocency, immortality, and glory, wherewith he hath endued our nature in his own person for us all; that as now in faith and hope we have the same, so in his coming we might fully enjoy them in very deed; for then shall our bodies, now vile, be like to his glorious body. (Phil. iii.) Herein appeareth thy love, not that we loved thee, but that thou lovedst us, and hast given thy Son for us. (1 John iv.) Herein dost thou commend unto us thy love, that when we were yet sinners, Christ thy dear Son

bled for us; (Rom. v.) so that nothing should separate us from thy love in Christ Jesus, neither life nor death, nor any other thing. (Rom. viii.) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto thee by the death of thy Son, much more we, being reconciled, shall be saved by his life. (Rom. v.) And that I should not doubt hereof, but certainly be persuaded that all things pertain to me, whereas I might have been born of Turks, lo! thou wouldst I should be born of Christian parents, brought into thy church by baptism, which is the sacrament of adoption, and requireth faith as well of remission of my sins as of sanctification and holiness, to be wrought of thee in me by thy grace and Holy Spirit. Whereas I might have been born in an ignorant time and region, thou wouldst that I should be born in this time and region, wherein is more knowledge revealed than ever was here before, or in many places is now. Whereas I might have been of a corrupt judgment, and entangled with many errors, lo! thou of thy goodness, as thou hast reformed my judgment, so thou dost keep it, and now for the same judgment's sake dost vouchsafe somewhat by the cross to try me. By all which things I should confirm my faith of this, that thou hast always been, art, and wilt be for ever, my dear Father; in respect whereof I should be certain of salvation and of the inheritance of heaven for ever, and be thankful, cast my whole care on thee, trust in thee, and call on thee, with comfort and certain hope, for all things that I want. For since thou hast given to me this benefit, to be thy child, undeserved, undesired on my behalf, simply and only in respect of thine own goodness and grace in Christ, lest at any time I should doubt of it, how should I but hope certainly that nothing profitable to me can be denied, since thy power is infinite? For as thy good will is declared in adopting me, so nothing can be finally wanting to me which may make for my weal,* (for that should disprove thy power to be almighty,) in that thy will already is so boundlessly declared; whereas my belief requires to believe in thee the Father Almighty, in consideration whereof I should in all things behave myself as a child, rejoice in thee, praise thee, trust in thee, fear thee, serve thee, love thee, call upon thee, &c. But, alas! how heavy-hearted am I! how unthankful am I! how full of unbelief and doubting of this

* Benefit, welfare.

thy rich mercy! how little do I love thee, fear thee, call upon thee! &c. Oh! be merciful unto me, forgive me, good Father, for thine own sake, and grant me the spirit of thy children, to reveal thyself unto me, and Jesus Christ thy dear Son our Lord, by whom we are made thy children, that I may truly know thee, heartily love thee, faithfully hang upon thee in all my needs, with good hope call upon thee, render faithfully this honour to thee, that thou art my God and Father, and I thy dear child, through thy grace in Christ, and so always be endued with an assured hope of thy goodness, and a faithful obedient heart in all things to thy holy will. At thy hands, and from thee, as I must look for all things, so come I unto thee, and pray thee to give me those things which thy dear children have; and thou requirest of me, that I might come and ask them of thee, as now I do through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As by this word FATHER I am taught to glory of thee and in thee, and all that ever thou hast, for thou art wholly mine, my Lord, my God, and my Father; so by this word OUR I am taught to glory of all the good, that all and each of thy servants that ever were, are, or shall be, had, have, and shall have. For now I am taught to believe that thou hast called me into the communion of thy church and people, whom hereby I perceive thou hast commanded to be careful for me, as for themselves, and in all their prayers to be as mindful of me as of themselves. Again, as by this word FATHER I am taught to remember and render my duty which I owe towards thee, faith, love, fear, obedience, &c., so by the word OUR I am taught my duty towards thy people, to be careful for them, and to take their sorrow, poverty, affliction, &c., as mine own; and therefore to labour to help them in heart and hand, after my vocation and ability, utterly abhorring all pride, self-love, arrogance, and contempt of any. By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and to rejoice. To lament, because I am so far from considering, much more from doing, my duty to thy people, in thoughts, words, or deeds. To rejoice, because I am called of thee, and placed in the blessed society of thy saints, and made a member and citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem; and because thou hast given in commandment to all thy church to be as careful for me as for themselves.

But, alas! how far am I herefrom! As I am guilty of unthankfulness for this thy calling me into the blessed

communion of thy dear Son and church, yea, of thyself; so am I guilty of self-love, unmercifulness, pride, arrogancy, forgetfulness, contempt of thy children; for else I could not but be otherwise affected, and otherwise labour than I do. Oh! be merciful unto me, good Father, forgive me, and grant for Christ's sake, that as my tongue soundeth this word *OUR*, so I may in heart feel the true joy of thy blessed communion, and the true love and compassion which thy children have and feel towards their brethren; that I may rejoice in all trouble, in respect of that joyful communion; that I may deny myself, to honour thy children upon earth, and endeavour myself to do them good, for thy sake, through Jesus Christ our Lord. I come only to thee to give me that which I cannot and must not have elsewhere; and thou requirest it of me, that therefore I should, as thy child, come and crave it to thy glory.

WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

As by these words, *OUR FATHER*, I am taught to glory and rejoice for the blessed communion which I am called to with thee, dear Father, with thy Christ, and with thy holy church, so also am I here taught by these words, *WHICH ART IN HEAVEN*, to rejoice in respect of the place and blessed joys, whereunto at length in thy good time I shall come. For now I may perceive, that as heaven is thy home, so it is mine also, being, as I am, thy child through Christ, although here for a time I am bodily on earth and in misery.

Again, by these words, *WHICH ART IN HEAVEN*, I am admonished not only to discern thee from earthly fathers, and to know that thou art almighty, present in all places, and of perfect purity, to confirm thereby my faith to be provoked the more to fear thee, to reverence thee, &c., but also I am admonished to judge of thy fatherly love by heavenly benefits, and not by corporeal benefits, simply and alone. For often the wicked prosper more in the world, and have more worldly benefits, than thy children; so that by this I see thou wouldst pull up my mind from earth and earthly things, to heaven and heavenly things; and that I should see further by corporeal benefits thy heavenly providence for me. For if thou place me thus on earth, and thus bless me as thou dost, and hitherto hast done,

from my youth up, since thou art not so careful for my body as for my soul, how should I but think much of thy providence for it in thy home, where is such glory as the eye hath not seen, &c. Of which things these corporeal benefits of thine, given me on earth, should be as it were inductions,* and the taking of them away admonitions to be more mindful of permanent things, and less mindful of transitory things.

By reason hereof I have great cause to lament and to rejoice. To lament, because I am so earthly-minded, so little desirous of my home, so unthankful for thy providence, and fatherly corrections here on earth. To rejoice, because of my home, and the great glory thereof, because thou dost so provide for me here, because thou dost so correct and chasten me, &c. But, alas! I am altogether a wretch, earthly, and unthankful, not only for these corporeal benefits, health, riches, friends, fame, wisdom, &c., for thy fatherly correction, sickness, temptation, &c., but also for thy heavenly benefits, for Jesus Christ, for the promise of thy Spirit, for thy gospel, &c., yea, even for heaven itself, and thy whole glory, as the Israelites were for the land of Canaan, and therefore never enjoyed it, but perished in the wilderness. (Psalm cvi.) I am proud in prosperity, and forget thee, waxing secure and careless, &c. I am impatient in the cross, and too much consider worldly disadvantage. Oh! dear Father, forgive me, for thy Christ's sake, all mine unthankfulness, love of this world, contempt and oblivion of thy heavenly benefits; and grant me thy Holy Spirit, to illuminate the eyes of my mind with the light and lively knowledge of thy presence, power, wisdom, and goodness in thy creatures, but especially in Christ Jesus, thy Son; and so by the same Spirit inflame mine affection, that I may desire nothing in earth but thee, and to be present with thee, that my conversation may be in heaven continually. From whence grant me still to look for the Lord Jesus, to make this my vile body like unto his own glorious and immortal body, according to his own power, by which he is able to do all things. As thou hast given me to be thy child, so I pray thee give me these things which are the properties of thy children, given from thee in thy good time. (Col. iii. Phil. iii.)

* Should lead me on.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Thy name is that whereby thou art known, for names serve to distinguish and make known one thing from another. Now, though thou art known by thy creatures, yet in this our corrupt estate they serve but to make us excuseless. (Rom. i.) Therefore properly, most lively, and comfortably thou art known by thy holy word, and especially by thy promise of grace, and freely pardoning and receiving us into thy favour for Christ Jesus's sake; for which goodness in Christ thou art praised and magnified, (Psalm xlvi. cxxxviii.) according to thy name. That is, by so much as men know thee in Christ, they magnify thee, and praise thee, which here thou callest hallowing or sanctifying, not that thou art the more holy in respect of thyself, but in respect of men, who, the more they know thee, the more they cannot but sanctify thee, that is, they cannot but as in themselves by true faith, love, fear, and spiritual service, honour thee; so also, in their outward behaviour and words, they cannot but live in such sort, as others, seeing them, may in and by their holiness and godly conversation be occasioned to know thee, and to sanctify thy name accordingly. And therefore thou settest forth here unto me what is the chief and principal wish and desire of thy children and people, namely, that thou in Christ mightst be truly known and honoured, both of themselves and of others, inwardly and outwardly. By reason whereof a man may easily perceive that the greatest sorrow and grief thy people have, is ignorance of thee, false service or religion, and wicked conversation: against which they pray and labour diligently after their vocations, as they, for the obtaining of the others, both to others and themselves, take no small pains in prayer, study, and godly exercise. By reason hereof I see that I am far from this desire and lamentation, which is in thy children: I see my ignorance of the true knowledge of thee and thy name; for else it had not needed that thou by thy word shouldst have so revealed thyself. I see also my ignorance of the excellency of the same; for else wouldst thou not have told me, that the sanctifying of thy name is the chief thing thou requirest of every man. Again, I see my great want of holiness; for else thou needest not to teach me to seek and pray for that I want not. Moreover, I see my great perverseness, which

would not seek at thy hands for sanctification, although I see my need thereof: for else thou wouldst not have commanded me to pray for it, if I, seeing my want, would have prayed unto thee therefore. Last of all, I see thy wonderful goodness, who wilt undoubtedly give unto me sanctification and holiness; for thou wouldst not that I should ask for that thing which thou wilt not give me; so that I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because I am so far from this desire and lamentation, which thy children have; also because of my ignorance, poverty, perversity, unthankfulness, &c., but most of all, because thy holy name, word, and religion, is so blasphemed, both in doctrine and living, by many, especially in this realm. To rejoice, I have great cause, for thy exceeding goodness and mercy, who wouldst so disclose thyself by thy works, words, and gospel, who wouldst open these things thus unto me, and also give unto me and unto others sanctification in thy sight by faith, and also in the sight of men by pureness of life and godly conversation.

But, alas! I heartily do neither the one nor the other, that is, lament and rejoice, as thou, Father, who searchest my heart, right well dost know. Oh! be merciful unto me, and forgive me, yea, give me of thine own pity, thy Holy Spirit to reveal and open to my mind effectually my miserable estate and condition; my ignorance, perversity, and my carelessness, for thy true honour and dishonour; in such sort that I may heartily lament these evils, and have them pardoned and taken from me through Jesus Christ our Lord. Again, good Father, give me the same Holy Spirit to reveal to me thy name, word, and gospel, that I may lively know thee, unfeignedly love thee, heartily obey thee, and, above all things, desire and labour by all lawful means, that all godliness in doctrine and conversation may be exercised both in me and in all others, for whom thou wouldst I should pray.

(Here think upon the state of religion, and the life of the professors of the gospel, that you may lament for some, pray for some, and give thanks for some.)

LET THY KINGDOM COME.

Thy kingdom is to be considered in two points,—universally and particularly; universally, according to the power of God, wherewith he governs all things every where; in earth, heaven, hell; devils, angels, men, beasts, fowls, fishes, and all creatures, animate and inanimate, sensible and insensible. Of this kingdom David spake, when he said, “Thy kingdom ruleth over all.” Particularly thy kingdom is to be considered according to thy grace wherewith thou, O Lord, reignest in thy church and elect people, ruling and governing all and every member of thy church to thy glory and their eternal comfort. Not that I exclude thy power out of this church, (for as therewith thou defendest thy people, so thou punishest thine enemies,) but because thy grace is specially considered, being, as it were, the very keeper that keepeth and guideth thy people. The time will be, when this kingdom of grace and power, now being distinct, shall be united and made one kingdom of glory, which will be when Christ shall give up his kingdom into thine hands; that is, in the resurrection, when death, the last enemy, shall be subdued, and thou shalt be all in all. In the mean season, this kingdom of grace is miraculously and mightily propagated, enlarged and governed by the true ministry of thy word and sacraments, through the working of thy Holy Spirit. And this is the mean and way, whereby as thou didst first plant, so thou dost enlarge, amplify, and preserve the same. This kingdom of grace, begun, continued, and enlarged, by the true preaching of thy gospel, and ministration of thy sacraments, is the thing which Christ here teaches thy children to pray for, “that it might come,” that is to say, that thy gospel might so mightily, purely, and plenteously be preached, (notwithstanding the opposition of all thine enemies,) that the number of thine elect might be brought in, and so the kingdom of thy glory might appear. So that I see thy children desire, pray, and labour that thy gospel might be truly preached, heard, and lived in themselves, and in others; also they lament the not preaching and refusing, the not living and the unbelieving, thy gospel; yea, they lament the lingering of the coming of thy Christ; for in his coming, they know

they shall be like unto him, and having this hope, they purify themselves as he is pure. (1 John iii.)

By reason hereof I see first, that I am far from this desire and lamenting, which thy children have. I see my ignorance of thy kingdom and power every where, in thy grace, in thy church, and of thy glory, when all the enemies of thy grace shall be cast down, and thy glory and power shall embrace each other. I see my ignorance, how acceptable a service to thee is the true preaching and the hearing of thy gospel; for else thou hadst not needed to have placed this petition next to the petition of the sanctifying of thy name. Again, I see here my inability to enter into thy kingdom, and to attain to it; for else what need should I have to pray for that to come from thee, which otherwise might be achieved? Thirdly, I see also my perversity and contempt of thy kingdom and grace; for although I see my want, yet I should not desire thy kingdom to come, if thou didst not command me to pray so; for if I would have prayed for it of myself, thou wouldst not have commanded me. Last of all, I see thy goodness, who wilt bring thy kingdom, and that generally, by sending forth ministers to preach truly, and particularly by regenerating me more and more, and by giving me grace here, and glory elsewhere; for thou wouldst not I should pray for that which thou wilt deny. So that I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament because of my miserable state and condition, because of my sin, ignorance, rebellion, perversity, Satan's power, contempt of thy grace, thy gospel, and ministry, here or elsewhere. To rejoice, because of thy goodness and great mercy, who hast brought me into thy church, keepest me in it, and wilt do so still. Also because of the ministry of thy word and sacraments, by which the Holy Ghost is, and will be, effectual. And, finally, because of that great glory, whereunto thou hast called me, and now wilt give unto me, asking the same. But, alas! how unthankful I am and sorrowless, Lord, thou knowest, for my heart is not hid from thee. Oh! be merciful unto me, and forgive me, good Father, and grant the Spirit of thy children, to reveal unto me my ignorance of thy kingdom, my poverty and perversity, that I may lament the same, and daily labour for thy help and thy Holy Spirit, to suppress the kingdom of sin in myself and in others. Again, grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me thy kingdom of power, grace, and glory, to kindle

mine affections, to regenerate me more and more, to reign in me as in a part of thy kingdom, to give to me to desire, to pray, and to labour for thy kingdom; both for myself and to others, effectually to thy glory; and to assure my conscience of thy goodness, that thou wilt give me grace and glory.

(Here call to mind the state of the ministry and ministers, the light and life of gospellers, the errors and heresies which men are entangled withal.)

THY WILL BE DONE.

As thy power is infinite, so is thy wisdom accordingly; whereby, as we may perceive, that nothing is or can be done against thy power, or otherwise than by it; so is there not, nor can be, any thing done against or otherwise than by thy omnipotent and secret will; which is always, as thou art, good, holy, and just, how far soever it seem otherwise to our foolish reason and judgment: and therefore we are taught to pray, that thy will may be done here, without sin, on man's behalf, as it is on the angels' behalf in heaven.

Again, forasmuch as thou art incomprehensible of thyself, as well concerning thy power as concerning thy wisdom, we may not, according thereto, search thee, but rather adore and worship thy majesty, and tremble at thy judgment and works; and therefore we pray always, that we may be content with thy will, and be obedient thereto. And forasmuch as thou hast revealed to us so much of thy will in thy written word as is necessary for us to know in this life, yea, as much as we can attain unto, and even further, we ought to reckon all things done thereagainst as sin and transgression, although thou canst use the same sin to serve thy providence. Of which providence we cannot, and may not judge further than thou hast and shalt open it unto us; so that this petition, **THY WILL BE DONE**, is not simply to be understood concerning thy omnipotent will unrevealed, against which nothing is or can be done; but rather concerning thy will revealed in thy law and gospel, which thou here teachest me, that we should desire, not only to know it, but also to do it, and that in such perfection and willingness as it is in heaven. Which I perceive hereby, that thy children desire daily in

and for themselves and others, and lament the contrary in whomsoever it be; so that their eyes often gush out with rivers of tears, because men keep not thy laws. Psalm cxix.

By reason hereof I see that I am far from the sighs and tears of thy people. I see my ignorance of thy will, if thou hadst not opened the same by thy own mouth. I see my ignorance, how acceptable a service obedience to thy will is, and therefore thou dost place this petition among the first and continual desires of thy children. Again, I see my poverty in godly obedience, who have need to be taught to pray for it, thereby to signify unto me my want and inability to attain it, but by thy gift. Thirdly, I see my disobedience: for thou never wouldst have commanded me to have prayed for the doing of thy will, if I, seeing my want, would have prayed so.

Last of all, I see thy goodness, which will give to me and others to obey thy will; that is, to love thee with all our hearts, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to die to ourselves, to live to thee, to take up our cross, and follow thee, to believe, to repent; for else thou wouldst never have commanded us to pray for a thing which we should not look for.

So that I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because of my miserable state and condition, because of my sin, ignorance, poverty, and perversity; also because thy will every where is either not known or contemned, and Satan's will—the will of the world and of the flesh, is readily obeyed. To rejoice, I have great cause, for that thou hast opened thyself and thy will unto mankind; for that also thou peculiarly hast taught me these things, and because also thou wilt grant me grace to do the same. But, alas! how unthankful I am, and how hard-hearted, thou Lord dost know. Oh! be merciful unto me, and forgive me. I pray thee, gracious God, grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me my ignorance of thy will, my poverty and perversity, that I may heartily bewail it, and by thy help and working of the same Spirit may suppress the will of the flesh. Again, grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me thy will declared in thy law and gospel, that I may truly know the same, and so inflame my affections, that I may will and love the same, so that it may be my meat and drink to do thy will.

Here call to mind the ten commandments of God, particularly or generally, what he requires therein, and pray for the same particularly as you see your need, and that not only for yourself, but also for others.

Pray for patience to suffer whatever cross God shall lay upon you, and pray for them that are under the cross, that they may be patient. Pray for spiritual wisdom in every cross, privately or publicly, that you may see and love God's will.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

By BREAD, as the food of the body, all things necessary for this corporeal life are understood, as meat, drink, health, success in our callings, &c. By this word GIVE, we should understand that not only spiritual things, but also corporeal benefits are God's free gifts, and come not for our worthiness, or travail* taken about the same, although our travails oftentimes are means by which God doth give corporeal things.

By DAILY, are understood the contented minds of thy children, O Lord, with that which is sufficient for the present time, as having hope in thee, that they shall not want, but that they shall daily receive at thy hands plenty and enough of all things. By the word OUR, are public benefits understood, as peace in the common weal, good magistrates, seasonable weather, good laws, &c. as well as particular benefits, such as children, health, name, success in the works of our vocation, &c. And besides this, by it we should see the care even in corporeal things, which thy children have for others as well as for themselves.

So that here I may learn how far I am from what I should be, and what I see thy children are come unto. I see my ignorance also, that as spiritual things come from thee, so do temporal things; and as they come from thee, so they are conferred and kept of thee. And therefore thy children are thankful and look for them, as thy mere gifts, notwithstanding the means which they use if they have them. Howbeit they use them but as means, for except thou work therewith, all is in vain. Psal. cxxvii.

Again, here I am taught to be content with sufficient for the present time, as thy children are, which have the shortness of this life always before their eyes, and there-

* Labour.

fore they ask but for daily sustenance, knowing this life to be compared to a day, yea, a watch,* a sound, a shadow, &c. Moreover, I may learn to see the compassion and brotherly care thy children have one for another. Last of all, here I may see thy goodness, by which thou wilt give me all things necessary for this life (or else thou wouldst not bid me ask, &c.) and thou commandest all men to pray and care for me, and that bodily; much more then, if they are able, they are commanded to help me both in body and soul. By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and rejoice; to lament, because I am not so affected as thy children are, because of my ignorance, my ingratitude, my perversity, and contempt of thy goodness, and of the necessity of thy people, who, alas! are in great misery, some in exile, some in prison, some in poverty, sickness, &c.† To rejoice, I have great cause, because of thy goodness, in teaching me these things, in commanding me to ask whatsoever I want, in giving me so many things unasked, in keeping the benefits given me, in commanding men to care for me, to pray for me, to help me, &c. But, alas! how far I am from true lamentation and rejoicing, Lord, thou knowest. Oh! be merciful unto me, and help me, forgive me, and grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me my need, ignorance, great ingratitude and contempt of thy mercies and thy people; and that in such a manner that I may heartily lament and bewail my misery, and through thy goodness be brought with thy people to mourn for the miseries of thy children as for mine own.

Again, reveal to me thy goodness, dear Father, even in corporeal things, that I may see thy mercies, thy presence, power, wisdom, and righteousness, in every creature and in corporeal benefits, and that in such sort, that I may be thoroughly affected, truly to reverence, fear, love, obey thee, to hang upon thee, to be thankful to thee, and in all my need to come unto thee; not only when I have ordinary means by which thou commonly workest, but when I have none, yea, when all are entirely against me.

Here remember the state of your children and family; also your parents, neighbours, kinsfolks; also your friends, country, and magistrates, &c. as you shall have time there-to and by God's good Spirit shall be excited.

* A short space of time. Psalm xc. 4.

† This was written during the persecutions of queen Mary.

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT ARE DEBTORS UNTO US.

By our DEBTS are understood, not only things we have done, but the omission and leaving undone of the good things we ought to do.

By OUR, are not only the particular sins of one understood, but also generally the sins of all and every one of thy church.

By FORGIVENESS are free pardon and remission of sins understood, by the merits and deserts of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for us.

By our forgiving other men's offences towards us is understood thy good will, not only that it pleases thee that we should live in love and amity, but also that thou wouldst have us be certain of thy pardoning us our sins. For as we are certain that we pardon them that offend us, so should we be certain that thou dost pardon us, whereof the forgiving our trespasses is (as it were) a sacrament unto us.

So that by this petition I am taught to see that thy children, although by imputation they are pure from sin, yet they acknowledge sin to be and to remain in them, and therefore they pray for remission and forgiveness.

Again, I am taught hereby to see how thy children consider and take to heart, not only the evils they do, but also the good they leave undone. And therefore they pray to thee heartily for pardon.

Moreover, I am here taught to see that thy children are careful for other men, and for their trespasses; and therefore pray that they may be pardoned, in saying OUR SINS, and not *my* sins.

Besides this, I am taught here to see, how thy children not only forgive all that offend them, but also pray for the pardoning of the offences of their enemies, and such as offend them; so far are they from malice, pride, revenge, &c. Last of all, I am taught to see how merciful thou art, who wilt have me to ask pardon; whereof thou wouldst that we should in no point doubt, but be most assured, that for Christ's sake thou hearest us, and that not only for ourselves, but also for many others; for thou dost not command us to ask for any thing thou wilt not give us.

