

A

PITEOUS LAMENTATION

OF THE MISERABLE ESTATE

OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND,

IN THE TIME OF THE LATE REVOLT

FROM THE GOSPEL.

WRITTEN BY

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**A PICTVOVS
LAMENTATION
OF THE MISERABLE
ESTATE OF THE
CHVRCH**

**of Christ in Englande, in the time of queene
Mary, wherein is conteyned a learned com=
parison betwene the comfortable doctryne of
the gospell, and the traditions of the poppshe
religion; with an instruction howe the true
Chrystian oughte to behaue himselfe in**

the tyme of tryall—wrytten by

that worthy martyr of God

Nicolas Rydley, late

Bysshoppe of

London.

Reuer before this tyme

imprynted.

Perused and allowed according to the

Quenes Maiesties Eniunctions.

A

LAMENTATION OF THE CHURCH.

ALAS! what misery is thy church brought unto, O Lord, at this day! Where of late the word of the Lord was truly preached, was read and heard in every town, in every church, in every village; yea, and almost every honest man's house; alas! now it is exiled, and banished out of the whole realm. Of late, who was not glad to be taken for a lover of God's word, for a reader, for a ready hearer, and for a learner of the same? And now, alas, who dare bear any open countenance towards it, but such as are content in Christ's cause, and for his word's sake, to stand to the danger and loss of all that they have?

The state of
the church
of England
described
and la=
mented.

Of late there was to be found, of every age, of every degree and kind of people, that gave their diligence to learn, as they could, out of God's word the articles of the Christian faith, the commandments of God, and the Lord's prayer. The babes and young children were taught these things of their parents, of their masters, and weekly of their curates, in every church: and the aged folk, which had been brought up in blindness, and in ignorance of those things which every Christian is bound to know, when otherwise they could not, yet they learned the same, by often hearing their children and servants repeating the same; but now, alas, and alas again, the false prophets of Antichrist, which are past all shame, do openly preach in pulpits unto the people of God, that the catechism is to be counted heresy: whereby their old blindness is brought home again; for the aged are afraid of the higher powers, and the youth is abashed and ashamed, even of that which they have learned, though it be God's word, and dare no more meddle.

Of late in every congregation throughout all England was made prayer and petition unto God, to be delivered

from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities¹; from all false doctrine and heresy: and now, alas! Satan hath persuaded England, by his falsehood and craft, to revoke her old godly prayer, to recant the same, and provoke the fearful wrath and indignation of God upon her own pate.

The lamentable change of religion in the church.

Of late by strait laws and ordinances, with the consent of the nobles and commonality, and full agreement and council of the prelates and clergy, was banished hence the beast of Babylon, with laws (I say), and with oaths and all means that then could be devised for so godly a purpose: but now, alas! all these laws are trodden under foot: the nobles, the commonality, the prelates, and clergy, are quite changed; and all those oaths, though they were herein made in judgement, justice, and truth, and the matter never so good, doth no more hold than a bond of rushes, or of a barley straw; nor public perjury no more feareth them, than a shadow upon the wall.

Jerem. iv.

Of late it was agreed in England of all hands, according to Paul's doctrine and Christ's commandment, as Paul saith plain, that nothing ought to be done in the church, in the public congregation, but in that tongue which the congregation could understand, that all might be edified thereby, whether it were common prayer, administration of the sacraments, or any other thing belonging to the public ministry of God's holy and wholesome word: but, alas! all is turned upside down, Paul's doctrine is put apart, Christ's commandment is not regarded: for nothing is heard commonly in the church, but in a strange tongue, that the people doth nothing understand.

1 Cor. xiv.

Ignorance in prayer.

Of late all men and women were taught, after Christ's doctrine, to pray in that tongue which they could understand, that they might pray with heart that which they should speak with their tongue: now, alas! the unlearned people is brought in that blindness again, to think that they pray,

[¹ In the Litany of Edward VI. occurs the Petition:

Priest. From all sedition and privy conspiracy, from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities; from all false doctrine, &c. &c.

Ans. Good Lord, deliver us. *Ed.*]

when they speak with their tongues, they cannot tell what, nor whereof their heart is nothing mindful at all, for that it can understand never a whit thereof.

Of late the Lord's supper was duly ministered and taught to be made common to all that were true Christians, with thanksgiving and setting forth of the Lord's death and passion, until his returning again to judge both quick and dead: but now, alas! the Lord's table is quite overthrown, and that which ought to be common to all godly, is made private to a few ungodly, without any kind of thanksgiving, or any setting forth of the Lord's death at all, that the people is able to understand.

Abuse in the Lord's Supper.

Of late all that were endued with the light and grace of understanding of God's holy mysteries, did bless God, which had brought them out of that horrible blindness and ignorance, whereby in times past being seduced by Satan's subtilities, they believed that the sacrament was not the sacrament, but the thing itself whereof it is a sacrament; that the creature was the Creator; and that the thing which hath neither life nor sense, (alas, such was the horrible blindness!) was the Lord himself; which made the eye to see, and hath given all senses and understanding unto man. But now, alas! England is returned again like a dog to her own vomit and spewing, and is in a worse case than ever she was: for it had been better never to have known the truth, than to forsake the truth once received and known: and now, not only that light is turned into darkness, and God's grace is received in vain; but also laws of death are made by high court of Parliament, masterfully to maintain by sword, fire, and all kind of violence, that heinous idolatry, wherein that adoration is given unto the lifeless and dumb creature, which is only due unto the everliving God: yea, they say, they can and do make of bread both man and God by their transubstantiation. O! wicked invention, and Satan's own brood!

The sacrament turned out of his right use and kind.

Idolatry in worshipping creatures for the Creator.

Of late was the Lord's cup at his table distributed, according to his own commandment by his express words in his Gospel, as well to the laity as to the clergy, which order Christ's church observed so many hundred years after, as all the ancient ecclesiastical writers do testify, without contradiction of any one of them, that can be shewed, unto

The cup debarred from the ministration of the Lord's Supper.

this day: but now, alas! not only the Lord's commandment is broken, his cup is denied to his servants, to whom he commanded it should be distributed, but also with the same is set up a new blasphemous kind of sacrifice, to satisfy and pay the price of sins, both of the dead and of the quick, to the great and intolerable contumely of Christ our Saviour, his death, and passion, which was and is the one only sufficient and everlasting available sacrifice, satisfactory for all the elects of God, from Adam the first to the last that shall be born in the end of the world.

Deut. v.

Of late that commandment of God, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor any similitude or likeness of any thing in heaven above, or in earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them," this commandment of God, I say, was graven¹ almost every where in churches, was learned of every body, both young and old; whereupon images that provoked the simple and ignorant people unto idolatry, as the wise man saith, were taken out of the churches, and straitly forbidden that none should any where either bow down to them, or worship them: but now, alas! God's holy word is blotted and razed out of churches, and stocks and stones are set up in the place thereof. God commanded his word so to be ordered, that it might be had in continual remembrance at all times, and in every place; and on the other side he forbad images and idols, so to be either made or set in any place, where any should bow or worship them: but now, alas! that which God commanded is not passed upon², and that which he forbiddeth is masterfully maintained by falsehood and craft, and wickedly upholden.

Idolatry in
stocks and
stones.

Of late all ministers that were admitted to the public office and ministry of God's holy word, in their admission made a solemn profession before the congregation, that they should teach the people nothing, as doctrine necessary to

[¹ "Graven almost every where in churches." In the reign of king Edward VI. texts of Scripture were painted in most of the churches, particularly the second commandment, and 1 John v. 21, "Babes, keep yourselves from images." On the accession of Queen Mary these texts were erased. ED.]

