

Letters of John Bradford from Prison.

From John Foxe's Acts & Monuments, Bk. XI (1563)

Modernized and annotated by William H. Gross www.onthewing.org Sep 2025

This godly and heavenly martyr, during the time of his imprisonment, wrote several comforting treatises, and many godly letters, some of which he wrote to the city of London, to Cambridge, Walden, Lancashire, and Cheshire, and to several to his private friends. It will appear by these letters, how piously this man occupied his time while a prisoner — what special zeal he bore toward 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 — how faithfully he confirmed those whom he had taught. I thought it good to give a few of the most important of those letters here. For the rest, I refer the reader to the book of the *Letters of the Martyrs*, where they may be found.¹

To the City of London.

“To all who profess the gospel and true doctrine of our Lord and Savior 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 sole and all-sufficient Redeemer, Jesus Christ, by the operation of the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

“My dearly beloved brethren in our Savior Christ, although the time I have to live is very short (for I look hourly when I will be taken from here to be conveyed into Lancashire, there to be burned, and to render my life, by the providence of God, where I first received it by the same providence), and although the charge is great to keep me from all things by which I might signify anything to the world of my state; yet having pen and ink, as now I have, through God's working, in spite of the head of Satan and his soldiers, I thought it good to write a short confession of my faith, and join to it a little exhortation to you all, to live according to your profession.

“First, for my faith, I confess, and pray 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 God's gift alone), all the twelve articles of the symbol and creed, commonly attributed to the Apostles Creed. I would gladly declare my faith particularly, and expound to the confirmation and comfort of the simple. But, alas! by starts and stealth I write in the manner that I do. And therefore I desire you all to take this brevity in good part. And I hold this faith, not because of the creed itself, but because of the word of God, which teaches and confirms every article accordingly. This word of God, written by the prophets and apostles, left and contained in the canonical books of the whole Bible, I believe to plentifully contain all things necessary to salvation, so that nothing (necessary to salvation) ought to be added to it. And therefore the church of Christ, nor any of His congregation, should be burdened with any other doctrine than that which has its foundation and ground from this. In testimony of this faith, I render and give my life, being condemned for not acknowledging the antichrist of Rome to be Christ's vicar, the general and supreme head of his catholic and universal church here or elsewhere upon earth; as well as for

¹ *Letters of the Martyrs*, collected and published in 1564 by Myles Coverdale.

denying the horrible and idolatrous doctrine of transubstantiation, and Christ's real, corporeal, and carnal presence in his supper, under the forms and accidents of bread and wine.

"To believe that Christ our Savior is the head of his church, and that kings in their realms are to be the supreme powers to whom every soul owes obedience, and to believe that in the supper of Christ (which the 'sacrament of the altar' as the papists call it and use it, and utterly overthrow it), is a true and very presence of a whole Christ, God and man, to the faith of the receiver, but *not* to the bystander and onlooker, because 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 I am condemned as a heretic, and I will be burned. Therefore I heartily ask God for mercy, that I no more rejoice than I do, having such great cause as to be an instrument in which it may please my dear Lord God and Savior, that I suffer.

"For though my manifold sins, ever since I came into prison, have deserved at the hands of God, not only this temporal, but also eternal fire in hell, much more than my former sinful life, which may the Lord pardon for Christ's sake, as I know he has done of his mercy, and will never lay my iniquities to my charge, to condemnation, so great is his goodness (praised, therefore, be His holy name). Although, I say, my recent manifold and grievous sins have most justly deserved all the tyranny that man or devil can do to 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 those sins in me, but Christ himself: his word, his truth, and religion. And therefore I have great cause, yes, great cause to rejoice that I was ever born, and kept by the Lord up to now; that by my death, which is deserved for my sins, it pleases my heavenly Father to glorify His name by having me testify his truth; to confirm his word; and to repugn his adversaries. O, good God and merciful Father! forgive my great unthankfulness, especially in this.

"And you, my dearly beloved, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, I now humbly and heartily beseech you, in his compassion and blood, for my last farewell in this present life, and that each of you will consider this work of the Lord accordingly: first be admonished by me to beware of hypocrisy and carnal security; do not profess the gospel with your tongue and lips only, but in heart and truth; frame and fashion your lives accordingly; beware that God's name is not evilly spoken of, and the gospel less regarded by your conduct. God forgive me that I have not so heartily professed it as I should have done, but have much sought myself in it. The gospel is a new doctrine to the old man; it is new wine; and therefore cannot be put in old bottles, without greater hurt than good to the bottles. If we would talk with the Lord, we must put off our shoes and carnal affections; if we would hear the voice of the Lord, we must wash our garments and be holy; if we would be Christ's disciples, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ; we cannot serve two masters. If we seek Christ's kingdom, we must seek its righteousness. To this petition: 'Let your kingdom come;' we must join: 'Your will be done' — done 'on earth as it is in heaven.' If we would not be doers of the word, but hearers of it only, we sorely deceive ourselves. If we hear the gospel, and do not love it; we declare ourselves to be but fools, and builders upon the sand. The Lord's Spirit hates feigning; the Lord abhors deceitfulness. If we come to him, we must beware that we do not come with a double heart; for then perhaps God

may answer us according to the block which is in our heart, and so we will deceive ourselves and others.