By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because of my miserable state, who am so far from the affections that are in thy children—who am so ignorant and careless of sin, not only in leaving good undone, but also in doing evil, and that daily in thought, word, and deed. I speak not of my carelessness for other folk's sins, as those of my parents, children, family, magistrates, &c., neither of the sins of them to whom I have given occasion to sin.

To rejoice, I have great cause, because of thy mercy in opening to me these things, in commanding me to pray for pardon, in promising me pardon, and in commanding others to pray for me. I ought surely to be persuaded of thy mercy, though my sins are innumerable. For I see not only in this, but in every petition, that every one of thy church prays for me; yea, even Christ thy Son, who sitteth on thy right hand, prayeth for me. Oh! dear Father, be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my sins, and of thy goodness give me thy Holy Spirit, to open mine eyes, that I may see sin, the better to know it, the more truly to hate it, and most earnestly to strive against it, and that effectually, both in myself and others.

Again, grant me thy Holy Spirit to reveal unto me the remedy of sin, by Christ alone; and to work in me by faith to embrace thy Christ and thy mercies in him; that I may henceforth be endued with thy Holy Spirit more and more, to begin and obey thy good will continually, and to increase in the same for ever.

Here call to mind the special sins you have committed heretofore. Remember, if you have occasioned any to sin, to pray for them by name; remember that God's law should be so near unto us, that the breaking thereof in others should be an occasion to make us to lament with tears, &c.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM
EVIL.

Because of our continual and great infirmities, because of the great diligence and subtlety of our enemies, and because thou art wont to punish sin with sin, (which of all punishments is the greatest and most to be feared,) in this petition thou wouldest have thy children keep the

same in remembrance, and for a remedy hereof thou hast appointed prayer. So that the only cause why any are overcome, and led into temptation, is because they forget what they desire in the petition going before this, which should be never out of their memory, to provoke them to be more thankful to thee, and more vigilant and careful hereafter of falling into like perils; for the avoiding of which thou dost most graciously set forth a remedy, in commanding us to pray for pardon of our sins past, for thy grace to guide us; so that we be not led into temptation, but be delivered from evil. And because thou wouldest have all thy children hang wholly upon thee, fear thee only, and love thee only, thou dost not teach them to pray, "Suffer us not to be led," but "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION," that they might alone fear thee. I certainly know that Satan hath no power over so much as the swine, (Matt. viii. ;) but whatsoever thou givest unto him, and of thy secret but most just judgment dost appoint him to use. Not as he will, (for then we were all lost,) but as thou wilt, who canst will nothing but that which is most just; so as to give them to the guiding of Satan, which will not be guided by thy grace, as thou didst Saul.

Occasions to evil are of two sorts; one by prosperity and success, the other by adversity and the cross. The evils coming of success, commonly are unthankfulness, pride, security, and forgetting ourselves, forgetfulness of others, forgetfulness of God, of our mortality. The evils coming of adversity, commonly are impatience, murmuring, grudging, despairing, contemning of God, flattering of men, stealing, and lying, with many other evils, whereto temptations will entice a man that is left to himself; whereas, to one that is guided by God's Spirit, temptations are only TRIALS to the glory of God, the comfort of the tempted, and the edifying of thy church. But, as I said, if a man is left alone, temptations entice even to the devil himself; and therefore thy children pray to be delivered from evil, understanding thereby Satan himself, the sower and supporter of all evil. And this thy children do, as well for others as for themselves, so that I may learn herefrom many good things.

First, often to remember our infirmities and weakness, and the dangerous state we stand in, in respect of our

flesh; of the world, which is full of evil; of Satan, who seeketh to sift us, and as a roaring lion to destroy us; and of our sins, which deserve all kinds of punishment and correction, that I may with thy children fear thee, watch, pray, and desire the day of redemption from all evils.

Again, I may learn here, that to avoid all dangers and evils, is not in the power of man, but only thy work. By reason whereof I should consider thy great goodness, who hitherto hast kept me from so many evils, both of soul and body; yea, of name, goods, &c., as thou hast done in my infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, &c.

Thirdly, I may learn here, that I should be careful for others, both that they might be delivered from their evils, and that they might be preserved from temptation, and from being overcome in the same; and therefore thou teachest me to pray, not merely "deliver *me* from evil," but "DELIVER US FROM EVIL."

Last of all, I am taught hereby to see thy goodness towards me, who wilt deliver me from evil, and from being overcome in temptations; for thou wouldest not have me ask for that which I should not look for at thy hands certainly. By reason whereof thou wouldest have me to be in a certainty of salvation for ever: for I cannot believe my prayer to be heard, if I should not finally be delivered from evil; and therefore thou joinest hereto a giving of thanks, which, with thy church, I should say, FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THINE IS THE POWER, THINE IS THE GLORY FOR EVER.

By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and to rejoice. To lament, because of my corruption, infirmity, weakness, oblivion and carelessness for thy people, ingratitude, &c., because of Satan's power, vigilance, and prudence,* which have overcome many most grave, wise, and holy men, whereof some were never recovered. To rejoice, because of thy goodness, who teachest me this, and showest me the remedy; commandest all thy church to pray for me, and wilt at length deliver me from all evil, and give me glory. But, alas! I am altogether careless and miserable. Oh! be merciful unto me, dear Father, and for Christ's sake forgive me all my sins; grant me thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me mine infirmities, weakness, perils, and dangers, in such sort, that I may heartily

* Subtlety.

lament my miseries, and may ask and obtain thy grace to guide me from all evil for evermore.

Again, grant me thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me thy love and kindness towards me, (and that in eternity,) so that I may be thoroughly persuaded of the same, become thankful unto thee, and daily expect and look for the revelation of thy kingdom, power, and glory, as one that for ever shall have the enjoyment of the same, through thine own goodness and mercy in Christ, prepared for me before the beginning and foundation of the world were laid.

Here call to mind our security, Satan's vigilance, our negligence, his diligence, our infirmity, his ability, our ignorance, his craftiness and subtlety.

Also, call to mind how that he hath overthrown for a time many of the dear saints of God, to whom we are to be compared in nothing.

Also, call to mind the goodness of God, and of our Shepherd Christ, who has kept us hitherto, keeps us still, and teaches us here to know that he will keep us for ever. For he would not have us ask for deliverance from evil, if he would not that we should certainly look for the same. If thou doubt of final perseverance, thou dishonourest God. Be certain therefore, rest in hope, be still in his word. See also how he has commanded his whole church, and every member thereof, to pray for thee as well as for themselves, in these and all other things.

Now and then reckon how many and divers kinds of evils there are, that thereby, as you may know you are delivered from none, but by God's great goodness, so you may see that the number of evils which you have, are nothing to be compared to the multitude of evils wherewith (if your Christ were not) the devil would betray and daub you.

But what are all the miseries and evils that can be, when compared to the least joys prepared for us in heaven? Oh! think of those joys, and pray that when the tide of death cometh, we may sail forth from the haven of this flesh and this world joyfully. In praying this petition, call to mind the evils you have been in, the evils you are in, and the evils you may fall into, if God should not preserve you, that you may be stirred up the more to thankfulness, to prayer, to trust in God to modesty, &c.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THINE IS THE POWER, THINE
IS THE GLORY FOR EVER.

As, in the beginning of this prayer, by the words *OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN*, thy children are excited and stirred up to a full confidence of obtaining the petitions which follow, and all things necessary; so, in the latter end, thou hast added for the same purpose these words, *FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, &c.*; wherein I am taught many things. First, that in prayer I should have such consideration of thy kingdom, power, glory, and eternity, that my mind should be stricken with admiration of the same. Secondly, that I should so consider them, especially in prayer, that I should not doubt but that thou workest, rulest, and governest all things everywhere, in all persons and creatures, most wisely, justly, and mercifully. Thirdly, that in prayer all my petitions should tend to the setting forth of thy power, of thy kingdom, and of thy glory. Last of all, that in prayer I should in no wise doubt of being heard, but be assured that thou, who hast commanded me to pray, and hast promised to hear me, dost most graciously, for thy mercy's sake and truth's sake, hear my petitions, according to thy good will, through Jesus Christ thy dear Son, our Lord and only Saviour. By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because I consider not these things in prayer in such a manner as should move me to admiration and gratitude; because I consider not thy power and wisdom generally in all things; because I am so careless for thy kingdom, and because I am so full of dubitation and doubting of thy goodness. To rejoice, I have great cause, because thou revealest these things unto me in this manner; because of thy power, kingdom, and glory, which cause my prayers to be heard, and help me; because thou wilt use me as thine instrument to set forth thy kingdom, power, and glory, and because it pleases thee to hear my prayers, and thou assuredly wilt save me for ever.

But, alas! how far am I from these lamentations and rejoicings! by reason whereof I deserve damnation. Oh! be merciful unto me, and forgive me, and of thy goodness grant me thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me my blindness, oblivion, and contempt of thy kingdom, power, and glory,

with the greatness of my doubtings, that I may heartily lament them, and have them pardoned, and taken from me, through the merits of Jesus Christ thy Son.

Again, give me thy Holy Spirit so to reveal to me thy kingdom, power, glory, and eternity, that I may always have the same before mine eyes, be moved with admiration thereof, labour effectually to set forth the same; and finally, have the enjoyment thereof after this life, increasing in an assured, certain, and lively expectation of the same, that I may always, and in all things, rejoice in thee through Christ, and give laud, thanks, and praises perpetually unto thy most holy name, O blessed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, to whom be all honour and glory world without end.

Here think, that if the kingdom, power, glory, and eternity be God's, who is our Father, what our dignity is, who are his children. If the power is our Father's, of whom should we be afraid? If the devil is subject to the Lord's power and kingdom, (as he is,) how can the subject have power over us, who are sons and heirs, since he has not power even over swine, without the providence and permission of God? Therefore full well should we pray, "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION," rather than "Let us not be led into temptation." For power is the Lord's, and the devil hath none, but what he has of God's gift. No; he were not able to receive power, if God did not make him able, although the execution of it is rather of God's permission.

Give all thanks, praise, and glory to God our Father, through Christ our Lord and Saviour. So be it.

II. UPON THE TWELVE ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER, &c.

O LORD GOD, the Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, thy people in saying this article, I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, &c., by faith know that thou, together with Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, didst create all things that are in heaven and in earth, for by heaven and earth are understood all things therein. And as they know this, so they by the same faith do see thee the same God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, governing all things after thy great wisdom, power, righteousness, and mercy, and using every creature they see as means to put them in remembrance of fearing, reverencing, trusting, and loving thee; for in every creature they behold thy presence, power, wisdom, and mercy.

Again, by this word FATHER, they declare their belief that they are not only thy creatures, and that all they have is thy gracious gift and blessing; but also that they are thy children, dearly beloved, and cared for of thee through Jesus Christ; whereby, (notwithstanding their unworthiness,) as they conceive a sure hope of thy goodness and fatherly love towards them, in soul and body for ever, so they are thankful for their creation, and also that thou hast made them thy excellent creatures, lords of all. They are thankful for the creation of all creatures, and use them with thankfulness, as visible tokens of thy invisible love. They are thankful for thy preserving and keeping them, and for thy governing them and all the world, lamenting that they are no more thankful, that they believe no deeper, and that reason* has so great power with them in these matters.

But, most gracious good Lord and Father, though I say, I BELIEVE IN THEE, MY FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, yet thou knowest that I am full of much doubting, not only whether thou art my good, almighty, and most loving dear Father in Christ, because I feel in myself such a consciousness of unworthiness, and such great want of the things which thou requirest of thy children, (and so I transfer the cause of my being

* Human reasoning, unbelief.

thy child in part to myself, whereas it is due only and wholly always to thy mercy and grace in Christ,)—but also thou knowest my doubting of my creation and governance, and of the creation and governance of all this world, as I declare by my unthankfulness for my creation, for mine adoption, for my gubernation,* for thy providence for me. Or else, dear Father, I could not but heartily with thy children rejoice and praise thy holy name, and that continually; being henceforth anxious for nothing but how to please thee, and profit thy people, and that they might praise thy name in all things for evermore, desiring the sanctification of thy name, the coming of thy kingdom, the doing of thy will upon earth as it is in heaven.

Thou mightest have made me a dog, but of thy goodness hast made me a creature after thine image. Thou mightest have made me a Turk, a Jew, a Saracen, but thou hast made me a Christian, a member of thy church. Thou, after my birth, mightest have left me, and in all need have made no provision for me, as we sometimes see has happened unto others; but yet thou never didst so with me, and yet I am of all others most unthankful.

Thy creatures I use not thankfully; I consider not thy invisible love by thy manifold visible tokens, as I now should by this apparel of my body, by this bodily health, by this light, by this my hearing, seeing, feeling, memory, understanding, time, place, company, creatures, and benefits; as well in keeping innumerable evils from me, both in soul and body, which else could not but come to me; as also in giving to me now so many things, which without thy especial grace and working I never could have had, or could keep. In thy creatures I see not thy power, for I fear thee not; I see not thy presence, for I reverence thee not; I see not thy wisdom, for I adore thee not; I see not thy mercy, for I love thee not; I praise thee not but in lips and tongue. Therefore in all that thy creatures do teach me, they cry out upon me to be thankful to thee, to love, fear, serve thee, and trust in thee, and that continually; and since I do not so, they cannot but cry out upon me and against me in thy sight, and in the day of judgment they will arm themselves against me.

Oh that I now considered this! Oh that my blind eyes and my deaf ears were opened! Oh that my miserable and foolish heart were made wise and converted! This

* Being governed or guided.

thou alone canst do who hast all men's hearts in thy hands, to bow them as pleases thee. Bow my heart, good Lord, into thy testimonies. Open my eyes. Make me to hear, for thy mercy's sake, that I may believe and so love thee, be thankful to thee, amend in all things and serve thee, though not as thy dear servants do, yet at the least as brute creatures do; that is, to obey thee and to be profitable to others.

Now forasmuch as my sins hinder this, and all good things from me, I beseech thee to pardon me all my sins according to thy gracious promise, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, &c.

Thy servants, O Christ Jesus, and thy people, know by faith, that as thou art almighty and God with the Father, by whom all things were made and are ruled; for thou art God eternal, co-equal and co-substantial with the Father and the Holy Ghost; so also thou art man, and hast taken our nature upon thee by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and art become the blessed seed who hast bruised the serpent's head, (Gen. iii. ;) the blessed seed in whom all nations are blessed, (Gen. xxii. ;) the prophet whom Moses prophesied of, (Deut. xviii. ;) the pattern he saw in the mount, (Exod. xxv. ;) the truth and body of all the types, figures, and shadows of the old law; the Messias, Christ, and Saviour of thy people; the Advocate and Redeemer; the pacifier of God's wrath for sins, the opener of heaven, and the giver of everlasting life.

This they know thou broughtest to pass in thy human nature, by thy incarnation and nativity, by thy being here on earth, by thy living, teaching, fasting, praying, especially by thy suffering under Pontius Pilate; by thy death, burial, resurrection, ascension into the heavens, and reigning on the right hand of the Father, from whence thou shalt come to judge both the quick and the dead. And as they know this, so by faith they apply it also to themselves, that for their sake thou wast made man, didst pray, fast, wast tempted, didst die, didst rise again, and ascend into heaven; and there art set their Advocate, Bishop, and High priest, always appearing in God's sight for them, from whence they look for thee, knowing that thou wilt not enter into

judgment with them to condemn them, who didst suffer condemnation thyself for them.

By this faith they feel these affections in themselves, namely, the hatred of sin, the fear of God, the love of God, trust in thee, and love to thy church. The hatred of sin they feel, because it is so foul a thing that it could not be washed away with any other thing than with thy precious blood-shedding—the fear of God, because his anger is so great against sin, that no less price could pacify his wrath than thy most painful death—the love of God, because he has so loved them, that he would not spare thee, his dear Son, for them, even when they were his enemies—trust in thee, because thou hadst no respect to thyself, but most willingly gavest thyself wholly to be our Saviour and servant—love to thy people and church, because generally and particularly in every member of the same they see how dear they are to thee, and therefore they cannot but be so to them. Oh how they imitate and follow thy footsteps! How they rejoice when they are by affliction made like to thee! Oh how they lament their sins, ingratitude, unbelief; how they love thee, and wholly yield themselves up to thee! Whereas I, O gracious God, and dear Saviour, Jesus Christ, though I say I believe in thee, who wast conceived by the Holy Ghost, yet, alas! I do but babble this, for nothing is in me but unbelief. Of thy power and love, of thine anger and mercy, I have but an opinion, as my insensibleness and unthankfulness declare.

If a man should show me friendship but in a trifle, or suffer any thing at all for me, I could not but be thankful: thou, besides my creation, hast redeemed me, and brought me into the number of God's children, than which nothing is greater, and lo! I am unthankful.

Thou hast suffered much for me; from heaven thou camest into earth to fetch me into heaven, but I, alas, regard it not.

Thou didst bear my sins on thy back, suffering a most bitter death; but I am so far from thankfulness, that I loath thee still more and more.

Thou wouldest enter into communion with me, taking my nature unto thee, concerning the substance thereof, that I might enter into communion with thee concerning the qualities wherewith in thyself thou hast endued it, but I consider it not.

Thou didst die to deliver me from death, but I still more and more give thee cause to die, so ungrateful am I.

Thou didst rise to justify me, but I with the Jews would still keep thee down, because I would not leave my wickedness.

Thou ascendedst to heaven to take possession for me there, to be always in the sight of thy Father for me, to send me down gifts, and to pray for me; but I daily am pulling thee down again, as much as I am able. I am altogether earthly; I hide myself out of thy sight by forgetting thee; I reject and abuse thy gifts; I neglect prayer.

Thou art now in readiness to come to judge both quick and dead, but I tremble not at this, nor beseech thee before thou comest to be merciful unto me, and not to enter into judgment with me. Yea, I think nothing at all of thy coming: the wicked consider not the end, they think not on thy judgments.

Thou wouldest bring me to thy Father, that I might find grace; but I put this off, and therefore am worthy to feel thee a Judge, who refuse to feel thee a Saviour.

Now the cause of all these things is unbelief, which though it is natural, by reason of the corruption of our nature, yet I have augmented the same maliciously, in not labouring against it, and by continuing in all sin and wickedness, by reason whereof I deserve most justly thy anger thereon, even rejection from thy face for ever.

Long hast thou mourned, even with displeasure and anger, the incredulity of my heart; calling me therefrom, and offering me thy grace, which I have neglected and rejected, and therefore am never worthy to have it any more offered unto me; much more, then, I am unworthy to have grace given me to receive thy mercy.

Alas! what shall I do? Shall I despair, or, as long as I can, keep unmindful of my misery? O Saviour Christ Jesus, wilt not thou be merciful unto me? Thou didst die for me when I deserved it not, and is thy mercy now shortened? Wilt not thou give me thy grace, and take from my heart this horrible unbelief? Shall I never love thee? Shall I never hate sin? Shall I never, as with my mouth I say, I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, so in heart say the same? Shall Satan possess me for ever? O Christ Jesus, who hast led captivity captive, wilt not thou help me? Though I desire it not as I should, yet give me to desire when thou wilt.

Thou didst appear to destroy the work of the devil. Thou seest his work in me; good Christ, destroy his work, but not thy work. Save me, for thy great mercies' sake. Give me to believe in thee, in thy death, resurrection, and ascension. Pardon me my sins, and now mortify in me my corrupt affections. Raise me up and justify me. Regenerate me daily more and more. Give me faith of immortality, and the resurrection of this body. Give me faith to ascend into heaven, and to be certain that thou hast already taken possession for me there. Give me to look for thy coming, and to be ready for thy coming, to find mercy to everlasting life.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST.

O Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, who didst descend upon Christ our Saviour in his baptism in the likeness of a dove; thy children know that with the Father and the Son thou madest and rulest all creatures, visible and invisible; they know thee in their redemption to be no less willing and loving than the Father and the Son; for thou didst always declare Christ to be the Son of God, and gavest testimony inwardly in the hearts of thy elect to believe and embrace the same; and outwardly, by miracles and wonders, they know thee to be the comforter and governor whom Christ promised in his corporeal absence to teach, rule, keep, comfort, and govern his church and people.

Again, as in the former part of their belief they consider the works of creation and redemption; so in this part they consider the place where the same is most effectual and takes place, even thy holy church, which is catholic; that is, extending itself to all times, to all places, to all kinds of people.

For in this church alone they know that as all things were made, so the work of redemption was taken in hand, that the blessed Trinity might in this church be praised, magnified, served, and worshipped for ever.

This church is nothing but a communion and society of saints; that is, not only a society of all such as are, have been, or shall be thy people, but also a society or partaking of Christ Jesus, who is the Head of the same. Yea, by him of thee, O blessed Father! who art the Head of Christ, and of thee, O Holy Ghost! who now shadowest and sittest upon the same, to hatch and cherish it, as the hen her

chickens, by the extending of thy wings, not only to defend them from their enemies, but also to cover their sins, and to remit them in this life. Beginning also here the resurrection of the flesh and everlasting life, which thou wilt consummate in the end of the world, so that they shall not need to be covered for sin; for then shall they be pure and have glorious bodies, immortal and spiritual, which shall have the fruition of eternal joy, life everlasting, and glory, such as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man can conceive. For then Christ Jesus shall give up his kingdom to God the Father, that God may be all in all; concerning the governance of it by the ministration of his word, and other means, whereby now he governs it, that it may be his Father's kingdom, we being become like unto him, (1 John iii. :) that is, as the Godhead is united to the manhood of Christ, and is all in all without any other means; even so God shall be in us, assuming not only in the person of Christ the human nature, but also all the human nature of his church, who are members of Christ; the wicked and reprobate being separated from this communion, and cast into eternal perdition with Satan and anti-christ, there to be in torments and horror for ever.

By reason of this their faith they are thankful to thee, O Holy Spirit, who hast taught them this, and given them to believe it.

By reason of this faith they pray, love, and help thy church here militant, and labour to be holy.

By reason of this faith they confess themselves sinners, they desire and believe the pardon of their sins, they are risen and rise daily concerning the inward man, and feel the life eternal begun in them, more and more labouring, praying, wishing for, and desiring the same, wholly and perfectly.

Whereas, O Lord God and most gracious Holy Spirit, thou knowest that it is otherwise with me. I do but babble with my lips in saying I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, for I am unthankful for calling me into thy church; I do not live holily; I confess not, I lament not my sins, I pray not for remission of them, I stand in doubt thereof. I feel not myself risen from a sinful life as I should be. I feel not life begun in me as it is in thy dear children, and I doubt hereof, whether I have pardon of my sins, whether I am regenerate, whether I truly feel everlasting life: this most displeases thee, and yet with my tongue I say, I

BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST. Oh, I beseech thee, good Holy Spirit, for thy love's sake, which moved thee to agree and be willing to patefy and open thy goodness, not only in the work of creation (Gen. i. ii.) but also in the work of redemption; and therefore didst descend and abide not only upon Christ in his baptism, but also on the apostles and church, in fiery tongues, visibly, the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection; as now thou dost invisibly, generally, and particularly, sit upon thy church and children, being the consoler, the comforter, the teacher, and leader, the guider and governor of us all.

For this thy love's sake, I say, I beseech thee to be merciful unto me, and forgive me my doubting, unbelief, and horrible monstrous uncleanness and sin, and utterly take them from me. Bring me into thy church which thou guidest; that is, guide me, make me holy, and by faith unite me to Christ, by charity to thy people; that is, give me the communion of saints with thy saints, overshadow my sins, raise me up to righteousness, begin in me everlasting life, and give me now more and more to expect and look for all these great mercies, and at length to possess eternal felicity with thee, O blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one almighty eternal, most just, wise, and good God; to whom be all glory, power and dominion, now and for ever!

III. UPON THE COMMANDMENTS.

I AM THE LORD THY GOD, WHICH BROUGHT THEE OUT OF
THE LAND OF EGYPT, &c.