[² Regarded. ED.]

attain eternal salvation, but that which is God's own holy word, or may be thereof grounded without any doubt, whereby vanished and melted away of themselves many vain, yea, wicked traditions of man, as wax before the fire: but now at one brunt they are revived, and are in full hope all to return again, in as great strength as ever they have been. And how can any man look for any other thing, but when you have received the head, you must also receive the whole body withal; or else how can the head abide? The head, under Satan, of all mischief is Antichrist and his brood; and the same is he which is the Babylonical beast. The beast is he whereupon the whore sitteth. The whore is that city, saith John in plain words, which hath empire over the kings of the earth. This whore hath a golden cup of abominations in her hand, whereof she maketh to drink the kings of the earth, and of the wine of this harlot all nations hath drunk; yea, and kings of the earth have lain by this whore; and merchants of the earth, by virtue of her pleasant merchandise, have been made rich.

Now what city is there in the whole world, that when John wrote, ruled over the kings of the earth; or what city can be read of in any time, that of the city itself challenged the empire over the kings of the earth, but only the city of Rome, and that since the usurpation of that See hath grown to her full strength? And is it not read, that old and ancient writers understood Peter's former Epistle to be written at Rome, and it to be called of him in the same Epistle, in plain terms, Babylon! By the abominations thereof, I understand all the whole trade of the Romish religion, under the name and title of Christ, which is contrary to the only rule of all true religion, that is, God's word. What word of God hath that devilish drab, for the maintenance of her manifold abominations, and to set to sale such merchandise, wherewith, (alas, the madness of man!) the wicked harlot hath bewitched almost the whole world? Did not Peter, the true Apostle of Christ (of whom this stinking strumpet beareth herself so high, but falsely and without all just cause), did not he, I say, give all the world warning of her pelf and trash, of her false doctors and apostles (for this whore and beast will be called *Dominus Apostolicus*, whosoever say nay), after this

The whore
of Babylon
with her cup
of abomina-
tions ex-
pounded.
Apoc. xvii.

2 Pet. ii.

manner in his latter Epistle? "There were among the people in times past false prophets, as there shall be also among you, in time to come, false teachers, which shall privily bring in pestilent sects, even denying the Lord which hath bought them, and redeemed them, procuring to themselves swift damnation; and many shall follow their damnable ways, by whom the way of truth shall be railed upon, and through covetousness by counterfeit tales or sermons, they shall, saith Peter, make merchandise upon you, &c." And doth not John likewise in his Revelation, after he hath reckoned up a great rabblement of this whore's mystical merchandise, at the last (as though he would knit up all in plain words, without any mist at all, setting out the whore's merchandise) reckon up among the rest, and concludeth saying, *et animas hominum*, "and the souls of men too?" Whereupon I pray you else rose this true proverb, *Omnia Romæ venalia*, "All things for money are set to sale at Rome?" Was not that a worthy commendation of Christ's vicar in earth, that was written of our holy father, one of the Alexanders, a bishop of Rome, thus I ween in Latin:

*Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum;
Vendere jure potest, emerat ille prius.*

These two verses in Latin, I have read thus of one translated into English rhyme:

Alexander our holy father, the Pope of Rome,
Selleth for money both right and doom:
And to sale the holy father doth not stick to set
All kinds of holiness, ready money for to get:
And eke Christ himself he dare be bold,
To chop and change for silver and gold.
And why should any think this to be sore?
For what doth he sell, but that he bought before?

I grant these verses to be light gear, and the verse is but rude; but, alas! such conditions were more wicked and lewd than any wit could express. If these had been but the faults of one or a few in number, they had been less pernicious, and might have been taken for personal crimes, not to be imputed unto that See: but now, alas, the matter is more than evident to all that hath godly understanding, that these crimes be grounded upon laws, be es-

All things at
Rome for
money.

Verses a-
gainst Pope
Alexander
VI.

tablished by custom, and set forth by all kind of wicked doctrine, falsehood, and craft: and therefore are not now to be esteemed for any one man's or of a few men's personal crimes, but are now by laws, custom, and doctrine, incorporated into that wicked See; and maketh indeed the body of the beast, whereupon the abominable whore doth sit.

But you would know, which be those merchandise, which I said this whore setteth forth to sell, for the which all her false prophets, with all their jugglings and crafty gloses, cannot bring one jot of God's word. Surely, surely, they be not only all these abominations which are come into the church of England already (whereof I have spoken somewhat before), but also an innumerable rabblement of abominations and wicked abuses, which now must needs follow: as Popish pardons, pilgrimages, Romish purgatory, Romish masses, *placebo et dirige*, with trentals, and *scala cæli*, dispensations and immunities from all godly discipline, laws, and good order, pluralities, unions, *tot quot*, with a thousand more¹.

Abomina-
tions and
wicked a-
buses of the
See of Rome
declared.

Now shall come in the flattering friars, and the false pardoners, and play their old pranks and knavery; as they were wont to do. Now you shall have (but of the See of Rome only, and that for money) canonizing of such saints as have stood stout in the Pope's cause, shrining of relics, and from any kind of wickedness, if you will pay well for it, clear absolution, *a pœna et culpa*, with thousands of years; yea, at every poor bishop's hands and suffragan, ye shall have hallowing of churches, chapels, altars, superaltars, chalices, and of all the whole household stuff and adornment, which shall be used in the church after the Romish guise; for all these things must be esteemed of such high price, that they may not be done, but by a consecrate bishop only. O Lord, all these things are such as thy Apostles never knew. As for conjuring (they call it hallowing, but it is conjuring indeed) of water and salt, of christening of bells² and such like light things, what need I to speak? For every priest that can but read, hath power, they say, not only

[¹ *Placebo, dirige, etc.* See note C. at the end of the volume. Ed.]

[² The forms for these and other offices may be found in the *Rituale Romanum*. Ed.]

to do that, but also hath such power over Christ's body, as to make God and man, once at the least every day, of a wafer-cake¹.

After the rehearsal of the said abominations, and remembrance of a number of many more, which, the Lord knoweth, irketh me to think upon, and were too long to describe; when I consider on the other side the eternal word of God, that abideth for ever, and the undefiled law of the Lord, which turneth the soul from all wickedness, and giveth wisdom unto the innocent babes; I mean that word of God, that word of truth, which must be graven within the heart, and then is able to save men's souls; that wholesome seed, not mortal but immortal, of the eternal and everliving God, whereby the man is born anew, and made the child of God; that seed of God, whereby the man of God, so being born, cannot sin, as John saith (he meaneth, so long as that seed doth abide in him); that holy Scripture which hath not been devised by the wit of man, but taught from heaven by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct, and give order in all righteousness, that the man of God may be whole and sound, ready to perform every good work; when, I say, I consider this holy and wholesome true word, that teacheth us truly our bounden duty towards our Lord God in every point, what his blessed will and pleasure is, what his infinite great goodness and mercy is, what he hath done for us, how he hath given his own only dear beloved to death for our salvation, and by him hath sent us the revelation of his blessed will and pleasure; what his eternal word willeth us both to believe and also to do, and hath for the same purpose inspired the holy Apostles with the Holy Ghost, and sent them abroad into all the world, and also made them, and other disciples of Christ, inspired by the same Spirit, to write and leave behind them the same things that they taught, which as they did proceed of the Spirit of truth, so by the confession of all them that ever were endued with the Spirit of God, were sufficient to the obtaining of eternal sal-