“See that we couple a good conscience to faith, lest we make shipwreck. To the Lord we must come with fear and reverence. If we would be gospellers, we must be Christ’s; if we are Christ’s, we must crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts; if we would be under grace, sin must not bear rule in us. We may not come to the Lord, and draw near to him with our lips, and leave our hearts elsewhere, lest the Lord’s wrath grow hot, and He take from us the good remaining. In no case can the kingdom of Christ approach those who do not repent. Therefore, my dearly beloved, let us repent and be heartily sorry that we have so carnally, so hypocritically, so covetously, so vaingloriously professed the gospel. For all these I confess myself, to the glory of God, that he may cover my offenses 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, so that from the bottom of our hearts, all of us may say, ‘It is I, Lord, who have sinned against you. It is my hypocrisy, my vainglory, my covetousness, uncleanness, carnality, security, idleness, unthankfulness, self-love, and such like, which deserved the taking away of our good king, of your word and true religion, of your good ministers by exile, imprisonment, and death. It is my wickedness that causes success, and increase of authority, and peace of your enemies. Oh, be merciful! be merciful to us! Turn to us again, O Lord of Hosts, and turn us to you. Correct us, but not in your fury, lest we be consumed in your anger. Do not chastise us in your wrathful displeasure; do not reprove us, but in the midst of your anger, remember your mercy. For if you mark what is done amiss, who will be able to abide it? But with you is mercifulness, that you might be worshipped. Oh, then, be merciful to us, that we may truly worship you! Help us, for the glory of your name! Be merciful toward our sins, for they are great! O, heal us! and help us for your honor! Do not let the wicked people say, ‘Where is their God?’ etc.

“In this way, my right dearly beloved, let us heartily bewail our sins, repent of our former evil life, heartily and earnestly purpose to amend our lives in all things, continually watch in prayer, diligently and reverently attend, hear, and read the holy Scriptures, labor in our calling 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 for the cross; be obedient to all who are in authority in all things that are not against God and his word — for then, answer with the apostles, ‘it is fitting to obey God rather than man.’ However, never resist, or rise against the magistrates for anything. Do not avenge yourselves, but commit your cause to the Lord, to whom vengeance pertains, and in his time He will reward it. If you feel in yourselves a hope and trust in God, that he will never tempt you above what He will make you able to bear, be assured that the Lord will be true to you; and you will be able to bear all brunts. But if you want this hope, flee and get away from here, rather than God’s name be dishonored by your tarrying.

“In the end, cast your care on the Lord, knowing most certainly, that he cares for you. With Him all the hairs of your head are numbered, so that not one of them will perish without his good pleasure and will; much more then, nothing will happen to our bodies, which will not be profitable, though 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; indeed, when all means are against you. Give Him this honor, 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 offenses; that He is with you in trouble, and will be with you forever. When you fall, He will put you under His hand; you will not lie still. Before you call upon Him, He hears you. Out of the evil He will finally bring you and deliver you to His eternal joy. Do not doubt in this, my dearly beloved; do not doubt, I say, that God your Father will do this for you, not in respect of yourselves, but in respect of Christ your captain, your pastor, your keeper, out of whose hands none shall be able to snatch you. In Him be quiet, and often consider your dignity — namely, how you are God’s children, the saints of God, citizens of heaven, temples of the Holy Spirit, the thrones of God, members of Christ, and lords over all.

“Therefore be ashamed to think, speak, or do anything that might be unseemly for God’s children, God’s saints, Christ’s members, etc. Do not marvel if the devil and the world hate you, or if you are persecuted here; for the servant is not above his master. Do not covet earthly riches; do not fear the power of man; do not love this world, nor the things that are in this world. But long for the Lord Jesus’ coming, at which time your bodies will be made like His glorious body; when he appears you will be like him. When your life is thus revealed, then you will appear with him in glory.

“In the meantime, live in hope of this. Let the life you lead be in the faith of the Son of God. ‘For the just shall live by faith.’ This faith flees from all 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 does not behold the things present, but rather the things to come. She glories in affliction. She knows that the afflictions of this life are not to be compared to the glory which God will reveal to us, and in us. God grant us here a lively taste of this glory. Then we will run after the scent it sends out. It will make us valiant men, to take to ourselves the kingdom of God, where the Lord of mercy will bring us in his good time, through Christ our Lord. To Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three persons and one God, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

“My dearly beloved, I would gladly have given my body here, to be burned for the confirmation of the true doctrine I have taught to you; but my country must have that. Therefore I pray you take in good part this signification of my good will towards every one of you. Impute the lack in this to time and trouble. Pardon me my offensive and negligent behavior when I was among you.

“Repent with me, and labor to amend. Continue in the truth which I have truly taught to you by preaching in all places where I have come. God’s name therefore be praised. Confess Christ when you are called, whatever comes of it, and the God of peace be with us all. Amen. This 11th of February 1555.

“Your brother in bonds for the Lord’s sake,
“JOHN BRADFORD.”

“To the University and Town of Cambridge.

