

Anno 1556. March.

wrap not your selues againe in the yoke of bondage. But let vs alwayes be ready, looking for the coming of oure Lord & sauour Iesus Christ, which, as S. Peter sayth, will come as a theefe in the night. And as our Captayne Chryst sayth: if the good man of the house knew what houre the theefe would come, he would surely watche.

2. Pet. 3. Math. 24.

Therefore my deare hartts, be of good comfort, although the worlde neuer rage so foze agaynst you. And for youre comfort make wel the great mercy of God, who according to his promise, for y^e weaknes of our nature hath so adwaged the heate of the fire, that our deare brethren which are gone before vs, to the sight of all men, haue found it rather to be ioy then payne. And thinke you surely that God wil be as mercifull vnto you, as he hath bene vnto them: and say with S. Paule: Who shall seporate vs from the loue of God? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, eyther hunger either nakednes, either perill, either sword: as it is written: for thy sake are we killed all the day long. &c.

Rom. 8.

Therefore my deare sisters, if to saue your liues, any dissembling Gospellers would haue you to go to the Idoles temple with them, say vnto them: so for my maister Christ sayth: He that would saue his life, shall loofe it. And in an other place to comfort vs he sayth: There shall not one hearde fall from your head, without it be your heauenly fathers will. And therefore say you that you will not be of that sorte, that be neither hot nor cold, least God should spue you out of hys mouth. But make them this aunswere, saying, S. Paule sayth: Beare no straunge yoke with the vnbeleueers. For what fellowship hath righteoufnes with vnrighteoufnes, what company hath light with darckenes, what concord hath the Christe wyth Beliall, either what part hath hee that beleueth, with an Infidel? How agreeth the temple of God with Images? And yett are the temple of God, as God sayth, I will dwell among them, walke among them and will be theyr God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and seporate your selues (sayth the Lord) and touche no vnclane thing: so will I receaue you, and will be a father vnto you, and ye shall be my sonnes and daughters, sayth the Lord.

Math. 10.

2. Cor. 6.

Thus mine owne bowels in the Lord, as I began, so make I an end, bidding you beware of your enemies, and take vp your Crosse and follow your captayne Chryste in at the narrow gate here by persecution, and then you shall be sure to raigne and reioyce with him in his euerlastyng kingdome, whiche hee himselfe hath purchased with hys owne most precious blood: to whom with the father and the holye Ghost, be all honour both nowe and for euer. Amen.

By me William Tyms.

* An other letter of William Tyms, with an exhortation to all Gods saythfull seruantes to eschew the Societie of Idolaters, and Gods enemies.

An other letter of W. Tyms to Gods faithfull seruants.

Grace be with you, and peace from God the father, and from the Lord Iesus Christ.

I thanke my God with al remembrance of you alwaies in my prayers for you, and pray with gladnes, because of the fellowship which ye haue in the Gospell, from the first day that I knew you, vntill this day: and I am surely certified of this, that he whiche hath begon a good worke in you, shall go forth with it, vntill the day of Iesus Chryste, as it becommeth me to iudge of you: whom I haue in my heart, and as companions of grace with me, euen in my bondes. And thus I praye that youre soue may increase more and more in knowledge. Good brethren, I most hartely desire God, that as you haue a willing minde to comfort my vile earthly body in this time of persecution, so he will strengthen you with his holy spirite, that my imprisonment do not discomfote, but rather strengthen and comfort you, to see the goodnes of God shewed vnto me, in that being a man without learning, & brought before three such bishops concerning worldly wisdom, hee gaue me both mouth and wisdom: in so much that the Bishopp of London wet away in a great hast from me, and after that he sent his man with a Bible, turning to the chapter to the Heb. and the bishop of Bath looking on it, sayd: what meaneth my Lorde? this maketh nothing for his purpose. When I looked on it, and sayd my Lorde seeth that I was weak, and therefore hee hath holpen me: for here hee hath condemned the sacrifice of your masse: for you say that you offer a dayly sacrifice in your Masse: both for the quicke & the dead: and here S. Paule sayth: Without bloudshedding there is no forgiveness of finnes: therefore that is here condemned. He aunswere, Yea, sayth he so? So say all suche heretikes: and so forth with many like argumentes: whiche my neighbours that heard then, can declare, therefore I leaue them. Thus haue I written, that you should not

B. Boner went away from W. Tyms, belyke not able to make his part good.

Heb. 9. God getteth mouth and witte: rance to his Saintes.