[¹ A priest of the Roman church may perform mass once a day only, and then fasting. Ed.]

vation: and likewise when I consider that all that man doth profess in his regeneration when he is received into the holy catholic church of Christ, and is now to be accounted for one of the lively members of Christ's own body, all that is grounded upon God's holy word, and standeth in the profession of that faith, and obedience of those commandments, which are all contained and comprised in God's holy word: and furthermore, when I consider whom our Saviour Christ pronounceth in his Gospel to be blessed, and to whom Moses giveth his benedictions in the law; what ways the law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and all holy Scriptures, both new and old, do declare to be the ways of the Lord; what is good for man to obtain and abide in God's favour; which is that faith that justifieth before God; and what is that charity, that doth pass and excel all; which be the properties of heavenly wisdom; and which is that undefiled religion that is allowed of God; which things Christ himself calleth the weighty matters of the law; what thing is that which is only available in Christ; and what knowledge is that, that Paul esteemed so much, that he counted himself only to know; what shall be the manner of the extreme judgment of the later day; who shall judge, and by what he shall judge; and what shall be required at our hands at that fearful day; how all things must be tried by the fire, and that that only shall stand for ever, which Christ's word shall allow, which shall be the judge of all flesh, to give sentence upon all flesh, and every living soul, either of eternal damnation or everlasting salvation, from which sentence there shall be no place to appeal, no wit shall serve to delude, nor no power to withstand or revoke: when, I say, I consider all these things, and confer to the same again and again all those ways wherein standeth the substance of the Romish religion, whereof I spake before; it may be evident and easy to perceive, that these two ways, these two religions, the one of Christ, the other of the Romish See, in these latter days, be as far distant the one from the other, as light and darkness, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, Christ and Belial. He that is hard of belief, let him note and weigh well with himself the places of holy Scriptures, which be appointed in the margent where-

Note here, that these scriptures were written by N. Ridley in the margin, but were not in the copy which we followed. [Ed. 1556. Ed.]

upon this talk is grounded, and by God's grace he may receive some light. And unto the contemner I have nothing now to say, but to rehearse the saying of the Prophet Esay, which Paul spake to the Jews in the end of the Acts of the Apostles. After he had expounded unto them the truth of God's word, and declared unto them Christ, out of the law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning to night, all the day long, he said unto them that would not believe: "Well," said he, "spake the Holy Ghost unto our fathers, saying: Go unto this people and tell them, ye shall hear with your ears, and not understand, and seeing you shall behold, and not see the thing; for the heart of this people is waxed gross or dull, and with their ears they are hard of hearing, and they have shut together their eyes, that they should not see, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts, that they might return, and I should heal them, saith the Lord God¹."

Alas! England, alas! that this heavy plague of God should fall upon thee. Alas! my dear beloved country, what thing is it now that may do thee good? Undoubtedly thy plague is so great, that it is utterly incurable, but by the bottomless mercy and infinite power of Almighty God. Alas! my dear country, what hast thou done, that thus thou hast provoked the wrath of God, to pour out his vengeance upon thee for thine own deserts? Canst thou be content to hear thy faults told thee? Alas! thou hast heard oft, and wouldest never amend. England, thy faults of all degrees and sorts of men, of the magistrates, of the ministers, and of the common people, were never more plainly told, since thou bearest that name, than thou didst hear them of late, even before the magistrates, in King Edward's days, but thou heardest them only, and didst amend never a whit. For even of thy greatest magistrates, some (the King's Highness then, that innocent, that godly-hearted and peerless young Christian Prince excepted) evermore unkindly and ungently, against those that went about most busily and most wholesomely to cure their sore backs, spurned privily, and would not spare to speak evil of them, even unto the prince himself, and yet

[¹ The texts are—Is. vi. 9; Mark iv. 12; Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27. Ed.]

would they towards the same preacher outwardly bear a jolly countenance and a fair face.

I have heard that Cranmer, and another whom I will not name, were both in high displeasure, the one for shewing his conscience secretly, but plainly and fully, in the Duke of Somerset's cause, and both of late, but specially Cranmer, for repugning as they might against the late spoil of the church goods, taken away only by commandment of the higher powers, without any law or order of justice, and without any request of consent of them to whom they did belong. As for Latimer, Lever, Bradford, and Knox, their tongues were so sharp, they ripped in so deep in their galled backs, to have purged them, no doubt, of that filthy matter, that was festered in their hearts, of insatiable covetousness, of filthy carnality and voluptuousness, of intolerable ambition and pride, of ungodly loathsomeness to hear poor men's causes, and to hear God's word, that these men, of all other, these magistrates then could never abide. Other there were, very godly men and well learned, that went about by the wholesome plasters of God's word, howbeit after a more soft manner of handling the matter; but, alas! all sped in like. For all that could be done of all hands, their disease did not minish, but daily did increase, which, no doubt, is no small occasion in that state, of the heavy plague of God, that is poured upon England at this day. As for the common sort of other inferior magistrates, as judges of the laws, justices of peace, sergeants, common lawyers, it may be truly said of them, as of the most part of the clergy, of curates, vicars, parsons, prebendaries, doctors of the law, archdeacons, deans, yea, and I may say, of bishops also, I fear me, for the most part, although I doubt not but God had and hath ever, whom he in every state knew and knoweth to be his, but for the most part, I say, they were never persuaded in their hearts, but from the teeth forward, and for the king's sake, in the truth of God's word; and yet all these did dissemble, and bear a copy of a countenance, as if they had been sound within.

And this dissimulation Satan knew well enough, and therefore desired, and hath ever gone about, that the high magistrates by any manner of means might be deceived in matters of religion; for then he being of counsel with the

He meant himself. Cranmer and Ridley standing in the Duke of Somerset's cause. Cranmer repugning against the spoil of the church goods. Latimer, Bradford, Lever, Knox.

The corrupt life of gossellers in King Edward's time.

dissimulation in the worldly, knew well enough that he should bring to pass, and rule all even after his own will.

Hypocrisy a double evil.

Hypocrisy and dissimulation St Hierom doth call well a double wickedness, for neither it loveth the truth (which is one great evil), and also falsely it pretendeth, to deceive the simple, for another thing'. This hypocrisy and dissimulation with God in matters of religion, no doubt, hath wholly also provoked the anger of God. And as for the common people, although there were many good, where they were well and diligently taught; yet, God knoweth a great number received God's true word and high benefits with unthankful hearts. For it was great pity and a lamentable thing, to have seen in many places the people so loathsomely and so unreligiously to come to the holy communion, and to receive it accordingly, and to the common prayers, and other divine service, which were according to the true vein of God's holy word in all points so godly and wholesomely set forth, in comparison of that blind zeal and indiscreet devotion, which they had aforesaid to those things, whereof they understood never one whit, nor could be edified by them any thing at all.

The slackness that was in that time to good works.

And again, as for alms deeds, which are taught in God's word (whereby we are certain that God is pleased with them, and doth and will require such at our hands, which are a part of true religion, as St James saith, and such as he saith himself he setteth more by than by sacrifice, as to provide for the fatherless, infants and orphans, for the lame, aged, and impotent poor needy folk, and to make public provision that the poverty that might labour, should have wherewith to labour upon, and so be kept from shameful beggary and stealing), in these works, I say, how wayward were many, in comparison (I mean) of that great prodigality, whereby in times past they spared not to spend upon flattering friars, false pardoners, painting and gilding of stocks and stones, to be set up and honoured in churches, plainly against God's word. And yet because no place is to be defrauded of their just commendation, (*in*) London, I must confess, that such godly works, in Sir Richard Dobs, knight, then lord mayor, his year, began marvellous well: the Lord grant the same may so likewise persevere, continue, yea,

[¹ And it deceiveth the people, which is another evil. Ed.]

and increase, to the comfort and relief of the needy and helpless, that was so godly begun. Amen.