“To all who love the Lord Jesus and his true doctrine, being 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, wishes grace, peace, and mercy, with increase of all godliness from God the Father of all mercy, through the bloody passion of our Savior Jesus Christ, by the lively working of the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

“Although I look hourly for when I will be taken to the stake (my right dearly beloved in the Lord), and although the charge over me is great and strait, yet having secretly obtained pen and ink by the providence of God, I could not but signify something to you my solicitude which I have for you and every one of you in the Lord, though not as I would, yet as I may. You have often and openly heard the truth disputed and preached (especially in this matter for which I am condemned). So that it is needless to do any than to put you in remembrance of it. But up to now have you not heard it confirmed and sealed up, as it were, as you now and will hear by me — that is, by my death and burning. For although I have deserved (through my uncleanness, hypocrisy, avarice, vainglory, idleness, unthankfulness, and carnality, of which I accuse myself, to my confusion before the world, that before God, through Christ, I might, as is my assured hope, I shall find mercy) eternal death, and hell-fire, much more than this affliction and fire prepared for me. Yet, my dearly beloved, it is not for these, nor any of these things, for which the prelates persecute me, but for God’s word and truth. Indeed, even Christ himself is the only cause and thing for which I am now condemned, and shall be burned as a heretic. It is because I will not grant the antichrist of Rome to be Christ’s vicar-general and supreme head of his church here, and everywhere upon earth, by God’s ordinance. And also because I will not grant such corporeal, real, and carnal presence of Christ’s body and blood in the sacrament, as transubstantiates the substance of bread and wine, and is received by the wicked, even of dogs and mice. Also, I am excommunicated and counted as a dead member of Christ’s church, as a rotten branch; and therefore I will be cast into the fire.

“Therefore you should heartily rejoice with me, and give thanks for me, that God the eternal Father has granted our mother to bring up any child in whom it would please Him to magnify his holy name as he does; and I hope, for His mercy’s and truth’s sake, He will do in me, and by me. Oh, what benefit on earth can it be, that I, who deserved death because of my sins, should be delivered to a demonstration, a testification, and confirmation of God’s word and truth! You, my mother, the university, have not only had the truth of God’s word plainly manifested to you by reading, disputing, and preaching publicly and privately; but now, to make you altogether excuseless, and as it were, almost to sin against the Holy Spirit if you put your helping hand with the Romish mob to suppress the truth, and set out the contrary, you have my life and blood as a seal to confirm you, if you will be confirmed — or else to confound you, and bear witness against you, if you take part with the prelates and clergy, who now fill up the measure of their fathers, who slew the prophets and apostles, so that all the righteous blood from Abel to Bradford, shed upon the earth, may be required at their hands.

“Of this, therefore, I thought it good before my death, as time and liberty allowed me (for the love and duty I bear toward you) to admonish you, good mother, and my sister the town, that you would call to mind from where you are fallen, and study to do the first works. You know, if you will, these matters of the Romish supremacy, and the antichristian transubstantiation, whereby Christ’s supper is overthrown; his priesthood abolished; 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 beside 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 compassion and blood, I beseech you to take Christ’s eye-lotion and eye-salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see what you do and have done in admitting — as I hear you have admitted, yes and alas! authorized, and by consent confirmed — the Romish rotten rags which once you utterly expelled. O do not be like the proverb: ‘The dog has returned to his own vomit; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.’ Beware, lest Satan enter in with seven other spirits, and then the latter end will be worse than the first. It would have been better that you had never known the truth, than after knowledge, to run from it. Ah! woe to this world and the things in it, which has now so wrought with you. Oh, that ever this dirt of the devil should daub up the eye of the realm! For you, O mother! are like the eye of the realm. If you shine and give light, all the body will fare the better; but if your light is darkness, alas! how great will the darkness be? What is man whose breath is in his nostrils, that you should thus be afraid of him?

“Oh, what is honor and life here but baubles? What is glory in this world, but shame? Why are you afraid to carry Christ’s cross? Will you come into his kingdom, and not drink of his cup? Don’t you know Rome to be Babylon? Don’t you know that just as the old Babylon held the children of Judah in captivity, so has this Rome held the true Judah, that is, the confessors of Christ? Don’t you know that just as destruction happened to them, so it will happen to this? And do you think that God will not deliver his people now when the time has come, as he did then? Has God not commanded his people to come out from her? And will you give ensample to the whole realm to run to her? Have you forgotten the woe that Christ threatens to offense-givers? Will you not remember that it would be better that a millstone be hung about your neck, and you be thrown into the sea, than you should offend the little ones?

“And, alas! how have you offended? Yea, and how do you *still* offend? Will you consider things according to the outward show? Was the synagogue not more seemly and likely to be the true church, than the simple flock of Christ’s disciples? Does the whore of Babylon not have more costly array, and rich apparel to display herself externally, than the homely housewife of Christ? Where is the beauty of the king’s daughter, the church of Christ, without or within? Does David not say *within*? O, remember that just as they are happy who are not offended at Christ, so they are happy who are not offended at his poor church. Can the pope and his prelates honestly mean [what they say], who make so much of the wife, and so little of the husband? The church they magnify, but Christ they despise. If this church were an honest woman (that is, Christ’s wife) unless they would make much of her husband — Christ and his word — she would not be made much by them.

“When Christ and his apostles were on earth, who was more likely to be the true church: they, or was it the prelates, bishops, and synagogue? If a man had followed custom, unity, antiquity, or the more part, would not Christ and his company have been cast out the doors? Therefore, said Christ, ‘Search the Scriptures.’ And, good mother, will the servant be above his Master? Will 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 does Christ not say, ‘As it was then, so it will go now towards the coming of the Son of Man? What does Christ mean when he says, ‘Iniquity will have the upper hand?’ Does he not declare that charity will grow cold? And who does not see a shockingly great lack of charity in those who would now be taken for Christ’s church? All who fear God in this realm truly, can tell more of this than I can write.

