

example of his father's wild youth. See also Letters XXXVI and XLVI.

MUCH HONORED SIR, -- I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I wonder that ye write not to me; for the Holy Ghost beareth me witness, that I cannot, I dare not, I do not, forget you, nor the souls of those with you, who are redeemed by the blood of the great Shepherd. Ye are in my heart in the night-watches; ye are my joy and crown in the day of Christ. O Lord, bear me witness, if my soul thirsteth for anything out of heaven, more than for your salvation.

Love heaven; let your heart be on it. It were time that your soul cast itself, and all your burdens, upon Christ. I beseech you by the wounds of your Redeemer, and by your compearance before Him, and by the salvation of your soul, lose no more time; run fast, for it is late. Ye are now upon the very border of the other life. Your Lord cannot be blamed for not giving you warning. I have taught the truth of Christ to you, and delivered unto you the whole counsel of God, and I have stood before the Lord for you, and I will yet still stand. Awake, awake to do righteously. Think not to be eased of the burdens and debts that are on your house by oppressing any, or being rigorous to those that are under you. Remember how I endeavored to walk before you in this matter, as an example. Behold, here am I, witness against me, before the Lord and His Anointed: whose ox or whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed?' (I Sam. 12.3). Who knoweth how my soul feedeth upon a good conscience, when I remember how I spent this body in feeding the lambs of Christ?

The Lord is my witness above that I write my heart to you. I never knew by my nine years' preaching so much of Christ's love as He has taught me in Aberdeen by six months' imprisonment. I charge you in Christ's name to help me to praise; and show that people and country the loving kindness of the Lord to my soul, that so my sufferings may someday

preach to them when I am silent. He has made me to know now better than before what it is to be crucified to the world.

I would not exchange my sighs for the laughing of my adversaries, for He has sealed my sufferings with the comforts of His Spirit on my soul. Now, Sir, I have no earthly comfort, but to know I have espoused, and shall present a bride to Christ in that congregation. The Lord has given you much, and therefore He will require much of you again; number your talents, and see what you have to render back again; you cannot be enough persuaded of the shortness of your time. I charge you to write to me, and in the fear of God, be plain with me, whether or not you have made your salvation sure: I am confident, and hope the best; but I know, your reckonings with your Judge are many and deep. Sir, be not beguiled, neglect not the one thing, your one necessary thing, the good part that shall not be taken from you'; look beyond time; things here are but moonshine; they have but children's wit, who are delighted with shadows, and deluded with feathers flying in the air.

Desire your children in the morning of their life, to begin and seek the Lord, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth', to cleanse their way, by taking heed thereto, according to God's word'. Youth is a glassy age. Satan too often finds a 'swept chamber', and a garnished lodging' for himself and his train, in youthhood. Let the Lord have the flower of their age; the best sacrifice is due to Him; instruct them in this, that they have a soul, and that this life is nothing in comparison of eternity; they will have much need of God's conduct in this world, to guide them by those rocks upon which most men split; but far more need when it cometh to the hour of death, and their compearance before Christ. Oh that there were such an heart in them, to fear the name of the great and dreadful God, who has laid up great things for those that love and fear Him! I pray that God may be

their portion. Show others of my parishioners, that I write to them my best wishes, and the blessings of their lawful pastor. Say to them from me, that I beseech them, by the bowels of Christ, to keep in mind the doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which I taught them; so that they may lay hold on eternal life, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and making sure salvation to themselves. Walk in love, and do righteousness: seek peace; love one another. Wait for the coming of our Master and Judge. Receive no doctrine contrary to that which I delivered to you. If ye fall away, and forget it, and that Catechism which I taught you, and so forsake your own mercy, the Lord be Judge betwixt you and me. I take heaven and earth to witness, that such shall eternally perish. But if they serve the Lord, great will their reward be when they and I shall stand before our Judge. Set forward up the mountain, to meet with God; climb up, for your Savior calleth on you. It may be that God will call you to your rest, when I am far from you; but ye have my love, and the desires of my heart for your soul's welfare. He that is holy, keep you from falling, and establish you, till His own glorious appearance.

Your affectionate and lawful pastor.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XXXIII. To JOHN CLARK, a parishioner

LOVING BROTHER, -- Hold fast Christ without wavering and contend for the faith, because Christ is not easily gotten nor kept. The lazy professor has put heaven as it were at the next door, and thinketh to fly up to heaven in his bed and in a night-dream; but, truly, that is not so easy a thing as most men believe. Christ Himself did sweat ere He wan this city, howbeit He was the freeborn heir. It is Christianity, my heart, to be sincere, unfeigned, honest and upright hearted before God, and to live and serve God, suppose there was not one man nor woman in all the world dwelling beside you, to eye you. Any little grace that ye have, see that it be sound and true.

Ye may put a difference betwixt you and reprobates, if ye have these marks. -- 1. If ye prize Christ and His truth so as ye will sell all and buy Him; and suffer for it. 2. If the love of Christ keepeth you back from sinning, more than the law, or fear of hell. 3. If ye be humble, and deny your own will, wit, credit, ease, honor, the world, and the vanity and glory of it. 4. Your profession must not be barren and void of good works. 5. Ye must in all things aim at God's honor; ye must eat, drink, sleep, buy, sell, sit, stand, speak, pray, read, and hear the word, with a heart-purpose that God may be honored. 6. Ye must show yourself an enemy to sin, and reprove the works of darkness, such as drunkenness, swearing, and lying, albeit the company should hate you for so doing. 7. Keep in mind the truth of God, that ye heard me teach, and have nothing to do with the corruptions and new guises entered into the house of God. 8. Make conscience of your calling, in covenants, in buying and selling. 9. Acquaint yourself with daily praying; commit all your ways and actions to God, by prayer, supplication, and

thanksgiving; and count not much of being mocked; for Christ Jesus was mocked before you.