O good Lord and dear Father, who broughtest thy people of Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched-out power, who gavest thy law upon Mount Sinai in great thundering, lightning, and fire; who spakest by the prophets, and didst send thy dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, co-equal and co-substantial with thee in power, majesty, and glory, to take upon him our nature by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of whose substance he was made and born man, but pure, without sin; that we, by birth children of wrath, by him might be made thy children, children of grace—communicating with him righteousness, holiness, and immortality, by the working of the Spirit, as he communicated with us flesh and blood (but not infected with sin, as ours is,) by the working of the same Holy Spirit; which Spirit, after his bitter death, resurrection, and ascension into the heavens, he sent plentifully, and by a visible sign, unto his apostles and disciples; by whom he published the gospel throughout the whole world, and so continually hath done from age to age, doth, and will do unto the end of the world, by the ministry of preaching. Thou wouldest that we should know and believe that thou, this Almighty Lord and God, who hast thus revealed and opened thyself, art the one only, very true and eternal Almighty God, who madest and rulest heaven and earth, and all things visible and invisible, together with this thy dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit, con-substantial and co-eternal with thee, dear Father. And not only this, but also thou wouldest that I should know and believe, that by the same, thy dearly beloved Son, thou hast brought me from the tyranny and captivity of Satan and this sinful world, whereof the captivity of Egypt under Pharaoh was a figure; and in his blood shed upon the cross thou hast made a covenant with me, which thou wilt never forget, that thou art and wilt be my Lord and my God; that is, thou wilt forgive me my sins, and be wholly mine, with all thy power, wisdom, righteousness, truth, glory, and mercy. Wherefore, although I might confirm my faith by the

innumerable mercies hitherto poured upon me most abundantly, as thy children of Israel might have done, and did confirm their faith by the manifold benefits poured upon them in the desert; yet specially the seal of thy covenant, I mean thy holy sacrament of baptism, wherein thy holy name was not in vain called upon me (O dear Father, sweet Son and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and most gracious good Holy Ghost,) should most assuredly confirm, and even on all sides seal up my faith of this covenant, that thou art my Lord and my God. Even as Abraham and thy people of Israel did by the sacrament of circumcision, which as the apostle called the seal or signal of righteousness, so dost thou call it; being but the sign of thy covenant indeed, yet thy very covenant; because as thy word is most true and cannot lie, as thy covenant is a covenant of peace infallible and everlasting, even so the sacrament and seal of the same is a most true testimonial and witness thereof.

Thou, the Almighty God, of thine own goodness hast vouchsafed not only to make me a creature after thine own image and likeness, who mightest have made me a beast—to give unto me a reasonable soul endued with memory, judgment, &c. who mightest have made me an idiot, without wit or discretion, &c.—to endue me with a body beautified with right shape, limbs, health, &c. who mightest have made me a cripple, lame, blind, &c.—graciously to enrich me concerning fortune, friends, living, name, &c. who mightest have made me a slave, destitute of all friends and helps for this life. But also thou hast vouchsafed that I, being a miserable creature, born in sin, conceived in iniquity, to whom nothing is due (more than to a Turk, Jew, or Saracen) but eternal damnation, should be called into the number of thy people, enrolled in thy book, and now in thy covenant, so that thou, with all that ever thou hast, art mine; for which cause's sake hitherto thou hast kept me, cherished, defended, spared, and fatherly chastised me, and now graciously dost keep me and care for me, giving me to live, to be, and move in thee, expecting also and waiting how thou mightest show mercy upon me. (Isaiah xxx.) In consideration of this, most justly and reasonably thou requirest that, as thou art my Lord God, so I should be thy servant and one of thy people. As thou hast given thyself wholly unto me, to be mine, with all thy power, wisdom, &c. (for he that giveth him-

self giveth all he hath,) so should I be wholly thine, and give over myself unto thee, to be guided by thy wisdom, defended by thy power, helped, relieved, and comforted by thy mercy.

First therefore to begin withal, thou commandest that I should have none other gods in thy sight; that is to say, I should have thee for my Lord and God, and look for all good things most assuredly at thy hands; and therefore I should put all my trust in thee, be thankful unto thee, love thee, fear thee, obey thee, and call upon thy holy name in all my needs; and I should give this faith, love, fear, obedience, thankfulness and invocation, or prayer, to none other, no, not in my heart, but only to thee or for thee, where thou commandest. To do all this, O Lord God, and that with most joyful heart, I have great cause.

For what a thing is it, that thou, Jehovah, wouldest vouchsafe to make me, as thou hast done; to give thy Son for me, and to become my God! Oh! what am I, that thou wouldest I should put my trust in thee? This thou doest, that I might never be confounded, but might be most happy. What am I, that thou wouldest I should fear thee, when the only cause why thou requirest this of me, is not only because thou hast power to cast both body and soul into hell-fire, and because they that fear thee not shall perish, but also that thou mightest give me thy wisdom, that it might go well with me in the evil day, that thou mightest reveal thy Son to me, and that thy mercy might be upon me from generation to generation. Oh! what am I, that thou wouldest have me obey thee, not only that I should never perish with the disobedient, but that thou mightest give me thy Holy Spirit, and rewards innumerable? Oh! what am I, that thou wouldest I should love thee? which thing thou dost that I might fully and wholly enjoy and possess thee; and therefore dost thou require my whole heart, that I might dwell in thee, and thou in me. What am I, that thou wouldest I should call upon thee? Verily, because thou wilt give me whatsoever I shall ask of thee in the name of thy dear child Jesus Christ; even so thou wouldest have me thankful, that thou mightest pour out upon me, yet more plentifully, all good things. So that I have great cause to put my trust in thee, to love, fear, and obey thee, to call upon thee, to be thankful unto thee, not only in respect of the hurt which else will ensue, but also in respect of the advantage which

hereby comes unto me; but most of all, yea, alone for thy own sake, for thy goodness, wisdom, beauty, strength and power, truth and great mercies.

But, alas! dear Father, what shall I say? As in times past I have horribly broken this thy law, by trusting in thy creatures, calling upon them, loving, fearing, and obeying many things besides thee, and rather than thee; even so at this present time I am a most miserable wretch: I am blinded through unbelief and mine own wickedness; so that I see not firmly this thy power, wisdom, goodness, &c., but waver and doubt of it. I love thee little or nothing; I fear thee less, I obey thee least of all; thankfulness and prayer are utterly quenched in me; and therefore I deserve eternal damnation. If thou shalt deal with me only according to thy justice, I am, O Lord, condemned and lost for ever, for I am very wicked; but yet, inasmuch as thou hast given thy Son Jesus Christ to be a propitiatory sacrifice slain for the sins of the whole world, so that he which believeth in him shall not perish, but be saved (for so thou hast promised;) thy truth now requires thee to save me. Howbeit, here thou mayest say to me, that I do not believe; and therefore, notwithstanding thy truth and promise, since I believe it not, thou mayest most justly, according to thy justice, condemn me. O Lord God, to this I cannot otherwise answer, (my unbelief is so great,) but because thy mercy is over all thy works, and all creatures most highly commend and magnify thy goodness and love, as wherefore thou art called God; because thou art right good, and love itself—because of this thy merey, gracious God, if thou wilt look thereon, and unite thy truth therewith, then, good Lord, I shall be saved, and praise thy name for evermore.

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE TO THYSELF ANY GRAVEN
IMAGE, &c.

As the first commandment teaches me, that thou art my God, and what God thou art, and therefore I ought to have none other gods but thee; that is, I should hang on thee alone, trust in thee, love thee, serve thee, call upon thee, obey thee, be thankful to thee, so because thou didst reveal thyself visibly, that thou mightest visibly be worshipped, this commandment is concerning thy worship, that in worshipping thee, in no point I should

follow the device or intent of any man, saint, angel, or spirit; but should consider all such to be idolatry and image-service, be it ever so glorious. And why? Forsooth because thou wouldest I should worship thee, as thou hast appointed by thy word; for if service is acceptable, it must be done according to the will of him to whom it is done, and not of him who doeth it; but inasmuch as none knoweth the will and pleasure of a man but his spirit, except he reveal the same by word or sign; much more, O Lord, none knoweth thy will, except thy Spirit, and they to whom thou dost reveal the same. And therefore all those things which are abominable in thy sight, are in most force and estimation with men, because they are not according to thy word; so that the meaning of this precept is, that as in the first I should have none other gods but thee, so I should have no worship of thee, but such as thou appointest. Hereby therefore I see great cause of thankfulness for this commandment, since thou wouldest have mine outward service, and that after thy appointment; lest I should busy my brain how best to serve thee. Good Lord, thou needest not my service: thou wast perfect before I was in existence, therefore it is for my own advantage, that thou commandest me, yea, even for my own wealth. Thou mightest have let me stand all day idle; but such is thy love, that thou wouldest I should go into thy vineyard, that with thy servants I might receive the hire of blessedness. And how great a benefit is it, to deliver me from so great a burden, wherewith I should have been cumbered, if I should have served thee in any point after my wit and reason. But, alas! I, not considering what a promotion thy service is, nor what an easy service it is, and (for one may well know what to do, and when he pleases thee, namely, when he serves thee as thou hast appointed) simple as I am, and always have been unthankful; so I am, and always have been, a grievous transgressor of this thy law. For as in times past, when I did not know this commandment, I was an image-worshipper of stocks, stones, &c., yea, of bread and wine; so now I am a worshipper of mine affections, offering to them the service due unto thee, though not thereby to worship thee, as I thought when I kneeled to stocks and stones, bread and wine, &c., yet with no less transgression of thy law: for which I have deserved, and do deserve, everlasting damnation. Of thy goodness and great mercy,

dear Father, I beseech thee forgive me, for Christ's sake whom thou didst give to be the fulfilling of the law, to all them that should believe. O Father, I believe, help mine unbelief. As thou hast of thy goodness hitherto spared me, though transgressing this thy holy precept; so of thy goodness forgive me, as well mine idolatry done in times past, as that which of late time I have committed, and do commit. And as thou by this commandment hast delivered me from the one, that is, from bowing myself to stocks and stones, so, dear Father, deliver me from all other bowing myself after mine own will, to mine own affections; that I may have none other God in my heart but thee, nor do service to any other, but only to thee, and for thee, after thy word, as thou commandest. Oh! open mine eyes, to see thy will in this thy gracious precept. Give me a will to love it heartily, and a heart to obey it faithfully, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD
IN VAIN.

By this commandment I perceive, O Lord, that as, in the first, thou wouldest that in the outward service of thee I should utterly abandon mine own will and reason, and all the reasons or good entreaties of man, and wholly give myself to serve thee, after thy will and word; so here thou dost begin to tell me, how thou wilt have my tongue to be exercised in thy service. And therefore thou biddest me not to take thy name in vain; as by rash or vain swearing, by cursing; praying without sense, as those do that pray in a tongue they know not; praying without faith or consideration of the thing desired; without hearty desire and certain expectation of obtaining that which is to thy glory and my salvation; also by jesting or foolish abusing; or negligent reading or hearing of thy holy word; (by which thou, as by thy name, art known;) and in like manner, by denying thy truth and word, or concealing it when occasion is offered to promote thy glory, and confirm thy truth. By reason whereof I may well see that thou wouldest have me use my tongue, in humbly confessing thee and thy word and truth after my vocation; in praying heartily, and calling upon thy name; in reading and hearing thy word, and speaking thereof, with all reverence, diligence, and attention; in thanksgiving and praising thee, for thy great

mercy; in instructing my brother, and admonishing him when he erreth, after my calling and vocation, with all humbleness, gentleness, and love.

Thus wouldest thou have me exercise my tongue, and not think that the exercising of it in this manner is vain and unprofitable; but what pleases thee, and profits myself and others.

And forasmuch as thou knowest that our tongue is a slippery member, and we very negligent over it, and of the great advantage that might come to us and others by using it in thy service; thou hast added a fearful and most true communication, that though men find no fault, or punish us therefore, yet wilt thou not hold him guiltless that taketh thy name in vain, (Levit. xxiii.,) as by many examples we are taught, in thy holy word, and by daily experience, if we would consider the same.

And therefore I have great cause to give praise and thanks to thy most holy name, for many great benefits, which by this commandment I receive, and ought with thankfulness to consider. First, that it pleased thee, not only to give me a tongue, whereas thou mightest have made me speechless; but also that thou wouldest have it sanctified to thy service. Again, that thou wouldest not only reveal thy name unto us, but also wouldest give me leave to call upon it, and praise and publish it; yea, thou hast commanded me so to do, and not only commanded, but hast promised that thou wilt hear my prayer; and that my praising of thee, and confessing thy word and truth, shall not be in vain.

Thirdly, thou wouldest all men should use their tongue so that thereby I might be the better instructed, admonished, and occasioned to use myself well, and in the obedience of this thy holy precept. But why go I about to reckon the causes of thanks for this commandment, seeing that they are innumerable, if a man should but look upon thy word, by which, as by thy name, thou art most truly known. Which word thou commandest unto us in this commandment, as thou dost preaching, private admonishing, thanksgiving, and prayer; than which, nothing is more profitable to us, in this vale of misery. But, gracious good Lord, I acknowledge myself not only to be a most unthankful wretch, for this thy holy precept, and the great mercy which herethrough I perceive thou hast most graciously poured upon me, and dost yet still offer unto me; but also

that I am a miserable transgressor of this thy most holy, good, and blessed commandment, as I have always been in times past. Horribly have I abused thy name in swearing, cursing, and jesting wickedly. I have called upon other names than thine, as the names of Peter, Paul, Mary, &c., yea, of some whose salvation is to be doubted of.* I have foolishly prayed in such a tongue as I knew not what I prayed and said; with many other transgressions of this precept, wherein yet I am conversant; as in seldom praying, and when I pray I am not intent, nor very desirous of the thing I ask with my tongue. After prayer I do not earnestly look for the good things asked and prayed for; and therefore, when I obtain my request, I am most unthankful; thy word I read little, and most negligently, forgetting forthwith what I read; I admonish not others when I hear them abuse thy holy word; I am afraid, for fear of loss of friends, name, or life, to confess thy truth, gospel, and name, which was called upon me in baptism, and not in vain, if I did not thus make it in vain. But, alas! I can in no wise comprehend the multitude of my transgressions concerning this thy law. But this is a sin above other sins, that under thy name, word, and gospel, I play the hypocrite, having more care for mine own name, than for thine; for if my name were evil spoken of, it would grieve me, and I should defend it; but, alas! I hear thine daily evil spoken of, and see it profaned by false doctrine and evil living, but it grieves me not. I seek not, and do not endeavour to redress these things in myself and in others, according to my duty. And why? because, good Lord, I love myself better than thee, and not thee with my whole heart. Thy first commandment has no place with me, as it should have; it possesses not my heart, mind, and will, as thou requirest, most to my own advantage; by reason whereof I am worthy of eternal condemnation. Oh! what shall I do, gracious God, who not only have been so grievous and filthy a swearer, curser, &c., so great a caller upon dead creatures,* and so heinous a transgressor of this law; but also at this present time do so horribly and hypocritically offend thee, in taking thy name in vain, and that in so many ways, in praying and not praying; in reading and not reading; in speaking and not speaking; and not confessing simply, and from my heart, thy doctrine, truth, and name,

* He means the Romish saints.

but regarding mine own name far above it. Shall I fly from thee? then undoubtedly I am more guilty, and shall more disobey this thy holy precept, adding sin to sin; whereas, thou wouldest I should call upon thy holy name, dear Lord, who hast given thy dear Son Jesus Christ to be a Mediator for us; that through him we might find, not only grace for the pardon of our sins past, but also for the obtaining of thy Holy Spirit; as well the better to understand, as also the better and more frankly to obey this thy holy precept for ever. For his sake, therefore, dear God, pardon my sins, past and present, whereof this law accuses me, and grant, most gracious Father, that I may be endued with thy Holy Spirit, to know and love thy holy name, word, and truth in Jesus Christ; that I may be zealous, wise, and constant; and that my tongue may be sanctified henceforth, and guided by thy Holy Spirit and grace, to publish, confess, and teach thy truth and gospel, after my vocation, to others, as occasion is offered; to call upon thy name in all my need, to give thanks unto thee, praise thee, magnify thee, and to sanctify thy holy name, as a vessel of thy mercy, for ever and ever.

REMEMBER THAT THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH-DAY, &c.

After thou hast told me, how in the external service of thee, gracious Lord, thou wilt have my tongue used, so dost thou now teach me, how thou wilt have mine ears and all mine whole body occupied, namely, in sanctification and holiness; that is, in those things, which thou peculiarly hast appointed, to be means immediately to help to that end. As in hearing thy word preached, and using the ceremonies appointed by thee, even as thou hast commanded; for which things to be exercised of thy people, thou at the first didst appoint a certain day, namely, the seventh day, which therefore thou calledst thy sabbath, that thereby they with their children, resting from all exterior labour, which hinders the meditation of the mind, might not only be more able to go on with their travail and labour (for without some rest, nothing can endure, in respect whereof thou wouldest that the very beasts which were exercised in labour should have the privilege of this sabbath,) but also and much rather, that thy people with their families and children might be taught, first, by the ministry of thy

word in preaching and catechising: secondly, by the using of thy sacraments appointed after thy commandment and institution, that they might be assured of thy promises; thirdly, by praying that they might be augmented in all godliness; and, last of all, by their meeting together and exercising all these thy works of sanctification, that they might increase in love and charity one towards another, as members of one body, and fellow heirs of one inheritance; and thus by meeting together, praying, and using thy sacraments, they might be instructed in thy law and of that sabbath, whereunto thou thyself didst enter, after thou hadst made the world, ceasing from thy works, not of preservation, but of creation. Into which as after this life, and the works of this time, they should enter; so now they begin spiritually to enter, in resting from their own works, which the old man moves them unto. Not that, good Lord, thou wouldest these works, appointed for the sabbath day, should not be exercised at any other time, but only on the seventh day; but because thou didst as well ordain them for a policy,* to endure till the coming of Christ, as also according to the revelation of thee in that time, didst open thyself, beginning them in figures and shadows, whose verities at thy time were to be opened. Therefore it pleased thee to appoint then the seventh day, which seventh day, although by reason of the policy being by thee destroyed, and by reason of Christ, the verity and body of all shadows, it is abrogated from us; yet this commandment standeth in force; as well for the works of sanctification, that is, for preaching thy word, coming to hear it, for praying, using thy sacraments, and coming together to that end; as also for those days which by common order, and on good ground are ordained and received; howbeit with this liberty, that necessity of our faith, and sanctification and charity, may dispense therewith, occasion of wilful and witting offence being avoided, &c. So that hereby I perceive thy will and pleasure to be, that I should at all times, as much as charity and necessity will permit, give over myself, and cause all others over whom I have charge, so to do, especially on the Sundays, and other holydays received, and to that end appointed, to the resorting to the temple and places appointed to prayer; to hear with meekness thy holy word, and use thy sacraments and ceremonies as thou hast com-

* An observance, or a method of governance.

manded; and to exercise all things which might be to the confirmation and propagating of thy holy religion, or make to the increase of love and charity; as giving to the poor, reconciling such as are at variance, visiting the sick, and even (as it were) beginning that sabbath whereof Isaiah speaketh. (Isa. lvi.)

By reason whereof I have great cause to thank thee, most gracious Father, that thou wouldest appoint me to be in this time, wherein thou hast more fully revealed thyself than thou didst, not only before Christ's coming, but also since Christ's ascension. Never since England was England, didst thou so manifestly reveal thy truth, as thou hast done in these days. Great cause I have to thank thee, that thou wouldest institute the ministry of thy word and sacraments, as means whereby thy Holy Spirit is effectual to work sanctification in our hearts. Great cause have I to thank thee, that thou wouldest preserve the books of the prophets and apostles until this time. Great cause have I to praise thee, that thou wouldest give me such knowledge in them as thou hast done, of thy great mercy; great cause have I to thank thee for the good and true ministers and preachers of thy word, which thou hast sent amongst us, and that thou hast given me grace to hear them.

Great cause have I to thank thee, that in this religion thou hast given such long quietness and harbourage* to thy church; great cause have I to thank thee, for that thou wouldest make me such a man, in whom thy Holy Spirit might work. Great cause I have to thank thee, who wouldest call me into thine eternal sabbath and rest, full of all joy, such as the eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard. Great cause have I to thank thee, that so many days are appointed for this end, that we should meet together to hear thy word and receive thy sacraments; great cause have I to thank thee for the institution of thy sacraments, which thou hast ordained as thy visible and palpable words, to the obsignation† and confirmation of the faith of all such as use the same after thy commandments. But infinite are the causes for which I ought to give thee thanks for this commandment.

But, alas! I am not only unthankful, but also a most miserable transgressor of it. I will not now speak of my past

* Shelter.

† Sealing.

transgressions, concerning this commandment; they are so many that I cannot. For thou knowest how I do not only at convenient times, on the work-day, keep myself away from common prayers in the congregation and assembly of thy people, and from hearing of thy word, but also on the sabbath-days. I am very ready to ride or go about this or that worldly business; I am ready at the first bidding to sit down at the tavern, and to go to that man's table; but, alas! to resort to the table of thy Son, and receive with thankfulness the sacrament of his body and blood, for confirmation of my faith; that is, to learn spiritually to taste Christ's body broken, and his blood shed, for the remission of my sins: to do this, oh! how unwilling I am! To go to mass and sacrings, with such like idolatry, I have often been far more ready than I am now to hear thy word, and use thy sacraments as I should do: thy ministers I pray not for; thy church I am not careful for; no, not now, good Lord, when wicked doctrine prevails, and idolatry, superstition, and abominations abound; when the sacrament and sacrifice of thy dear Son Jesus Christ are blasphemously corrupted: when for preaching there is nothing but massing; for catechising, censuring; for reading of the Scriptures, bell-ringing; for singing of psalms and godly songs to our edification, all is done in Latin, with such notes, tunes, ditties, and descants, that the mind is utterly pulled from the consideration of the thing (if men did understand it) unto the melody. All which my wickedness has brought in, my profaning of this commandment, and my not praying. Thy ministers are in prison, dispersed in other countries, spoiled, burnt, and murdered. Many fall for fear of goods, life, name, &c. from the truth they have received, unto most manifest idolatry. False preachers abound among thy people; thy people, dearly bought, even with thy blood, are not fed with the bread of thy word, but with sullings;* antichrist wholly prevails; and yet for all this, alas! I am too careless, nothing lamenting my sins, which are the cause of all this. O dear Father, forgive me, for Christ's sake, and be merciful unto me; and as of thy mercy thou gavest me time to repent, so give me repentance. Grant me thy Holy Spirit, to open to me this thy law; so that I may know thy will in it, love it, and always obey it. May thy good Spirit sanctify me,

* Swillings, trash.

and work in me a true taste of eternal life and pleasure, in the meditation of it. Give me, gracious, good Father, one little mouthful of the bread that thou didst feed Elijah with, (1 Kings xix. ;) give it to me that with him I may come unto Mount Horeb. Help thy church, cherish it, and give it harbourage here and elsewhere, for Christ's sake. Purge thy ministry from corruption and false ministers; send out preachers to feed thy people; destroy antichrist and all his kingdom; give repentance to such as are fallen from thy truth; keep others from falling, and by their falling do thou the more confirm us; confirm the ministers and poor people in prison and exile; strengthen them in thy truth; deliver them, if it be thy good will; give them that with conscience they may so answer their adversaries, that thy servants may rejoice and the adversaries be confounded; avenge thou thy own cause, O thou God of hosts, and help all thy people, and me especially, because I have most need.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER, THAT THOU MAYEST
LIVE LONG, &c.

After thou hast told me, good Lord, thy will concerning thy service which thou requirest inwardly and outwardly to be given unto thee, now thou dost begin to tell me what thy will is that I should do and leave undone, for thy sake, unto man. And first thou settest before mine eyes those who for order's sake and the better advantage of man in this life, thou hast set in degree and authority above me; comprehending them under the names of father and mother, that I might know that as they are commanded by thee, to bear towards me a faithful love and a motherly care, in the very names of father and mother, wherewith thou honourest them; so I am commanded of thee to do that which is most equal and just, as the very brute beasts teach us—that with childlike affection and duty I should behave myself towards them. That is, I should honour them; which comprehends love, thankfulness, reverence, and obedience; and that not so much because they are my parents, and in their offices are careful for me, for it may be they will neglect the doing of their duty towards me, but because thou commandest me so to do, howsoever they do to me. So that by this commandment I perceive that thou wouldest I should consider them whom thou

hast placed in authority and superior degree; as parents, magistrates, masters, or such-like; and accordingly behave myself toward them—honour them, that is to say, love them, be thankful unto them, reverence them, and obey them, for thy sake, so long as they pass not their bounds; that is, so long as they require not otherwise than thou hast given them commission or permission to do.