“Therefore, dear mother, receive some admonition from one of your poor children, now going to be burned for the testimony of Jesus. Come back to God’s truth; come out of Babylon; confess Christ and his true doctrine; repent what is past; make amends by declaring your repentance by the fruits. Remember the readings and preachings of God’s prophet, the true preacher, Martin Bucer. Call to mind the threatenings of God, now somewhat seen by your children Leaver and others. Let the exile of Leaver, Pilkington, Grindal, Haddon, Horn, Scorie, Ponet, etc. somewhat awaken you. Let the imprisonment of your dear sons, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer move you. Consider the martyrdom of your chickens, Rogers, Sanders, Taylor. And do not now cast away the poor admonition of me also going to be burned, and to receive the same crown of glory with my fellows. Take to heart God’s calling by us. Do not be as Pharaoh was; for then it will happen to you as it did to him. What is that? Hardness of heart. And what then? Eternal destruction of both body and soul. Ah! Therefore, good mother, awake! awake! Repent! Repent! Stir yourself up, and make haste to turn to the Lord. For otherwise it will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for you. O, do not harden your hearts! O, do not stop your ears today in hearing God’s voice! Even if it is by a most unworthy messenger. O, fear the Lord! For his anger has begun to kindle. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.

“You know I prophesied truly to you before the plague came, what would come if you did not repent your carnal gospelling. And now I tell you before I depart from here, that the ears of men will tingle to hear the vengeance of God that will fall upon all, both town and university, if you do not repent, if you do not leave your idolatry, if you do not turn speedily to the Lord, if you are still 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 quickly, calling on the Lord. Let us all say, ‘We have all sinned; we have done wickedly; we have not hearkened to your voice, O Lord! Do not deal with us according to our deserts, but be merciful to our iniquities, for they are great. Oh, pardon our offenses! In your anger remember your mercy. Turn us to you, O Lord God of hosts! for the glory of your name’s sake. Spare us and be merciful to us. Let not the wicked people say; Where now

is their God? O, for Your own sake, for Your name's sake, deal mercifully with us! Turn yourself to us, and turn us to you, and we will praise your name forever!

"If in this way, my dearly beloved, in heart and mouth, we come to our Father and prostrate ourselves before the throne of his grace, then surely we will find mercy. Then the Lord will look graciously upon us, for his mercy's sake in Christ. Then we will hear him speak peace to his people. For he is gracious and merciful, of great pity and compassion. He cannot chide us forever. His anger cannot last long toward the penitent. Though we weep in the morning, yet at night we will have our sorrow cease. For He is exorable, and takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner. He would rather have our conversion and turning.

"Oh, turn now and repent yet once again, I humbly beseech you; and then the kingdom of heaven will draw near. The eye has not seen, the ear has 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 do not repent, but remain as you were, and go on forward with the wicked, following the fashion of the world, the Lord will lead you on with wicked doers. You will perish in your wickedness; your blood will be upon your own heads; your portions will be with hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You will be cast from the face of the Lord for ever and ever; eternal shame, sorrow, woe, and misery, will be in both body and soul to you, world without end. Oh, therefore, right dear to me in the Lord, turn, turn, repent, repent, 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; do not be ashamed of his gospel. Prepare yourselves for the cross; drink of God's cup before it comes to the dregs, and then with you and for you, I will rejoice in the day of judgment which is at hand; and therefore prepare yourselves for it, I heartily beseech you. And thus I take my farewell forever from you in this present life, my 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 A.D. 1555.

"Your own in the Lord forever,

"JOHN BRADFORD."

"To Lancashire and Cheshire.

"To all those who profess the name and true religion of our Savior Christ in Lancashire and Cheshire, and especially abiding in Manchester and thereabout, 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 merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the working of the most mighty and lively Spirit, the Comforter forever. Amen.

"I heard it credibly reported, my dearly beloved in the Lord, that my heavenly Father has thought it good to provide that, as I have preached his true doctrine and gospel among you by word, so I will testify and confirm the same by deed — that is, I will leave my life with you, which by his providence I first received there (for I was born in Manchester) for a seal to the doctrine I have taught with you, and among you. So that, if from now on you waver in the same, you have no excuse at all. I know the enemies of

Christ, who exercise this cruelty upon me (I speak in respect to my offense, which is none towards them), think to terrify you and others by killing me among you, lest they should attempt to teach Christ truly, or believe his doctrine hereafter. But I do not doubt that my heavenly Father will, by my death, more confirm you in His truth forever. And therefore I greatly rejoice to see Satan and his soldiers supplanted in their own craftiness, which is plain foolishness among the wise indeed — that is, among those who have heard God's word, and follow it; for they alone are counted wise who have the wisdom of God our Savior.