Persuade yourself, that this is the way of peace and comfort which I now suffer for. I dare go to death and into eternity with it, though men may possibly see another way. Remember me in your prayers, and the state of this oppressed church. Grace be with you. Your soul's well-wisher.

ABERDEEN

XXXIV. To JOHN GORDON OF CARDONESS, the younger

See the note on his father (Letter XXXII). The son, to whom this letter was addressed, was an uncivilized loose liver, and made his home a misery. Like his others to the same address, Rutherford's letter is outspoken and straight to the point. Nor could he ignore the fact that though the young man continued to attend church at times he came late and strode out before the service was over, behaving with the utmost irreverence and as if he was deliberately trying to insult his minister.

MUCH HONORED SIR, -- I long to hear whether or not your soul be hand-fasted with Christ. Lose your time no longer: flee the follies of youth: gird up the loins of your mind, and make you ready for meeting the Lord. I have often summoned you, and now I summon you again, to compear before your Judge, to make a reckoning of your life. While ye have time, consider your ways. Oh that there were such an heart in you, as to think what an ill conscience will be to you, when ye are upon the border of eternity, and your one foot out of time! Oh then, ten thousand thousand floods of tears cannot extinguish these flames, or purchase to you one hour's release from that pain! Oh, how sweet a day have ye had! But this is a fair-day that runneth fast away. See how ye have spent it, and consider the necessity of salvation! And tell me, in the fear of God, if ye have made it sure. I am persuaded that ye have a conscience that will be speaking somewhat to you. Why will ye die, and destroy yourself? I charge you in Christ's name, to rouse up your conscience in time, while salvation is in your offer. This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. Therefore, let me again beseech you to consider, in this your day, the things that belong to

your peace, before they be hid from your eyes. Dear brother, fulfill my joy, and begin to seek the Lord while He may be found. Forsake the follies of deceiving and vain youth: lay hold upon eternal life.

Shoring, night-drinking, and the misspending of the Sabbath, and neglecting of prayer in your house, and refusing of an offered salvation, will burn up your soul with the terrors of the Almighty, when your awakened conscience shall flee in your face. Be kind and loving to your wife: make conscience of cherishing her, and not being rigidly austere. Sir, I have not a tongue to express the glory that is laid up for you in your Father's house, if ye reform your doings, and frame your heart to return to the Lord. Ye know that this world is but a shadow, a short living creature, under the law of time. Within less than fifty years, when ye look back to it, ye shall laugh at the evanishing vanities thereof, as feathers flying in the air, and as the houses of sand within the sea-mark, which the children of men are building. Give up with courting of this vain world: seek not the bastard's moveables, but the son's heritage in heaven. Take a trial of Christ. Look unto Him, and His love will so change you, that ye shall be taken with Him, and never choose to go from Him. There is nothing that will make you a Christian indeed, but a taste of the sweetness of Christ. Come and see', will speak best to your soul. I would fain hope good of you. Be not discouraged at broken and spilled resolutions; but to it, and to it again! Use the means of profiting with your conscience: pray in your family and read the Word. Remember how our Lord's day was spent when I was among you. It will be a great challenge to you before God if ye forget the good that was done within the walls of your house on the Lord's day; and if ye turn aside after the fashions of this world, and if ye go not in time to the kirk, to wait on the public worship of God, and if ye tarry not at it, till all the

exercises of religion be ended. Give God some of your time both morning and evening and afternoon; and in so doing, rejoice the heart of a poor, oppressed prisoner. Rue upon your own soul and from your heart fear the Lord.

Now He that brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of His sheep, by the blood Of the eternal covenant, establish your heart with grace, and present you before His presence with joy.

Your affectionate and loving pastor.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XXXV. To JOHN FULLERTON of Carleton in Galloway

WORTHY AND MUCH HONORED, -- Grace, mercy and peace be to you. I received your letter from my brother, to which I now answer particularly.

I confess two things of myself: First, woe is me, that men should think there is anything in me. He is my witness, before whom I am as crystal, that the secret house-devils that bear me too often company, and that this sink of corruption which I find within, make me go with low sails. And if others saw what I see, they would look by me, but not to me. Secondly, I know that this shower of free grace behaved to be on me, otherwise I should have withered. I know, also, that I have need of a buffeting tempter, that grace may be put to exercise, and I kept low. Worthy and dear brother in the Lord Jesus, I write that from my heart which ye now read. I avouch that Christ, and sweating and sighing under His cross, is sweeter to me by far, than all the kingdoms in the world could possibly be. If you, and my dearest acquaintance in Christ, reap any fruit by my suffering, let me be weighed in God's even balance, if my joy be not fulfilled. What am I, to carry the marks of such a great King! I have gotten the wale and choice of Christ's crosses, even the tithe and the flower of the gold of all crosses, to bear witness to the truth; and herein find I liberty, joy, access, life, comfort, love, faith, submission, patience and resolution to take delight in on waiting. And, withal, in my race He has come near me and let me see the gold and crown. Let no man think he shall lose at Christ's hands in suffering for Him.

I doubt not but my Lord is preparing me for heavier trials. I am most ready at the good pleasure of my Lord, in the strength of His grace,

for anything He will be pleased to call me to; neither shall the black faced messenger, Death, be holden at the door when it shall knock. If my Lord will take honor of the like of me, how glad and joyful will my soul be. Let Christ come out with me to a hotter battle than this, and I will fear no flesh. I know that my Master shall win the day, and that He has taken the order of my suffering into His own hand. I have not yet resisted to blood.

Oh, how often am I laid in the dust, and urged by the tempter (who can ride his own errands upon our lying apprehensions) to sin against the unchangeable love of my Lord! When I think upon the sparrows and swallows that build their nests in the kirk of Anwoth, and of my dumb Sabbaths, my sorrowful, bleated eyes look askint upon Christ, and present Him as angry. But in this trial (all honor to our princely and royal King!) faith saileth fair before the wind, with topsail up, and carrieth the passenger through. I lay inhibitions upon my thoughts, that they receive no slanders of my only, only Beloved.