And forasmuch as thou seest their care and office is great, and our corruption* to obey is very much; so to encourage them to be diligent in their vocation, and to inflame me to humble obedience unto them, therethrough to make them more willing to sustain cares for me, thou addest a promise, that is, long life; which, so far as it is a blessing from thee, thou wilt endue us withal. Whereby we may gather, that a civil† life much pleases thee, and receives rewards here, especially if we lead it for conscience to thy law. And on the contrary, a disobedient life to them that are in authority, will bring the sooner thy wrath and vengeance in this life. All which worketh much to the commendation of the state of political and civil magistrates. By reason hereof, dear Father, I see myself much bound to praise thee, and heartily to obey this thy commandment; for in it and by it thou declarest thy great love toward us, who even in this present life, our pilgrimage and passage to our home, wouldest have us to enjoy the benefit of peace, and most seemly quietness and order, and by this order so unite us, that none should condemn or despise another, but even high and low should be and account themselves as parents and children; particularly, for my part, I cannot but say that I have most cause to thank thee for my parents, schoolmasters, and others, under whose tuition thou hast put me. No pen is able to write the particular benefits which I have hereby received in my infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, and always hitherto. Oh! how good a Lord hast thou declared thyself to me, who in them and by them hast nourished, fed, instructed, corrected, defended, and most graciously kept me! I could reckon innumerable behind me, and but few before me—so much made of and cared for as I have been hitherto. No small token of thy love towards me is it, that thou wouldest engrave in their hearts, and command them, under pain of condemnation, to be careful

* Unwillingness.

† Obedient in civil concerns.

over me, to do me good, and provide for me, as they have done, or rather as thou hast done by them publicly. Also for the commonwealth, and such as thou hast placed in authority over me in both thy regiments,* if I considered them that have been, and them that are, I could not but praise thee, good Lord; for no less praiseworthy art thou for thus chastening us, and admonishing us now at present by them that are in authority, for our ingratitude and unthankfulness; than by such as have been, for all kinds of good things. But infinite are the causes of thankfulness, which this commandment, being considered, should stir up in me; but, alas! most merciful Father, as I acknowledge myself most unthankful unto thee for all thy benefits poured upon me in this life by my parents, nurses, tutors, masters, magistrates, bishops, pastors, and good friends, even from my cradle unto this hour, so unto them have I always been and am unthankful in not loving them; as my coldness in praying for them, and my carelessness in helping them, declareth. And also my not reverencing them, my contemning them, and my temerariousness† in mistrusting, or too narrowly and too straitly looking at them and their duties showeth; and in not obeying them, as by my contumacy appears, not only when any thing to me unpleasant or unprofitable, but also profitable and convenient, is required; and yet I speak not of evil and muttering reports, or the offences in transgressing the laws about apparel and meats, and other no small offences, which I have committed and given. Oh! this is a sin, dear Father, that I always have been a private more than a common weal man, always seeking for mine own advantage, and contemning that which made to the commodity of others. As for my disobedience and wicked behaviour towards my own parents, and all others whom thou hast set over me, dear Father, no tongue can express it, and therefore I am worthy of condemnation. But, gracious, good Lord and dear Father, I beseech thee, for thy Christ's sake, to have mercy upon me, and pardon me, as of thy goodness it pleased thee to pardon the patriarchs. Thou hast given this commandment as thy holy law, to open to us how corrupt we are, and how much we swerve from the pattern whereafter we were first made, and once agreed thereto before Adam's fall, that we might loathe

* He means spiritual and temporal governors.

† Rashness.

ourselves, and even thereby be driven to seek and set by thy sweet mercies in Christ Jesus, whom therefore thou didst send to fulfil the law in his flesh, that we might borrow of him the same, by true faith, which of thy goodness work in us by thy Holy Spirit; and open this law unto us, that we may more and more increase in the knowledge, love, and obedience of it to thy glory and our salvation. Amen. Dear Father, be merciful to our magistrates, especially the Queen's highness, whose heart, with the residue of her counsellors, turn to thy testimonies; give them thy wisdom, and a zeal for the truth according to knowledge, that they may use the power they have received of thee to the cherishing of thy church, that with us here thy word may have free passage, and thy true worship may be maintained; and not only here, but also every where among those whom thou wouldest we should pray for. Be merciful to my poor parents, gracious Lord, with my brethren, sisters, wife, children, family, servants, kinsfolks, neighbours, as thou knowest they all have need. Give unto the hearts of all parents, magistrates, and such as are in authority here or elsewhere, that they may, according to that which thou hast entrusted them with, be faithful, diligent, careful, and happy. Grant unto children, servants, and subjects, that every one may render love, obedience, thankfulness, and reverence to all such as thou hast put in authority over them. Bless the church, and send it peace and harbourage* here or elsewhere; bless the common weal, and send us peace; bless the dioceses and shires, and send them good bishops and justices; bless every household and family, that thy peace may be in the same continually. Finally, write this law, and all thy laws, in our hearts, we beseech thee, that we may keep them. Amen.

THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.

As in the commandment next before, thou, O Lord, settest before me the persons of all such as thou for the advantage, order, and peace of man in this life, hast placed in authority, and accordingly by us to be esteemed for thy sake, so dost thou in this commandment set before us to look on the persons of all men generally, high and low, over whom thou givest us a charge, that we shall not kill

* Shelter.

or murder them. In which word thou comprehendest all kinds of hatred or malice, in word, thought, or deed, as thy dearly beloved Son, expounding this commandment, did teach. (Matt. v.) Yea, because thou wouldest all men should be dear unto us, being all of one substance, of one similitude, coming of the same parents, Adam and Eve, made of one God, redeemed of one Christ, in whom we should be joined together as members of one body, and live to the aid, succour, and comfort one of another;—because of this (I say) we may easily see that not only thou here forbiddest us to beware of all kinds of displeasure, but also thou commandest us to bear and exercise all kinds of love and favour in heart, word, and deed, and that for thy commandment's sake; for else our hearts would arise towards our enemies, and be great, in that they, contemning their duties towards us, seem to deserve the like at our hands.

By reason hereof I have great cause to thank thee, dear Father; for hereby I see that thou dost much love my soul, who art so careful over my body, that he which hurteth it displeases thee, and he that does it good pleases thee, if he does it for thy sake. By this commandment now I see that it is thou who hast kept me from doing many evils, which else I should have outrageously done, and hast stirred me up to do good to my brethren, if at any time I have done any, even as thou hast also kept and dost keep at present, others from doing me hurt, and hast and dost stir up those that do me good, to do so unto me. Oh! how great is the multitude of thy benefits, good Lord, wherewith thou hast overwhelmed me, and which, through this commandment, I perceive myself to have received, at present do receive, and so long as I live am likely to receive; for thou commandest all men every where to do me good, to love me, defend me, and cherish me; such is thy love to me in this present life, and that for my body. Oh! how great is thy love then to me in everlasting life, and that for my soul! If in a strange country so great is thy protection, how great is it at home! But, alas! dear Lord, how unthankful have I been, and am still, for these thy fatherly benefits! Oh! mine ingratitude! Yea, Lord, horribly have I transgressed, and still do transgress, this thy gracious precept, in pride, envy, disdain, malice, hardness of heart, unmercifulness, and contemning thy children, saints, and servants. Self-love altogether reigns in

me, and the desire of praise, rule, and fame. I am so far from love and mercy in heart, good Lord, that no man can hear it in my tongue, nor see it in my works; but rather quite the contrary, and that generally, and towards them to whom I am bound most particularly. By reason whereof I have deserved everlasting condemnation, and to be cast away from thy presence for ever. O most gracious Father, forgive me, for Christ's sake, I beseech thee; for to this end thou didst give this commandment, that I, seeing my corruption and depraved nature by sin, might come to thy mercy deserved by Christ, and through faith in him might find not only pardon of that which is past, but also thy grace and Holy Spirit, to begin in me the obedience to this and all thy other holy precepts for evermore. So be it. For this thy Christ's sake, dear Father, I beseech thee therefore to take from me, and all others for whom thou wouldest that we should pray, all envy, pride, arrogancy, disdain, hatred, and all suspiciousness; and grant unto us bowels of mercy, humility, patience, meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, peace, charity, and all kinds of brotherly love. Comfort the feeble, relieve the poor, help the fatherless, heal the sick, bless the afflicted; show thy great mercy upon all poor prisoners, and deliver them in thy good time; remember thy pity towards strangers, captives, widows, and such as are oppressed.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

Here, good Lord, thou commandest unto me pureness and chastity; and therefore thou sayest I should not commit adultery; in the which word thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ comprehends all uncleanness, yea, the very concupiscence and abusing of the heart in lusting after any man's wife, or otherwise unchastely. By which thou wouldest have us to love in ourselves and others purity and cleanness, that we might be holy as thou our God art holy, and our bodies being temples of thy Holy Spirit might be kept pure; and accordingly we may easily see, that as thou forbiddest all unclean deeds, words, looks, and thoughts, so dost thou command us to love and exercise all purity, chastity, cleanness, sobriety, temperance, &c.

By reason whereof I have great cause to be thankful

unto thee, who not only for the help and advantage of man, but also for remedy of man's infirmity, hast made woman-kind, and ordained the state of matrimony, which in thy sight is so holy and pure, that thou accountest this state of matrimony to be an undefiled thing. And such care thou hast over the persons who are married and their condition, that those sin unto damnation, who not only go about to defile that bed, but wish or desire it within their hearts, yea, which do not endeavour themselves with thought, word, and deed, to help that purity and cleanness may be kept between married folks. But the great causes thou givest us to thank thee for this state and ordinance, and for thy defending us* by this commandment, are innumerable.

Full well I see, that it is thou who by this commandment not only restrainest me, but also keepest my wife from impurity, which else we might both commit. Great is thy love, O good Lord, and more than I am able to consider, who declarest thyself to be thus careful over me, concerning the benefits which come unto me, both for the mind, body, and goods, by sobriety and temperance, which thou here requirest: only this I cannot but see, that I have great cause to thank thee, who art so careful over me, as by this commandment I well see.

But, alas! good Lord, what shall I say, who am and have been so far from thankfulness, that I am to be accounted among the most unthankful; yea, thou knowest it, good Lord. Grievously have I broken this law, and caused others so to do, of whose repentance I am uncertain; as also my tongue, alas! has often been shamefully exercised, mine eyes and thoughts too wickedly abused.

All this I have increased by mine intemperance in eating, drinking, cherishing my body, &c. I have also hurt my bodily health, diminished that which I and others should live on, and horribly hindered all good prayers and meditations; wherein, though I have time and place, yet, alas! I nothing exercise myself as I should do. By reason whereof I have deserved everlasting damnation.

O good Lord and gracious Father, do thou for thy name's sake, and in Christ's blood, pardon me and forgive me, I beseech thee; and as thou hast most mercifully hitherto spared me, so of thy mercy put away my trespasses, and the transgressions of those whom I have caused

* Forbidding us from evil.

to sin; let that love which moved thee to pardon Judah, David, Bathsheba, and the great sinner of whom we read in Luke vii., move thee to pardon and forgive me also. Thou gavest this commandment to this end, that I might know my sin and sinful nature, and so thereby be driven to thy Christ crucified, for whose sake I ask mercy; and also that thy good Spirit may be given unto me, to purify me, and work so in me and with me, that I may truly know, heartily love, and faithfully obey this thy holy precept, inwardly and outwardly, now and for ever. Amen. Gracious good Lord, grant to me and my wife, that we may dwell together according to knowledge, and may keep ourselves in holiness; grant, O Lord, that we may be pure and undefiled, and grant the same to all that are married; and to them which are unmarried, grant that they may live a pure, chaste, and undefiled life; and if they have not the gift of singleness of life, grant unto them mates with whom they may live holily to thy praise. Dear Father, give me the gift of sobriety and temperance, and grant the same to all them whom thou wouldest I should pray for. As in times past I have used my tongue and other members evil, so now, good Lord, grant that I may use them well, chastely and godlily. This I pray thee to grant, through Jesus Christ; and finally, O Lord, sanctify me both in soul and body, and as in thy temple dwell in me now and for evermore. Amen.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

Now that thou hast taught me the service required of thee for me to observe towards the persons of all men and women, of every condition, thou beginnest to tell me what thou wouldest I should do concerning their goods; and as in the commandment next before this thou didst command unto me sobriety and pureness; so dost thou in this, command justice and righteousness; forbidding me to steal; under which word thou comprehendest all kinds of deceit; which thou dost, because thou wouldest that I should give over myself wholly to the study and exercise of justice; as in the precept going before, thou wouldest I should give over myself wholly to the keeping of sobriety and pureness; so that I see thy good pleasure herein is not only that I should abstain from all theft, but also from all fraud and craft in word or

deed, yea, that I should earnestly follow and exercise all equity, truth, and justice.

By reason whereof, I see myself much bound to praise thee, who art so careful over my goods and substance, that if any man should go about to steal from me, or to defraud me in any thing, yea, whosoever goeth not about to keep and care for that which I have, as he would do for his own, the same displeases thee.

O Lord, if thou hast such care for my goods, cattle, and such pelf, how great is thy care for my soul! If this commandment had not been given, I perceive, I for my own part should have done and should do much worse than I have done; and much worse would have been done to me and mine than has been done. It is thou, good Lord, I perceive, who hast both given all that I have, and also still preservest and keepest the same, and not my own polity, wisdom, and industry; for in vain were all this, except thou didst vouchsafe to use and take it as a mean to work by. There is nothing therefore that I have, but whenever I look upon it, by this commandment, I learn thy goodness, strength, and power; for as thou givest it of thy mercy, so it speaks to me that at present thou still dost keep it for me; so that exceeding great cause have I to thank thee for this precept, dear God and most gracious Lord.

But, alas! I am far from thankfulness, and always have been so, for all thy care for me, and for all that ever thou hast given unto me, so that I have used subtlety and craft, yea, sometimes theft and bribery; and now, good Lord, I still exercise the same, when occasion is offered. I live also voluptuously upon that which thou hast given and lent me, and nothing consider, what equity requires; and what or how great the necessity of the poor is, whom I thus defraud by excess and prodigality. That which I borrow, I with unwillingness repay; I use it more negligently than I would do my own. Lack of justice, the great usury, robbery, oppression, and such like wickedness which are exercised among us, I lament not, I labour not after my vocation for the redress of the same, I pray not to thee thereabout, but neglect it altogether.

Yea, even those things wherewith I am entrusted, or am hired to do, those (I say) I do with great negligence; so that my sin is great herein, and I am worthy of condemnation. But, merciful God, I beseech thee, for Christ's sake,

to have mercy upon me, and to pardon me my unthankfulness, thefts, frauds, deceits, avarice, negligences, and great carelessness, for the lack of justice, and for the monstrous oppression, usury, excess, and riot, which are horribly exercised in the common weal. For thy mercy's sake in Christ Jesus, O Lord, whom thou hast given to fulfil the law for them that do believe, give me true faith and thy Holy Spirit, to work in me the knowledge, love, and perpetual obedience of this thy holy precept, and all thy other commandments for ever.

Dear Lord, give unto me, and to all whom thou wouldst I should pray for, the hatred of all craft, and love of all justice; grant to the oppressed thy comfort; to wrongers repentance; to thieves and deceivers, that they may make restitution; to justices of peace, landlords, and the rich of the world, that they may have thee before their eyes, love their poor tenants and brethren; and give to labourers and artificers, that they may be diligent in their work and labours, and that wherewith they are put in trust.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY
NEIGHBOUR.

Now dost thou, most gracious Lord, instruct me in this commandment, how I should use my tongue towards my neighbour, and behave myself concerning his name, forbidding me to bear false witness; in which thou forbiddest me all kinds of slandering, lying, hypocrisy, and untruth. And why? because, as members of one body, thou wouldst we should speak truth one to another; and be careful, every one, to cover the other's infirmity, and with our tongue to defend the names of others, even as we would that others should defend ours; so that in this commandment, as thou forbiddest me all kinds of evil, calumnious and untrue speaking; thou dost command to me all kind of godly, honest, and true report and talk.

By reason whereof I have great cause to praise thee, since I see thee to be so careful over my name, that all men are commanded by thee to defend the same. O precious God, great is thy care over my soul, I now perceive. If this commandment were not, I see, I should have done, and should do much worse with my tongue to others than has happened, and so should I have felt of others towards me.

Besides this, no small advantage is it to me, that thou wouldst all men should use truth in all their words to me.

Oh! how great and how good a thing is this unto me: If we consider the hurt that cometh by untruth and by deceitful words, easily may we see a wonderful benefit and care of thee for us in this commandment.

But, gracious Lord, I acknowledge my unthankfulness to be monstrous and great, and that it always has been so; and yet I continue in wonderful hypocrisy in all my conversation; often lying and speaking vainly, offensively, fleshly, subtly, calumniously, and giving my ears to hear things slanderously spoken; not repugning or admonishing others (as the slanderer) to do as he would be done by, to tell his tale where he should tell it; nor admonishing the party slandered of that which is reported of him, thereby to take better heed; but rather I augment it. By reason whereof I have deserved eternal condemnation.

But thou, good Lord, be merciful unto me, I beseech thee, for Christ's sake, whom thou hast ordained to be the end of the law to all them that do believe, as well for pardon of that which is past, as for not imputing the imperfection that remaineth. In his name, therefore, good Lord, I beseech thee to pardon me, and give me thy Holy Spirit to open to me this law, and all thy other precepts; and so to understand them that I may heartily love them, and faithfully give myself to the obedience of them for ever. Grant me thy good Spirit to sanctify my tongue, that it may be kept from lying, slandering, and all such vices; and that it may be continually used in thy service, and speaking that which may be to edify, to thy glory and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE, THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE, NOR HIS SERVANT, NOR HIS MAID, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANY THING THAT IS HIS.

Here, O most gracious Lord and God, thou givest me the last commandment of thy law, who having taught what outward actions I shall avoid, that I do not thereby offend or undo my neighbour, as murder, adultery, theft, or false witness: now thou teachest a rule for my heart, to order that well, from the abundance whereof all works and words proceed, that I covet not any thing that is my neighbour's.

I know hereby, that if he have a fairer house, I may not wish for it: if he have a more beautiful wife, I may not desire her: if he have an honest and faithful servant, such

a one as helpeth to get his living, I must not think to myself, I would I had him from his master. I may not desire to take his ox, nor his ass, nor not his dog, nor not the meanest thing he hath in his possession. So that in the other commandments, as thou hast forbidden all injuries and evil practice against my neighbour, now thou chargest me to beware of thinking any evil thought against him.

By reason whereof I have great cause to praise thee, in that I see thee to be so careful over mine estate, my house, my wife, my servants, and the beasts that drudge for my service: that all men are by thee commanded not once to wish them from me. Thy apostle said well, when he taught us, saying, "Cast all your care upon God, for he careth for you." It is true, I find it true, thus thou carest for us, and wouldest have us so to care one for another.

But gracious Lord, I must needs confess, that I have forgotten and broken this commandment, and do so still every day. I am wishing and woulding (desiring) every minute. I have gone about to take my neighbour's house over his head. Many times have I had unchaste thoughts in my heart: I have gone about to inveigle and entice his servants from him: I could have been content to have wrought his beast and spared my own: I always thought he had too much, and I have too little; the dregs of these things, O Lord, are not quite out of my heart. Wherefore I deserve to have thy law executed upon me with all severity.

But thou, good Lord, be merciful unto me in this point also, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake: for otherwise I am of all men most miserable. Good Lord, pardon me, consider the frailty of my flesh, the corruption of my nature, the multitude of temptations, how of myself, I am able to do nothing; how if left to myself, I shall come to nothing.

Set my heart straight in the case of religion, to acknowledge thee one God, to worship none other God, to reverence thy name, and to keep thy sabbaths. Set my heart right in matters of human conversation, to honour my parents, to obey rulers, and reverence the ministry of the gospel, to have hands clean from blood, true from theft, a body free from adultery, and a tongue void of all offence. But purge the heart first, O Lord, and then the hand, the eye, the tongue, the foot, and the whole body will be cleaner. Write all these thy laws in my heart, O Lord, and in the hearts of all the faithful people, that we may believe them, and keep them all the days of our lives to thy glory and praise, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

IV. A MEDITATION CONCERNING PRAYER,

WITH A BRIEF PARAPHRASE UPON

THE PETITIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE mind of man has such large room to receive good things, that nothing can fully fill it but God alone; whom thy mind fully possesses, when it fully knows him, fully loves him, and in all things is framed after his will. They therefore, dear Lord God, that are thy children, and have tasted somewhat of thy goodness, do perpetually sigh, that is, do pray, until they come thereto; and since they love thee above all things, it wonderfully wounds them that other men do not so, that is, love thee, and seek for thee, with them. Whereof it comes to pass, that they are inflamed with continual prayers and desires, that thy kingdom might come every where, and thy goodness might be both known, and in life set forth by every man.

And because there are innumerable things, which as well in themselves as in others are against thy glory, they are kindled with continual prayer and desire, sighing unspeakably in thy sight for the increase of thy Spirit. And sometimes, when they see thy glory more put back than it was wont to be, either in themselves or in any others, then are they much more disquieted and vexed. But because they know that thou dost rule all things after thy good will, and that none other can help them in their need, they oftentimes go aside, all business laid apart, and give themselves to godly cogitations and talk with thee, complaining to thee as to their Father, of those things that grieve them, begging thereto, and that most earnestly, thy help, not only for themselves, but also for others, especially those whom especially they embrace in thee. And they often repeat and remember thy gracious benefits to others and to themselves also; wherethrough they are provoked to render to thee hearty thanks, thereby being inflamed, assuredly to hope well of thy good will towards them, and patiently to bear all evils; also to study and labour to mortify the affections of the flesh, and to order their whole life to the service of their brethren, and the setting forth of thy glory.

This they know is that prayer which thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord commanded to be made to thee in the chamber,

the door being shut. (Matt. vi.) In this kind of prayer he himself watched often, even all the whole night. Herein was Paul frequent, as all thy saints are. This kind of prayer is the true lifting up of the mind unto thee; this standeth in the affections, in the heart, not in words and in the mouth. As thy children are endued with thy Spirit, so they frequently thus talk with thee—the more thy Spirit is in them, the more are they in talk with thee. Oh! give me plentifully thy Spirit, which thou hast promised to pour out upon all flesh, that thus I with thy saints may talk with thee night and day, for thy only beloved Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Moreover, thy saints, to provoke themselves to this kind of prayer, use first *their necessity*, which they consider in three sorts; inwardly, concerning their souls; outwardly, concerning their bodies; and finally, concerning their names and fame: whereto they add the necessities of those committed to them, of thy church, and the common weal.

Secondly, they use *thy commandments*, which require them under pain of sin, to pray to thee in all their need.

Thirdly, they use *the consideration of thy goodness*, who art naturally merciful to young ravens calling upon thee, much more then to them for whom ravens and all things else were made, for whom thou hast not spared thy dear Son, but given him up for us all. (Rom. viii.) Fourthly, they use *thy most sweet and free promises*, made to hear and help all them that call upon thee in Christ's name. Fifthly, they use *examples*, how that thou, who art the God of all, and rich unto all them that call upon thee in Christ's name, hast heard and helped others calling upon thee. Sixthly, they use *the benefits given them before they asked*; thereby not only provoking them to ask more, but also certifying their faith, that if thou wast so good to grant them many things unasked, now thou wilt not deny them any thing they ask to thy glory and their weal.

Last of all, they use *the reading and meditating upon psalms and other good prayers*, because they know thereby peculiarly, besides the other Scriptures, there is no small help; as may appear by Paul, (Eph. v., Col. iii.) where he willeth the congregation to use psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, but so that in the heart we should sing and say them;—not that thy children do not use their tongues and words in praying to thee, for they do use their tongues, speech, and words, to stir up their inward desire and fer-

vency of the mind, full well knowing that else it were plain mocking of thee, to pray with lips and tongue only. Oh! that now I might feel thy Spirit so affect me, that with heart and mouth I might heartily and in faith pray unto thee.