All these things do minister matter of more mourning and bewailing the miserable state that now is; for by this it may be perceived, how England hath deserved this just plague of God. And also it is greatly to be feared that those good things, whatsoever they were, that had their beginning in the time when God's word was freely preached, now with the exile and banishment of the same they will depart again.

God's plague upon England justly deserved.

But to return again to the consideration of this miserable state of Christ's church in England, and to leave further and more exquisite searching of the causes thereof unto God's secret and unsearchable judgments, let us see what is best now to be done for Christ's little silly flock. This is one maxim and principle in Christ's law: "He that denieth me before men, him shall Christ deny afore his Father, and all his angels of heaven." And therefore every one that looketh to have by Christ our Saviour everlasting life, let him prepare himself so, that he deny not his master Christ, or else he is but a castaway and a wretch, howsoever he be counted or taken here in the world.

He exhorteth to constant confession of Christ.

Now then, seeing the doctrine of Antichrist is returned again into this realm, and the higher powers (alas!) are so deceived and bewitched, that they are persuaded it to be truth, and Christ's true doctrine to be error and heresy, and the old laws of Antichrist are allowed to return with the power of their father again; what can be hereafter looked for by reason, to the man of God and true Christian abiding in this realm, but extreme violence of death, or else to deny his Master? I grant the hearts of princes are in God's hands, and whithersoever he will, he can make them to bow; and also that Christian princes in old time used a more gentle kind of punishment, even to them which were heretics indeed, as degradation, and deposition out of their rooms and offices; exile and banishment out of their dominions and countries; and also (as it is read) the true bishops of Christ's church were sometime intercessors for the heretics unto princes, that they would not kill them, as is read of

Punishment of heretics more gentle in the old time, and how it was used.

[² See page 6, foot-note. Ed.]

St Augustine. But as yet Antichrist's kingdom was not so erected at that time, nor is now accustomed so to order them, that will not fall down and worship the beast and his image; but even as all the world knoweth, after the same manner that both John and Daniel hath prophesied before, that is, by violence of death: and Daniel declareth farther, the kind of death accustomedly should be by sword, fire, and imprisonment.

Therefore if thou, O man of God, do purpose to abide in this realm, prepare and arm thyself to die: for both by Antichrist's accustomed laws, and these prophecies, there is no appearance or likelihood of any other thing, except thou wilt deny thy Master Christ, which is the loss at the last, both of body and soul, unto everlasting death. Therefore, my good brother or sister in Christ, whatsoever thou be, to thee that canst and mayest so do, that counsel that I think is the best safeguard for thee, both for thy body, and most surety for thy soul's health, is that which I shall shew thee hereafter. But first I warn thee to understand me, to speak to him or her which be not in captivity, or called already for to confess Christ, but is at liberty abroad.

My counsel, I say, therefore is this, to fly from the plague, and to get thee hence. I consider not only the subtleties of Satan, and how he is able to deceive by his false persuasions, if it were possible, even the chosen of God, and also the great frailty, which is oftentimes more in a man, than he doth know in himself, which in the time of temptation then will utter itself—I do not only consider these things, I say, but that our Master Christ, whose life was and is a perfect rule of the Christian man's life, that he himself avoided oftentimes the fury and madness of the Jews, by departing from the country or place.

Paul likewise, when he was sought in Damascus, and the gates of the city were laid in wait for him, he was conveyed by night, let down in a basket out at a window over the wall: and Helias, the Prophet, fled the persecution of wicked Jezebel. And Christ our Saviour saith in the Gospel, "When they persecute you in one city, flee unto another:" and so did many good, great, learned, and virtuous men of God, which were great and stout champions nevertheless, and stout

Counsel given in these days of persecution what to do.

Such as remained out of captivity, counselled to depart the realm.

confessors and maintainers of Christ and his truth, in due time and place. Of such was the great clerk Athanasius. But this is so plain to be lawful by God's word, and examples of holy men, that I need not to stand in it.

Having this for my ground, I say to thee, O man of God, this seemeth to me to be the most sure way for thy safeguard, to depart and flee far from the plague, and that swiftly also: for truly, before God, I think that the abomination that Daniel prophesied of so long before, is now set up in the holy place. For all Antichrist's doctrine, laws, rites, and religion, contrary to Christ, and of the true serving and worshipping of God, I understand to be that abomination: therefore now is the time in England for those words of Christ, *Tunc, inquit, qui in Judea sunt fugiant ad montes.* "Now then," saith Christ, "let those that be in Judea fly to the mountains." "Then," saith he,—mark this Christ's "then"; for truly I am persuaded, and I trust by the Spirit of God, that this "then" is commanded—"then," saith Christ, they that be in Jewry, let them flee into the mountains, and he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take away any thing out of his house; and he that is abroad in the field, let him not return to take his clothes. Woe be to the great-bellied women, and to them that give suck! but pray, saith Christ, that your flight be not in winter, or on the Sabbath-day."

These words of Christ are mystical, and therefore have need of interpretation. I understand all those to be in Jewry spiritually, which truly confess one true living God, and the whole truth of his word, after the doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. Such are they whom Christ here biddeth, in the time of the reign of Antichrist's abominations, to fly unto the mountains: which signifieth places of safeguard, and all such things which are able to defend from the plague: that he biddeth him that is on the house-top, not come down; nor him that is in the field, not to return to take with him his clothes—he meaneth that they should speed them to get them away betimes, lest in their tarrying, and trifling about worldly provision, they be trapped in the snare or ever they be aware, and caught by the back, and for gain of small worldly things endanger and cast themselves into great perils

The abomination of desolation set up in England.

Christ commandeth to fly to the mountains.

of more weighty matters. And where he saith, Woe be to great-bellied women, and to them that give suck; women great with child, and nigh to their lying down and to be brought to bed, are not able to travel: nor also those women, which are brought to bed, and now give their babes suck. By these therefore Christ spiritually understandeth all such as be in extreme danger, which this word "woe" signifieth: all such, I say, as are so letted by any manner of means, that they no ways be able to fly from the plague. That which Christ saith, "Pray you that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath-day:" in winter, the common course of the year teacheth us, that the ways be foul, and therefore it is a hard thing then to take a far journey, for many incommodities and dangers of the ways in that time of the year; and on the Sabbath-day it was not lawful to journey, but a little way. Now Christ therefore, meaning that we should have need, both to speed our journey quickly, which cannot be done in the winter, for the incommodities of the ways, and also to go far, which cannot be done on the Sabbath-day; he biddeth us therefore pray that our flight be not in winter, nor on the Sabbath-day: that is, to pray that we may fly in time, and also far enough from the danger of the plague. Now the causes why we should fly followeth

Matt. xxiv.

in the same place of St Matthew's Gospel, which I now pass over: thou mayest read them there.

Apoc. xviii.

