

**Date sent: 8 March 1555**

**Date received:**

**Writer: Peter Martyr Vermigli**

**Recipient: John Jewel**

**Location of origin: Strasbourg**

**Destination: Frankfurt**

**Original language: Latin**

**Transcript of Later copy/English translation of copy**

**Ref: Denbighshire Record Office, Plas Power MSS, DD/PP/839 44-45**

**Other Versions: None**

To Dominus Jewell,<sup>1</sup> pious and learned man, most dear friend and brother in Christ. At Frankfurt

I extend greetings.

Nothing either more pleasing or more sweet could happen to me, Jewell most dear and truly to be loved in Christ, than your letter. To be sure hitherto I had the highest regard for you because of your most resplendent gifts, nor do I recall being refreshed by the presence or by the conversation of anyone at Oxford more than by yours. So it is that in this whole time in which I have now lived outside England I have often thought to myself about you and did not cease to ask about your affairs. But now, when I perceive that you have escaped from a hostile homeland,

I give thanks to God as is right, and I congratulate you in every way on that spirit. Formerly I had good hope; now I hold the reality. Before I had some fear for you, when you were not yet going out; now I sleep on each ear, free from care.<sup>2</sup> Then I grieved at the things I persuaded myself that you were suffering; at present I am affected with unbelievable joy that you at last throw off bonds and chains. The things which you fear were disseminated about you in less than friendly fashion were – believe me – light. By those who knew you from the inside and in

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<sup>1</sup> John Jewell = Garrett no. 228.

<sup>2</sup> The comic poets (Plautus and Terence) use the expression ‘to sleep on each ear’ to mean ‘to sleep soundly’.

the flesh they were by no means easily believed, and I heard of no one who was not most respectfully well disposed to you. And if any doubted, now finally do they perceive what kind of a man you are. What you dared to do is, beyond controversy, to take up your cross and follow Christ. I pray that he in accordance with his kindness should wish to soften these otherwise hard travels and grant you to have endurance. Yet that which presses hard upon me I am unable to hide – that your journey was not able

to be extended as far as here. Then my joy would have been complete and perfect, if you had come. God damn that money that left you destitute that way when it was least appropriate. But it will not be fixed because of that that you do not come. Get yourself here at my expense after the market. For apart from the fact that you will be a pleasure, you will also be extremely useful to me in something I am preparing. But what that is I am not now minded to explain. But I will take care that at the market itself the whole thing is explained completely to you. There you will deliberate in the sand.<sup>3</sup>

But I will regard as fair and good whatever you have decided, since I do not so seek my things as to interfere for the sake of some advantage of mine with what you might have determined in your mind to do – though I am not one to separate my advantage from the public good or to consider anything to be in my interest which I do not think will be of advantage to others also. What you report about Canterbury is nothing new to me, for I regard him quite certainly as an unbroken hero of Christ, though I rejoice that

the unshaken strength that formerly lay hidden in his heart has now been disclosed to the world. God adorned that most excellent father with unbelievable steadfastness. He is not a reed shaken by the wind. Alas for the realm and church of England, if it is bereaved of so great a shepherd. He wrote wisely and judiciously, but little – and so little that the rest of what I long for [? – *reading uncertain here*] absolutely stands in need of your report. I grieve for Sidall<sup>4</sup> and Curtop.<sup>5</sup> They are strong in talent and learning, but thorns choke the good seed. I reckon that one must pray for them, for sometimes

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<sup>3</sup> I think this means ‘in the arena’, ‘in combat’, ‘in the heat of battle’.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Sidall of Christ Church, Oxford. According to the letter of Julius Terentianus to John of Ulms of 20 November 1553 (= *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation* (Parker Society) CLXXXII, at p. 369), ‘Master Peter Martyr is forbidden to leave his house; and Sidall, a truly excellent man, is ordered to guard against his running away ...’

<sup>5</sup> James Curtop, Canon of Christ Church, who recanted under Mary. In the same letter of 20 November 1553, Julius Terentianus says, ‘Curtop has wonderfully fallen away’ (*Original Letters*, p. 373). So Peter Martyr is obviously not reacting to news of their defection. Clearly, Jewell had been moaning about Sidall and Curtop in his letter and may have assumed that Martyr would be interested since all three were Christ Church men. Since Jewell’s own position had been badly compromised in 1554, he may well have been working to an agenda in keeping Martyr up to date with reminders of others who had not – like Jewell – turned again. I see that Garrett (p. 198) expresses some doubt about the date of a letter from Cranmer ‘believed’ to have been conveyed by Jewell to Peter Martyr and assigned by Hastings Robinson in *Original Letters* to 1555. I don’t know what discussion there has been on this since Garrett, but the present letter would seem to confirm Robinson’s claim. Garrett herself concludes that, if the date 1555 is right, ‘then Jewell must have left London for the Continent perhaps late in January (1555) and gone directly to Strasbourg’. This letter shows that the former part of that suggestion is right; the latter part, wrong.

one who is not fit for the kingdom of God today will be more so tomorrow. I am not troubled about Smith.<sup>6</sup> As for Marcus Antonius,<sup>7</sup> I wish his mouth

[45] were blocked up. What the obstacle is I will say in your presence, or I will take care that you know soon through a friend. Farewell. And let nothing of your charity for me abate. My Julius with the Oxford people I have at home greet you. See fit to give greetings in my name to Whittingham. 8 March 1555. In Argentina [*Strassburg*].

As much yours as he is -- Peter Martyr.

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<sup>6</sup> I presume this is Richard Smith, who was Peter Martyr's predecessor as Regius Professor of Divinity and who had attacked him in print. Once again, Peter Martyr shows great restraint in not allowing himself to get wound up by the litany of denunciations of Christ Church men that Jewell had obviously been reeling off in his letter.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Gardiner, as in letter XVIII (Cranmer to Peter Martyr) in *Original Letters of the Reformation*, ed. Hastings Robinson [Parker Society], p. 30.