Now concerning the things that are to be prayed for, thy children know that the prayer taught by thy Son, most lively and plainly contains the same; and therefore they often use it. First, asking of thee, their heavenly Father, through Christ, that thy name might every where be had in holiness and praise; then, secondly, that thy kingdom, by regeneration and the ministry of the gospel, might come. And, thirdly, that willingly, perfectly, and perpetually, they might study to do, yea, to do indeed thy will, with thy holy and heavenly angels and spirits. These things they seek and pray for; namely, thy kingdom and thy righteousness, before any worldly benefit. After which petitions, because all things, yea, even the benefits of this present life, come from thee, they godly desire the same under the name of daily bread; being instructed of thy wisdom, that after spiritual benefits to ask for corporeal, is not unseemly to thy children, who know that both spiritual and corporeal come from thy mercy. In the other petitions, they pray for things to be taken from them, beginning with forgiveness of sins, which, if their hearts were not so broken, that they could forgive all things to all men for their own part, were impudently prayed for. They add their profession, that is, charity, whereby they profess they have forgiven all offences done to them; howbeit, because it is not enough to have pardon of the past, except they are preserved from new offences, they pray thee not to lead them into temptation, by permitting them to follow perverse suggestions of Satan; but rather to deliver them from his importunity and power: by evil, they understand that Satan the author of all evil is meant. Oh! dear God, that thou wouldest endue me with thy Spirit of grace and prayer, with thy children, so to make this prayer always when I pray.

As for outward evils, so long as they do not, as it were, enforce thy people to sin, Christian profession accounts them among thy benefits, and thy Son has not taught thy church to pray for the taking away of them in this prayer; for here he has contained only those things for which all Christians, generally and particularly, may of faith pray at all times. It often comes to pass, that exterior evils, because they are not evils indeed, that is, because they are

not against God's grace in us, therefore they cannot of faith be prayed against to be taken away; for thy children that have faith always prefer thy judgment before their own; which judgment when they know, by that which happens to them, they submit themselves thereto wholly—although thy Spirit make his unspeakable groanings to help their infirmities by prayer, not to have them taken away, but that they might have strength and patience to bear the burden accordingly. Which burden, if it be too heavy in the better sense and feeling thereof, they in their prayers complain somewhat of, rather than pray to have it taken away. As our Saviour did in the garden, when he added to his complaint, "Not my will, but thy will be done;" so do thy people in all their complaints add, "Not as we will, but as thou wilt;" for they are taught by thy Spirit not to pray for the taking away of corporeal evils, either from themselves or from others, unless they by the same Spirit can certainly perceive that the same makes to thy glory; as did thy apostles and servants, when absolutely and without condition they asked health or miracle for any, when they healed or raised the dead by prayer, for they know nothing can be better, than when it is according to thy will. Oh! that I might always know thy will in all things, and for ever apply myself thereto. Hereof it comes that thy saints and dear children, who love their neighbours as themselves, do yet in their prayers ask vengeance on some, as in the Psalms, because, in praying and talking with thee, they see by thy Holy Spirit (without it there is no true prayer) sometimes thy judgments upon some, whom they perceive to sin to death, who therefore ought not to be prayed for; but rather prayed against, because thy glory cannot be set forth as it should be without their destruction. Thy will is always best, and the thing whereto they frame all their desires. Therefore when they perceive it decreed with thee, that such and such by their destruction set forth more mightily thy glory, how should they but desire and pray for the same, and write it as David has done, that the godly in reading and weighing such prayers might receive comfort, and the ungodly be afraid? Else when they perceive not manifestly the determined judgments of God, they in their prayers do most heartily pray for them, as Samuel did for Saul, Moses for the Israelites, Abraham for Sodom. Good Father, for thy mercy's sake, give me true love of mankind; but so that I may love man for thee and in thee,

and always prefer thy glory above all things, through Christ our Lord.

Now though thy children know, that thy will cannot but be done, and that nothing can be done but what thou of thine own will hast determined to do, although no man should desire the same, yet are they earnest and frequent in prayer; first, to render obedience to thee, who requirest prayer as spiritual service to thee; secondly, because thou hast ordained prayer to be as an instrument and mean, by which thou workest things with thee already decreed and determined. Thy children use prayer to offer to thee their service, if it please thee to use the same. As they eat and drink, which is a mean ordained, for the preservation of life, not looking thereby to lengthen days above the bounds which already thou hast appointed; but as it becomes them to use means which thou hast ordained to serve thy providence, so they (herein as men not curious to know thy providence further than thou revealest it) use prayer as a mean by which thou art accustomed to work many of thy children's desires, that according to thy good will thou mayest use the same. They do not think there is mutability in thee, for thou art God, and art not changed—with thee there is no variableness, and therefore they pray, not as men who would have thy determinations and ordinances altered, which are ordained in the fullest wisdom and mercy, but rather that they might submit their wills to thine, and make them more able to bear thy will and pleasure. They know that thou hast promised to help them who call upon thee; wherefore they doubt not, but that thou wilt do so, and pray accordingly. They love thee heartily, and therefore they cannot but desire much to talk with thee, that is to pray, even as a well mannered and loving wife will not ask any thing of her husband at all, but what she hopes he would take in good part, and do of his own free will, although she had not spoken thereof. When she knows what her husband's will is, she gladly talks with him, and accordingly as she sees he is purposed to do, she will often desire him to do. Even so thy children, who heartily love thee, since they know thy wisdom and will is best; how can they but often talk with thee, and desire thee to do that which they know is best, which they know also thou wouldest do, though none should ask or pray for the same? Thy children use prayer as a means, by which they see plainly thy power, thy presence, thy providence, mercy, and goodness

towards them, in granting their petitions, and by prayer they are confirmed of them all. Yea, thy children use prayer to admonish them that all things are in thy hands. In prayer they are, as it were, of thee put in mind of those things which they have done against thee their good Lord. By reason whereof repentance ensues, and they conceive purpose to live more purely ever afterwards, and more heartily to apply to all innocency and goodness. Who now, considering that so many great advantages come by reason of prayer, would marvel why thy children are much in prayer, and labour to provoke others thereto?

For as no one that is a suitor to any other, will use any thing which might offend or hinder his suit, so no man that uses prayer will flatter himself in any thing that should displeas thee, to whom by prayer he makes suit whenever he prayeth; so that nothing is greater provocation to all kinds of godliness than prayer. Therefore not without cause we see thine apostles and servants laboured so diligently, and desired that others might use prayer for themselves and others. Concerning outward things, which thy children pray for, although they know thy will and decree is not variable, and thy purpose must needs come to pass, yet they receive by their prayer no small advantage. For either they obtain their requests, or not; if they obtain them, then they prove by experience that thou doest the will of them that fear thee, and they are more kindled to love and serve thee. For this purpose thou art wont, when thou wilt do good to any, to stir up their minds to desire the same good of thee, that thou and thy gifts may be more magnified, and set by of them, by how much they have been earnest petitioners for the same: for how can it but inflame them with love towards thee, to perceive and feel thee so to care for them, hear them, and love them? If they do not obtain what they pray for, yet undoubtedly they receive great comfort to see, that the evils which press them, and whereof they complain still, do not oppress and overcome them, and therefore they receive strength to bear the same the better. O good Father! help me that I may heartily love thee, complain to thee in all my need, and always by prayer pour out my heart before thee. Amen.

V. ANOTHER PARAPHRASE OR MEDITATION

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY and eternal God, of whom all fatherhood in heaven and in earth is named, whose seat is the heaven, whose footstool is the earth, who of thy great clemency and unspeakable love hast not weighed nor considered our great unkindness and wilful disobedience, but according to the good pleasure of thy eternal purpose hast in thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ chosen us out of the world, and dost accept us far otherwise than we are in deed; to be called, yea, and to be indeed thine adopted sons; and dost vouchsafe, O loving Father, that we, being, as it were, heavenly children, should every one of us confess, declare, and call thee our heavenly Father. Grant, dear Father, that among us thy poor children, by pureness of mind and conscience, by singleness of heart, by uncorrupt and innocent life, and example of virtue and godliness, thy most holy name may be sanctified; and that so many of all other nations as thou hast thereunto chosen and predestinated, beholding our godliness and virtuous deeds that thou workest in us, may be the more stirred to hallow and glorify thy blessed name.

Oh! faithful Father, we beseech thee that the kingdom of thy Holy Spirit, of grace and prayer, of thy loving kindness and mercy, and of all other thy holy virtues, and of thy holy and most blessed word, may continually reign in our hearts, so that thou wouldest vouchsafe thereby to make us worthy to be partakers of the realm and kingdom of thy glorious and blessed presence.

Oh! dear God and heavenly Father, we humbly desire thy goodness to bow our hearts unto thee, to make us humble of mind, to make us low in our own sight and obedient, that, like as thy dear Son, our only Saviour Jesus Christ, counted his meat, works, praise, and life, to be only in obeying thy most blessed will, wherein for our sakes he became obedient to the death of the cross; that so we may, even unto the very death, in lowliness, in meekness, pa-

tience and thankfulness, obey thy holy will, and not murmur and grudge, nor refuse whatsoever thy fatherly pity shall think good to lay on us, be it poverty, hunger, nakedness, sickness, slanders, oppressions, vexations, persecutions, yea, or death itself, for well-doing. But in all things may we seek and labour to make these our earthly bodies serviceable to do thy will, and to refuse what thou wilt not; never to strive nor wrestle against thy holy will, but with thy heavenly citizens and household, builded upon the foundation of thy holy prophets and apostles, thy Son Jesus Christ being the head corner-stone; all self-will and controversy in opinions being set aside; the lusts, desires, and affections of the flesh mortified; the flattering assaults of the vain world, the cruel and subtle layings in wait of the devil overcome; agreeing together quietly, and united in spirit, we may freely obey thy most blessed will, therein to walk all the days of our life.

Oh! dear God, give unto our needy bodies necessary sustenance, and take from us all love of worldly things, all anxiety and covetousness, that we may the more freely worship and serve thee. Oh! merciful Father, we beseech thee to give unto us that heavenly bread to strengthen our hearts; I mean the body of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, the very food and health of our souls, that we may always with thankfulness firmly feed on him by faith, and utterly forsake and abhor all false doctrine and persuasions of men, and all lying spirits that shall persuade us any otherwise of him than thy holy word teaches and assures us. Satisfy our hungry souls, dear Father, with the marrow and fatness of thy rich mercy, promised to us in the same thy Son, and of our eternal election, redemption, justification, and glorification in him. Make us, O gracious God, to contemn and despise this world, with the vain things and pleasures thereof, and inwardly to hunger for thy blessed kingdom and presence, which do thou satisfy, good God, in thy good time, according to thy good will and pleasure. Oh! most loving God, give us the bread of thy divine precepts, and make our hearts perfect, that we may truly and freely walk and live in them all the days of our life. Oh! dear and merciful Father, we beseech thee give us the bread of thy lively and heavenly word, and the true understanding thereof, which is the light of our paths, the food, strong tower, and sure defence of our souls, that we, being well fenced with this

ammunition, fed and filled with this food, may be worthy guests at thy celestial feast and wedding, where we shall never hunger nor want.

Oh! most righteous and merciful God, Father, and Governor of our life; we confess that we have grievously sinned against thee from our youth up until now, in ingratitude, in unthankfulness, wilfulness, disobedience, presumption, and our innumerable negligences and sins, which we from time to time most heinously have committed; whereby we have deserved not only sore and grievous plagues, but even eternal damnation, were it not that thou art the Lord of mercy, and hast power to show mercy on whom thou wilt; wherein thou art rich and plentiful to all them that call upon thee faithfully. Wherefore, dear Father, we, seeing our manifold and grievous sins which we have committed against thee, and also thy great mercy, loving kindness, patience, and long-suffering towards us; are compelled not only to bear patiently and suffer our enemies when they rail on us, slander us, oppress us, vex us, or trouble us, curse, persecute, and kill us; but also to speak well of them, to instruct them, to pray for them, to do them good, to bless them, to clothe them, and feed them, so heaping coals of thy charity and love upon them, and mercifully to forgive them, even as thou, dear Father, for thy beloved Christ's sake hast forgiven us. Thus hast thou taught us, good Father, not as the hypocrites, to look narrowly on our neighbours' faults, but diligently to examine our own consciences, wherein we have offended thee; and also what occasion of offence or falling we have given to our brethren in eating, drinking, going, apparel, speaking, dissolute or uncomely laughter; in bargaining, or by any means, and with all speed to seek to reconcile ourselves to them, and to forgive unto others, from the bottom of our hearts, whatsoever they have offended us, and to do none otherwise than we wish and desire in our hearts that others should do to us; that so we may find thee, O Lord, in forgiving us our trespasses, mild and merciful, which do thou speedily show thyself unto us, for thy dear Christ's sake.

Oh! Lord, thou God of the righteous, we feel the frailty of our nature to be so perverse and apt to sin, that when thou by the gifts of thy Holy Spirit dost move us, and (as it were) call us, yea, rather draw us unto thee, then are we drawn away and tempted of our own concupiscence and lust, be-

sides the great and dangerous assaults of the world and devil; therefore, faithful Father, we thy poor children beseech thee to take from us all those evils and occasions that may draw us from thee. Oh! dear God, protect, defend, and strengthen us against all the suggestions and assaults of our enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil; that neither in prosperity we should be haughty and high-minded to say unthankfully, "What is the Lord!" nor yet in the abundance of temptation, anguish, vexation, tribulation, or persecution, be oppressed with fear; nor be deceived by flattery, nor yet to fall in despair, and so utterly perish. But in all dangers and perils of temptation, and in the midst of the stormy tempests of tribulation, dear Father, make us thy poor children, to feel the consolation of the certainty of our eternal election in Christ Jesus our Lord, and to perceive thy fatherly succour ready to help us; lest that we, being overcome with the wicked sleight,* and deceitful invasions of the enemies, should be drawn into an obstinate mind, as without thy grace and merciful protection we shall, and so be shut up by the knowledge that should lead thy gracious gifts, and benefits unto us, to our advantage and comfort, so that thou mightest lead us forth with the evil doers and harden our hearts. Therefore, O good God, give us these thy good gifts, namely, strength, patience, and joyfulness of heart, to rejoice in temptation, and assure us that it is the trial of our faith; that faith in us may have her perfect work, that when we are well approved, and purified with the fire of temptations, we may finish our life in victory, and evermore live with thee in thy heavenly kingdom, where no temptation shall hurt us.

Finally, most merciful Father, we humbly beseech thee to deliver us from this present evil world, from all human and worldly fear, from all infirmities of the flesh and mind, from false prophets and teachers, from false brethren, from traitors, tyrants, &c. And if it be thy good pleasure, and may make most to the glory of thy name, deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and from all other evils, present and to come, both of body and soul; that we, being by thy great mercy defended from all hurtful things, may always use those things that are profitable for us, devoutly given to serve thee in good works; that the yoke of our enemies and the bands of sin being shaken off, we may

* Craftiness.

possess the inheritance of thy heavenly kingdom, which thy dear Son Jesus Christ hath with his precious blood purchased for thine elect from the beginning of the world. For thine is the kingdom, thou only hast the majesty, thou only art the God above all gods, King of all kings, and Lord of all lords: thou only hast the power and authority to set up kings, and to put them down; thou liftest the poor out of the dirt, and makest him to sit among the princes of thy people; thou only makest wars to cease, and givest victory to whom thou wilt. Oh! dear God there is neither majesty, rule, nor power, honour nor worship, dignity nor office, riches nor poverty, health nor sickness, plenty nor scarcity, prosperity nor adversity, war nor peace, life nor death, nor any other thing, but it is all thine; and thou both hast the power, and wilt give it to whom it pleaseth thee, in thy time and season, that all glory may be given to thee alone, for thou art worthy.

Oh! dear Father, to thee we come therefore for help and succour, for without thee there is no help at all. Oh! good Father, deliver us from all that is evil in thy sight, for thine own name's sake, and for thy dear Christ's sake; that we being armed with thy holy armour, and weaponed with thy blessed word, and instructed with thy Holy Spirit, may, according to thy holy promise, serve thee without fear all the days of our lives, in such holiness and righteousness as is acceptable in thy sight. To thee therefore, our dear Father, our Creator, Feeder, Protector, Governor, and Defender; and thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, our only Peace, Mercy-seat, Redeemer, Justifier, and Advocate; and thy Holy Spirit, our Sanctification, our Wisdom, Teacher, Instructor, and Comforter, be all dominion, power, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

VI. A MEDITATION ON THE COMING OF CHRIST TO JUDGMENT, AND OF THE REWARDS BOTH OF THE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the everliving God, by whom all things were made, are ruled, and governed, of thy love for our redemption thou didst not disdain to be our Mediator, and to take upon thee our nature in the womb of a virgin, purely and without sin, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; that thou mightest in thine own person

wonderfully beautify and exalt our nature, and work the same in us also, first abolishing the guiltiness of sin by remission; then sin itself by death; and last of all, death, by raising up again these our bodies, that they may be like unto thine own glorious and immortal body, according to the power wherewith thou art able to subject all things unto thee. As of thy love, for our redemption, thou becamest man, and that most poor and afflicted upon earth, by the space of thirty-four years at the least, in great humility, and didst pay the price of our ransom by thy most bitter death and passion, for which I most heartily give thanks to thee: so of the same love towards us, in thy good time thou wilt come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, (Matt. xxv.,) with flaming fire, with thousands of saints, with angels of thy power, with a mighty cry, the shout of an archangel, and blast of a trumpet, suddenly as the lightning which shineth from the east, when men think least of it, even as a thief in the night, when men are asleep. And thou wilt so come thus suddenly in the twinkling of an eye, and all men that ever have been, are, and shall be, with women and children, must appear before thy tribunal judgment-seat, to render an account of all things which they have thought, spoken, and done against thy law, openly and before all angels, saints, and devils; and to receive the just reward of thy vengeance, if they have not repented and obeyed the gospel; and to depart from thee to the devil and his angels, and all the wicked which ever have been, are, or shall be, into hell-fire, which is unquenchable and of pains intolerable, easeless, endless, hopeless, even from the face of thy glorious and mighty power. But if they have repented and believed thy gospel, if they are found watching with their lamps and oil in their hands, if they are found ready apparelled with the wedding garment of innocence; if they have not hardened their hearts, and hoarded up their treasure of thy vengeance in the day of wrath to be revealed, but have used the time of grace, the acceptable time, the time of salvation, that is, the time of this life, in which thou stretchest out thy hand and spreadest thine arms, calling and crying unto us to come unto thee, who art meek in heart, and lowly; for thou wilt ease all that labour, and are heavy laden. And if they have visited the sick and prisoners, comforted the comfortless, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, lodged the harbourless. And if they have not

loaded their hearts with gluttony and surfeiting, and carefulness of this life; if they have not digged and hid their talent in the ground, doing no good therewith, but have been faithful to occupy thy gifts to thy glory, and have washed their garments in thy blood by hearty repentance. If they have done thus, then shall thy angels gather them together, not as the wicked, which shall be collected as fagots, and cast into the fire, but as the good wheat that is gathered into thy barn—then shall they be caught up to meet thee in the clouds—then shall their corruptible body put on incorruption—then shall they be endued with immortality and glory—then shall they be with thee, and go whither thou goest—then shall they hear, “Come, blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning, &c.”—then shall they be set on seats of majesty, judging the whole world—then shall they reign with thee for ever—then shall God be all in all with them and to them—then shall they enter and inherit the heavenly Jerusalem, and the glorious restful land of Canaan; where is always day and never night, where is no manner of weeping, tears, infirmity, hunger, cold, sickness, envy, malice, nor sin; but always joy without sorrow, mirth without measure, pleasure without pain, heavenly harmony, most pleasant melody, saying and singing. Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, &c. A sum the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, but which they shall then inherit and most surely enjoy, although here they are tormented, prisoned, burned, solicited of Satan, tempted of the flesh, and entangled with the world; wherethrough they are enforced to cry, “Thy kingdom come, come Lord Jesus, &c. (Rev. xxii.) How amiable are thy tabernacles! Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. (Psalm xlii.) Now let thy servant depart in peace; I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. We mourn in ourselves, waiting for the deliverance of our bodies, &c.” (Rom. viii.) Oh! gracious Lord, when shall I find such mercy with thee, that I may repent, believe, hope, and look for these blessings, with the full fruition of these heavenly joys, which thou hast prepared for all them that fear thee, and so rest with thee for evermore?

VII. A MEDITATION CONCERNING THE SOBER USAGE BOTH OF THE BODY AND PLEASURES IN THIS LIFE.

We could not but use this our body, which God has made to be the tabernacle and mansion of our soul for this life, otherwise than we do, if we considered it accordingly. That is, we should use it for the soul's sake, being the guest thereof, and not for the body itself, and so should it be served in things to help, but not to hinder the soul. A servant it is, and therefore it ought to obey, to serve the soul, that the soul might serve God; not as the body will, neither as the soul itself will, but as God will; whose will we should learn to know, and behave ourselves thereafter. To observe which is hard for us now, by reason of sin, which has gained a mansion-house in our bodies, and dwelleth in us, as doth the soul; to which (sin I mean) we are altogether of ourselves inclined, because we naturally are sinners, and born in sin; by reason whereof we are ready as servants to sin, and use our bodies accordingly, making the soul to sit at reward, and pampering up the servant to our shame. Oh! therefore, good Lord, that it would please thee to open this unto me, and to give me eyes effectually to consider what this my body is, namely, a servant lent for the soul to sojourn in, and serve thee in this life. Yea, it is by reason of sin, that hath his dwelling there, become now to the soul nothing else but a prison, and that most strait, vile, stinking, filthy, and therefore in danger of miseries, to many in all ages, times, and places, till death has turned it to dust, whereof it came, and whither it shall return; that the soul may return to thee, from whence it came, until the day of judgment come, in the which thou shalt raise up the body, that then it may be partaker with the soul, and the soul with it, inseparably, of wealth or woe, according to that which is done in and by the same body here now in earth.

Oh! that I could consider these things often and heartily, then should I not pamper up this body to obey it, but bridle it, that it might obey the soul. Then should I fly the pain it puts my soul unto, by reason of sin and provocation to all evil, and continually desire the dissolution of it, with Paul, (Philip i.) and the deliverance from it, as much as ever did prisoner his deliverance out of prison. For only by it the devil has a door to tempt, and so to hurt me; in

it I am kept from thy presence, and thou from being so conversant with me as else thou wouldest be. By it I am restrained in a great degree from the sense and feeling of all the joys and comforts which are to be taken as joys and comforts indeed. If it were dissolved, and I out of it, then Satan could no more hurt me; then wouldest thou speak with me face to face; then the conflicting time were at an end; then sorrow would cease, and joy would increase, and I should enter into inestimable rest. Oh! that I considered this accordingly!

VIII. ANOTHER MEDITATION TO THE SAME EFFECT,

The beginning of all evil in our sinning springs out of the depravity and corruptness of our judgment, because our will always follows that which the reason judges should be followed. Now that which every man takes to be friendly and agreeing to his nature, the same he judges necessarily to be good for him, and to be desired. Thus meat, drink, apparel, riches, favour, dignity, rule, knowledge, and such like, because they are thought good and agreeing either to the body or to the mind, or to both, (for they help either to the conservation or to the pleasure of man,) are accounted by every one amongst good things.

Howbeit, such is the weakness of our understanding on the one part, and the blindness and too great rage of our lusts on the other part, that we, being left to ourselves, in the desire of things which we judge good and agreeing to our nature by the judgment of our senses and reason, cannot but overpass the bounds whereby they might be profitable unto us, and so we make them hurtful to us, which of themselves are ordained for our health. What is more necessary than meat and drink, or more agreeing to our nature? but yet how few there are who do not hurt themselves by them! In like manner it is with riches, estimation, friends, learning, &c. Yea, although we are in these most temperate, yet when the Spirit, our Regenerator, is wanting in them, we are so drowned in them, that we utterly neglect to lift up our minds to the good pleasure of God, to the end we might imitate and follow God our Maker, by yielding ourselves over, duly to use his gifts to

the common and private utility of our neighbours. But now God only is life and eternity, and he cannot but demand of his handywork, that we should render ourselves and all we have to the ends wherefore we were made, that is, to resemble for our portion, his goodness, as those who are nothing else but witnesses and instruments of his mercy. So that when we wholly and naturally strive against that kind of life whereto he has created us, by seeking always ourselves, what other thing ought to ensue, but that he should again destroy us, and take away his notable gifts, wherewith he endued us, that by all kinds of well-doing we should resemble his image? Yea, what other thing may ensue, but that he should leave us, and that eternally, that we might feel, and by experience prove, how bitter a thing it is to leave the Lord, in whom is all goodness? Oh! that therefore I might find such favour in thy sight, dear Father, that thou wouldst work in me, by thy Holy Spirit, a true knowledge of all good things, and hearty love to the same, through Christ Jesus our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.