Now my dearest in Christ, the great Messenger of the Covenant, the only wise and all-sufficient Jehovah, establish you to the end. I hear that the Lord has been at your house, and has called home your wife to her rest. I know, Sir, that ye see the Lord loosing the pins of your tabernacle, and wooing your love from this plastered and over-gilded world, and calling upon you to be making yourself ready to go to your father's country, which shall be a sweet fruit of that visitation. Ye know to send the Comforter' was the King's word when He ascended on high. Ye have claim to, and interest in, that promise.

All love, all mercy, all grace and peace, all multiplied saving consolations, all joy and faith in Christ, all stability and confirming strength of grace, and the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the Bush be with you.

Your unworthy brother.

ABERDEEN, June 15, 1637

XXXVI. To JOHN GORDON OF CARDONESS, the elder

MUCH HONORED AND DEAREST IN MY LORD, Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.

My soul longeth exceedingly to hear how matters go betwixt you and Christ; and whether or not there be any work of Christ in that parish, that will bide the trial of fire and water. Let me be weighed of my Lord in a just balance, if your souls lie not weighty upon me. Ye go to bed and ye rise with me: thoughts of your soul, my dearest in our Lord, depart not from me in my sleep. Ye have a great part of my tears, sighs, supplications, and prayers. Oh, if I could buy your soul's salvation with any suffering whatsoever, and that ye and I might meet with joy up in the rainbow, when we shall stand before our Judge! Sir, show the people this; for when I write to you, I think I write to you all, old and young. Fulfill my joy and seek the Lord. Sure I am, that once I discovered my lovely, royal princely Lord Jesus to you all. Woe, woe shall be your part of it for evermore, if the Gospel be not the savor of life to you. Believe me, I find heaven a city hard to be won.

I know your accounts are many, and will take telling and laying, and reckoning betwixt you and your Lord. Fit your accounts, and order them. Lose not the last play, whatever ye do, for in that play with death your precious soul is the prize: for the Lord's sake spill not the play, and lose not such a treasure. Ye know that, out of love which I had to your soul, and out of desire which I had to make an honest account of you, I testified my displeasure and disliking of your ways very often, both in private and public. I am not now a witness of your doings, but your Judge is always your witness. I beseech you by the mercies of God, by the salvation of your soul, after the sight of this

letter to take a new course with your ways and now, in the end of your day, make sure of heaven. I never knew so well what sin was as since I came to Aberdeen, howbeit I was preaching of it to you. To feel the smoke of hell's fire in the throat for half an hour; to stand beside a river of fire and brimstone broader than the earth; and to think to be bound hand and foot, and casten into the midst of it quick, and then to have God locking the prison door, never to be opened to all eternity! O how it will shake a conscience that has any life in it!

Look up to Him and love Him. O, love and live! It were life to me if you would read this letter to the people and if they did profit by it.

My dearest in the Lord, stand fast in Christ, keep the faith, contend for Christ. Wrestle for Him and take men's feud for God's favor; there is no comparison betwixt them. O that the Lord would fulfill my joy and keep the young bride that is at Anwoth to Christ!

Now, worthy Sir, now my dear people, my joy and my crown in the Lord, let Him be your fear. Seek the Lord, and His face: save your souls.

Doves! flee to Christ's windows. Pray for me, and praise for me. The blessing of my God, the prayers and blessing of a poor prisoner, and your lawful pastor, be upon you.

Your lawful and loving pastor.

ABERDEEN, June 16, 1637

XXXVII. To EARLSTON, the younger

See also Letter LVI.

MUCH HONORED AND WELL BELOVED IN THE LORD, Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. Your letters give a dash to my laziness in writing.

I must first tell you, that there is not such a glassy, icy, and slippery piece of way betwixt you and heaven, as Youth; and I have experience to say with me here, and to seal what I assert. The old ashes of the sins of my youth are new fire of sorrow to me. I have seen the devil, as it were, dead and buried, and yet rise again, and be a worse devil than ever he was: therefore, my brother, beware of a green young devil, that has never been buried. Yet I must tell you, that the whole saints now triumphant in heaven, and standing before the throne, are nothing but a pack of redeemed sinners.

I shall be loath to put you off your fears, and your sense of deadness:

I wish it were more. There be some wounds of that nature, that their bleeding should not be soon stopped. Ye must take a house beside the Physician. It will be a miracle if ye be the first sick man whom He put away uncured, and worse than He found you. Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6.37). Take ye that. It cannot be presumption to take that as your own, when you find that your wounds stound you. He that can tell his tale and send such a letter to heaven as he has sent to Aberdeen, it is very like he will come speed with Christ. It bodeth God's mercy to complain heartily for sin.

Now for myself; alas! I am not the man I go for in this nation: men have not just weights to weigh me in. Oh, but I am a silly, feckless body, and overgrown with weeds; corruption is rank and fat in me. Oh, if I were answerable to this holy cause, and to that honorable Prince's

love for whom I now suffer! If Christ should refer the matter to me (in His presence I speak it), I might think shame to vote my own salvation. I think Christ might say, Thinkest thou not shame to claim heaven, who does so little for it?' I am very often so, that I know not whether I sink or swim in the water.

Grace be with you,

ABERDEEN, June 16, 1637

XXXVIII. TO MR WILLIAM DALGLEISH

REVEREND AND WELL-BELOVED BROTHER, Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.

I have heard somewhat of your trials in Galloway. My witness is above, my dearest brother, that ye have added much joy to me in my bonds, when I hear that ye grow in the grace and zeal of God for your Master. Our ministry, whether by preaching or suffering, will cast a smell through the world both of heaven and hell (II Cor. 2.15, 16). I persuade you, my dear brother, that there is nothing out of heaven, next to Christ, dearer to me than my ministry.

