

Polemical Poetry

Of Suffering and Bearing the Crosse (Bodleian)

[fol. 7v] Oh can that soule that loues her God
For very shame complaine
To any other then him selfe
of what she doeth sustaine
Noe way to him was euer found 5
or euer shall there be
But takeing up thy Crosse¹ my Lord
Thereby to follow thee

This is the way the trueth y^e life²
which leadeth vnto heauen 10

[fol. 8r] None is secure but only this
Though it seeme nere so eauen
Those that doe walke this happie path
Iesus doeth company
But those that goe another way 15
will Erre most shamfully

In this ^{waie} doe not thinke it much
If thou doest here endure
Suffering euen by S^{ts} themselves
For God doeth this procure 20
That thou maist seeke him selfe alone
And putt thy trust in him
And not in any creature ~~being~~ living
How good soere they seeme

For suffering by the meanes of ill 25
Would little thee aduance
But to be censured by the good
Goes nere to thee p^rchance;
Alas we shew but little loue
If wee must chuse w^{ch} way 30
Our Lord shall trie our loue to him
And not in all obey.

¹ “Then Jesus said to his disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24, Douay-Rheims Bible).

² “Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6, Douay-Rheims Bible).

[fol. 8v]	Wee must submitt our selues to him And be of chearfull heart For he expecteth much of her That he giues Maries part ³ For she must beare a censure hard From all w th out exception, Yet thou o Lord wilt hir excuse Who art her soules Election	35 40
	If she will patiently sustaine And be to the attent Thou fauourably wilt Iudge of her Who knowes her harts Intent. For all but thee, as well she sees May erre concerning her. They onely iudge as they conceiue, But thou dost see more farre	45
	Cumplaine not therefore louing soule If thou wilt be of those Who loues their God more ^{then} them selues And Maries part haue chose If all thou dost be taken ill By those of high perfection And farther if thou be accus'd To be of some great faction	50 55
[fol. 9r]	Or Lord will answer for thee, if Thou wilt but hold thy peace, And if that he doe thinke it good, If not content surcease Leaue all thy ^{care} to this thy God And him alone attend, Yet what is ill reforme in thee, And this will all amend	60
	As farre as he doeth thinke it good Who is most Iust and wise	65

³ Within the convent, the “better part” references the contemplative life of the cloister as opposed to the active life of the world associated with Mary’s sister, Martha: “Now it came to pass as they went, that he entered into a certain town: and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word. But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things: But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:38-42, Douay-Rheims Bible).

	For by afflictions he doeth purge what doeth displease his Eyes. wilt thou of all that lou'st thy God From suffering be exempt O noe but bleasse as others doe Thy God and be content	70
	Amidst the seuerall accidents That doeth to the befall Committ thy selfe and all to God who seeks our good in all. Thy selfe art blind and canst not Iudge what is the best for thee	75
[fol. 9v]	But he doeth pierce into all things How hidden so eue they be.	80
	My heart shall only this desire That thou my Lord dispose Of all things as thou pleasest best Till these my Eyes thou close By death, w ^{ch} I so much desire Because it will procure Me to enioye my God my all Where I shall be secure	85
	That none from ^{me} can take my Lord But for Eternitie I shall enioye my only good And to him euer be Vnited by a perfect loue w ^{ch} none can Interposse, Being by thee assured then That him I cannot losse.	90 95
	O happy houre when wilt thou come And sett my spirit free That I may loue and praise my God W th all perpetually Contemplating his glorious face W th all y ^t him adore	100
[fol. 10r]	Singing w th them his swetest praise For euer euer more.	
	My God the summum bonum ⁴ is	105

⁴ "The highest good."

Yea all that's good ^{is} his,
And those y^t seeke himselfe alone
of him shall neuer misse
In thee my ^{God my} soule shall rest
Not in created things 110
For thou alone o Lord of lords
True peace to spirit brings

All other things wisht or desire'd,
How good so ere they be
Cause perturbation to our heart 115
Nor can wee rest in thee
Whilst we doe pleasure take in them
contrary to thy mynde
And Nothing prospers we attempt
whilst wee remain thus blinde 120

O God the portion of my heart
Be thou my Lord for euer
In thee alone lett me haue part
And lett noe thing vs seuer
I doe inuite with all my soule 125
All creatures thee to praise
And begg of thy celestially Host
To supplie our delayes

[fol. 10v] But praise thy selfe my blessed God
Yea for them all and me 130
For thou alone canst giue whats due
Vnto thy Maiestie.