“Indeed, if I were to simply consider my life with that which it should have been, and as God in his law requires, then I could not help but cry as I do, ‘Righteous are you, O Lord, and all your judgments are true. For I have grieved you, and transgressed your holy precepts, not only before my professing the gospel, but also since. Indeed, 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 loved his gospel as I should have done; I have sought myself, and not simply and only His glory and my brethren's welfare. I have been too unthankful, secure, carnal, hypocritical, vainglorious, etc. All of these evils of mine, the Lord of mercy pardon me for Christ's sake, as I hope and certainly believe He has 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 not rejoice more than I do. For it is God's word and truth. So that the condemnation is not a condemnation simply of Bradford, 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 granted 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 allow any kind of affliction, much more this violent kind of death which I perceive is prepared for me with you, for His sake. All glory and praise be given to God our Father, for his great and exceeding mercy towards me through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

“But perhaps you will say to 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 you make it a mere 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 to me that Pendleton has gone down to preach among you, not as he once recanted (for you all know he has preached contrary to that he usually preached before I came among you), but to recant what he has recanted. How he will speak of me, and report before I come, when I have come, and when I am burned, I do not care much. For he that is so uncertain, and will speak so often against himself, I cannot think he will speak well of me, unless it makes for his purpose and profit. But enough of this.

“Indeed, the chief thing which I am condemned for, as a heretic, is because I deny in the sacrament of the altar (which is not Christ's supper, but a plain perverting of it, being used as the papists now use it) to be 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, by which the mass is maintained; Christ's supper perverted; his sacrifice and cross made imperfect; 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 actual presence of the whole Christ, God and Man, to the faith of the receiver (but not of the bystander and onlooker) just as there is a very true presence of bread and wine to the senses of the one who partakes of it. This faith, this doctrine, which consents 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 I am condemned as a heretic, and shall be burned. But, my I dearly beloved, this truth (which I have taught, and you have received, which I believed, and do believe, and for this give my life) I hope in God 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 truth in any other than those who are children of unbelief, who have no love of the truth, and therefore are given up to believe lies. From this 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 that you might be delivered from this plague, right dear to me in the Lord, I will for my farewell with you for ever in this present life, heartily desire you all, in the compassion and blood of our most merciful Savior Jesus Christ, to attend to these things which I will now briefly write to you, out of the holy Scriptures of the Lord.

“You know a heavy plague of God has fallen upon us (or rather plagues), in taking away our good king, and true religion, God's true prophets and ministers, etc. And in setting over us those who do not seek the Lord according to knowledge; whose endeavors God prospers wonderfully to the trial of many, that his people may both better know themselves, and be known. Now the cause of this is our iniquities and grievous sins. We did not know the time of our visitation; we were unthankful to God; we despised the gospel and carnally abused it to serve our hypocrisy, our vainglory, our viciousness, avarice, idleness, security, etc. Long did the Lord linger and tarry to have shown mercy upon us, but we were ever longer the worse. Therefore God has most justly dealt with us, and deals with us. Indeed, we may yet see that his justice is tempered with much mercy, to which let us attribute that we are not utterly consumed. For if the Lord were to deal with us according to our deserts, alas! how could we abide it? In his anger, therefore, seeing that He remembers his undeserved mercy (even undesired on our behalf) let us take occasion to more speedily go out to meet Him, not with force of arms (for we are not so able to withstand him, much less to prevail against him), but to beseech him to be merciful to us, and to deal with us according to His accustomed mercy.

“Let us arise with David, and say, ‘Do not enter into judgment with your servant, O Lord; for in Your sight no man living shall be justified.* Let us send ambassadors with the centurion, and say, Lord, we are not worthy to come to you ourselves; speak the word, and we will have peace. Let us penitently with the publican look down at the earth, beat our hard hearts to burst them, and cry out, ‘O God be merciful to us sinners,’ Let us with the lost son return and say, O Father, we have sinned against

heaven and before you, and are no longer worthy to be called your children. Let us, I say, go on this way, that is, heartily repent of our former evil life, and unthankful gospelling past, repent, 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 will find and feel otherwise than we now feel, both inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly we will feel peace of conscience between God and us, which peace surpasses all understanding. Outwardly we will feel much mitigation of these miseries, if not an utter taking away of them.

“Therefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord, I your poorest brother now departing to the Lord, for my *Vale in aturnum* (i.e., my farewell forever) 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 shown to you, most earnestly beg and crave of you, out of prison (as I have done often out of your pulpits) that you would repent, leave your wicked and evil life, be sorry for your offenses, and turn to the Lord, whose arms are wide open to receive and embrace you, whose outstretched hand to strike to death, stays so that he may show mercy to you. For he is the Lord of mercy, and God of all comfort. He does not wish the death of a sinner, but rather that you should return, repent, and amend. He has no pleasure in the destruction of men; his long-suffering draws to repentance before the time of vengeance, and the day of wrath comes, which is at hand.

“Now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, to utterly destroy the impenitent. Now the fire has gone out before the face of the Lord, and who is able to quench it? Oh therefore repent, repent. 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 speaks in wrath. There is still mercy with the Lord, and plenteous redemption. He has not yet forgotten to show mercy to those who call upon him. Oh then, call upon him while he may be found. For he is rich in mercy, and plentiful to all those who call upon him. So that, whoever calls on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. If your sins are as red as scarlet, the Lord says he will make them as white as snow. He has sworn, and will never repent of it, that he will never remember our iniquities. But as he is good, faithful, and true, so he will be our God, and we will be his people. He will write his law in our hearts, and ingraft it in our minds, and he will never have in mind our unrighteousness.”

“Therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord, turn, turn to the Lord your Father, to the Lord your Savior, to the Lord your Comforter. O why do you stop your ears, and harden your hearts today, when you hear his voice by me, your poorest brother? Oh do not forget how the Lord has shown himself true, and me his true preacher, by bringing to pass these plagues which you often heard from my mouth before they came to pass, especially when I treated Noah’s flood, and when I preached on the 22nd 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 in your impenitency, carnality, hypocrisy, idolatry, covetousness, swearing, gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, etc., with which, alas! alas! our country flows: if, I say, you will not turn and desist, 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, and now by me in burning.

“As I said, therefore, I say again, my dear hearts and darlings in the Lord, turn, turn, repent! Cease from doing evil; study to do well; do away with idolatry; flee the Romish god and service; desist from swearing; cut off carnality; abandon avarice; drive away drunkenness; flee 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, etc.; be spiritual, and by the Spirit mortify carnal affections; be sober, holy, true; loving, gentle, merciful; and then the Lord’s wrath will cease, not for our doings’ sake, but for His mercy’s sake. Go to therefore, good countrymen. Take this council of the Lord by me now sent to you as the Lord’s counsel, and not as mine, so that in the day of judgment I may rejoice with you, and for you. This thing 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 is his will, to heartily forgive — yes, even those who put me to death and are the causers of it. For they know not what they do. So will my blood cry for vengeance against you, my dearly-beloved in the Lord, if you do not repent, and do not amend and turn to the Lord.

“Turn to the Lord, yet once more I heartily beseech you — you Manchester, you Ashton-under-Line, you Bolton, Bury, Wigan, Liverpool, Mottram, Steppor, Winsley, Eccles, Priestwich, Middleton, Radcliff, and you city of Westchester, where I have taught and preached the word of God truly. Turn, I say to you all, and to all the inhabitants thereabouts, to the Lord our God, and he will turn to you. He will say to his angel, ‘It is enough, put up the sword’ — which He will do, I humbly beseech his goodness, for the precious blood’s sake of his dear Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Ah, good brethren, take in good part these last words of mine to every one of you. Pardon me my offenses and negligences in behavior among you. The Lord of mercy pardon us all our offenses, for our Savior Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

“Out of prison, ready to come to You,
the 11th of February A.D. 1555.”

“To my loving Brethren, B.C. etc., their Wives and whole Families.

“I beseech the everlasting 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 Scripture seem to be oppressed, and those who take exception to it are unjustly treated, as those who love the truth lament to see and hear as they do. The cause of all this is God’s anger and mercy: his anger, because we have grievously sinned against him; his mercy, because here he punishes us, and as a Father he nurtures us. We have been unthankful for his word; we have despised his kindness; we have been negligent in prayer; we have been so carnal, covetous, licentious, etc. We have not hastened toward heaven, but rather toward hell. 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 makes us feel his anger, as he has now done, in taking his word and true service from us, and permitting Satan to serve us with antichristian religion, and in such a way, that if we will not yield to it, but seem to allow it in deed and outward act, our bodies are likely to be laid in prison, and our goods given to whom we cannot tell.²

“We should look upon this as a sign of God’s anger produced by our sins which, my good brethren, every of us should now call to our memories oftentimes, so particularly as we can, that we might heartily lament them, repent of them, hate them, earnestly ask mercy for them, and submit ourselves to bear in this life any kind of punishment which God will lay upon us for them. We should do this in consideration of God’s anger in this time. Now, His mercy in this time of wrath is seen, and should be seen in us, my dearly beloved, in this: that God grants to punish us in this present life. If he were not to have punished us, do you think we would not have continued in the evils we were in? Yes, truly, we would have been worse, and have gone forward in hardening our hearts by impenitence and negligence of God and true godliness. And then if death had come, would we not have perished, both soul and body, in eternal fire in perdition? Alas, what misery would we have fallen into if God had allowed us to go on in our evils? There is no greater sign of damnation, than to lie in evil and sin unpunished by God, as now the papists, my dearly beloved, are cast into Jezebel’s bed of security, which is the most grievous of all plagues that can be. They are bastards and not sons, for they are not under God’s rod of correction.

“It is a great mercy, therefore, that God does punish us. For if he did not love us, he would not punish us. Now he chastises us, that we should not be condemned with the world. Now he nurtures us, because he favors us. Now we may think ourselves to be God’s house and children, because he begins his chastising at us. Now he calls us to remember our past sins. Why? 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 like Christ here, that we might be like him elsewhere, even in heaven, where we are already set by faith with Christ. And at his coming indeed, we will then most joyfully enjoy, when our sinful and vile bodies will be made like Christ’s glorious body, according to the power by which he is able to make all things subject to himself.

“Therefore, my brethren, let us in respect to this not lament, but praise God, not be sorry, but be merry; not weep, but rejoice and be glad, that God grants 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 those who suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ ‘If,’ says St. Peter, ‘you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.’ After you are afflicted a little, God will comfort, strengthen, and confirm you. And therefore, my good brethren, do not be discouraged for cross, for prison, or loss of goods for confession of Christ’s gospel and truth, which you have believed, and was lively taught among you in the days of our late good king, and most holy prince, King Edward. This is most

² His meaning appears to be that if we disagree with evil, but don’t oppose it, we may yet be discovered by our enemies, and suffer persecution at their hands, as God’s judgment on our passive acceptance of it (Lev 19.17).

certain: if you lose anything for Christ's sake, and for despising the antichristian service set up again among us, then just as you, for your parts, even in prison, will find God's great and rich mercy, far surpassing all worldly wealth, so your wives and children in this present life, will find and feel God's providence, more plentifully than tongue can tell.

