

He that standeth let him take heed he fall not. Rom. 13. Anno 1555. Februa- ry. M. Saun- ders diligent in writing letters out of prison. Read the booke of let- ters of the Martyrs.

ther some, s'eme they neuer so floure, stand they neuer so much in theyr own conceites. wherefore let him that standeth take heed he fall not, and let vs pray continually to almighty God though we haue sayth, that he will helpe and encrease our faith, that in him it may be made strong, which of it selfe is so weakie, that it is soone ouerthrowne.

This blessed man of God enduring long time in prison, did not passe all his time in vnfruitfull idleness, but still fro time to time did visite his frendes (as is sayd) and especially his wife, with many letters full of godly instruction & consolatio. All which letters it shall not be greatly need- ful here to insert, partly because they are to be found in the booke of letters, partly because we entred also (if God will) to prosecute the same inere at large. In the meane time it shall not be out of place here, preely to cōprehend certein of them, as in order foloweth.

A letter sent to M. Farrar Bishop of S. Dauids, Doctor Tailor, M. Bradford, and M. Philpot.

A letter of M. Saun- ders sent to B. Farrar, D. Taylor, M. Brad- ford and M. Philpot. Plal. 8.

Grace, mercy and peace, in Iesus Christ our Lord. &c. Good fa- thers and deare brethren, be thankefull vnto our most graci- ous God, which hath preferred vs., and shall. (I doubt not) from blaspheming his blessed name; yea not onely that, but also ex ore Infantium & Lactentium perficit laudem. &c. i. Out of the mouthes of very babes and sucklings shall be fet forth his praise. They offer vs (forsooth) ourliberty & pardon; so that we will rise with them vnto that faith which we with them were fallen from. Yea or no, must be answered in hast. They will not admit any need- full circumstances, but all (as heretofore) most detestable & ab- hominable. Rise with them we must vnto the vntity. And pardon (say I) of me must not be so dearely purchased. A pardon I desire, for to liue with an vnlogged cōscience. The Donatills (say they) fought for such singularitye; but they were not meete to liue in a common wealth, no more be you, as you shall shortly vnderstand. Wherefore away with him, yea the time was named within this seuennight. There be 12. houres in the day. Death shall be well- come (say I) as being looked for long since, and yet do iustice ye were belt; for Abels blood cryed ye wot what. The spirit of God be vpon you, & God saue your honors. Thus departed I from the. Pray, pray. Ah, ah, puer sum, nescio loqui. I am a childe, I cannot speake. My brother P. shall shew you more herein. By him send me word what you haue done. Fare ye well, and pray, pray I woulde gladly meet with my good brother Bradford, on the backefide about 11. of the clock. Before that time I cannot start out, we haue such outwalkers, but then will they be at dinner.

Yours as you know, Lau- rence Saunders.

A Letter which L. Saunders did write to his wife, and others of the faythfull, after his con- demnation to the fire, written the last of Ianua. 1555. out of the Counter in Breadstreate.

John. 11.

A comfort- able letter of M. Saun- ders to his wyfe & o- ther of the faythfull flocke.

The grace of Christ, is the cōsolation of the holy Ghost, to the keeping of sayth and a good conscience, cōfirme & keep you for euer vessels to Gods glory. Amen.

Oh what worthy thanks can be giue to our gracious God for his vnmeasurable mercies plentifully poured vpo vs; And I must vnto worthy wretch cannot but poure forth at this present, euē from the bottom of my hart, the beway- ling of my great ingratitude and unkindnes towards so gracious a good God and louing father. I beseech you all, as for my other many sinnes, so especially for that sinne of my vnthankfulness, craue pardon for me in your earnest prayers, commending me to Goddes great mercyes in Christ.

To number these mercies in particular, where to num- ber the drops of water which are in the Sea, the sandes on the shore, the starres in the skie, & my deare wife & ye the rest of my frendes, reioyce with me. I say reioyce to thank- giving for this my present promotion, in that I am made worthy to magnifye my God, not onely in my life by my slow mouth & vncircumcised lips, bearing witness vnto hys truth, but also by my blood to seale the same, to the glory of my God, and confirming of his true church. And as yet I testify vnto you, that the comfort of my sweete Christ doth dyue from my phantasy the feare of death. But if my deare husband Christ doe for my triall, leaue me alone a little to my selfe, alas I know in what case I shall be the; but if for my prouice he do so, yet am I sure he will not be long or far from me. Though he stand behind the wal & hide himselfe (as Salomo saith in his iusticial ballad) yet will he peep in by a cress to see how I do. He is a very tender-hearted Ioseph: though he speak roughly to his brethren & handle the hardy, yea & threaten geuous bondage to his best beloved

The sweete comfort of Christ taketh away the feare of death from Saunders. Cant. 2. Iosephes handling of his brethren applied to Christ.