And in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, the angel is said to have cried mightily with a loud voice: "Fly, my people, out of Babylon, lest you be infected with her faults, and so be made partners of her plagues: for her offences and sins are grown so great, that they swell and are come unto the heaven: certainly the time doth approach, and the Lord's day is at hand." Hear, I beseech you, also holy Paul, that blessed Apostle: he plainly forbiddeth us *ducere jugum cum incredulis*, that is, to join or couple ourselves with the unfaithful; "for what fellowship can there be," saith he, "of righteousness with unrighteousness; what company hath light with darkness; or what agreement hath Christ with Belial; or what part can the faithful have with the unfaithful; or how doth the temple of God agree with images or idols? for you are the temple of the living God:

2 Cor. vi.

as God hath said, I will walk and dwell in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people: wherefore depart from amongst them, and get you from them, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be to you in the stead of your father, and you shall be unto me as my sons and daughters, saith the Almighty Lord."

This counsel to depart the realm, I do not marvel if it do seem to divers (even of them, I mean, that bear favour to God-ward) diversely. Many, I trust, that be learned shall think the counsel good. Others there be peradventure, that will think it rather a thing to be more tolerable, and that it may be indeed by God's word lawfully done, rather than to be counselled to be done; for they will peradventure say, we should counsel a man always to do that, which is best of all and of most perfection: but boldly in Christ's cause to spend a man's life is best of all and of most perfection, and to fly it may seem to smell of cowardness. In many things, that which is best for one at some times is not best for all at all times; and it is not most perfection, nor meet for a child to covet to run before he can go. I will not here make a discourse in this matter, what might here be objected, and what might be answered again: I leave that to the witty and eloquent men of the world.

This is my mind, which I would thou shouldest know, O man of God, as I would wish; and I do pray to Almighty God it may be, that every true Christian, either brother or sister (after they be called, and brought into the wrestling place, to strive in Christ's cause for the best game, that is, to confess the truth of the Gospel and of the Christian faith, in hope of everlasting life), should not shrink, not relent one inch, or give back, whatsoever shall befall, but stand to their tackle, and stick by it even unto death, as they will Christ shall stick by them at the latter day: so likewise, I dare not wish nor counsel any, either brother or sister, of their own swing to start up into the stage, or to cast themselves either before or farther in danger than time and need shall require. For undoubtedly when God seeth his time, and his pleasure is, that his glory shall be set forth and his church edified by thy death and confession, means shall be found by his fatherly universal Providence, that thou, without thine

Counsel to depart the realm. Doubts whether to fly or to tarry debated.

Presumptuous provocation, and rash running into danger, forbidden.

own presumptuous provocation, shalt be lawfully called to do thy feat and to play thy part. The miserable end that one Quintus came unto, may be a warning and a fearful example, for all men to beware of presumption and rashness in such things, as Eusebius writeth in Eccles. Historia, for evermore.

But a third sort of men there be, which also will be counted favourers of God's word, and are, I fear, in number far more, and worse to be persuaded to that which is the godly mean: I mean, of such as will peradventure say or think, that my former counsel, which was to flee the infection of the antichristian doctrine by departure out of the realm, is more than needeth, and other ways and means may be found, both to abide, and also to be clear out of danger of the foresaid plague. If that could be found indeed truly agreeable to God's word, I would be as glad to hear it, God is my witness, as who is the other. Yes, peradventure, will some say, thus it may be. Thou mayest keep thyself, thy faith, and thy religion close to thyself, and inwardly and privately worship God in spirit and truth, and outwardly see thou be no open meddler, nor talker, nor transgressor of common order: so mayest thou be suffered in the commonwealth, and yet use thy religion without offence of thy conscience.

In other countries somewhere this peradventure might be used: but in England what shall be, God wot; but it was never yet, so far as ever I have known or heard. And also how can it be, but either thou must transgress the common order, and the Romish laws and customs, which have been used in England in the times past of Popery, and now, it is certain, they return again: I say, thou must either be a breaker of these rites, laws and customs, and so bewray thyself; or else if thou be indeed a man of God, thou shalt offend thy conscience; for in observing of them, thou shalt be compelled to break God's law, which is the rule of conscience to the man of God. For how canst thou resort every holy day to the church, and bear a face to worship the creature for the Creator, as thou must do, and peradventure confess it too with thy mouth, and to sprinkle thyself with their conjured water?

Thou must be contributor also to the charges of all their popery, as of books for Antichrist's service, of lights of the

Euseb.
Eccles. His.
Lib. iv.
Cap. 15.

Conscience
in religion
would not
be dissem-
bled.

roodloft, of the sepulchre, for setting up and painting of images, nay indeed of idols, and thou must bear a face to worship them also, or else thou must be had by the back¹. Thou must serve the turn, to give the holy loaves, as they call it, which is nothing else but a very mockery of the Lord's holy table. Thou must be a contributor to the charges of all the disguised apparel, that the popish sacrificing priest, like unto Aaron, must play his part in. Yea, when the pardoner cometh about, or the flattering friar, to beg for the maintenance of superstition, except thou do as thy neighbours do, look not long for to live in rest. If any of the household die, if thou wilt not pay money for ringing and singing, for requiem, masses, dirige, and commendations, and such-like trumpery of the antichristian religion, thinkest thou that thou shalt be reckoned for a catholic man, or for *amicus Caesaris*? A hundred things more may be reckoned, and many of more weight, and of more evident superstition and idolatry, than some of these which I have now rehearsed, which God knoweth be ill enough: but these are enough to declare, and to set before thine eyes the thing that I intend; that is, if thou abide and wilt dwell in England, thou must either do these, and many other more contrary to God's word, which forbiddeth not only the thing which is evil, but also saith, *ab omni specie mali abstinete vos*, "Abstain from all things that have any appearance of evil;" or else, if thou wilt not do them, how thou canst live in England in rest and safe from the stake, truly I cannot tell.

But peradventure (as a man is ready to find and invent some colour to cloke his conscience, to do that thing that his heart desireth) thou wilt say, Though at any time I shall be forced to do any of these things and such-like, yet will I have no confidence in them, but outwardly with my body; I will keep mine heart unto God, and will not do that of mine own mind willingly, neither but to avoid another inconvenience: I trust therefore God will hold me excused, for he shall have my heart—what can I do more?

O my friend, beware for God's sake, and know that the subtleties of Satan are deep. He that is not able by God's word to perceive them, is heavily laden; pray therefore with

[¹ Be imprisoned. Ed.]

A hard
dwelling in
England for
a good man,
either with-
out danger
of con-
science or
peril of life.

Invent not
excuses to
cloke sin.

David: "Lord, let me not have a mind to invent excuses for to cloke my sin." Examine, my dear friend, these thy wily ways with the word of God, and if they do agree, thou mayest use them: if not, know, though they may seem never so fine and goodly, yet indeed they be of Satan's brood. God's word is certain, that forbiddeth to worship the creature for the Creator; for that is heinous idolatry, and against the first commandment of God. And it is also against the second commandment of the first table to bow down, or to do worship, unto any images of God or of any other thing: and God's word requireth not only the belief of the heart, but also the confession of the mouth. And to bear part of the charges to the maintenance of things ungodly, what is that but, in thy so doing, a consent to the thing done? Now consenters and the doers, God's word accounteth to be guilty both. And it is not lawful by St Paul's doctrine, which was inspired him by the Spirit of God, to do ill, that thereof the thing which is good may come.