"For he will show merciful kindness on thousands of those who love him. The good man's seed will not go begging for bread. You are good men, so many as suffer for Christ's sake.

"I trust you all, my dearly beloved, will consider this cross yourselves, and see God's mercy in the cross, which is sweeter and more to be esteemed than life itself, much more than any currency 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 winds toward the devil; but it is a straight 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, who deny him here; few consider that Christ will be ashamed of them in the last day, who are ashamed of his truth and true service; few sum up 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 they disallow inwardly; few love God better than their goods.

"But I trust that you are of this few, my dearly beloved. I trust you are of that little flock which will inherit the kingdom of heaven; I trust you are the mourners and lamenters who will be comforted with that comfort which will not be taken from you; if now you repent of 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 do not defile your bodies with any idolatrous service used in the antichristian churches, if you do not molest the good Spirit of God which is given to you as a pledge of eternal redemption, a counsellor and master to lead you into all truth. This 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 all you who believe it, follow it, and serve God thereafter.

"And of this I wish you were all certain, that all the hairs of your heads are numbered, so that not one of them will perish, nor will any man or devil be able to attempt anything, much less do anything to you, or any of you, before your heavenly Father, who loves you most tenderly, gives them leave. And when he has given them leave, they shall go no further than He wills, nor keep you in trouble any longer than He wills. 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 is now used everywhere, and God will marvelously and mercifully defend and comfort you. May He do this thing for his holy name's sake in Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Your afflicted poor brother and bondsman,
"JOHN BRADFORD."

*To a Woman who desired to know his mind, whether
refraining from the Mass, she might be present
at the impish Matins, or not.*

“I beseech Almighty God our heavenly Father to be merciful to us, and to increase in you, my good sister, the knowledge and love of his truth, and at present, give me grace to write to you something about the same, as may make for His glory and our own comfort and confirmation in him, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

“Whether you may come with safe conscience to the church now, that is, to the service used commonly, in part, such as at matins, or at even-song, or not, is your desire to have me write something for your further guidance. My dearly beloved, although your benefits towards me might perchance make you think that in respect to this, I would bear with what otherwise was not to be borne with. Yet by God’s grace I am purposed, simply and without any such respect in this matter, to speak the truth to you according to my conscience, as I may be able to stand to it when I come before the Lord.

“*First*, therefore, go about to learn perfectly the first lesson to be learned of all who profess Christ, that is, to deny yourself, and in nothing to seek yourself.

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

“*Thirdly*, know, that you seek God, when in his service you follow his word, and not man’s imagination, custom, multitude, etc., 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 regarding this, I admonish you of the service now used, which is not according to God’s word, but rather *against* God’s word directly, and in manner wholly against it. So that your going to the service, is a declaration that you have not learned the first lesson, nor can ever learn it, so long as you go there. Therefore you will utterly lose the second lesson, if you do not cease seeking yourself; that is, if for company, custom, father or friend, life or goods, you seem to allow that which God disallows. And that you may better perceive this, I purpose by God’s grace to briefly show:

“First, the matins and even-song, are in a tongue forbidden to be publicly used in the congregation that does not perceive the tongue. Read how St. Paul affirms it, to pray in an unknown tongue, is to be against God’s commandment, 1Cor 14. This one, indeed, would be enough, if nothing else were. For how can God’s glory be sought where his word and commandment is willfully broken? How can charity to man stand, when charity to God, which is obedience to his word, is overthrown?

“Again, both in matins and in even-song, idolatry is maintained instead of God’s service; for there, invocation and prayer is made to saints who have departed this life, which robs God of that glory which He will give to no other.

“Moreover, this service, and those who set it forth, condemns the English service as heresy, thereby falling into God’s curse which is threatened to all those who call good evil, and evil good, of which they will be partakers who take communion with them.

“Besides this, this Latin service is a plain mark of antichrist’s catholic synagogue. So that the communicants and those who approved it, thereby declare themselves to be

members of the same synagogue, and so they are 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 there to allow the religion of antichrist (as doubtless you are indeed doing, however you think in your heart) occasions the obstinate to be utterly intractable, the weak papists to be more obstinate, the strong gospellers to be sorely weakened, and the weak gospellers to be utterly overthrown. How great offenses these things are, no pen is able to utter by letters. You will be guilty of all those evils that accompany those in religion externally, from whom you are admonished to flee. If Christ is Christ, follow him. Gather with him, lest you scatter abroad. Serve God, not only in spirit, but also in body. Do not make your body, now a member of Christ, a member of antichrist. Come out from among them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Confess Christ and his truth, not only in heart, but also in tongue, yes, in very deed, which few gospellers do. Indeed they deny him, and therefore they need to tremble, lest Christ deny them in the last day. If that day were set before our eyes often, the pleasures and treasures of this world would be but trifles.

"Therefore, good sister, have it often before your eyes, daily set yourself and your doings as though before the judgment seat of Christ now, so that hereafter you are 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, 'Whoever would save his life, shall lose it.' The Father of heaven commands you to hear Christ; and He says, 'Follow me.' This you cannot do, and also follow idolatry or idolaters. Flee from such, says the Scripture.