And, let me speak to you now, how kind a fellow prisoner is Christ to me! Believe me, this kind of cross (that would not go by my door, but would needs visit me) is still the longer the more welcome to me. It is true, my silent Sabbaths have been, and still are, as glassy ice, whereon my faith can scarce hold its feet, and I am often blown on my back, and off my feet, with a storm of doubting; yet truly, my bonds all this time cast a mighty and rank smell of high and deep love in Christ. I cannot, indeed, see through my cross to the far end; yet I believe I am in Christ's books, and in His decree (not yet unfolded to me), a man triumphing, dancing, and singing, on the other side of the Red Sea, and laughing and praising the Lamb, over beyond time, sorrow, deprivation, prelates' indignation, losses, want of friends, and death. Woe is me, my dear brother, that I say often, I am but dry bones, which my Lord will not bring out of the grave again'; and that my faithless fears say, Oh, I am a dry tree, that can bear no fruit: I am a useless body, who can beget no children to the Lord in His house!' Hopes of deliverance look cold and uncertain and afar off, as if I had done with it. If my sufferings could do beholders good and edify His kirk and

proclaim the incomparable worth of Christ's love to the world, then would my soul be overjoyed and my sad heart be cheered and calmed!

Dear brother, I cannot tell what is become of my labours among that people! If all that my Lord builded by me be casten down, and the bottom be fallen out of the profession at that parish, and none stand by Christ, whose love I once preached as clearly and plainly as I could (though far below its worth and excellence) to that people; if so, how can I bear it! And if another make a foul harvest, where I have made a painful and honest sowing, it will not soon digest with me. But I know that His ways pass finding out. Yet my witness, both within me and above me, knoweth. And my pained breast upon the Lord's Day at night, my desire to have had Christ awful, and amiable, and sweet to that people, is now my joy. It was my desire and aim to make Christ and them one; and, if I see my hopes die in the bud, see they bloom a little, and come to no fruit, I die with grief.

But, my dear brother, go on in the strength of His rich grace, whom ye serve. Stand fast for Christ. Deliver the Gospel off your hand, and your ministry to your Master with a clean and undefiled conscience. Let us make our part of it good, that it may be able to abide the fire, when hay and stubble shall be burned to ashes. Nothing, nothing, I say, nothing, but sound sanctification can abide the Lord's fan.

Now, remember my love to all my friends, and to my parishioners, as if I named each one of them particularly. I recommend you, and God's people, committed by Christ to your trust, to the rich grace of our all-sufficient Lord. Remember my bonds. Praise my Lord, who beareth me up in my sufferings. As you find occasion, according to the wisdom given you, show our acquaintance what the Lord has done for my soul. This I seek not, verily, to hunt my own praise, but that my dearest Master may be magnified.

ABERDEEN, June 17, 1637

XXXIX. To MARION MCNAUGHT

DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. Few know the heart of a stranger and prisoner. I am in the hands of mine enemies. I would that honest and lawful means were essayed for bringing me home to my charge, now when Mr A. R. and Mr H. R. are restored. It concerneth you of Galloway most, to use supplications and addresses for this purpose, and try if by fair means I can be brought back again. As for liberty, without I be restored to my flock, it is little to me; for my silence is my greatest prison. However it be, I wait for the Lord; I hope not to rot in my sufferings: Lord, give me submission to wait on. My heart is sad that my days flee away, and I do no service to my Lord in His house, now when His harvest and the souls of perishing people require it. But His ways are not like my ways, neither can I find Him out. Oh that He would shine upon my darkness, and bring forth my morning light from under the thick cloud that men have spread over me!

But that day that my mouth was most unjustly and cruelly closed, the bloom fell off my branches and my joy did cast the flower. O that I might preach His beauty and glory as once I did, and my branches be watered with the dew of God, and my joy in His work grow green again and bud and send out a flower! O, that I may wait for Him till the morning of this benighted kirk break out! This poor, afflicted kirk had a fair morning, but her night came upon her before her noonday, and she was like a traveler forced to take house in the morning of his journey. And now her adversaries are the chief men in the land; her ways mourn; her gates languish; her children sigh for bread. O, that my Lord would bring me again amongst you with abundance of the Gospel of Christ.

Remember my love in the Lord to your husband; God make him faithful to Christ! And my blessing to your three children. Faint not in prayer for this kirk. Desire my people not to receive a stranger and intruder upon my ministry. Let me stand in that right and station that my Lord Jesus gave me. Grace, grace, be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XL. To ROBERT STEWART, on his decision for Christ

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER, -- You are heartily welcome to my world of suffering, and heartily welcome to my father's house; God give you much joy of your new Master. If I have been in the house before you, I were not faithful to give the house an ill name, or to speak evil of the Lord of the family: I rather wish God's Holy Spirit (O Lord, breathe upon me with that Spirit!) to tell you the fashions of the house (Ezek. 43.11). One thing I can say, by on-waiting, ye will grow a great man with the Lord of the house. Hang on, till ye get some good from Christ. Take ease yourself, and let Him bear all; lay all your weights and your loads, by faith, on Christ; He can, He will bear you. I rejoice that He has come, and has chosen you in the furnace; it was even there where He and ye set tryst. He keepeth the good old fashion with you that was in Hosea's days (Hos. 2.14). Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her.' There was no talking to her heart while she was in the fair flourishing city, and at ease, but out in the cold, hungry, waste wilderness, He allureth her; He whispered news into her ear there, and said, Thou art Mine'. What would ye think of such a bode? Ye may soon do worse than say, Lord, hold all; Lord Jesus, a bargain be it, it shall not go back on my side'.