Thy heart, thou sayest, God shall have, and yet wilt thou suffer thy body to do the thing that God doth abhor. Beware, O man; take heed what thou sayest. Man may be deceived, but no man may deceive God, for he is called, and is truly, *καρδιογνώστης*, that is to say, "the Searcher of the heart." Now, to give God thy heart is to give him thy whole heart, to love him, to dread him, and to trust in him above all other things. "He that hath my commandments," saith Christ, "and observeth and keepeth them, it is he that loveth me:" and to dread God above all other, is rather willingly to incur the danger and peril of all fearful things, than willingly to do that thing which is contrary to his blessed will and commandment; and to trust in him above all things, is assuredly to trust to his promise of his reward, and of his tuition, and of his goodness and mercy, and to prefer that above all things in the world, seem they never so strong, so wise, or so good. Now how canst thou say truly, that God hath thy heart after this manner of sort (which is to have thy heart indeed), when thy deeds do declare far another thing? Thy body, O man, is God's, and all the parts thereof; even as thy soul is; he made them both, and Christ with his blood hath redeemed them both, and is Lord of both, for he

To trust in
God, what it
is.

hath bought them both dear; and darest thou suffer any parts of either of them to do service to Satan? Surely in so doing, thou committest sacrilege and dost rob God; thou defilest the lively temple of the living God, if thou suffer thy body to do Satan service. "Do you not know, saith St Paul, that your body is a lively temple of God?" And may a man then take and use any part thereof but in the service of God? No surely, it is not lawful so to do for the man of God, neither with hand, tongue, nor foot, nor any part of the whole body.

Doth not Paul command to the Romans, which pertaineth to every Christian soul: "As you have in times past," saith he, "given your members to do service unto uncleanness and wickedness, from one wickedness to another; so now give your members to do service unto righteousness, that you may be sanctified." And I pray thee, good brother, what dost thou think is to bear the mark of the beast in the forehead and in the hand, that St John speaketh of? I know we ought warily to speak of God's mysteries, which be shewed by the spirit of prophesying to his servant John; yet to read them with reverence, and to pray for the understanding of the same so much as God knoweth is necessary for our time to know, I think it necessary and good. Wherefore what I suppose is to bear the beast's mark, I will tell thee, and commit the judgment of mine interpretation, as in all other things, to the spiritual man. I suppose he beareth the mark of Babylon's mark in his forehead, which is not ashamed of the beast's ways, but will profess them openly to set forth his master the beast Abaddon. And likewise he beareth his mark in his hand, that will and doth practise the works of the beast with his power and hand.

To bear
the beast's
mark, what
it is.

Apoc. xiii.

And likewise I will not let to tell thee, what I think to be signed in the forehead for the servant of God, whereof John also speaketh, reckoning up many thousands so to have been signed of every tribe: I suppose he is signed in the forehead for the servant of God, whom God hath appointed of his infinite goodness, and hath given him grace and strength, stoutly to confess him and his truth before the world. And to have grace and strength to confess Christ, and the doctrine of the cross, and to lament and mourn for the abo-

minations of antichrist, I suppose is to be signed with Tau¹, whereof Ezekiel the prophet doth speak. Thus I suppose these prophecies are spiritually to be understood: and to look for other corporal marks, to be seen in men's foreheads, or in their hands, is nothing else but to look that there should come some brute beast out of Babylon, or some elephant, leopard, lion, or camel, or some other such monstrous beast with ten horns, that should do all the wonderful things spoken in John; and yet of a beast speaketh John; but I understand him so to be called, not for that he shall be any such brute beast, but for that he is and shall be the child of perdition, which for his cruelty and beastly manners is well called a beast.

The carnal Jews knew there was a promise made, that Helias should come before Christ Messias, the anointed of God, to prepare his ways: they knew also that there was a promise of Messias, that he should come and be a king, and reign in the house of David for evermore; but they understood all so grossly and so carnally, that they neither knew Helias nor Messias, when they came, for they looked for Helias to come down from heaven in his own person, and for Messias to come and reign in worldly pomp, power, riches, and glory: when as the prophecies of both were spiritually to have been understood of Helias, that he should come not in person, but in spirit, that is, one which should be endued with the spirit and gifts of grace of Helias, which was indeed John Baptist, as Christ himself did declare to his Apostles. And of Messias' reign, all the Prophets were to be understood of the reign of his spiritual kingdom over the house of Jacob and the true Israelites for evermore. And so by that their gross and carnal understanding, they mistake both Helias and the true Messias; and, when they came, knew neither of them both. So likewise I fear me (nay it is certain), the world that wanteth the light of the Spirit of God (for the world is not able to receive him, saith John) neither doth nor shall know the beast nor his marks, though he rage cruelly and live never so beastly, and though his marked men be in number like the sand of the sea. The

[¹ Tau, the letter Tau, or a cross, see Ezek. ix. and Rev. xiii. xiv. xx. Ed.]

The literal taking of the Scriptures made the Jews infidels.

The pope's marked men.

Lord therefore vouchsafe to open the eyes of the blind with the light of grace, that they may see, and perceive, and understand the words of God, after the mind of his Spirit. Amen.

Here remaineth two objections, which may seem weighty, and the which may peradventure move many not to follow the former counsel. The former reason is, a man will say: "O, Sir, it is no small matter ye speak of, to depart from a man's own native country into a strange realm. Many men have so great lets, as how is it possible that they can or may do so? Some have lands and possessions, which they cannot carry with them: some have father, mother, wife, children, and kinsfolk, from whom to depart is as hard a thing, (and all one almost) as to suffer death, and to go to a strange country, that thou knowest not, neither the manner of the people, nor how thou mayest away either with the people or with the country. Oh! what a hard thing it is to live among a strange people, whose tongue thou dost not understand," &c.

Carnal objections answered.

I grant here thou mayest heap a number of worldly incommodities, which are surely very like to ensue the departure out of a man's own native country—I mean out of the whole realm, into a strange land: but what of all these, and a thousand more of the like sort? I will set unto them one saying of our Saviour Christ, which unto the faithful child of God, and the true Christian, is able to countervail all these, yea, and to weigh them down. Christ our Saviour saith in Luke: "If any come to me, and do not hate his father and mother (he meaneth, and will not in his cause forsake his father and mother), his wife, children, and brethren, yea, and his life too, he cannot be my disciple: and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, he cannot be my disciple." And in the same place he declareth by two parables, one of a builder, and the other of a king that is a warrior, that every man that will not in Christ's cause forsake all that ever he hath, he cannot be his disciple. Look the place who will: the matter is so plainly set forth, that no glosses nor cloaking of conscience to the man of God can serve to the contrary. Many places there be for the same purpose, for the embracing of Christ's cross, when Christ and his cause

layeth it upon our back: but this is so plain, that I need here to rehearse no more.

The latter reason and objection, whereof I spake before, is of more force, and includeth a necessity, which, after the common saying, hath no law, and therefore it is more hard to shape for it a good answer. This may be objected of some: "Alas! Sir, I grant all these things do grieve me, and because I understand they do not agree with God's word, which is the rule of my conscience, I loathe either to look on them or to hear them. But, Sir, alas! I am an impotent man, an aged man, a sick man, a lame man, or I have so many small infants and a lame wife, which all liveth by my labour and by my provision: if I leave them they shall starve, and I am not able to carry them with me, such is my state. Alas! Sir, what shall I do?" And these causes may chance to some men of God, whereby either it shall be for them utterly impossible to depart the country, or else in departing they shall be enforced to forsake such in extreme necessities, of whom both God and nature hath committed unto them the care.

