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SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Anne Cecil, Countess of Oxford, in John Brooke's *A Christian Discourse Upon Certain Points of Religion*, published in 1578, a translation from the French version dedicated to Henri de Bourbon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Prince of Conde. In the dedication, Brooke refers to himself as the Countess' servant.

To the right honourable and his singular good Lady and mistress, the Countess of Oxenford, John Brooke wisheth long and blessed life, with increase of much honour etc.

When first true intent of bounden duty and entire zeal had quickened and pricked me forward to present your Ladyship with the dedication of this small volume (right honourable and my very good Lady), I grew full of doubts in myself whether to proceed and go forward or else to surcease and revoke my presumed enterprise. And abiding sometime in this uncertain and undetermined conclusion, one while adaunted and suppressed with the unworthiness of the work in respect of mine own labours, being an unlearned translation, another while animated and encouraged by the godliness of the matter comprehended and included therein, then pulled back and in manner put to silence by many doubts of presumption, rudeness or rashness, eftsoons again emboldened and hearted on, partly by duty to unfold and show my willing mind, partly by certain knowledge and daily report of your Ladyship's good inclination to virtue and godliness whereunto adjoined the great fame of your singular humility & manifold courtesy, leaning at length only to this staff I wound in time out of this doubtful labyrinth of inconstant passions and became plainly resolved in the process and going forward of this mine enterprise, whereunto I was yet the rather and more easily induced for that as within the hard and untoothsome bone is included the sweet marrow, and as the unsavoury shell comprehendeth the pleasant kernel, so under the rough and unsmoothed grace of mine unlearned style is shrouded much wisdom, virtue & godliness, and in the simplicity and plainness of my translation many profitable examples and wholesome lessons contained, worthy to be embraced and followed of all men. It came unto my hands (right honourable) in the French, and is intituled *A Christian Discourse Upon Certain Points of Religion*, which title drave me first to the overrunning of the matter, and then finding the whole sum and contents so well agreeing with the nomination, I thought if I could put him on an English habit I might thereby pleasure and profit divers of my native countrymen studious in the scriptures, to the contentation (I trust) of many, & to the offence of no virtuous and well disposed person. May it therefore please you to admit the same into your favourable acceptance, and that under your ensign it may have safe-conduct to enjoy publication and free passage. This request being granted & allowed of your good Ladyship, let captious Zoilus cavil or find fault. Let hateful heretic with all his forcible invectives, subtile arguments & strange reasons dissuade and seek to oppugn, impair or discredit the matter. Let proud Papist with all his authority abjure, curse & condemn both book & author to the fire. Our immunity, protection & defence resteth in Almighty God, the high judge of all. And for the clearness of this matter, we refer us unto his most holy and pure word and sacred scriptures. Wherefore trusting the sincerity and truth of the matter shall countervail the plainness of the interpretation, and that the

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consideration of my zeal and bounden duty above rehearsed shall abandon all suspect of arrogancy and rashness, I leave for this time to trouble your Ladyship, beseeching the Almighty to bless you with long and many happy years in this life, and the reward of virtue in the life to come.

Your Ladyship's servant all to command,  
John Brooke