Ye have gotten a great advantage in the way of heaven, that ye have started to the gate in the morning. Like a fool, as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven, and near afternoon, before I ever took the gate by the end. I pray you now keep the advantage ye have. My heart, be not lazy; set quickly up the bras on hands and feet, as if the last pickle of sand were running out of your glass, and death were

coming to turn the glass. And be very careful to take heed to your feet, in that slippery and dangerous way of youth that ye are walking in. Dry timber will soon take fire. Be covetous and greedy of the grace of God, and beware that it be not a holiness which cometh only from the cross; for too many are that way disposed. When He slew them, then they sought Him, and they returned and inquired early after God.'

Nevertheless, they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues' (Ps. 78.34, 36). It is part of our hypocrisy, to give God fair, white words when He has us in His grips (if I may speak so), and to flatter Him till He win to the fair fields again. Try well green godliness, and examine what it is that ye love in Christ. If ye love but Christ's sunny side, and would have only summer weather and a land-gate, not a sea-way to heaven, your profession will play you a slip, and the winter-well will go dry again in summer.

Make no sport nor bairn's play of Christ; but labour for a sound and lively sight of sin, that ye may judge yourself an undone man, a damned slave of hell and of sin, one dying in your own blood, except Christ come and rue upon you, and take you up. And, therefore, make sure and fast work of conversion. Cast the earth deep; and down, down with the old work, the building of confusion, that was there before; and let Christ lay new work, and make a new creation within you. Look if Christ's rain goes down to the root of your withered plants, and if His love wound your heart whill it bleed with sorrow for sin, and if ye can pant and fall aswoon, and be like to die for that lovely one, Jesus. I know that Christ will not be hid where He is; grace will ever speak for itself, and be fruitful in well-doing. The sanctified cross is a fruitful tree, it bringeth forth many apples.

If I should tell you by some weak experience, what I have found in Christ, ye or others could hardly believe me. I thought not the

hundredth part of Christ long since, that I do now, though, alas! my thoughts are still infinitely below His worth. And for Christ's cross, especially the garland and flower of all crosses, to suffer for His name, I esteem it more than I can write or speak to you. And I write it under mine own hand to you, that it is one of the steps of the ladder up to our country; and Christ (whoever be one) is still at the heavy end of this black tree, and so it is but as a feather to me. I need not run at leisure, because of a burden on my back; my back never bare the like of it; the more heavily crossed for Christ, the soul is still the lighter for the journey.

Now, would to God that all cold-blooded, faint-hearted soldiers of Christ, would look again to Jesus, and to his love; and when they look, I would have them to look again and again, and fill themselves with beholding Christ's beauty: and, I dare say, then He would be highly esteemed of many. It is my daily growing sorrow, that He does so great things for my soul, and He never yet got any thing of me worth speaking of. Sir, I charge you, help me to praise Him. If men could do no more, I would have them to wonder -- if we cannot be filled with Christ's love, we may be filled with wondering. To Him and His rich grace I recommend you. I pray you, pray for me, and forget not to praise.

ABERDEEN, June 17, 1637

XLI. To LADY GAITGIRTH

Her husband, to whom Rutherford expresses his obligations at the close of the letter, was Sheriff of Ayrshire and represented it in the Scottish Parliament. He was one of three commissioners sent by Parliament on behalf of the Covenant to Newcastle in 1641. In 1649 he commanded a troop of Horse.

MISTRESS, -- I long to know how matters stand betwixt Christ and your soul. Time cannot change Him in His love. Ye yourself may ebb and flow, rise and fall, wax and wane; but your Lord is this day as He was yesterday. And it is your comfort that your salvation is not rolled upon wheels of your own making, neither have ye to do with a Christ at your own shaping. God has singled out a Mediator, strong and mighty: if ye and your burdens were as heavy as ten hills or hells, He is able to bear you, and to save you to the uttermost. Your often seeking to Him cannot make you a burden to Him. I know that Christ compassioneth you, and maketh a moan for you, in all your dumps, and under your down castings; but it is good for you that He hideth Himself sometimes. It is not niceness, dryness, nor coldness of love, that causeth Christ to withdraw, and slip in under a curtain and a vail, that ye cannot see Him; but He knoweth that ye could not bear with upsails, a fair gale, a full moon, and a high spring-tide of His felt love, and always a fair summer-day and a summer-sun of a felt and possessed and embracing Lord Jesus. His kisses and His visits to His dearest ones are thin-sown. He could not let out His rivers of love upon His own, but these rivers would be in hazard of loosening a young plant at the root; and He knoweth this of you. Ye should, therefore, frist Christ's kindness, as to its sensible and full manifestations, till ye and He be above sun

and moon. That is the country where ye will be enlarged for that love which ye dōw not now contain.

Cast the burden of your sweet babes upon Christ, and lighten your heart, by laying your all upon Him: He will be their God. I hope to see you up the mountain yet, and glad in the salvation of God. Frame yourself for Christ, and gloom not upon His cross. I find Him so sweet, that my love, suppose I would charge it to remove from Christ, would not obey me: His love has stronger fingers than to let go its grips of us bairns, who cannot go but by such a hold as Christ. It is good that we want legs of our own, since we may borrow from Christ; and it is our happiness that Christ is under an act of cautionary for heaven, and that Christ is booked in heaven as the principal debtor for such poor bodies as we are.

I request you, give the laird, your husband, thanks for his care of me, in that he has appeared in public for a prisoner of Christ. I pray and write mercy, and peace, and blessings to him and his.