"This God grant to vow 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 that this may be a little means to do you some good spiritually. Amen. If time would serve, I would have written more at large. The 2nd of March A.D. 1555.

*To a certain godly Gentlewoman, troubled and afflicted
by her Friends for not coming to the Mass.*

"I wish to 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, to strengthen your inward man with the strength of God, that you may continue to the end in the faithful obedience of God's gospel, to which you are called. Amen.

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

"If then your cross is a comfort to me, or a token of your election, and a confirmation of God's continual favor, my dearly-beloved, how much more should it be so to you? To you He has not only given to believe, but also to come into the cause of suffering for his sake, and that is not merely by common enemies, but even of your own father, mother, and all your friends, I mean kinsfolk, as you told me. By this 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 he stirs up father and mother, sister and brother, rather than have it continue. But, my dear sister, if you cry with David to the Lord, and complain to him, how for your conscience to Him, your father and mother have forsaken you, you will hear him speak in your heart, that He has received you. And by this He would have you see that here he makes you like Christ, do that elsewhere (in heaven) you might be like him. You ought to be most assured of this, knowing that in time, even when Christ shall appear, you will be like him. For he will make your body — which now you defile not with idolatrous service in going to mass — like his own glorious and immortal body, according to the power by which he is able to do all things. He will confess you before his Father, for you do not deny His truth in word or deed, before your Father. He will make you reign with him, who now suffer for Him and with Him. He will not leave you comfortless, who seek no comfort but at his hand. Though for a little time you are afflicted, yet in this He will comfort and strengthen you, and at length make you rejoice with him in such joy as is infinite and endless. He will wipe away all 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 will never be able to conceive in such a way as the thing 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 him in his cup of the cross, and you will pledge him in the cup of his glory. Desire to drink it before it comes to the dregs, of which the wicked shall drink, and all those who for fear of the cross and pledging the Lord, walk with the wicked in betraying in act and deed that which their heart embraces for truth. If you were to do this thing (which God forbid), then my dear mistress and sister in the Lord, you will not only lose all that I have spoken before, and much more of eternal joy and glory, but also be a cast-away, and a partaker of God’s heaviest displeasure in hellfire eternally. And so for a little ease, which you cannot tell how long it will last, you would lose forever and ever all ease and comfort. ‘For whoever does not gather with me,’ says Christ, as no mass-gospeller does, ‘scatters abroad.’ We will receive according to what we do in this body, whether good or bad. If by our words we will be judged to condemnation or salvation, then much more by our acts and deeds. You cannot be a partaker of God’s religion and antichrist’s service, of which 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, who are now his wife, than your husband required of you. If your husband would have both heart and body, do you think Christ will have less, who has so bitterly and dearly bought it? If your husband would not have allowed an excuse that your heart was his, if he had found you faithless to him, do you think Christ will allow your body at mass, even if your heart does not consent 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, except those who had not bowed their knees to Baal. So now in England, he does not account any to be His servants who know the truth in heart, yet deny it in their deeds, as do our mass gossellers.

“We should 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 propitiatory sacrifice, and setting forth a false Christ of the priest’s and baker’s making, to be worshipped as God, and say nothing? The Jews tore their clothes asunder in seeing or hearing anything blasphemously done or spoken against God. And shall we yet come to a church where mass is conducted, and be mute? Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes to see the people of Lycaonia offering sacrifice to them. And shall we see sacrifice and God’s service done to an inanimate creature, and be silent? What thing helps antichrist’s kingdom more, or so much, as the mass? And what destroys preaching and the kingdom of Christ on earth more than it does? How then can we say, ‘Let your kingdom come,’ and go to mass? How can we pray before God, ‘Your will be done on earth,’ when we will do our own will, and the will of our father or friend? How can we pray, ‘Deliver us from evil,’ who knowing the mass to be evil, come to it?

“But what go I about to light a candle in the noonday, that is, to tell you that we may not go to mass, or to the congregation where it is, unless it is to reprove it, in that all men in so doing, only dissemble both with God and man? And is dissembling now to be allowed? How long will men still halt on both knees? Asks God. Halting, says St. Paul, brings us out of the way, that is to say, out of Christ, who is the Way. So that whoever is not in him shall wither away, and be cast into hellfire. For Christ will be ashamed of those before his Father, who are now ashamed of his truth before this wicked generation.

“Therefore, my good mistress, take good heed. For it would have been better for you never to have known the truth, and through it to have escaped from papistical uncleanness, than to now return to it, thereby making your members, being members of righteousness, members of unrighteousness, as you do if you but go to the church where there is a mass. Be pure, therefore, and keep yourself from all filthiness 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 will be with you, the glory of God will govern you, the Spirit of God will sanctify you, and be with you forever, 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 will enjoy in glory and felicity in the Lord. Undoubtedly you shall not fail to inherit this forever, if as the elect child of God, you put your trust in his mercy, call upon his name unfeignedly, and do not yield yourself to the wicked world, but fight against it until the end.

God for his holy name’s sake, who is properly the God of the widows, be your good and dear Father forever, and help you always, as I myself would be helped at his bauds in all things, and especially in this, His own cause. Amen, Amen.

“JOHN BRADFORD.”