IX. A MEDITATION FOR THE EXERCISE OF TRUE MORTIFICATION.

He that will be ready in weighty matters to deny his own will, and be obedient to the will of God, had need accustom himself to deny his desires in matters of less weight, and to exercise mortification of his own will in trifles. For if our affections by this daily custom are not (as it were) half slain, surely when the plunge shall come, we shall find the more to do. If we cannot watch with Christ one hour, as he said to Peter, we undoubtedly can much less go to death with him. Wherefore that in great temptations we may be ready to say with Christ, "Not my will, but thine be done," since this commonly comes not to pass, but when the roots of our lusts by thy grace, dear Father, are almost rotten, and rooted out by a daily denial of what they desire, I humbly beseech thee, for Christ's sake, to help me herein. First, pardon me my cherishing and, as it were, watering of my affections, obeying them in their devices and superfluous desires. Wherethrough since they have taken deep root, and are so lively in me, I, secondly, do beseech thee to pull them up by the roots

out of my heart, and so henceforth order me, that I may continually accustom myself to weaken the principal root, that the by-roots and branches may lose all their power. Grant me, I beseech thee, that thy grace may daily mortify my concupiscence of pleasant things, that is, of wealth, riches, glory, liberty, favour of men, meats, drinks, apparel, ease, yea, and life itself; that the horror and impatience of more grievous things may be weakened, and I may be made more patient in adversity. Whereunto I further desire and pray thy goodness, dear Father, that thou wilt add this, namely, that I may for ever become obedient and ready to thy good will in all things, heartily and willingly to serve thee, and to do whatsoever may please thee. For doubtless, although we accustom ourselves, in the pleasant things of this life, to mortification and denial of ourselves, yet we shall find enough to do when more bitter and weighty crosses come; for if thy Son our Saviour, ever wont to obey thy good will, prayed so heartily and so often, "Not my will, but thy will be done," whereby he declared himself to be very man; how can it be but that we, whose nature is corrupt, not only in our birth, but in our whole life also, shall find both our hands full in great and grievous temptations, and should wholly resign ourselves unto thee? Grant therefore, dear Father, for thy Christ's sake, to me a most miserable wretch, thy grace and Holy Spirit to be effectual in me, that I may daily accustom myself to deny my will in the more easy and pleasant things of this life, that, when need shall be, I may come with Christ to thee with a resigned will, always steadfastly expecting thy mercy, and in the mean season continually obeying thee with readiness and willingness, doing whatever may most please thee, through Christ our Lord, who liveth with thee, &c.

X. A GODLY MEDITATION AND INSTRUCTION ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD TOWARDS MANKIND.

This ought to be most certain unto us—that nothing is done without thy providence, O Lord. That is—that nothing is done, be it good or bad, sweet or sour, but by thy knowledge, that is, by thy will, wisdom, and ordinance; for knowledge comprehends in it all these, as by thy holy word we are taught in many places, that even the

life of a sparrow is not without thy will, (Matt. x.) nor have all the devils in hell any liberty or power upon a beast, (Matt. viii.) but by thy appointment and will; which will we always must believe most assuredly to be wholly just and good, howsoever otherwise it may seem unto us. For thou art marvellous and not comprehensible in thy ways, and thou art holy in all thy works.

But hereunto it is necessary also for us to know no less certainly, that though all things are done by thy providence, yet the same providence hath many and divers means to work by, which means being contemned, thy providence is contemned also. As for example, meat is a mean to serve thy providence for the preservation of health and life here; so that he who contemneth to eat, because thy providence is certain and infallible, the same contemneth thy providence. Indeed, if it were so that meat could not be had, then should we not tie thy providence to this mean, but make it free, as thou art free, that is, that without meat thou canst help and give health and life; for it is not from any need that thou usest any instrument or mean to serve thy providence; thy power and wisdom are infinite, and therefore should we hang on thy providence, even when all is quite against us. But for our instruction and infirmities' sake, it has pleased thee by means to work and deal with us here, to exercise us in obedience, and because we cannot else, so great is our corruption, sustain thy naked and open presence. Grant me therefore, dear Father, I humbly beseech thee, for Christ's sake, that as I now know something of these things, so I may use this knowledge to my comfort and advantage in thee; that is, grant that in what state soever I am, I may not doubt but the same comes to me by thy most just ordinance, yea, by thy merciful ordinance; for as thou art just, so art thou merciful; yea, thy mercy is above all thy works.

And by this knowledge, grant me that I may humble myself to obey thee, and look for thy help in time convenient, not only when I have means, by which thou mayest work, and art so accustomed to do; but also when I have no means, but am destitute, yea, when all means are directly and wholly against me; grant I say, yet, that I may still hang upon thee and thy providence, not doubting of a fatherly end in thy good time.

Again, lest I should contemn thy providence, or pre-

sume upon it by uncoupling those things which thou hast coupled together, preserve me from neglecting thy ordinary and lawful means in all my needs, if so be I may have them, and with good conscience use them, although I know thy providence is not tied to them further than it pleases thee. But grant that I may with diligence, reverence, and thankfulness use them, and exert my diligence, wisdom, and industry in all things lawful, to serve thereby thy providence, if it so please thee. Howbeit, so that I hang in no part on the means or on my diligence, wisdom, and industry; but only on thy providence, which I am more and more persuaded is altogether fatherly and good, how far soever otherwise it appear and seem, yea, is felt by me. By this, I being preserved from negligence on my behalf, and despair or murmuring towards thee, shall become diligent and patient, through thy mere and only grace, which give and increase in me, to praise thy holy name for ever, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

XI. A MEDITATION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

There is nothing that maketh more to true godliness of life, than the persuasion of thy presence, dear Father, and that nothing is hid from thee, but that all to thee is open and naked, even the very thoughts which one day thou wilt reveal and open, either to our praise or punishment in this life, as thou didst David's faults, which he did secretly; (2 Sam. xii.) or in the life to come. (Matt. xxv.) For nothing is so hid that it shall not be revealed; therefore the prophet says, Woe to them that keep secret their thoughts, to hide their counsel from the Lord, and do their works in darkness, saying, "Who seeth us?" Grant to me therefore, dear God, mercy for all my sins, especially my hidden and close sins; enter not into judgment with me, I humbly beseech thee; give me to believe truly in thy Christ, that I may never come into judgment for them, and that with David I might so reveal them and confess them unto thee, that thou wouldest cover them. And grant further, that henceforth I may always think myself continually conversant before thee; so that if I do well, I publish it not as the hypocrites do; and if I do or think any evil, I may forthwith know that the same shall not always be hid from men.

Grant me that I may always have in mind that day wherein hidden works of darkness shall be illumined, and also the sentence of thy Son, that nothing is so secret which shall not be revealed. So in trouble and wrong I shall find comfort, and otherwise be kept through thy grace from evil, which do thou work, I humbly beseech thee, for Christ's sake. Amen.

XII. A MEDITATION OF GOD'S POWER, BEAUTY, GOODNESS, &c.

Because thou, Lord, wouldest have us to love thee, not only dost thou will, entice, allure, and provoke us, but also commandest us to do so, promising thyself unto such as love thee, and threatening us with damnation if we do otherwise; whereby we may see both our great corruption and naughtiness, and also thine exceeding great mercy towards us.

First, concerning our corruption and naughtiness, what a thing it is that power, riches, authority, beauty, goodness, liberality, truth, justice, all which thou art, good Lord, cannot move us to love thee! Whatsoever things we see fair, good, wise, mighty, are but sparks of that power, beauty, goodness, wisdom, which thou art. For that thou mightest declare thy riches, beauty, power, wisdom, goodness, &c. thou hast not only made, but still dost preserve, all creatures to be declarers and setters forth of thy glory, and as a book to teach us to know thee, as David saith of the heavens. Ps. xix.

How fair thou art, the beauty of the sun, moon, stars, light, flowers, rivers, fields, hills, birds, beasts, men, and all creatures, yea, the goodly shape and form of the whole world, declare!

How mighty thou art, we are taught by the creation of this world out of nothing, by thy governing the same, by thy punishing the wicked mighty giants thereof, by thy overthrowing their devices, by thy repressing the rage of the sea within her bounds, by storms, by tempests, by fires; these and such like declare unto us thine invisible, almighty, and terrible power, whereby thou subduest all things unto thee! How rich thou art, this world, thy great and infinite treasure-house, well declares! What plenty is there, not only of things, but also of every kind of things! Yea, how dost thou yearly and daily multiply

these kinds! How many seeds dost thou make of one seed, yea, what great increase dost thou bring it unto! These cannot but put us in remembrance of the exceeding riches that thou hast; for if to thine enemies, who love thee not, (as the most part in this world are such,) if to them thou givest so plentifully thy riches here; what shall we think that, with thyself, thou hast laid up for thy friends? How good thou art, all creatures both generally and particularly do teach. What creature is there in the world which thou hast not made for our advantage? I will not say how thou mightest have made us creatures without sense or reason, if thou wouldest have done so. But, amongst all things, none so teaches us thy great love towards us, as doth the death of thy most dearly beloved Son, who suffered the pains and terrors thereof, yea, and of hell itself, for our sakes.

If this thy love had been but a small love, it would never have lasted so long, and Christ should never have died.



XIII. A MEDITATION ON DEATH, AND THE ADVANTAGES IT BRINGS.

What else do we daily in this present life, than heap sin to sin, and hoard up trespass upon trespass?—So that this day always is worse than yesterday, by increasing our sins as our days, and therefore thy indignation, good Lord, is against us. But when we shall be suffered to go out of the body, and are taken into thy blessed company, then shall we be in the fullest safety of immortality and salvation; then shall come unto us no sickness, no need, no pain,—no kind of evil, to soul or body; but whatsoever good we can wish, that shall we have, and whatsoever we loath shall be far from us. Oh, dear Father, that we had faith to behold these things accordingly! Oh that our hearts were persuaded thereof, and our affections inflamed with the desire of them! Then should we live in longing for that which now we most loath. Oh help us, and grant that we, being ignorant of things to come, and of the time of our death, which to thee is certain, may so live and finish our journey here, that we may be ready, and then depart, when our departing may make most to thy glory and our comfort through Christ!

What is this life, but a smoke, a vapour, a shadow, a warfare, a bubble of water, a word, grass, a flower? *Thou shalt die* is most certain, but the time when no man can tell. The longer thou dost remain in this life, the more thou sinnest, which will turn to thy more pain. By thinking upon death, our minds are often in manner oppressed with darkness, because we do but remember the night of the body, forgetting the light of the mind, and of the resurrection. Thereto remember the good things that shall ensue after this life, and without wavering, in certainty of faith—so shall the passage of death be more desired. It is like sailing over the sea to thy home and country; it is like a medicine to the health of soul and body; it is the best physician; it is like to a woman's travail, for so thy soul, being delivered out of the body, comes into a much more large and fair place, even into heaven!



XIV. A GODLY MEDITATION UPON THE PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the everliving and Almighty God, by whom all things were made, and are ruled and governed; thou the lively image of the substance of the Father, the eternal wisdom of God, the brightness of his glory, God of God, light of light, co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial with the Father. Thou, of the love thou hadst to mankind, that when he was fallen from the fellowship of God into the society of satan and all evil, didst vouchsafe for our redemption to become a Mediator between God and man, taking to the Godhead our nature, as concerning the substance of it, and so becamest man. Also thou becamest the heir of all, and most merciful Messiah; who by the power of thy Godhead, and merits of thy manhood, hast purged our sins, even by thine own self, whilst thou wast here on earth; and being now set on the right hand of thy Father for us, even concerning our nature, in majesty, glory, and power infinite; I beseech and humbly pray thy mercy, to grant me at this present to rehearse somewhat of thy passion and suffering for me the last night thou wast here before thy death, that thy good Spirit may thereby be effectual to work in me faith, as well of the pardon of my sins by them, as also the mortification of mine

affections, comfort in my crosses, and patience in afflictions. Amen.

In the midst of thy last supper, with thy dear apostles, these things could not but be before thee, namely, that they would all leave thee, the most earnest would forswear thee, and one of the twelve should most traitorously betray thee; which were no small crosses unto thee. Judas was admonished by thee to beware; but when he took no heed, and wilfully went out to finish his work, contemning thy admonition and counsel, he could not but vex thy most loving heart.

After supper there was contention among thy disciples who should be greatest after thee; they still dreaming carnally of thee and of thy kingdom, and having this affliction of pride and ambition busy among them, notwithstanding thy diligence in reproving and teaching them.

After thy admonitions to them respecting the cross that would come, thereby to make them more vigilant, so ignorant were they that they thought they could, with their two swords, put away all perils; which was no little grief unto thee. After thy coming to Gethsemane, heaviness oppressed thee, and therefore thou wouldest thy disciples to pray; thou didst tell to Peter and his fellows, that thy heart was heavy to death; thou didst will them to pray, being careful for them also, lest they should fall into temptation. After this thou wentest a stone's cast from them, and didst pray thyself, falling down and grovelling upon the earth; but, alas! thou didst feel no comfort, and therefore thou camest to thy disciples, who, of all others, were most sweet and dear unto thee! but, lo! to thy further discomfort, they cared neither for thy perils nor for their own, and therefore slept apace. After thou hadst awakened them, thou didst go again to pray, but thou foundest no comfort at all, and therefore didst return again for some comfort at thy dearest friends' hands. But yet again, alas! they are fast asleep; whereupon thou art enforced to go again to thy heavenly Father for some sparkle of comfort in these thy wonderful crosses and agonies. Now here thou wast so discouraged and so comfortless, that even streams of blood came running from thine eyes and ears, and other parts of thy body. But who is able to express the infirmities of thy crosses, even while in the garden! All which thou sufferedst for my sake, as well to satisfy thy Father's wrath

for my sins, as also to sanctify all my sufferings, and make them the more gladly to be sustained by me.

After thy prayer, thou camest, and yet again foundest thy disciples asleep; and before thou canst well awake them, lo! Judas cometh with a great band of men to apprehend thee as a thief, and doth so, leading thee away bound to the high bishop's house Annas, and so from him to Caiaphas. Here now to augment this thy misery, behold thy disciples flee from thee, false witnesses are brought against thee, thou art accused and condemned of blasphemy! Peter, even in thy sight, forswearth thee; thou art unjustly stricken for answering lawfully, thou art blindfolded, stricken, and buffeted all the whole night in the bishop Caiaphas's house by their cruel servants.

In the morning betimes thou art condemned again by the priests for blasphemy, and therefore they bring thee before the secular power to Pilate, by whom thou art openly arraigned as thieves and malefactors were. When he saw that thou wast maliciously accused, yet he did not dismiss thee, but sent thee to Herod; where thou wast derided shamefully in coming and going to and from him, all the way wonderfully, especially after Herod had apparelled thee as a fool.

Before Pilate again therefore thou wast brought, and accused falsely. No man took thy part, or spake a good word for thee. Pilate caused thee to be whipped and scourged, and to be handled most pitifully, to see if any pity might appear with the prelates; but no man at all pitied thee.

Barabbas was preferred before thee; all the people, high and low, were against thee, and cried, hang thee up; unjustly wast thou judged to death; thou wast crowned with thorns that pierced thy head; thou wast made a mockingstock; thou wast reviled, rebated, beaten, and most miserably handled.

Thou wentest through Jerusalem to the place of execution, even the mount of Calvary; a great cross to hang thee was laid upon thy back to bear and draw, as long as thou wast able.

Thy body was racked to be nailed to the tree; thy hands were bored through, and thy feet also, nails were put through them to fasten thee thereon; thou wast hanged between heaven and earth, as one cast out of

heaven, and rejected of the earth, unworthy of any place. The high priest laughed thee to scorn, the elders blasphemed thee, and said, God hath no care for thee; the common people laughed and cried out upon thee: thirst oppressed thee, but vinegar only and gall were given thee to drink. Heaven shined not on thee, the sun gave thee no light, the earth was afraid to bear thee, Satan tempted thee, and thine own senses caused thee to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh! wonderful passions* which thou sufferedst; in them thou teachest me, in them thou comfortest me; for by them God is my father, my sins are forgiven; by them I should learn to fear God, to love God, to hope in God, to hate sin, to be patient, to call upon God, and never to leave him for any temptation, but with thee still to cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."†

* Sufferings.

† The similarity of many of the sufferings endured by the martyrs in those days to the sufferings of our Lord, was evidently present to Bradford's mind when he penned some of the expressions in this Meditation.

A CONFESSION OF SINS
AND
PRAYER FOR THE MITIGATION OF GOD'S WRATH,
AND
PUNISHMENT FOR THE SAME.

O ALMIGHTY God, King of all kings, and Governor of all things, whose power no creature is able to resist, to whom it belongeth justly to punish sinners, and to be merciful unto them that truly repent; we confess that thou dost most justly punish us, for we have grievously sinned against thee. And we acknowledge, that in punishing us thou declarest thyself to be our most merciful Father, as well because thou dost not punish us in any thing as we have deserved, as also because, by punishing us thou dost call us and (as it were) draw us to increase in repentance, in faith, in prayer, in contemning of the world, and in hearty desires for everlasting life, and thy blessed presence; grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, thankfully to acknowledge thy great mercy, who hast thus favourably dealt with us, in punishing us, not to our confusion, but to our amendment. And seeing thou hast sworn that thou wilt not the death of a sinner, but that he turn and live, have mercy upon us, and turn us unto thee for thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ's sake; whom thou wouldest should be made a slain sacrifice for our sins, thereby declaring thy great and unspeakable anger against sin, and thine infinite mercy towards us sinful wretches.

And forasmuch as the dulness of our hearts, blindness and corruption are such, that we are not able to rise up unto thee by faithful and hearty prayer, according to our great necessity, without thy singular grace and assistance; grant unto us, gracious Lord, thy holy and sanctifying Spirit to work in us this good work with a pure and clean mind, with a humble and lowly heart, with grace to weigh and consider the need and greatness of that which we desire, and with an assured faith and trust that thou wilt grant us our requests;—because thou art good and gracious even to young ravens calling upon thee, much more then to us for whom thou hast made all things; yea, and hast not spared thine own dear Son;—because thou hast commanded us to call upon thee;—because thy throne whereunto we come

is a throne of grace and mercy;—because thou hast given us a mediator Christ, to bring us unto thee, being the way by whom we come, being the door by whom we enter, and being the head on whom we hang, and hope that our poor petitions shall not be in vain, through and for his name's sake.

We beseech thee, therefore, of thy rich mercy, wherein thou art plentiful to all them that call upon thee, to forgive us our sins, namely, our unthankfulness, unbelief, self-love, neglect of thy word, security, hypocrisy, contempt of thy long suffering, omission of prayer, doubting of thy power, presence, mercy, and good will towards us, insensibleness of thy grace, impatience, &c. And to this thy benefit of correcting us, add these thy gracious gifts, repentance, faith, the spirit of prayer, the contempt of this world, and hearty desires of everlasting life. Endue us with thy Holy Spirit, according to thy covenant and mercy, as well to assure us of pardon, and that thou dost accept us into thy favour as thy dear children in Christ and for his sake, as to write thy law in our hearts, and so to work in us, that we may now begin, and go forwards in believing, loving, fearing, obeying, praying, hoping, and serving thee as thou dost require most fatherly and most justly of us, accepting us as perfect through Christ and by imputation.

And moreover, when it shall be thy good pleasure, and most to thy glory, deliver us, we beseech thee, out of the hands of thine adversaries, by such means, be it death or life, as may most make to our comfort in Christ. In the mean season, and for ever, save us and govern us with thy Holy Spirit and his eternal consolation.

And concerning thine adversaries, which for thy sake are become our adversaries, so many of them as are to be converted, we beseech thee to show thy mercy upon them, and to convert them. But those that are not to be converted, which thou only dost know, most mighty God and terrible Lord, confound, and get thy name a glory over them, abate their pride, assuage their malice, bring to nought their devilish devices, and grant that we and all thine afflicted children may be armed with thy defence, weaponed with thy wisdom, and guided with thy grace and Holy Spirit, to be preserved for ever from all giving of offence to thy people, and from all perils, to glorify thee, who art the only Giver of all victory, through the merits of thy only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANOTHER CONFESSION OF SINS.

As David, seeing thine angel with his sword ready drawn, most righteous Lord, to plague Jerusalem, cried out unto thee, "It is I, Lord, that have sinned, and I that have done wickedly; thine hand, Lord, be on me, and not on thy poor sheep;" wherethrough thou wast moved to mercy, and badest thine angel put up his sword, thou having taken punishment enough.

Even so we, gracious Lord, seeing thy fearful sword of vengeance ready drawn, and now striking against this common weal and thy church in the same, we have occasion every man now to cast off our eyes from beholding and narrowly spying out other men's faults, and to set our own only in sight, that with the same David thy servant, and with Jonah in the ship, we may cry, "It is we, O Lord, who have sinned, and procured this thy grievous wrath."

And this we now, gathered together in Christ's name, do acknowledge, confessing ourselves guilty of horrible ingratitude for our good king,* for thy gospel and pure religion, and for the peace of thy church, and quietness of the common weal, besides our negligences and our many other grievous sins, wherethrough we have deserved not only these but much more grievous plagues, if even at present thou didst not, as thou art wont, remember thy mercy.

Hereupon, since thou in thine anger rememberest thy mercy before we seek and sue for it, we take boldness, as thou commandest us to do, in our trouble, to come and call upon thee, to be merciful unto us; and of thy goodness now we humbly in Christ's name pray thee to hold thy hand and cease thy wrath; or at least so to mitigate it, that this realm may be quietly governed, and the same shortly become a harbour for thy church and true religion; which do thou restore to us again, according to thy great power and mercy, and we shall praise thy name for ever, through Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Saviour. Amen.

* Edward VI.

A PRAYER FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

Oh! Lord God and dear Father, what shall I say, that feel all things to be in a manner with me as in the wicked! Blind is my mind, crooked is my will, and perverse concupiscence is in me, as a spring or stinking puddle. Oh! how faint is faith in me! how little love is there to thee or thy people, how great is self-love, how hard is my heart, &c. By reason whereof I am moved to doubt of thy goodness towards me, whether thou art my Father or not, and whether I am thy child or not. Indeed justly might I doubt it, if the having of these were the causes and not rather the fruits of being thy children. The cause why thou art my Father, is, thy mercy, goodness, grace, and truth in Christ Jesus, which cannot but remain for ever. In respect whereof thou hast borne me this good will, to accept me into the number of thy children, that I might be holy, faithful, obedient, innocent, &c. And therefore thou wouldest not only make me a creature after thy image, enduing me with sight, limbs, shape, form, memory, wisdom, &c., whereas thou mightest have made me a beast, a maimed creature, lame, blind, frantic, &c.; but also thou wouldest that I should be born of Christian parents, brought into thy church by baptism, and called divers times by the ministry of thy word into thy kingdom, besides the innumerable other benefits always hitherto poured upon me. All this thou hast done of thy good will which thou of thine own mercy barest to me in Christ and for Christ before the world was made; which thou requirest straitly that I should believe without doubting, so that in all my needs I should come unto thee as a Father, and make my moan without mistrust of being heard, in thy good time, as most shall make to my comfort. Lo! therefore to thee, dear Father, I come through thy Son our Lord, our Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ, who sitteth on thy right hand, making intercession for me, and I pray thee of thy great goodness and mercy in Christ to be merciful unto me, that I may feel indeed thy sweet mercy, as thy child. The time, O dear Father, I appoint not, but I pray thee that I may with hope still expect and look for thy help. I hope that as thou hast left me for a little while, thou wilt come and visit me, and that in thy great mercy, whereof I have need by reason of my great misery. Thou art wont for a little season in

thine anger to hide thy face from those whom thou lovest, but surely, O Redeemer, in eternal mercies thou wilt show thy compassions. For when thou leavest us, O Lord, thou dost not leave us very long, neither dost thou leave us to our loss, but to our gain and advantage: even that thy Holy Spirit, with a greater portion of thy power and virtue, may lighten and cheer us, that the want of feeling, to our sorrow, may be recompensed plentifully with the lively sense of having thee, to our eternal joy. And therefore thou swearest, that in thine everlasting mercy thou wilt have compassion on us: of which mercy that we might be most assured, thine oath is to be marked, for thou sayest, "As I have sworn that I will not bring any more the waters to drown the world; so have I sworn, that I will never more be angry with thee, nor reprove thee. The mountains shall remove, and the hills shall fall down, but my loving kindness shall not move, and the bond of my peace shall not fail thee;" (Isa. liv.) thus sayest thou the Lord, our merciful Redeemer. Dear Father, therefore I pray thee, remember, even for thine own truth and mercy's sake, this promise and everlasting covenant, which in thy good time I pray thee to write in my heart, that I may know thee to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent: that I may love thee with all my heart for ever; that I may love thy people for thy sake; that I may be holy in thy sight through Christ; that I may always not only strive against sin, but also overcome the same, daily more and more, as thy children do. Above all things desiring the sanctification of thy name, the coming of thy kingdom, the doing of thy will here on earth as it is in heaven, &c., through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate. Amen.