brother Benjamin: yet can he not coneyne hymselfe from weeping with vs & vpon vs, with falling on our neckes, and sweetly kissing vs. Such, such a brother is our Christ vnto vs all. wherefore hasten to go vnto him as Jacob did with his Sonnes and family, leauing theyr country and acquaintance. Yea this our Ioseph hath obteined for vs, that Ioharad the Iustidell shall minister vnto vs chariots, wherein at ease we may be carryed to come vnto him: as we haue experience how our very aduersaries do helpe vs vnto our euerlasting blisse by theyr speedy dispatch, yea & how all thinges haue byne helpinges hereunto: blessed be our God. Be not afraid of fraynagges which lye in the way. Feare rather the euerlasting fire: scate the Serpent which hath that deadly sting of which by bodely death they shall be brought to taste which are not grafted in Christ, want- ing sayth and a good conscience, and so are not acquaynted with Christ the killer of death. But oh my deare wyfe and frends, we, we whom God hath deliuered from the pow- er of darknes, and hath translated vs into the kingdom of his deare sonne, by putting out the old man, & by sayth put- ting on the newe, euen our Lord Iesus Christ, his wise- dome, holines, righteousnes & redēption; we I say haue to triumph agaynst the terrible spitefull Serpent the Deuill, sinne, hell, death & damnation. For Christ our heauen Ser- pent hath pulled away the sting of this serpent, so that now we may boldly in beholding it ioyled of his sting, cry sayth & with our Christ & al his elect say: Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who hath geuen vs [vs] the victory through our Lord Iesus Christ.

Christ a sweete brother vnto vs.

The sting of death pluckt out. 1. Cor. 15.

wherefore be merry my deare wife, & all my deare felow- heres of the euerlasting kingdom alwayes remember the Lord. Reioyce in hope, be patient in tribulation, continue in prayer, & pray for vs now appointed to the slaughter: y we may be vnto our heauenly father, a fat offering, and an acceptable sacrifice. I may hardely write to you, wherefore let these few words be a witness of commendations to you and all them which loue vs in sayth, and namely vnto my flocke, among whom I am resident by Gods prouidence, but as a prisoner.

To this his flocke the parish of Alhallowes in Breadstreate. He wrote also a fruitfull letter, exhorting and charging them to beware of the Romish religiō and constantly to stick to the truth which they had confes- sed.

And although I am not so amidg them, as I haue bene to preach to them out of a pulpit, yet doth god now preach vnto them by me, by this my imprisonment and captiuitie which now I suffer among them for Christes Gospelles sake, bidding them to beware of the Romish Antichristian religion and kingdom, requiring and charging them to a- bide in the truth of Christ, which is shortly to be sealed w the blood of theyr pastor: who though he be vnworthy of such a ministry, yet Christ there high pastor is to be regard- ed, whose truth hath bene taught the by me, is witnessed by my chaynes, & shall be by my death, through the power of that hie pastor. Be not carefull good wife, call your care on the Lord, & commend me vnto him in repentant praier, as I do you and our Samuel: whom euen at the stake, I will offer as my selfe vnto God. Fare ye wel all in Christ, in hope to be ioyned w you in ioy euerlasting. This hope is put vp in my bosome, Amen, Amen, Amen, pray, pray.

An other Letter to Maytres Lucy Haring- ton, a Godly Gentlewoman, and friendly to him in his troubles.

Your most gentle commendations, whereof this messenger made remembrance vnto me, was for two causes very com- fortible. First, for that thereby I vnderstood of the state of your health & bodely welfare, for the which I geue thanks vnto god, who graunt the long continuance thereof to his honour and fatherly good will, whereunto I will dayly say, Amen. And farther I was refreshed by the expressing of your mindefull friendship to- wardes me farre vnworthy thereof. Wherein I take occasion of much reioysing in our so gracious a God and mercifull Father, who as he hath in his vnmeasurable mercy by sayth handfasted vs his chosen childre vnto his deare sonne our Christ, as the spiri- tual spouse of such an heauely husband: so he linketh vs by loue one vnto an other, being by that bond cōpact together with chari- table readines to doe good one vnto another: so that first to the glory of our God & his Christ, the to our owne ioying in the testi- mony of a good cōscience, and last of all to the stopping of the mouthes and confusio of our aduersaries, we beare the badge as the right spouse of our Christ, which him selfe noted in this say- ing: Herein shall all men know that ye be my Disciples, if ye loue one another. Then farther, by this bond of mutuall loue, is sette forth the fatherly prouidence of God towards vs his children; that though it be he that careth for vs, in whom we liue, moue and be, who feedeth all flesh with bodely sustenance; yet hath he appointed vs in these present necessities, to stand in his sted one vnto another. Wherein is not onely sette forth our dig- nitye, but also that vnspeakeable accorde and vntye among vs the many members in his mysticall body. And though that ei-

An other com- fortable letter of M. Saunders.

The true badge of Christ. Iohn 13.