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Writer: Christopher Goodman

Recipient: Richard Cox

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Transcript of Later copy/English translation of copy

Other Versions: None

To Doctor Richard Cox

If, when we were at Frankfort, I caused offence to you [*singular*], most learned man, do not be surprised. For your undertakings were such that I was in no way able to comply with them. Then – something that had a worse effect on me – when I had hopes that you were going to change for the better after that sudden and horrible reversal of affairs in our homeland and your bitter – albeit fatherly – reproof,

not without sorrow I found you far otherwise. For this reason, if I did not yield to the decrees (then most dear) of you and the others, I acted in accordance with my custom and duty: to me it seems that the truth of Christ must always be preferred to human dreams and must be given place before the friendship or enmity of all people – whatever authority they have.

[61] Therefore, do not believe that I proceeded from enmity toward you – whom I have many reasons to embrace – but rather from a desire for the truth. For I am yours, to no less an extent, and I always will be – provided you will be Christ's. In his name alone I confess and acknowledge that I am a debtor to all, but without it or contrary to it, a debtor to no one. Therefore follow Christ straightforwardly – to use the words of Paul¹ -- and I in turn will attend upon you with all love and service. Accordingly,

¹ *Recto pede* is meant to be an allusion to Gal 2:14, but it is quite an interesting one. The Vulgate has simply *recte ambularent*, while the Greek uses the very rare verb *orthopodeo* = 'walk straightforwardly'. This became *recto pede incederent* in Erasmus' translation, which was printed alongside the Greek and the Vulgate in the important edition of the New Testament published in Geneva by Robert Stephanus in 1551.

if you desire to know with precision what it is to follow Christ, come to us, where you will find very many examples – and exquisite ones – of people of that sort who, denying themselves, follow Christ bravely. For they have learnt by experience that which I had believed that you had learnt long ago – that the deceitful and fickle world will at length desert those who court it, while Christ will never leave his own. But now, where you are, you will in my judgement rather become accustomed to what it is

to pretend to be at once with Christ and the world and to expose his holy name to mockery than to press on in his footsteps. Therefore I urge you to leave such places and to seek those that are better. If it pleases you to come here, you will never be sorry that you have done so, and you will experience how serviceable I will be to you. Farewell, most learned man – and recognize that I am the same as you thought me to be of old. In Geneva 14 March in the year of the Lord 1557.

Yours from my heart Christopher Goodman