Grace, grace be with you for ever.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XLIII. To ROBERT BROWN OF CARSLUTH

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER, -- I would have looked for larger and more particular letters from you, for my comfort in this; for your words before have strengthened me. I pray you to mend this; and be thankful and painful, while ye have a piece or corner of the Lord's vineyard to dress. Oh, would to God that I could have leave to follow you, to break the clods! But I wish I could command my soul to be silent, and to wait upon the Lord. I am sure that while Christ lives, I am well enough friend-stand. I hope that He will extend His kindness and power for me; but God be thanked it is not worse with me than a cross for Christ and His truth. I know that He might have pitched upon many more choice and worthy witnesses, if He had pleased; but I seek no more (be what timber I will, suppose I were made of a piece of hell) than that my Lord, in His infinite art, hew glory to His name, and enlargement to Christ's kingdom, out of me. Oh that I could attain to this, to desire that my part of Christ might be laid in pledge for the heightening of Christ's throne in Britain! Let my Lord redeem the pledge, or, if He please, let it sink and drown unredeemed. But what can I add to Him? Or what way can a smothered and borne-down prisoner set out Christ in open market, as a lovely and desirable Lord to many souls? I know that He seeth to His own glory better than my ebb thoughts can dream of; and that the wheels and paces of this poor distempered kirk are in His hands; and that things shall roll as Christ will have them: -- only, Lord, trust the matter so, as Christ may be made a householder and lord again in Scotland, and wet faces for His departure may be dried at His sweet and much-desired welcome-home!

I desire you to contribute your help to see if I cannot be restored to

my wasted and lost flock.

Grace be (as it is) your portion.

ABERDEEN, 1637

Robert Brown of Carsluth owned considerable property in Galloway.

WORTHY SIR, -- I beseech you in the Lord to give your soul no rest till ye have real assurance, and Christ's rights confirmed and sealed to your soul. Take pains for your salvation; for in that day when ye shall see many men's labours and conquests and idol-riches lying in ashes, when the earth and all the works thereof shall be burnt with fire, oh how dear a price would your soul give for God's favor in Christ! It will not be time to cry for a lamp when the Bridegroom is entered into His chamber and the door shut. Look into those depths (without a bottom) of loveliness, sweetness, beauty, excellency, glory, goodness, grace, and mercy, that are in Christ; and ye shall then cry down the whole world, and all the glory of it, even when it is come to the summer-bloom; and ye shall cry, Up with Christ, up with Christ's Father, up with eternity of glory!' Sir, there is a great deal less sand in your glass than when I saw you, and your afternoon is nearer even-tide now than it was. As a flood carried back to the sea, so does the Lord's swift post, Time, carry you and your life with wings to the grave. Ye eat and drink, but time standeth not still; ye laugh, but your day fleeth away; ye sleep, but your hours are reckoned and put by hand. Oh how soon will time shut you out of the poor, and cold, and hungry inn of this life! And then what will yesterday's short-born pleasures do to you, but be as a snow-ball melted away many years since? O blessed conquest, to lose all things, and to gain Christ! I know not what ye have, if ye want Christ! Alas! How poor is your gain, if the earth were all yours in free heritage, holding it of no man of clay, if Christ be not yours!

I recommend Christ and His love to your seeking; and yourself to the tender mercy and rich grace of our Lord. Remember my love in Christ to your wife. I desire her to learn to make her soul's anchor fast upon Christ Himself. Few are saved.

Your soul's eternal well-wisher.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XLIV. To CASSIN CARRIE

MUCH HONORED SIR, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I have been too long in writing to you. I am confident that ye have learned to prize Christ, and His love and favor, more than ordinary professors who scarce see Christ with half an eye, because their sight is taken up with eyeing and liking the beauty of this over-gilded world, that promiseth fair to all its lovers, but in the push of a trial, when need is, can give nothing but a fair beguile.

I know that ye are not ignorant that men come not to this world, as some do to a market, to see and to be seen; or as some come to behold a May-game, and only to behold, and to go home again. Ye come hither to treat with God, and to tryst with Him in His Christ for salvation to your soul, and to seek reconciliation with an angry, wrathful God, in a covenant of peace made to you in Christ; and this is more than ordinary sport, or the play that the greatest part of the world give their heart unto. And, therefore, worthy Sir, I pray you, by the salvation of your soul, and by the mercy of God, and your compearance before Christ, do this in sad earnest, and let not salvation be your by-work or your holy-day's talk only, or a work by the way. For men think that this may be done on three days' space on a feather bed, when death and they are fallen in hands together, and that with a word or two they shall make their soul-matters right. Alas! This is to sit loose and unsure in the matters of our salvation. Know and try in time your holding of Him, and the rights and charters of heaven, and upon what terms ye have Christ and the Gospel, and what Christ is worth in your estimation, and how lightly ye esteem of other things, and how dearly of Christ. I am sure, if you see Him in his beauty and glory, you will see Him to be that

incomparable jewel which you should seek, howbeit you should sell, wadset and forfeit your few years' portion of this life's joys. Oh happy soul for evermore, who can rightly compare this life with that long-lasting life to come, and can balance the weighty glory of the one, with the light golden vanity of the other! The day of the Lord is at hand, and all men shall come out in their blacks and whites as they are; there shall be no borrowed colors in that day. Men now borrow the lustre of Christianity, but how many counterfeit masks will be burnt in the day of God, in the fire that shall consume the earth and the works that are on it! And howbeit Christ have the hardest part of it now, yet, in the presence of my Lord, whom I serve in the Spirit, I would not differ or exchange Christ's prison, bonds, and chains, with the golden chains and lordly rents of the men of this world. Worthy, worthy for evermore is Christ, for whom the saints of God suffer the short pains of this life!

Sir, I wish your soul may be more acquainted with the sweetness of Christ. Grace, grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XLV. To JOHN LENNOX, Laird of Catty

MUCH HONORED SIR, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. -- I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I have that confidence that your soul mindeth Christ and salvation. I beseech you, in the Lord, to give more pains and diligence to fetch heaven than the country-sort of lazy professors, who think their own faith and their own godliness, because it is their own, best; and content themselves with a cold rife custom and course, with a resolution to summer and winter in that sort of profession which the multitude and the times favor most; and are still shaping and clipping and carving their faith, according as it may best stand with their summer sun and a whole skin; and so breathe out hot and cold in God's matters, according to the course of the times. This is their compass which they sail towards heaven by, instead of a better. Worthy and dear Sir, separate yourself from such, and bend yourself to the utmost of your strength and breath, in running fast for salvation; and, in taking Christ's kingdom, use violence. It cost Christ and all His followers sharp showers and hot sweats, see they won to the top of the mountain; but still our soft nature would have heaven coming to our bedside when we are sleeping, and lying down with us that we might go to heaven in warm clothes. But all that came there found wet feet by the way, and sharp storms that did take the hide off their face, and found tos and fros and ups and downs, and many enemies by the way.