be asfeard, but call vpon God, as he hath commaunded vs to aske, and we shall haue: Seeke, and you shall finde, knocke and it shall be opened vnto you. Also hee hath commaunded vs to call on him in the day of trouble, and he hath promised to heare vs. Therefore if we haue not both mouth and wisdom at his hand, the faulte is in vs, that eyther we wil not repent vs of our wickednes, and amend our liues: or els we bee vnfaithfull: and beleue not the promises of God: and so wee oure selues are the cause that this wisdom is lacking in vs. Therefore let vs repente and amend our liues, and God is mercifull. And in any case, as I haue alwayes sayd vnto you, since I first knew you, so say I now: beware of Idolatry, and of your good intent: if not, marke what hath followed vpon them that haue left Gods commaundmentes, and done theyr owne good intentes. Remember when the children of Israell hadde made them a golden calfe, did not God say they hadde made all, and would haue destroyed them, had not Moyses earnestly prayed for them? I let manye other places alone that proueth the wrath of God to come vpon the people for Idolatry: therefore as we will auoyd the wrath of God, let vs keepe vs vnslayned from it. You haue examples out of the old Testament, how loth the godly fathers were to be partakers with the wicked. And yett to see how little we regarded it, it would make any Christian mans hart to wepe. God send vs more grace. First looke in the 11. and 12. of Genesis, Abraham, because he would not be partaker of their Idolatry, fled from the people of Calde being his natiue countrey. Also in the 19. of Genesis, Lot at the commaundment of the angels departed from Sodom, least he taryng with the Sodomites, should haue bene consumed with them. In the 21. of Genesis, Sara would not suffer Ismael whiche was geuen to mocking, to keepe company with her sonne Isaac, least hee should become a mocker. Looke in Iam. the 16. Moyses at Gods appoyntment commaunded the people to departe from the dwelling places of Choyse, Darhan, and Abiron: least they also should be all wrapped in their finnes and to perishe among them. So do I, euen as Moyses commaunded them that they should not keepe company with those wicked people, least y^e vengeance of god shuld light on the so do I geue you warning that you should not keepe company with the Idolaters in theyr idolatrous temples: lest the wrath of God come vpon you to destroy you.

Warning to come away fro the wicked.

Looke what S. Paule sayth in his second Epistle, and the 6. chap. to the Corinth. Set your selues (sayth he) therefore at large, and beare no straunge yoke with the vnbeleueers, for what fellowship hath righteoufnes with vnrighteousnesse? what company hath light with darckenes? what concord hath Chryste with Beliall? eyther what part hath he that beleueth, with an Infidel? How agreeth the temple of God with Images? And yett are the temple of God, as sayth God: I will dwell among them, & walke among them, and will be theyr God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and separate your selues (sayth the Lord) and touche no vnclane thing.

2. Cor. 6.

Good brethren, marke what commaeth of keeping company with the wicked. Syrach sayth: He that toucheth pitch, shall bee defiled wythall: and hee that keepeth companye with the proude, shall clothe himselfe with pride. Euen so he that is familiare with Idolaters, can not be vassamed from idolatry, except he do it to winne them to Christ, as there be but a few that doe: Yea it may not be where Idolatry is openly committed, as for an example: Peter, so long as he continued wyth Christ and Chrystes disciples, he continued in the truth, preached the truth, confessed openly Chryste to be the sonne of the liuing God, and promised that he would not onely go to prison, but also to be-ry death with him: but when he came once into the Court into the Bishops house, he straight way was strike with such a feare, that a poxe maiden and simple rustin (suche a one as my A. of London hath, that sayd: By Gods blood, if I meete with any of these vile heretikes, I will thruste an arrow in him: when Peter (I say) was amongst them, he denied his maister, and swoore that he neuer knew him, whom he, before he came thence, boldly confessed before all men: and againe, after that he hadde repented him of hys wicked dedde, he boldly preached to the beleuyng Jewes, commanding them among other his godly exhortations, to saue them selues frō that vntoward generation. How many of our priests before this forme of persecution whē the Gospell was truly preached, were holde, and could say, they would die rather, then denie their Maister? But whē they come once into the bishops houses, they preach no more Chryste, but vtterlye denie him: therefore I praye God keepe them from thence, or else sende them more grace and strength. It is needefull to pray: therefore waich in prayer.

Syrach. 15.

What it is to be affociate in ill company.

A vile seruant of B. Boners.

Actes. 14

Paul, at the while he was among the Bishops, was a CCCC. lxxviii.