ANOTHER PRAYER FOR REMISSION OF SINS.

O gracious God! who seekest by all means to bring thy children into the feeling and sure sense of thy mercy, and therefore when prosperity will not serve, thou sendest adversity, graciously correcting them here, whom thou wilt shall live with thee elsewhere for ever;—we poor, wretched creatures give humble praises and thanks unto thee, dear Father, that thou hast vouched us worthy of thy

correction at this present time, hereby to work that which we in prosperity and liberty did neglect. For which neglecting and our many other grievous sins, whereof we now accuse ourselves before thee, most merciful Lord, thou mightest most justly have given us over, and destroyed us both in souls and bodies. But such is thy goodness towards us in Christ, that thou seemest to forget all our offences; and as though we were far otherwise than we are indeed, thou wilt that we should suffer this cross now laid upon us for thy truth and gospel's sake, and so be thy witnesses with the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, yea, with thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, to whom thou dost now here begin to fashion us like, that in his glory we may be like him also.

O good God! what are we on whom thou dost show this great mercy! O loving Lord! forgive us our unthankfulness and sins. O faithful Father! give us thy Holy Spirit now to cry in our hearts, Abba, dear Father—to assure us of our eternal election in Christ—to reveal more and more thy truth unto us—to confirm, strengthen, and stablish us so in the same, that we may live and die in it as vessels of thy mercy, to thy glory and to the advantage of thy church. Endue us with the Spirit of thy wisdom, that with good conscience we may always so answer the enemies of thy cause, as may turn to their conversion or confusion, and our unspeakable consolation in Jesus Christ; for whose sake we beseech thee henceforth to keep us, to give us patience, and to will none otherwise for deliverance or mitigation of our misery, than may stand alway with thy good pleasure and merciful will towards us.

Grant this, dear Father, not only to us in this place, but also to all others elsewhere afflicted for thy name's sake, through the death and merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SIN, AND TO BE RESTORED TO GOD'S GRACE AND FAVOUR AGAIN.

O Almighty and everlasting Lord God! who hast made heaven, earth, and all things. O incomprehensible Unity! O always to be worshipped, most blessed Trinity! I humbly beseech thee and pray thee, by the assumption and cru-

cified humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou wouldst incline and bow down thy Deity to pity my vileness, to drive from me all kinds of vice, wickedness, and sin, and to make in me a new and clean heart, and to renew in me a right spirit, for thy holy name's sake.

O Lord Jesus! I beseech thy goodness, for the exceeding great love which drew thee out of thy Father's bosom into the womb of the holy virgin, and for the assumption of man's nature, wherein it pleaseth thee to save me, and to deliver me from eternal death.—I beseech thee, I say that thou wouldest draw me out of myself into thee, my Lord God, and grant that thy love may recover again thy grace to me, to increase and make perfect in me that which is wanting, to raise up in me that which is fallen, to restore to me that which I have lost, and to quicken in me that which is dead and should live; so that I may become conformable unto thee in all my life and conversation, thou dwelling in me and I in thee, my heart being supplied with thy grace, and settled in thy faith for ever.

O thou my God! loose and set at liberty my spirit from all inferior things, govern my soul, and so work, that both in soul and body I may be holy, and live to thy glory, world without end. Amen.



A PRAYER FOR THE OBTAINING OF FAITH.

O merciful God and dear Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! in whom as thou art well pleased, so hast thou commanded us to hear him. Forasmuch as he often biddeth us to ask of thee, and promises that thou wilt hear us, and grant us that which in his name we shall ask of thee; lo! gracious Father, I am bold to beg of thy mercy, through thy Son Jesus Christ, one sparkle of true faith and certain persuasion of thy goodness and love towards me in Christ; wherethrough I, being assured of the pardon of all my sins by the mercies of Christ thy Son, may be thankful to thee, love thee, and serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE.

Most gracious God and merciful Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ;—because I have sinned and done wickedly, and through thy goodness have received a desire of repentance, whereto thy long-suffering draws my hard heart; I beseech thee, for thy great mercy's sake in Christ, to work the same repentance in me; and by thy Spirit, power, and grace, to humble, mortify, and make my conscience afraid for my sins, to salvation; that in thy good time thou mayest comfort and quicken me, through Jesus Christ, thy dearly beloved Son. So be it.

A GODLY MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

O Almighty and everlasting Lord God! the dear Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is, who art the only ruler, governor, preserver, and keeper of all things, together with thy dearly beloved Son Christ Jesus our Lord, and with thy Holy Ghost the Comforter. O holy, righteous, and wise! O strong, terrible, mighty, and fearful Lord God! Judge of all men, and Governor of all the whole world! O exorable, patient, and most gracious Father! whose eyes are upon the ways of all men, and are so clean that they cannot abide impiety; thou searchest the hearts, and triest the very thoughts and reins of all men; thou hatest sin, and abhorrest iniquity; for sin's sake thou hast grievously punished mankind, thy most dear creature, as thou hast declared by the penalty of death laid upon all the children of Adam, by the casting out Adam and his offspring forth from paradise. Also by the cursing of the earth; by the drowning of the world; by the burning up of Sodom and Gomorrah; by the hardening the heart of Pharaoh, so that no miracle could convert him; by the drowning of him and his people with him in the Red Sea; by the overthrowing of the Israelites in the wilderness, so that of six hundred thousand only two entered into the land of promise; by rejecting king Saul; by the great punishment upon thy servant David, notwithstanding his hearty repentance; by grievously afflicting Solomon in himself and in his posterity; by the captivity of the ten tribes, and by the thralldom of the Jews, wherein until this present day they continue a notable spectacle to the world of thy wrath against and for sin. But of all the spectacles

of thy anger against sin, the greatest and most notable is the death and bloody passion of thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ. Great is thy anger against sin, when in heaven and earth nothing could be found which might appease thy wrath, save the bloodshedding of thine only and most dearly beloved Son, in whom was and is all thy delight. Great is the sore of sin, that needeth such a salve; mighty was the malady that needeth such a medicine. If in Christ, in whom was no sin, thy wrath was so fierce for our sin, that he was constrained to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" how great and insupportable must be thine anger against us, who are nothing but sinful! They that are thy children, through the contemplation of thine anger against sin, most evidently set forth in the death of Christ, do tremble and are afraid, lamenting themselves to him, and heartily crying for mercy; whereas the wicked are altogether careless and contemptuous, nothing lamenting their iniquities, nor crying to thee heartily for mercy and pardon, among whom we are rather to be placed, than among thy children. For we are shameless for our sin, and careless for thy wrath; which we may well say is most grievous against us, and evidently set forth in the taking away of our good king and thy true religion, in the exile of thy servants, imprisonment of thy people, misery of thy children, and death of thy saints. Also by the placing thy enemies in authority over us, by the success thou givest them in all they take in hand, by the returning again of antichrist the pope into our country. All these, as they declare thy grievous wrath unto all the world, but specially unto us, so they set before our eyes our iniquities and sins, which have deserved the same. For thou art just and holy in all thy works, thy judgments are righteous altogether; it is we, it is we that have sinned, and procured these plagues; we have been unthankful wretches, and most carnal gospellers; therefore to us pertaineth shame, and nothing else is due, but confusion. For we have done very wickedly, we have heaped sin upon sin, so that the measure has overflowed and ascended up to heaven, and brought these plagues, which are but earnest for greater to ensue; and yet, alas, we are altogether careless in manner! What shall we do? What shall we say? Who can give us penitent hearts? Who can open our lips, that our mouths may make acceptable confession unto thee? Alas! of ourselves we cannot think

any good, much less wish it, and least of all do it. As for angels or any other creatures, they have nothing but what they have received, and they are made to minister unto us, so that where it passes the power of the master, the minister must needs want. Alas! then, what shall we do? Thou art holy, and we unholy; thou art good, and we nothing but evil; thou art pure, we altogether impure; thou art light, and we most dark, darkness; how then can there be any conveniency or agreement betwixt us? Oh! what may we now do? Despair? No; for thou art God, and therefore good; thou art merciful, and therefore thou forgivest sins; with thee is mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worshipped. When Adam had sinned, thou gavest him mercy before he desired it; and wilt thou deny us mercy, who now desire the same? Adam excused his fault, and accused thee; but we accuse ourselves, and excuse thee; and shall we be sent empty away? Noah found favour when thy fury abounded; and shall we, seeking grace, be frustrated? Abraham was pulled out of idolatry when the world was drowned therein; and art thou his God only? Israel in captivity in Egypt was graciously visited and delivered; and, dear God, the same good Lord, shall we always be forgotten? How often in the wilderness didst thou defer, and spare thy plagues, at the request of Moses, when the people themselves made no petition to thee? And seeing we not only now make our petitions unto thee through thy goodness, but also we have a Mediator for us far above Moses, even Jesus Christ; should we, I say, dear Lord, depart ashamed? So soon as David said, "I have sinned," thou didst forthwith answer to him, that he should not die, thou hadst taken away his sins. And, gracious God, even the self-same God, shall not we, who now with David gladly confess that we have sinned, shall not we, I say, hear by thy good Spirit that our sins are pardoned? Oh! grant that with Manasseh we may find favour and mercy; remember that thou hast not spared thine own only dear Son Jesus Christ, but hast given him for us all, to die for our sins, to rise for our righteousness, to ascend for our taking possession of heaven, and to appear before thee for us for ever, a High-priest after the order of Melchisedec, that through him we might have free access to come to thy throne, now rather a throne of grace than of justice. Remember that thou by him hast bidden us to ask, and promised that we should

receive, saying, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." O thou dear God, and most mild and merciful Father! we heartily beseech thee to be merciful unto us. For this thy Christ's sake, for his death's sake, for thy promise, truth, and mercy's sake, have mercy upon us; pardon and forgive us all our sins, iniquities, and trespasses, whatsoever we have committed against thee, in thought, word, or deed, ever or at any time hitherto, by any means. Dear Father, have mercy upon us; though we are poor, yet our Christ is rich; though we are sinners, yet he is righteous; though we are fools, yet he is wise; though we are impure, yet he is pure and holy; for his sake therefore be merciful unto us. Call to mind how thou hast promised that thou wilt pour out thy clean waters, and wash us from our filth, and cleanse us from our evils; forget not that thou hast promised to take from us our stony hearts, and dost promise to give us soft hearts, new hearts, and to put right spirits into the midst of us. Remember thy covenant, namely, how thou wilt be our God, and we shall be thy people; forget not the parts of it, that is, to put out of thy memory for ever all our unrighteousness, and to write in our minds and hearts thy law and testimonies. Remember that thou dost strictly charge us to have none other gods but thee, saying, that thou art the Lord our God. Oh! then declare the same to us all, we now heartily beseech thee; forgive us our sins, forget our iniquities, cleanse us from our filthiness, wash us from our wickedness, pour out thy Holy Spirit upon us, take from us our hard hearts, our stony hearts, our impenitent hearts, our distrusting and doubtful hearts, our carnal, our secure, our idle, our brutish hearts, our impure, malicious, arrogant, envious, wrathful, impatient, covetous, hypocritical, and selfish hearts; and in place thereof give us new hearts, soft hearts, faithful hearts, merciful hearts, loving, obedient, chaste, pure, holy, righteous, true, simple, lowly, and patient hearts, to fear thee, to love thee, and trust in thee for ever. Write thy law in our hearts, engrave it in our minds, we heartily beseech thee; give us the spirit of prayer, make us diligent and happy in the works of our vocation, take into thy custody and governance our souls and bodies for ever, our lives, and all that ever we have. Tempt us not further than thou wilt make us able to bear; and whatsoever thou knowest we have need of, in soul or

body, dear God and gracious Father, vouchsafe to give us that same in thy good time, and guide us always as thy children, so that our life may please thee, and our death praise thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For whose sake we heartily pray thee to grant these things thus asked, and all other things necessary for soul and body; not only to us, but to all others also, for whom thou wouldest that we should pray; especially for thy children that are in thralldom, in exile, in prison, misery, heaviness, poverty, and sickness. Be merciful to the whole realm of England; grant us all true repentance, mitigation of our misery, and, if it be thy good will, thy holy word and religion among us once again; pardon our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and if it be thy pleasure, turn their hearts; be merciful unto our parents, brethren and sisters, friends, kinsfolks and families, neighbours, and such as by any means thou hast coupled and linked us to, by love or otherwise. And unto us, poor sinners, here gathered together in thy holy name, grant thy blessing and thy Holy Spirit to sanctify us, and dwell in us as thy dear children, to keep us, this day and for ever, from all evil, to thy eternal glory, and our everlasting comfort, and the profit of thy church; which mercifully maintain, cherish and comfort; strengthening them that stand, so that they may never fall; lifting up them that are fallen;—and keep us from falling from thy truth; through the merits of thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, to whom be all praise and honour, both now and for ever. Amen.

DAILY MEDITATIONS.*

WHEN YOU AWAKE OUT OF YOUR SLEEP, PRAY THUS:

O most dear Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom none doth know but by thy gift, grant that to the manifold great benefits of thy goodness given to me, this which of all other is the greatest, may be added; that like as thou hast awakened my body from sleep, so thou wouldest thoroughly awake, yea, deliver my soul from the sleep of sin and the darkness of this world, and that which now is awakened out of sleep, be pleased, after death, to restore to life, for that is but sleep to thee, which is death to us. O God, I most heartily beseech and humbly pray thy goodness to make my body such a companion, or rather such a minister of godliness to my soul, in this present life, that in the life to come it may partake therewith everlasting happiness by Jesus Christ our Lord. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall show light unto thee. (Eph. v.)

Occasions to meditate.

Here call to mind the great joy and blessedness of the everlasting resurrection; also remember to muse upon that most clear light and bright morning, and clearness of our bodies, after the long darkness they will have been in: all then shall be full of joy.



SO SOON AS YOU BEHOLD THE DAY-LIGHT, PRAY:

O Lord, thou greatest and most true Light, whence this light of the day and of the sun doth spring! O Light, which dost lighten every man that cometh into this world! O Light, which knowest no night nor evening, but art always a mid-day, most clear and fair, without whom all is most dark. darkness—by whom all are most resplendent! O

* The following meditations were written by Bradford to supersede the meditations upon similar subjects in use among the papists and which are still found in many of their books of devotion.

thou Wisdom of the eternal Father of mercies! enlighten my mind, that I may only see those things that please thee and may be blinded to all other things. Grant that I may walk in thy ways, and that nothing else may be light and pleasant unto me. Lighten mine eyes, O Lord! that I sleep not in death, lest mine enemies say, "I have prevailed against him."

Occasions to meditate.

Muse a little how much the light and eye of the mind and soul are better than those of the body; also that we care more for the soul's seeing well than for the body. Think that beasts have bodily eyes, and therewith see, but men have eyes of the mind, and therewith should see.



WHEN YOU ARISE, PRAY:

Our first father tumbled down himself from a most excellent, high, and honourable estate into the mire of misery and deep sea of shame and mischief; but, O Christ, thou, putting forth thine hand, didst raise him up; even so we, except we be lifted up by thee, shall lie still for ever. O good Christ, our most gracious Redeemer, grant that as thou dost mercifully now raise up this my body and burden, even so I beseech thee raise up my mind and heart to the light of the true knowledge of the love of thee, that my conversation may be in heaven, where thou art. If thou be risen with Christ, think upon those things that be above.

Occasions to meditate.

Think how foul and filthy Adam's fall was by reason of sin, and so the fall of every one of us from the height of God's grace; again, think upon the great benefit of Christ, by whose help we do daily arise from our fallings.



WHEN YOU DRESS YOURSELF, PRAY:

O Christ, clothe me with thine own self, that I may be so far from making provision for my flesh to fulfil the lusts of it, that I may quite put off all my carnal desires, and

crucify the kingdom of the flesh in me. Be thou unto me a garment to warm me from catching the cold of this world; if thou be away from me, dear Lord, all things will forthwith be unto me cold, weak, dead, &c. But if thou art with me, all things will be warm, lively, fresh, &c. Grant therefore, that as I compass this my body with this coat, so thou wouldest clothe me wholly, but especially my soul, with thine own self. Put upon me as the elect of God, mercy, meekness, love, peace, &c.

Occasions to meditate.

Call to mind a little how we are incorporated into Christ; again, how he clothes us, and nourishes us under his wings, protection, and providence, preserves us, &c.



WHEN YOU ARE MADE READY TO BEGIN THE DAY,
PRAY:

O God and merciful Father, thou knowest and hast taught us somewhat to know, that the weakness of man is much, and that without thy grace and virtue he cannot do or think any good thing; have mercy upon me, I humbly beseech thee, who am thy most unworthy and most weak child. Oh! be gracious and tender towards me, enlighten me, that I may with pleasure look only upon good things; exhort me that I may covet them; carefully lead me, that I may follow, and at length attain them. I, distrusting myself altogether, commend and offer myself wholly, soul, body, life, &c. into thy hands. Thy loving Spirit lead me forth unto the land of righteousness.



COGITATIONS PROPER TO BEGIN THE DAY WITH.

Think first that a man consists of a soul and a body, and that the soul is from heaven, firm and immortal; but the body is of the earth, earthly, frail, and mortal. Again, think that by reason of sin, wherein you are conceived and born, the parts of the soul that understand and desire are so corrupt, that without especial grace to both soul and body, you can neither know nor love any good thing in God's sight, much less do good. Yet notwithstanding think,

that you are regenerate by Christ's resurrection, whereof your baptism requireth faith, and therefore have both body and soul something reformed both to know and love, and therefore to do some good in the sight of God through Christ, for whose sake our poor doings are accepted for good; the evil and infirmity cleaving thereto not being imputed through faith. Think that by faith, which is God's seed, (for they which believe are born of God, and made God's children,) and which is given to those that are ordained to eternal life; think (I say) that by faith you receive more and more the Spirit of sanctification, through the use of God's word and sacraments, and earnest prayer to illumine and enlighten your mind's understanding, judgment, and reason, and to bow, form, frame, and inflame your affections with love and power to that which is good; and therefore use the means aforesaid accordingly. Think that, by this Spirit, you are through faith united to Christ as a lively member, and so to God, and, as it were, made one with him, and by love which springeth out of this faith you are made one also with all that are of God. And so you have fellowship with God, and all good men that ever were or shall be, in all the good that God and all his saints have or shall have. Think that as, by faith and love through the Spirit, you are now entered into this communion, the blessedness whereof no tongue can express, so after this life you shall, first in soul, and in the last day in body also, enjoy for ever the same society most perfectly, which now is only begun in you. Think then of your negligence, that cares so little for this your happy estate. Think upon your ingratitude to God for making you, redeeming you, calling you, and so lovingly adopting you. Think upon your foolishness in fancying so much earthly and bodily pleasures. Think upon your deafness and blindness, who hear not God nor see him, though he calls you so diligently by his works, words, and sacraments. Think upon your frowardness, who will not be led of God and his Spirit. Think upon your forgetfulness and inconsideration of your high estate, how your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, how your members are the members of Christ, how the whole world and all things are your own. (1 Cor. iii. vi.) And therefore say unto your soul, O soul! arise, follow God, contemn this world, purpose well, and pursue it, long for thy Lord's coming, be ready and watch that he come not upon you unawares. And forasmuch as

you must live to God's pleasure, consider the vocation and state of your life whereto God hath called you, and pray to God for grace, knowledge, and ability to take the most profitable things in hand; to begin well, to go on better, and, best of all, to end the same to God's glory, and the profit of your brethren; and think that time lost wherein you speak or do not, or at the least think not, something to God's glory and your brethren's advantage.

WHEN YOU GO FORTH OUT OF DOORS, PRAY:

Now must I walk among the snares of death, which are stretched out by Satan and his mischievous ministers in the world, carrying with me a friend to them both, and a foe to myself, even this body of sin and sinful flesh. O grand Captain, Christ, lead me and guide me, I beseech thee; defend me from the plagues and subtleties whereby I am endangered. Grant that I may take all things that happen as I should do; only upon thee set thou mine eyes, that I may so go on forwards in thy ways so that by nothing I may be hindered, but rather forwarded, and may refer all things to thee accordingly. Show me thy way, O Lord, and teach me thy paths; consider how vainly the most part of men are occupied, how they trouble and cumber themselves diversely, how they meddle with many things, thereby much alienating their minds from the knowledge and cogitation of that which they should most esteem, and so become a hinderance and an offence to others.

Occasions to meditate.

As in going abroad, you look that your apparel is seemly in the sight of men, so examine how seemly you appear in the sight of God.

WHEN YOU ARE GOING ANY JOURNEY, PRAY:

This our life is a pilgrimage. From the Lord we came, and to the Lord we make our journey; howbeit we pass through thievish places, and painful, yea, perilous ways, which our cruel enemies have, and do prepare for us, who now are more than stark blind by reason of sin. O Christ! who art a most true Lodesman* and Guide, and

* Pilot.

thereto most expert, faithful, and friendly, do thou put out thine hand, open mine eyes, make thy highways known unto me, which way thou didst first enter into out of this corruptible life, and hast fenced the same for us to immortality. Thou art the way, lead us to the Father by thyself, that we all may be one with him, as thou and he together are one. Show me thy way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto thee. (Psalm cxliii.)

OR PRAY THUS:

Merciful Father, thou art wont to send to thy servants and men of simple hearts, thine angels to be their keepers, and, as it were, guides: as elder brethren, to watch over thy weak children; so didst thou to Jacob, to Abraham's servant, to Joshua, &c. O good God! though we are much unlike unto them, so many are our sins, yet for thine own goodness' sake, send thine holy angels, to pitch their tents about us, from Satan and his slaves to hide and defend, to carry us in their hands, that we come not into further danger than thou throughout wilt deliver us from for thine own sake;—even his angels are ministers for them that are heirs of salvation. (Heb. i.) Satan sleepeth not, but seeketh always to destroy us.

Occasions to meditate.

Think how we are strangers from our country, from our home, from our original; I mean from God. Again, think upon our madness, that linger and loiter so willingly in this our journey and pilgrimage; also how foolish we are to fancy things which we cannot carry with us, and to contemn conscience, which will always be a companion to us, to our joy if it is good, but to our shame and sorrow, if it is evil and corrupt. Finally, how unnatural we are, that so little desire to be at our home, to be with our only Father, and Master, our fellows, friends, &c.

WHEN YOU ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE YOUR MEAT,
PRAY:

This is a wonderful mystery of thy work, O Maker and Governor of the world, that thou dost sustain the lives of men and beasts with these meats! Surely this power is

neither in the bread nor food, but in thy will and word, by which word all things live and have their being. Again, how great a thing is it, that thou art able yearly to give sustenance to so many creatures; this is spoken of by thy prophets in thy praises. All things look up to thee, and thou givest them meat in due season; thou openest thine hand, and fillest with thy blessing every living thing: these, doubtless, are wonderful works of thine almightiness. I therefore heartily pray thee, O most liberal Lord and faithful Father, that as thou by meat through thy word dost minister life to these our bodies, even so by the same word with thy grace do thou quicken our souls; that both in soul and body we may please thee till this our mortal body shall put on immortality, and we shall need no more any other food, but thee only, who then wilt be all in all. Taste, and see how good the Lord is; bless the Lord, O my soul, who feedeth and filleth thy mouth with good things.