It is impossible that a man can take his lusts to heaven with him; such wares as these will not be welcome there. Oh, how loath are we to forego our packalds and burdens, that hinder us to run our race with patience! It is no small work to displease and anger nature, that we

may please God. Oh, if it be hard to win one foot, or half an inch, out of our own will, out of our own wit, out of our own ease and worldly lusts (and so to deny ourself, and to say, It is not I but Christ, not I but grace, not I but God's glory, not I but God's love constraining me, not I but the Lord's word, not I but Christ's commanding power as King in me!), oh, what pains, and what a death it is to nature, to turn me, myself, my lust, my ease, my credit, over into, My Lord, my Savior, my King, and my God, my Lord's will, my Lord's grace!' But, alas! that idol, myself, is the master idol we all bow to. What made Eve miscarry? And what hurried her headlong upon the forbidden fruit, but that wretched thing herself? What drew that brother-murderer to kill Abel? That wild himself. What drove the old world on to corrupt their ways? Who, but themselves, and their own pleasure? What was the cause of Solomon's falling into idolatry and multiplying of strange wives? What, but himself, whom he would rather pleasure than God? What was the hook that took David and snared him first in adultery, but his self-lust? and then in murder, but his self-credit and self-honour? What led Peter on to deny his Lord? Was it not a piece of himself, and self-love to a whole skin? What made Judas sell his Master for thirty pieces of money, but a piece of self-love, idolizing of avaricious self? What made Demas to go off the way of the Gospel, to embrace this present world? Even self-love and love of gain for himself. Every man blameth the devil for his sins; but the great devil, the house-devil of every man, that lieth and eateth in every man's bosom, is that idol that killeth all, himself. Blessed are they who can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves. O sweet word! (Gal. 2.10) I live no more, but Christ liveth in me!' Worthy Sir, pardon this my freedom of love. God is my witness, that it is out of an earnest desire after your soul's eternal welfare, that I use this freedom of speech.

Your sun, I know, is lower, and your sun-setting and evening sky
nearer, than when I saw you last: strive to end your task before night,
and to make Christ yourself, and to acquaint your heart and your love
with the Lord. Sir, I remember you in my prayers to the Lord, according
to my promise: help me with your prayers, that our Lord would be
pleased to bring me amongst you again, with the Gospel of Christ.
Grace, grace, be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XLVI. To JOHN GORDON OF CARDONESS, the younger

DEARLY-BELOVED IN THE LORD, -- I long exceedingly to hear of the case of your soul, which has a large share both of my prayers and careful thoughts. Sir, remember that a precious treasure and prize is upon this short play that ye are now upon. Even the eternity of well or wo to your soul standeth upon the little point of your well or ill-employed short and swift-posting sand glass. Seek the Lord while He may be found; the Lord waiteth upon you.

And sinning against light will put out your candle, and stupefy your conscience, and bring upon it more coverings and skin, and less feeling and sense of guiltiness; and when that is done, the devil is like a mad horse that has broken his bridle and runneth away with his rider whither he listeth. Learn to know that which the apostle knew, the deceitfulness of sin. Strive to make prayer and reading and holy company and holy conference your delight; and when delight cometh in, ye shall by little and little smell the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ's sweetness. Then shall ye be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the ravishments of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt, and embraced Christ: and then ye shall not be able to loose yourself off Christ, and to bind your soul to old lovers. Then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, balkings, and wheels of your soul in a right tune, and in a spiritual temper.

But if this world and its lusts be your delight, I know not what Christ can make of you; ye cannot be metal to be a vessel of glory and mercy. As the Lord liveth, thousand thousands are beguiled with security, because God and wrath and judgment are not terrible to them. Stand in

awe of God and of the warnings of a checking and rebuking conscience. Make others to see Christ in you, moving, doing, speaking and thinking. Your actions will smell of Him if He be in you. There is an instinct in the new-born babes of Christ, like the instinct of nature that leads birds to build their nests, and bring forth their young, and love such and such places, as woods, forests, and wildernesses, better than other places. The instinct of nature maketh a man love his mother-country above all countries; the instinct of renewed nature, and supernatural grace, will lead you to such and such works, as to love your country above, to sigh to be clothed with your house not made with hands, and to call your borrowed prison here below a borrowed prison, and to look upon it servant-like and pilgrim-like. And the pilgrim's eye and look is a disdainfullike, discontented cast of his eye, his heart crying after his eye, 'Fy, fy, this is not like my country.'

I recommend to you the mending of a hole, and reforming of a failing, one or other, every week; and put off a sin, or a piece of it, as anger, wrath, lust, intemperance, every day, that ye may more easily master the remnant of your corruption. God has given you a wife; love her, and let her breasts satisfy you; and, for the Lord's sake, drink no waters but out of your own cistern. Strange wells are poison. Strive to learn some new way against your corruption from the man of God, Mr W. D. [William Dalglish], or other servants of God. Sleep not sound, till ye find yourself in that case that ye dare look death in the face, and durst hazard your soul upon eternity. I am sure that many ells and inches of the short thread of your life are by-hand since I saw you; and that thread has an end; and ye have no hands to cast a knot, and add one day, or a finger-breadth, to the end of it. When hearing, and seeing, and the outer walls of the clay house shall fall down, and life shall render the besieged castle of clay to death and judgment, and ye

find your time worn ebb, and run out, what thoughts will you then have of idol-pleasures, that possibly are now sweet? What bud or hide would you then give for the Lord's favor? And what a price would you then give for pardon? It were not amiss to think, What if I were to receive a doom, and to enter into a furnace of fire and brimstone? What if it come to this, that I shall have no portion but utter darkness? And what if I be brought to this, to be banished from the presence of God, and to be given over to God's sergeants, the devil and the power of the second death?' Put your soul, by supposition, in such a case, and consider what horror would take hold of you, and what ye would then esteem of pleasing yourself in the course of sin. Oh, dear Sir, for the Lord's sake awake to live righteously, and love your poor soul! And after ye have seen this my letter, say with yourself, The Lord will seek an account of this warning which I have received.'

