

Date sent: 15 April 1557

Date received:

Writer: Richard Cox

Recipient: Christopher Goodman

Location of origin: Worms

Destination: Geneva

Original language: Latin

Ref: Denbighshire Record Office, Plas Power MSS, DD/PP/839 61-2

Transcript of Later copy/English translation of copy

Other Versions: None

To the most learned man Dominus C. Goodman at Geneva

It is, most learned man, most clearly apparent from your letter by what spirit you were incited in writing to me, because you justify yourself and charge poor me with being guilty of many wrongs. You say that in accordance with your custom and duty you did not succumb to the decrees of me and the others. Those were not my decrees, but the decrees of those most holy fathers who have far surpassed both me and you in learning and piety. Nor were they human dreams (as you brazenly sneer), but resting on the word of God

and to be charged with no impiety at all. But you stood in the way – in accordance with your custom; how full of turmoil your custom always was in England those who know you were able to testify. You say that I departed from my homeland changed for the worse. The chief of physicians says, Goodman, that judgement is difficult¹ -- especially concerning the life of other people. As to the fact that you bid me follow Christ straightforwardly, I am grateful – if you write from pious feeling. Only you prescribe that I should come there if

I wish to follow Christ with precision. If Christ were to be found only in that place, I would hasten there, as they say,² with sail and horse. I very greatly reverence the gifts of

¹ 'Judgement is difficult', Hippocrates *Aphorism* 1.1.

² I don't know who says it. But it looks like a sort of conflation of two (rather more sensible) phrases which are used to mean 'by all means', 'with might and main', namely 'with oars and sails' (as Plautus, *Asinaria* 257; Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.9) and 'with horse and foot-soldiers' (as Cicero, *Ad Familiares* 9.7.1 and *De Officiis* 3.116). There may be such a phrase, or Cox may be so hacked off that he mixes his metaphors.

God which spring up there so abundantly. But I do not disdain equal gifts that have by the grace of God been sown in other places. As for the fact that you write that I ought to have learnt long since how deceitful the world is – you bring in a harsh judgement about me. For the wrongs I have done I will hope that through the grace of God I have done penance and that I will do so through all

that is left of the course of my life. Nor am I so stupid as to remain in ignorance till now as to how evanescent is the hope of the world. Finally, you accuse me of horrible impiety, for – in your judgement – I pretend to be at once with Christ and the world and I expose his holy name to mockery. My Lord God, Father of Mercies, deal with me in accordance with your clemency. I see that the judgement of human beings – rash and impetuous – wishes to pre-empt your

function to itself and to make pronouncement about the hidden thoughts of our heart. It is the Lord who judges. Do not, Goodman, judge before the time. Stop – I ask you – pushing such horrid charges on me, who deserve no such thing – things which I had never even thought of. I hoped that all these things would at least lie quiet with you and deeply buried. Stop – I ask you – from now on causing trouble by interrupting me and stop obstructing my efforts, which are not – as I hope – impious. Learn in the meantime to live a pious and quiet life yourself

and not rashly to condemn the brethren, but rather to rouse them to forbearance and perseverance. Let us learn to help one another with mutual service and with mutual prayers to commend one another to God through Christ Jesus –

[62] may he preserve you in safety. *Wormatia* [= *Worms*] 15 April. (1557)

Zealous for you.

R. Cox