Occasions to meditate.

Think a little how great God's power is, that made us; also think how great his wisdom is to preserve us; but most of all, think how many things are given for our use, how wonderful it is to give us life, but most of all, to propagate to immortality the life of the soul by his beck alone. Last of all, think that God, by his providence for thy body, would have thee confirm thy faith respecting God's providence for thy soul.



IN THE MEAL-TIME, PRAY:

O most liberal Distributor of thy gifts, who givest us all kinds of good things to use, thou being pure givest pure things, grant to me thy grace, that I misuse not these thy gracious gifts given to our use and profit. Let us not love them because thou dost give us these things, but rather let us love Thee, because thou givest them, and because they are necessary for us for a season, till we come unto thee. Grant us to be conversant among thy gifts soberly, purely, temperately, holily, because thou art such: so shall not we turn to the poison of our souls, that which thou hast given for the medicine of our bodies, but using thy benefits thankfully, we shall find them profitable both to soul and body.

Occasions to meditate.

Think that the meats and drinks set before you, are given to you to use, and not to abuse; think they are given to profit and not to hurt you; think that they are not given to you alone, but unto others also, by you. In eating and drinking think that you do but feed the worms. Remember the poor prisoners, the sick, &c., as though you were in their case. Think upon the food of your soul, Christ's body broken, and his blood shed. Desire the meat that lasteth for ever, (John vi.) work for it; Christ's meat was to do his Father's will. (John iv.)

—◆—
AFTER YOUR MEAT, PRAY THUS :

By corporeal meats thou dost sustain our corporeal daily life, which otherwise is ready to perish, which surely is a great work, but yet this is much greater, more profitable, and more holy—that thy grace, O Jesus Christ, keeps away from us the death of the soul. For this life we ought much to thank thee, and because thou prolongest it with thy good gifts, we most heartily praise thee; howbeit, this life is but the way to eternal life, which we beseech thee, for thy death's sake, that thou wilt give us; and so shall we not only give thee, as we can, thanks in time for temporal things, but also eternal thanks for eternal things. Oh! grant to us these our desires for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

Occasions to meditate.

Think now that God has given thee this his blessing of meat, &c., and also time that thou mightest repent to seek his glory, and the advantage of thy brethren. Therefore go thereabout; but first pray for grace well to begin, and again consider how thou hast been partaker of other men's labours, as of the husbandman, the miller, the baker, the brewer, the butcher, the cook, &c. See therefore that thou art not a drone, but rather such a bee as may help the hive. If God have thus fed thy body, which he loveth not, except for thy soul's sake, how can it be then, but that he will be much more ready to feed thy soul? Therefore take courage to thee, and go to him for grace accordingly.

COGITATIONS FOR ABOUT THE MID-DAY TIME.

As the body is now enlightened on all sides with light, so see that thy mind may be. As God giveth thee thus plentifully this corporeal light, so pray him that he will give thee the spiritual light. Think that as the sun is now most clear, so shall our bodies be in the day of judgment. As now the sun is come to the highest, and therefore will begin to draw downward, so is there nothing in the world so perfect and glorious, which, when it is at the full, will not decrease, and so wear away.



WHEN YOU COME HOME AGAIN, PRAY:

There is nothing, O Lord, more like to thy holy nature than a quiet mind; thou hast called us out of the troublesome disquietness of the world, into thy quiet rest and peace, which the world cannot give, being such a peace as passeth all men's understanding. Houses are ordained for us, that we might get into them from the injury of weather, from the cruelty of beasts, from disquietness of people, and from the toils of the world. O gracious Father, grant that through thy great mercy my body may enter into this house from outward actions, but so that it may become willing and obedient to the soul, and make no resistance thereagainst; that in soul and body I may have a godly quietness, and peace to praise thee. Amen. Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in the same.

Occasions to meditate.

Think what a return, and how joyful a return, it will be, to come to our eternal, most quiet, and most happy home; then all grief will be gone away; whatsoever here is pleasant and joyful, the same is nothing, but a very shadow in comparison, &c.



AT THE SUN'S GOING DOWN, PRAY:

Oh! how unhappy are they, O Lord, on whom thy sun goeth down, and giveth no light! I mean, thy grace, which is always clear as the mid-day. The mid-day is dark night unto them which depart from thee; in thee there never is night, but always daylight most clear. This

corporeal sun has his courses, now up, now down; but thou, dear Lord, if we love thee, art always one. Oh! that this block and veil of sin were taken away from me, that the air might be always clear day in my mind.

Occasions to meditate.

Think that as we are not sorry when the sun goes down, because we know it will rise again, even so let us not sorrow for death wherethrough the soul and body part asunder, for they shall soon return, and come together again. So long as the sun is up, wild beasts keep their dens, foxes their burrows, owls their holes, &c.; but when the sun is down, then they come abroad: so wicked men and hypocrites keep their dens in the gospel time; but it being taken away, then they swarm out of their holes like bees, as this day teaches.



WHEN THE CANDLES ARE LIGHTED, PRAY:

Most thick and dark clouds do cover our minds, except thy light, O Lord, dispels them. Thy sun, O most wise Worker, is as it were a firebrand* to the world; thy wisdom, whereby light comes both to soul and body, is a firebrand to the spiritual world. After day, when the night comes, thou hast given for the remedy of darkness, a candle; after sin, for the remedy of ignorance, thou hast given thy doctrine, which thy dear Son hath brought unto us. Oh! thou, who art the Author and Master of all truth, make us to see by both the lights, so that the dimness of our minds may be driven quite away: lift upon us thy joy in our hearts. Thy word is a lantern to my feet, and a light unto my paths.

Occasions to meditate.

Think that the knowledge and wisdom that God has given unto us by candles this night, whereby we see those things in this night of our bodies, which are expedient for us, make us to wish much more for this doctrine of God; and when we get it, to esteem and diligently embrace it the more, that as all would be horror without candles, so there is nothing but mere confusion, where God's word takes not place.

* A torch.

WHEN YOU UNDRESS YOURSELF, PRAY :

This our life and weak-knit body, by reason of sin, will be dissolved by little and little, and so shall be restored to the earth whence it was taken; then will be an end of this vanity, which by our foolishness we have wrought to ourselves. O, most merciful Father, so do thou untie, unloose, and loose me, (for thou hast knit me together,) that I may perceive myself to be made unready and dissolved, and so may remember both of whom I was made, and also whither I go, lest I be taken unprepared to thy tribunal and judgment-seat.

Occasions to meditate.

Put off the old man, with his lusts and concupiscence;—be content, with Joseph, to put off thy prison-apparel, that thou mayest put on new;—think that we willingly put off our garments, which in the morning we shall put on again; and therefore as after the night of the world, we shall receive our bodies again, let us not unwillingly put them off when God by death shall call.



WHEN YOU ENTER INTO YOUR BED, PRAY :

The day now ended, men give themselves to rest in the night, and so, this night finished, we shall rest in death. Nothing is more like this life than every day; nothing is more like death than sleep; nothing more like to our grave than our bed. O Lord, our Keeper and Defender, grant that I now, lying down to rest, being unable to keep myself, may be preserved from the crafts and assaults of the wicked enemy; and grant further, that when I have run the race of this life, thou wouldest of thy mercy call me unto thyself, that I may always live and watch with thee. Now, good God, give me to take my rest in thee, and bring to pass that thy gracious goodness may be, even in sleep, before mine eyes; that when sleeping I be not absent from thee, but may have my dreams to draw me unto thee, and so both soul and body may be kept pure and holy for ever. I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest.

Occasions to meditate.

Think that as this troublesome day is now past, and night is come, and so rest, bed, and pleasant sleep, which makes the most excellent princes and poorest peasants alike; even so after the tumults, troubles, temptations, and tempests of this life, they that believe in Christ have prepared for them a heaven and rest, most pleasant and joyful. As you are not afraid to enter into your bed, and to dispose yourself to sleep; so be not afraid to die, but rather prepare yourself for it; think that now you are nearer your end by one day's journey, than you were in the morning.



WHEN YOU FEEL SLEEP TO BE COMING, PRAY:

O Lord Jesus Christ, my Watchman and Keeper, take me to thy care; grant that while my body is sleeping my mind may watch in thee, and be made joyful by some sight of that celestial and heavenly life wherein thou art the King and Prince, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Thy angels and holy souls are most happy citizens. Oh! purify my soul, keep clean my body, that in both I may please thee, sleeping and waking, for ever. Amen.

A MOST FRUITFUL PRAYER FOR THE DISPERSED
CHURCH OF CHRIST, VERY NECESSARY TO BE USED
BY THE GODLY IN THESE DAYS OF AFFLICTION.

O MOST omnipotent, magnificent, and glorious God, and Father of all consolation; we here assembled do not presume to present and prostrate ourselves before thy mercy-seat in respect of our own worthiness and righteousness, which are altogether polluted and defiled; but in the merits, righteousness, and worthiness of thy only Son Jesus Christ, whom thou hast given unto us as a most pure and precious garment to cover our pollution and filthiness withal, that we might appear holy and justified in thy sight through him. Wherefore in obedience to thy commandments, and confiding in thy promises, contained in thy holy word, that thou wilt accept and grant our prayers presented unto thee in the favour of thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, either for ourselves or for the necessity of thy saints and congregation; we here, congregated together, do with one mouth and mind most humbly beseech thee, not only to pardon and forgive us all our sins, negligences, ignorances, and iniquities, which we, from time to time, incessantly do commit against thy divine majesty, in word, deed, and thought—such is the infirmity of our corrupted nature; but also that it would please thee, O benign Father, to be favourable and merciful unto thy poor afflicted church and congregation, dispersed throughout the whole world, which in these days of iniquity are oppressed, injured, despised, persecuted, and afflicted for the testimony of thy word, and for obedience to thy laws.

And especially, O Lord and Father, we humbly beseech thee to extend thy mercy and favourable countenance upon all those that are imprisoned or condemned for the cause of thy gospel, whom thou hast chosen for thee, and made worthy to glorify thy name. That it may please thee to give them such constancy as thou hast given to thy saints and martyrs in time past, willingly to shed their blood for the testimony of thy word; or else mightily to deliver them from the tyranny of their enemies, as thou deliveredst the condemned Daniel from the lions, and the persecuted

Peter out of prison, to the exaltation of thy glory, and the rejoicing of thy church.

Furthermore, most beneficent Father, we humbly beseech thee to stretch forth thy mighty arm unto the protection and defence of those that are exiled for the testimony of thy verity, because they would not bend their backs, and incline their necks under the yoke of antichrist, and be polluted with the execrable idolatries and blasphemous superstitions of the ungodly. That it would please thee not only to feed them in strange countries, but also to prepare a resting place for them, as thou hast done from time to time for thine elect in all ages; whereby they may unite themselves together in the sincere ministration of thy word and sacraments, to their singular edification. And in due time restore them home again to their land, to celebrate thy praises, promote thy gospel, and edify thy desolate congregation.

And also, O Lord, thou who hast said, thou wilt not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, be merciful, we beseech thee, unto all those who, through fear and weakness, have denied thee, by dissimulation and hypocrisy. That it may please thee to strengthen their weak knees, (thou who art the strength of them that stand,) and to lift up their feeble hands, that their little smoke may increase into a great flame, and their bruised reed into a mighty oak, able to abide all the blustering blasts and stormy tempests of adversity; that the ungodly may no longer triumph over their fate, which, as they think, they have utterly quenched and subdued—stir up thy strength in them, O Lord, and behold them with that merciful eye wherewith thou didst behold Peter, that they, rising by repentance, may become the constant confessors of thy word, and the sanctified members of thy church to the end; that when as by thy providence thou purposest to lay thy cross upon them, they do no more seek unlawful means to avoid the same, but most willingly be contented with patience to take it up and follow thee, in what sort soever it shall please thee to lay the same upon their shoulders, either by death, imprisonment, or exile; and that it will please thee not to tempt them above their power, but to give them grace utterly to despair of their own strength, and wholly to depend upon thy mercy.

On the other side, O Lord God, thou righteous Judge,

let not the ungodly, the enemies of thy truth, continually triumph over us, as they do at this day; let not thine heritage become a reproach and common laughing-stock unto the impudent and wicked papists, who, by all possible means, seek the utter destruction of thy little flock, by shedding the blood of thy saints for the testimony of thy word, seeking by most devilish and damnable practices to subvert thy truth. Confound them, O God, and all their wicked counsels, and let them be taken in the same pit they have digged for others; that it may be universally known that there is no counsel nor force that can prevail against the Lord our God. Break, O Lord, the horns of those bloody bulls of Bashan; pull down those high mountains that elevate themselves against thee; and root up the rotten race of the ungodly, that they being consumed in the fire of thine indignation, thine exiled church may, in their own land, find place of habitation.*

O Lord, deliver our land, which thou hast given us for a portion to possess in this life, from the invasion and subduing of strangers. Truth it is we cannot deny, but that our sins have justly deserved this great plague, now imminent† and approaching, even to be given over into the hands and subjection of that proud and brutish nation, that neither know thee nor fear thee, and to serve them in bodily captivity who have refused to serve thee in a spiritual liberty. Yet, Lord, forasmuch as we are assuredly persuaded by thy holy word, that thine anger doth not last for ever towards those that earnestly repent, but instead of vengeance thou dost show mercy, we most penitently beseech thee to remove this thy great indignation bent towards us, and give not over our land, our cities, towns and cattle, our goods, possessions and tithes, our wives, children, and our own lives, into the subjection of strangers. But rather, O Lord, expel them from our land, subvert their counsels, dissipate their devices, and deliver us from their tyranny, as thou deliveredst Samaria from cruel Benhadad, and Jerusalem from blasphemous Sennacherib.

Give us, O Lord, such princes and rulers, such magistrates and governors, as will advance thy glory, erect thy

* The reader will bear in mind the *peculiar* times and circumstances in which Bradford wrote this.

† Threatening. The nation had great cause at that time to fear lest it should be brought under the yoke of Spain.

gospel, suppress idolatry, banish all papistry, and execute justice and equity. Water again, O Lord, thy vine of England with the moisture of thy holy word, lest it utterly perish and wither away. Build up again the decayed walls of thy new Jerusalem, thy congregation in this land, lest the ungodly attribute our confusion, not unto our sins, as the truth is, but unto our profession in religion.

Remember, O Lord, that we are a parcel of thy portion, thy flock, the inheritors of thy kingdom, the sheep of thy pasture, and the members of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Deal with us therefore according to the multitude of thy mercies, that all nations, kindreds, and languages, may celebrate thy praises in the restoring of thy ruined church to perfection again; for it is thy work, O Lord, and not man's, and from thee do we with patience look for the same, and not from the fleshly arm of man, and therefore to thee only is due all dominion, power, and thanksgiving, now in our days and for evermore. Amen.



ANOTHER PRAYER.

Pray in every place, lifting up your hands. 1 Tim. ii.

O mighty King, and most high Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who mercifully governest all things which thou hast made, look down upon the faithful seed of Abraham, the children of thy chosen Jacob, thy chosen people I mean, consecrated unto thee by the anointing of thy Holy Spirit, and appointed to thy kingdom by thy eternal purpose, free mercy, and grace, but yet, as strangers, wandering in this vale of misery, brought forth daily by the worldly tyrants like sheep to the slaughter. O Father of all flesh, who, by thy divine providence, changest times and seasons, and most wonderfully disposest kingdoms; thou didst destroy Pharaoh, with all his horses and chariots, puffed up with pride against thy people, and thou didst lead forth safely, by the hands of thy mercy, thy beloved Israel through the high waves of the raging waters. Thou, O God, the Lord of all hosts and arms, didst first drive away from the gates of thy people the blasphemous Sennacherib, slaying of his army an hundred fourscore and five thousand, by thy angel in one night, and

afterwards by his own sons, before his own idols, didst kill the same blasphemous idolater, showing openly to all heathens thy provident power towards thy despised little ones. Thou didst transform and change proud Nebuchadnezzar, the enemy of thy people, into a brute beast, to eat grass and hay, to the horrible terror of all worldly tyrants. And as thou art the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, so of thy wonderful mercy thou didst preserve those thy servants in Babylon, who with bold courage gave their bodies to the fire, because they would not worship any dead idol; and when they were cast into the burning furnace, thou didst give them cheerful hearts to rejoice and sing psalms, and savedst unhurt the very hairs of their heads, turning the flame from them to devour their enemies. Thou, O Lord God, by the might of thy right arm, which governeth all, didst bring Daniel, thy prophet, safe into light and life out of the dark den of the devouring lions, where, by false accusations, he was shut under the earth to be destroyed by those raging beasts; but thou turnedst their cruelty upon his accusers, repaying the wicked upon their own pates. Yea, Lord, who passest all wonders, and art far above man's power to perceive therein thy working, thou didst cause the huge and great dragon of the seas, that horrible Leviathan and Behemoth, the mighty fish, to swallow up and devour thy servant Jonah, to keep him three days and three nights in the dungeon of his belly, the dark hellish grave to a living man; thou didst cause that great monster to carry him to the place that thou hadst appointed, and there to cast him up safe and able to do thy message.

Now also, O heavenly Father, beholder of all things, to whom only belongeth vengeance, thou seest and considerest how thy holy name is dishonoured by the wicked worldlings and blasphemous idolaters; thy sacred word refused, forsaken, and despised; thy Holy Spirit provoked and offended; thy chosen temple polluted and defiled: tarry not too long, therefore, but show thy power speedily upon thy chosen household, which is so grievously vexed, and so cruelly handled by thy open enemies.

Avenge thine own glory, and shorten these evil days for thine elect's sake. Let thy kingdom come of all thy desired, and though our lives have offended thy majesty, as we do confess unfeignedly, O Lord, that we have all sinned, our kings, princes, priests, prophets, and people—

all we, together with our parents, fathers, and mothers, have most grievously, infinitely passing all measure and number, with our hard flintish hearts, our dissolute and careless lives, without shame and repentance for sin, have offended, transgressed, trespassed, sinned, and committed most horrible wickedness, so that we have worthily deserved the uttermost of thy plagues and terrible vengeance. Yet for thine own glory, O merciful Lord, suffer not the enemy of thy Son Christ, the Romish antichrist, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy Son once died, that by his cruelty, after so clear light, they should be made captives to dumb idols and devilish inventions of popish ceremonies thereunto pertaining. Suffer him not to seduce the simple sort with his fond* opinion, that his false gods, blind mumbling, feigned religion, and his foolish superstition, give him such conquests, such victories, such triumphs, and such a high hand over us. We know most certainly, O Lord, that it is not their arm and power, but our sins and offences, that have delivered us to their fury, and have caused thee to turn away from us. But turn again, O Lord, let us fall into thy hands; otherwise (seeing thy justice must punish us) let us fall into thy hands as David chose, by dearth, famine, or pestilence, or what way thou likest; lest these vain idolaters rejoice at the miserable destruction of those men whom they make proselytes, and apostates from thy doctrine. But, holy Lord, thy holy will be fulfilled. This is thy righteous judgment to punish us with the tyrannical yoke of blindness, because we have cast away from us the sweet yoke of the wholesome word of thy Son our Saviour. Yet consider the horrible blasphemies of thine and our enemies; they call a cake† their God, their Christ, and altogether they know nothing of thy power. They say in their hearts, There is no God, who either can or will deliver us; wherefore, O heavenly Father, the Governor of all things, the Avenger of the cause of the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the oppressed, look down from heaven with the face of thy fatherly mercies, and forgive us all former offences; and for thy Son Christ's sake have mercy upon us, who by the force and cruelty of wicked and blasphemous idolaters without just causes, are haled and pulled from our own houses, are slandered, slain, and

* Foolish.

† The consecrated wafer used at the Romish sacrament.

murdered as rebels and traitors, like persons pernicious, pestiferous, seditious, pestilent, and full of mortal poison contagious to all men. Whereas we meddle no further than against the hellish powers of darkness, against the spiritual craftiness in heavenly things, which would deny the will of our Christ unto us. We contend no further than for our Christ crucified, and the only salvation by his blessed passion, acknowledging none other God, none other Christ or Saviour, but only the everliving Lord and our most merciful Father, and thy dear Son our Saviour, who is in the same glory with thee in the highest heavens. Therefore, O Lord, for thy glorious name's sake, for Jesus Christ's sake, by whom thou hast promised to grant all righteous requests, make the wicked idolaters to wonder and stand amazed at thy almighty power, use thy wonted strength to the confusion of thine enemies and to the help and deliverance of thy persecuted people. All thy saints do beseech thee therefore—the young infants which have somewhat tasted of thy sweet word, by whose mouth thou hast promised to make perfect thy praises, whose angels alway behold thy face, who, besides the loss of us their parents, are in danger to be compelled and driven without thy great mercies, to serve dumb and insensible idols, do cry and call to thee. Their pitiful mothers with lamentable tears, lie prostrate before the throne of thy grace. Thou, Father of the fatherless, Judge of the widows, and Avenger of all the oppressed, let it appear, O Lord omnipotent, that thou dost hear, and in due season avenge and punish all wrongs offered to all thy little ones that do believe in thee. Do this, O Lord for thy name's sake. Arise up, O Lord, and thine enemies shall be scattered and confounded. So be it, O Lord, most merciful, at thy time appointed.



A GODLY PRAYER TO BE READ AT ALL TIMES.

Honour and praise be given to thee, O Lord God Almighty, most dear Father of heaven, for all thy mercies and loving kindness showed unto us, in that it hath pleased thy gracious goodness freely and of thine own accord to elect and choose us to salvation before the beginning of the world. And the like continual thanks be given to thee for creating us after thine own image; for redeeming us

with the precious blood of thy dear Son, when we were utterly lost; for sanctifying us with thy Holy Spirit in the revelation and knowledge of thy holy word; for helping and succouring us in all our needs and necessities; for saving us from all dangers of body and soul; for comforting us so fatherly in all our tribulations and persecutions; for sparing us so long, and giving us so large a time for repentance. These benefits, O most merciful Father, like as we acknowledge to have received them of thy only goodness, even so we beseech thee for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, to grant us alway thy Holy Spirit, whereby we may continually grow in thankfulness towards thee, be led into all truth, and comforted in all our adversities. O Lord, strengthen our faith, kindle it more in fervour and love towards thee, and our neighbours, for thy sake. Suffer us not, dearest Father, to receive thy word any more in vain! but grant us always the assistance of thy grace and Holy Spirit, that in heart, word, and deed we may sanctify and worship thy holy name. Help to amplify and increase thy kingdom, that whatsoever thou sendest we may be heartily well content with thy good pleasure and will. Let us not lack that, O Father, without which we cannot serve thee, but bless thou so all the works of our hands, that we may have sufficient, and not be chargeable, but rather helpful unto others. Be merciful, O Lord, to our offences, and, seeing our debt is great, which thou hast forgiven us in Jesus Christ, make us to love thee and our neighbours so much the more. Be thou our Father, our Captain, and Defender in all temptations; hold thou us by thy merciful hands, that we may be delivered from all inconveniences, and end our lives in the sanctifying and honour of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Let thy mighty hand and outstretched arm, O Lord, still be our defence; thy mercy and loving kindness in Jesus Christ thy dear Son our salvation; thy true and holy word our instruction; thy grace and Holy Spirit our comfort and consolation unto the end, and in the end. Amen.

O Lord, increase our faith.

A BRIEF ADMONITION

WRITTEN BY JOHN BRADFORD

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF A FRIEND.

THIS book is called, *The word of the Cross*, because the cross always accompanies it: so that if you will be a student thereof, you must needs prepare yourself to that cross which you began to learn before you learned your alphabet. And Christ requires it of every one that will be his disciple, therein not swerving from the common trade* of callings or vocations; for no profession or kind of life wanteth its cross. So that they are far overseen† who think that the profession of the gospel, which the devil most envies, the world most hates, and the flesh most repines at, can be without a cross. Let us therefore pray that God would enable us to take up our cross by denying ourselves.

From prison, 18th February, 1555.

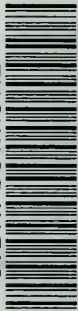
JOHN BRADFORD.

* Manner.

† Much mistaken.

THE END.

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