Alas! what counsel is here to be given? O lamentable state! O sorrowful heart! that neither can depart, and without extreme danger and peril is not able to tarry still! And these are they whom our Saviour Christ saw before should be, and called them in his prophecy of the latter time pregnant women or travailing women, and women that give, after they be brought to bed, their small babes suck. Of the state of such as are not able to fly the infection of the pestiferous plague of antichrist's abominations, Christ lamenting, and not cursing, saith: "Woe be to the pregnant women and travailing women, and women that give suck in those days!" For these, alas! my heart mourneth the more, the less I am able to give any comfortable counsel, but this, that always, as they look for everlasting life, they abide still in the confession of this truth, whatsoever shall befall; and for the rest to put their trust now wholly in God, which is able to save them against all appearance, and commonly in extremities, when all worldly comfort faileth, and the danger is at highest, then unto his he is wont, after his accustomed mercy, to be most ready for to put his helping hand. Daniel God suffered to

Another worldly objection answered.

be cast into the den of lions, and the three children into the hot burning furnace, and yet he saved them all. Paul was plucked out of the mouth of the lion (as he saith of himself), and in Asia he was brought in such trouble, that he looked for no other thing but for present death; and yet He that raiseth the dead to life again, did bring him out of all his troubles, and taught him and all other that be in troubles for Christ's cause, not to trust to themselves, but in Almighty God.

Of God's gracious aid in extreme perils toward them that put their trust in him, all Scripture is full, both old and new. What dangers were the patriarchs often brought into, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but of all other Joseph; and how mercifully were they delivered again! In what perils was Moses when he was fain to fly for the safeguard of his life! and when was he sent again to deliver the Israelites from the servile bondage? Not before they were brought into extreme misery. And when did the Lord mightily deliver his people from Pharaoh's sword? Not before they were brought in such straits, that they were so compassed on every side (the main sea on the one side, and the main host on the other), that they could look for none other, (yea, what did they else indeed look for then?) but either to have been drowned in the sea, or else to have fallen on the edge of Pharaoh his sword. Those judges which wrought most wonderful things in the delivery of the people, were ever given when the people were brought to most misery before, as Othoniel, Aioth¹, Sangar, Gedeon, Jephtha, Samson. And so was Saul endued with strength and boldness from above, against the Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalechites, for the defence of the people of God. David likewise felt God's help most sensibly ever in his extreme persecutions. What shall I speak of the Prophets of God, whom God suffered so oft to be brought into extreme perils, and so mightily delivered them again; as Helias, Hieremy, Daniel, Micheas, and Jonas, and many other, whom it were but too long to rehearse and set out at large? And did the Lord use his servants otherwise in the new law after Christ's incarnation? Read the Acts of the Apostles, and you shall see, no. Were not the

Examples of God's ready help in extreme perils.

[¹ Ehud. Ed.]

Examples
of God's de-
liverance.

Apostles cast into prison, and brought out by the mighty hand of God? Did not the angel deliver Peter out of the strong prison, and bring him out by the iron gates of the city, and set him free? And when, I pray you? Even the same night before Herod appointed to have brought him in judgment for to have slain him, as he had a little before killed James, the brother of John. Paul and Silas, when after they had been sore scourged, and were put into the inner prison, and there were laid fast in the stocks; I pray you, what appearance was there that the magistrates should be glad to come the next day themselves to them, to desire them to be content, and to depart in peace? Who provided for Paul, that he should be safely conducted out of all danger, and brought to Felix, the Emperor's deputy, when as both the high priests, the pharisees, and rulers of the Jews had conspired to require judgment of death against him, he being fast in prison, and also more than forty men had sworn each one to other, that they would never eat nor drink until they had slain Paul? A thing wonderful, that no reason could have invented, or man could have looked for: God provided Paul his own sister's son, a young man, that disappointed that conspiracy and all their former conjuration. The manner how the thing came to pass, thou mayest read in the twenty-third of the Acts; I will not be tedious unto thee here with the rehearsal thereof.

Now, to descend from the Apostles to the martyrs that followed next in Christ's church, and in them likewise to declare how gracious our good God ever hath been to work wonderfully with them which in his cause have been in extreme perils, it were a matter enough to write a long book. I will here name but one man and one woman, that is, Athanasius, the great clerk and godly man, stoutly standing in Christ's cause against the Arians; and that holy woman, Blandina, standing so constantly in all extreme pains, in the simple confession of Christ. If thou wilt have examples of more, look and thou shalt have both these and a hundred more in *Ecclesiastica Historia* of Eusebius, and in *Tripertita Historia*.

Lib. v. Cap. 1.
Lib. iv. v. vi.
ix.
Trip.
Lib. v.

But for all these examples, both of holy Scripture and of other histories, I fear me the weak man of God, encum-

bered with the frailty and infirmity of the flesh, will have now and then such thoughts and qualms (as they call them) to run over his heart, and to think thus: "All these things which are rehearsed out of the Scripture, I believe to be true, and of the rest truly I do think well, and can believe them also to be true: but all these we must needs grant were special miracles of God, which now in our days are ceased, we see, and to require them at God's hands, were it not to tempt God?"

Well-beloved brother, I grant such were great wonderful works of God, and we have not seen many of such miracles in our time, either for that our sight is not clear (for truly God worketh with his his part in all times), or else because we have not the like faith of them for whose cause God wrought such things, or because, after that he had set forth the truth of his doctrine by such miracles then sufficiently, the time of so many miracles to be done was expired withal. Which of these is the most special cause of all other, or whether there be any other, God knoweth: I leave that to God. But know thou this, my well-beloved in God, that God's hand is as strong as ever it was; he may do what his gracious pleasure is, and he is as good and gracious as ever he was. Man changeth as the garment doth; but God, our heavenly Father, is even the same now that he was, and shall be for evermore.

God worketh great miracles in our time, although every man doth not see them.

The world without doubt (this I do believe, and therefore I say) draweth towards an end, and in all ages God hath had his own manner, after his secret and unsearchable wisdom, to use his elect; sometimes to deliver them, and to keep them safe; and sometimes to suffer them to drink of Christ's cup, that is, to feel the smart, and to feel of the whip. And though the flesh smarteth at the one, and feel-eth ease in the other, is glad of the one, and sore vexed in the other; yet the Lord is all one towards them in both, and loveth them no less when he suffereth them to be beaten, yea, and to be put to bodily death, than when he worketh wonders for their marvellous delivery. Nay, rather he doth more for them, when in anguish of the torments he stand-eth by them, and strengtheneth them in their faith, to suffer in the confession of the truth and his faith the bitter pangs

The Lord's favour no less in adversity than in prosperity.

of death, than when he openeth the prison-doors and letteth them go loose: for here he doth but respite them to another time, and leaveth them in danger to fall in like peril again; and there he maketh them perfect, to be without danger, pain, or peril, after that for evermore: but this his love towards them, howsoever the world doth judge of it, is all one, both when he delivereth and when he suffereth them to be put to death. He loved as well Peter and Paul, when (after they had, according to his blessed will, pleasure, and providence, finished their courses, and done their services appointed them by him here in preaching of his Gospel) the one was beheaded, and the other was hanged or crucified of the cruel tyrant Nero (as the ecclesiastical history saith), as when he sent the angel to bring Peter out of prison, and for Paul's delivery he made all the doors of the prison to fly wide open, and the foundation of the same like an earthquake to tremble and shake.

