

MIDDLETON, CONYERS, a celebrated divine and critic, was born at York in 1683, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he became a fellow. In 1717 he was created D.D. by mandamus, on which occasion he resisted the claim of Dr Bentley, then regius professor, to exorbitant fees. This occasioned a lawsuit, in which Middleton triumphed. A personal enmity was the consequence of this affair; and when Bentley printed his proposals for a new edition of the Greek Testament, Middleton attacked them with such force that the design was abandoned. In 1724 he visited Italy, and, five years later, he wrote his famous "Letter from Rome," in which he drew an elaborate and highly ingenious parallel between the religious rites of Popery and those of Paganism. He was subsequently Woodwardian professor of mineralogy, and librarian, at Cambridge. His greatest literary undertaking was "The History of the Life of M. Tullius Cicero," 2 vols. 4to, which ranks among the classical productions of our literature; but his "Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have existed in the Christian Church from the earliest Ages through several successive Centuries," brought on the author the imputation of infidelity, and gave rise to much vehement censure from a host of opponents. Middleton's "Free Inquiry" and "Letter from Rome" have a fresh interest and value from the exciting controversies of our own time. They hold an important place in the history of the growth of religious liberalism in England. He died in 1750.

MIDDLETON (Dr. Conyers) Three A. L. s. $6\frac{1}{2}$ pp. 4to, Cambridge, Decr. 25 1736, Aug. 25 1737, April 15 1743, sending some deeds or charters granted by Walpole's ancestors, condoling with him on the death of his mother, referring to his art treasures, etc. (3)