Thinkest thou, O thou man of God, that Christ our Saviour had less affection to the first martyr, Stephen, because he suffered his enemies, even at the first conflict, to stone him to death? No, surely: nor James, John's brother, which was one of the three that Paul calleth primates or principals amongst the Apostles of Christ. He loved him never a whit the worse than he did the other, although he suffered Herod the tyrant's sword to cut off his head. Nay, doth not Daniel say, speaking of the cruelty of Antichrist his time: *Et docti in populo docebunt plurimos, et ruent in gladio, et in flammâ, et in captivitate, et in rapinâ dierum, &c. Et de eruditissimis ruent, ut conflentur, et eligantur, et dealbentur, &c.* That is, "And the learned (he meaneth truly learned in God's law) shall teach many, and shall fall upon the sword, and in the flame (that is, shall be burnt in the flaming fire), and in captivity (that is, shall be in prison), and be spoiled and robbed of their goods for a long season." And after a little, in the same place of Daniel, it followeth: "And of the learned there be, which shall fall or be overthrown, that they may be known, tried, chosen, and made white"—he meaneth be burnished and scoured anew, picked and chosen, and made fresh and lusty. If that then was foreseen for to be done to the godly learned, and for so gracious causes, let every

Dan. xi.

one to whom any such thing by the will of God doth chance be merry in God and rejoice, for it is to God's glory and to his own everlasting wealth. Wherefore well is he that ever he was born, for whom thus graciously God hath provided, having grace of God, and strength of the Holy Ghost, to stand stedfastly in the height of the storm. Happy is he that ever he was born, whom God, his heavenly Father hath vouchsafed to appoint to glorify him, and to edify his church, by the effusion of his blood.

To die in Christ's cause is an high honour, to the which Martyrdom an high honour. no man certainly shall or can aspire, but to whom God vouchsafeth that dignity; for no man is allowed to presume for to take unto himself any office of honour, but he which is thereunto called of God. Therefore John saith well, speaking of them which have obtained the victory by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony, that they loved not their lives even unto death. Apoc. xii.

And our Saviour Christ saith: "He that shall lose his life for my cause shall find it." And this manner of speech pertaineth not to one kind of Christians (as the worldly do wickedly dream), but to all that do truly pertain unto Christ. For when Christ had called unto him the multitude together with his disciples, he said unto them (mark that he said not this to the disciples and Apostles only, but he said it to all), "Whosoever will follow me, let him forsake or deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me: for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it" (he meaneth whosoever will, to save his life, both forsake or leave him and his truth); "and whosoever shall lose his life for my cause and the Gospel's sake, shall save it: for what shall it profit a man if he shall win the whole world and lose his own soul, his own life? or what shall a man give to recompense that loss of his own life and of his own soul?" "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words (that is, to confess me and my Gospel) before this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Know thou, O man of God, that all things are ordained for thy behoof, and to the furtherance of thee towards thy salvation. "All things," saith Paul, "worketh with the good to goodness,"

even the enemies of God; and such kind of punishments whereby they go about to destroy them, shall be forced by God's power, might, and fatherly providence, for to do them service.

It is not as the wicked thinketh, that poverty, adversity, sickness, tribulation, yea, painful death of the godly, be tokens that God doth not love them; but even clean the contrary, as all the whole course of Scripture doth evidently declare; for then he would never have suffered his most dear beloved, the patriarchs, to have had such troubles, his Prophets, his Apostles, his martyrs, and chief champions and maintainers of his truth and gospel, so cruelly of the wicked to have been murdered and slain: "of the which some were racked, as the Apostle saith, and would not be delivered, that they might receive a better resurrection. Some were tried by mockings and scourgings, yea moreover by bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned; they were hewn and cut asunder; they were tempted; they were slain with the sword; they wandered up and down in sheeps' skins and goats' skins, being forsaken, afflicted, and tormented; such men as the world was not worthy to have, wandering in wildernesses, in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. All these were approved by the testimony of faith, and received not the promise, because God did provide better for us, that without us they should not be consummated." They tarry now for us undoubtedly, longing for the day; but they are commanded to have patience; "yet," saith the Lord, "a little while," until the number of their fellow-servants be fulfilled, and of their brethren which are yet to be slain, as they were.

Now, thou, O man of God, for our Lord's sake, let us not, for the love of this life, tarry then too long, and be occasion of delay of that glorious consummation, in hope and expectation whereof they departed in the Lord, and the which also the living, endued with God's Spirit, ought so earnestly to desire and to groan for with all the creatures of God. Let us all with John, the servant of God, cry in our hearts unto our Saviour Christ, *Veni Domine Jesu*, "Come, Lord Jesu, come." For that when Christ, which is our life, shall be made manifest and appear with him in glory, then shall the

Heb. xi.

Apoc. xxii.

children of God appear what they be, even like unto Christ; for this our weak body shall be transfigured and made like unto Christ's glorious body, and that by the power whereby he is able to subdue unto himself all things: then that which is now corruptible, shall be made incorruptible: that is now vile, shall then be made glorious; that is now weak, shall rise then mighty and strong; that is gross and carnal shall be made fine and spiritual; for then we shall see and have the unspeakable joy and fruition of the glorious majesty of our Lord, even as he is.

Who or what then shall let us to jeopardy,—to jeopardy?—yea, to spend this life, which we have here, in Christ's cause, in our Lord God his cause? O thou therefore, man of God, thou that art laden, and so letted like unto a woman with child, that thou canst not fly the plague; yet if thou lust after such things as I have spoken of, stand fast, whatsoever shall befall in thy Master's cause; and take this thy letting to fly for a calling of God to fight in thy Master Christ his cause. Of this be thou certain, they can do nothing unto thee, which thy Father is not aware of, or hath not foreseen before; they can do no more than it shall please him to suffer them to do for the furtherance of his glory, edifying of his church, and thine own salvation. Let them then do what they shall, seeing to thee, O man of God, all things shall be forced to serve, and to work with thee unto the best before God. O be not afraid, and remember the end.

Nothing
happeneth
without
God's fore-
sight.

All this which I have spoken for the comfort of the lamentable case of the man whom Christ calleth women with child, I mean to be spoken likewise to the captive and prisoner in God's cause: for such I count to be, as it were, already summoned and pressed to fight under the banner of the cross of Christ, and, as it were, soldiers allowed and taken up for the Lord's wars, to do to their Lord and Master good and honourable service, and to stick to him, as men of trusty service in his cause, even unto death; and to think their life lost in his cause is to win it in eternal glory for evermore.

Therefore now to conclude, and to make an end of this treatise, I say unto all that love God, our heavenly Father, that love Christ Jesus, our Redeemer and Saviour; that love

Matt. x.

to follow the ways of the Holy Ghost, which is our Comforter and Sanctifier of all; unto all that love Christ's spouse and body, the true Catholic church of Christ, yea, that love life and their own soul's health; I say unto all these, Harken, my dear brethren and sisters, all you that be of God, of all sorts, ages, dignities, or degree; hearken to the word of our Saviour Jesus Christ, spoken to his Apostles, and meant to all his, in Saint Matthew's Gospel: "Fear not them which kill the body, for they cannot kill the soul; but fear him more which may destroy, and cast both body and soul into hell fire. Are not two small sparrows sold for a mite, and one of them shall not fall or light upon the ground without your Father? all the hairs of your head be numbered. Fear them not, you are much more worth than are the little sparrows."—"Every one then that confesseth me before men, him shall I likewise confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, I shall deny him likewise before my Father which is in heaven."

The Lord grant us therefore of his heavenly grace and strength, that here we may so confess him in this world, amongst this adulterous and sinful generation, that he may confess us again at the latter day, before his Father which is in heaven, to his glory and our everlasting comfort, joy, and salvation.

To our heavenly Father, to our Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, be all glory and honour now and for ever. Amen.

NOTE.—[To the letters of Careless, which have the signatures following those of Ridley, i. e. beginning F. 1—the date 1556 is prefixed and this colophon is appended.

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Powell, dwelling in Fletestrete
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Ed.]