Lodge Christ in your family. Receive no stranger hireling as your pastor. I bless your children. Grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XLVII. To WILLIAM GORDON

DEAR BROTHER, -- Ye complain that ye want a mark of the sound work of grace and love in your soul. For answer, consider for your satisfaction (till God send more) I John 3.14. And as for your complaint of deadnes.~ and doubting. Christ will, I hope, take your deadness and you together. They are bodies full of holes, running boils, and broken bones which need mending, that Christ the Physician taketh up: whole vessels are not for the Mediator Christ's art. Publicans, sinners, whores, harlots, are ready market-wares for Christ. The only thing that will bring sinners within a cast of Christ's drawing arm is that which ye write of, some feeling of death and sin. That bringeth forth complaints; and, therefore, out of sense complain more, and be more acquaint with all the cramps, stitches, and soul swoonings that trouble you. The more pain, and the more night-watching, and the more fevers, the better. A soul bleeding to death, till Christ were sent for, and cried for in all haste, to come and stem the blood, and close up the hole in the wound with His own heart and balm, were a very good disease, when many are dying of a whole heart. We have all too little of hell-pain and terrors that way; nay, God send me such a hell as Christ has promised to make a heaven of. Alas! I am not come that far on the way, as to say in sad earnest, Lord Jesus, great and sovereign Physician, here is a pained patient for Thee.' But the thing that we mistake is the want of victory. We hold that to be the mark of one that has no grace. Nay, say I, the want of fighting were a mark of no grace; but I shall not say the want of victory is such a mark. If my fire and the devil's water make crackling like thunder in the air, I am the less feared; for where there is fire, it is Christ's part, which I lay and

bind upon Him, to keep in the coal, and to pray the Father that my faith fail not, if I in the meantime be wrestling, and doing, and fighting, and mourning.

Pray for me, that the Lord would give me house-room again, to hold a candle to this dark world. -- Grace, grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XLIX. To MRS STUART, wife of the Provost of Aye

MY VERY NOBLE AND DEAR LADY, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. --

The Lord has brought me safely to Aberdeen: I have gotten lodging in the hearts of all I meet with. No face that has not smiled upon me; only the indwellers of this town are dry, cold, and general. They consist of Papists, and men of Gallio's metal, firm in no religion; and it is counted no wisdom here to countenance a confined and silenced prisoner. But the shame of Christ's cross shall not be my shame.

Madam, your Ladyship knoweth what Christ has done to have all your love; and that He alloweth not His level upon your dear child. Keep good quarters with Christ in your love. I verily think that Christ has said, I must needs-force have Jean Campbell for Myself'; and He has laid many oars in the water, to fish and hunt home-over your heart to heaven. Let Him have His prey, He will think you well won, when He has gotten you. It is good to have recourse often, and to have the door open, to our stronghold. For the sword of the Lord, the sword of the Lord is for Scotland! And yet two or three berries shall be left in the top of the olive-tree.

If a word can do my brother good in his distress, I know your Ladyship will be willing and ready to speak it, and more also. Now the only wise God, and your only, only One, He who dwelt in the Bush, be with you. I write many kisses and many blessings in Christ to your dear child: the blessings of his father's God, the blessings due to the fatherless and the widow, be yours and his.

ABERDEEN

(See Letter XXIX)

MISTRESS, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. -- I am sorry that ye

take it so hardly that I have not written to you.

I am judged to be that which I am not. I fear that if I were put into the fire, I should melt away, and fall down in shreds of painted nature; for truly I have little stuff at home that is worth the eye of God's servants. If there be anything of Christ's in me (as I dare not deny some of His work), it is but a spunk of borrowed fire, that can scarce warm myself, and has little heat for standers-by. I would fain have that which ye and others believe I have; but ye are only witnesses to my outer side, and to some words on paper. Oh that He would give me more than paper-grace or tongue-grace! But if I have any love to Him, Christ has both love to me, and wit to guide His love. And I see that the best thing I have has as much dross beside it as might curse me and it both; and, if it were for no more, we have need of a Savior to pardon the very faults, and diseases, and weakness of the new man, and to take away (to say so) our godly sins, or the sins of our sanctification, and the dross and scum of spiritual love.

I would have you and myself helping Christ mystical to weep for His wife. And oh that we could mourn for Christ buried in Scotland, and for His two slain witnesses, killed because they prophesied! If we could so importune and solicit God, our buried Lord and His two buried witnesses should rise again. Earth and clay and stone will not bear down Christ and the Gospel in Scotland. I know not if I shall see the second temple and the glory of it; but the Lord has deceived me if it be not to be reared up again. I would wish to give Christ His welcome Home again. My blessing, my joy, my glory and love be on the Home-comer.

I know that your heart and Christ are married together; it were not good to make a divorce. Rue not of that meeting and marriage with such a Husband. Pray for me, His prisoner. Grace, grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

L. To MR JAMES FLEMING

Fleming was minister of a parish in East Lothian. He was strongly opposed to the attempts of James and Charles I to impose prelacy and the Prayer Book on Scotland. His first wife, Martha, was the eldest daughter of John Knox.

REVEREND AND WELL-BELOVED IN OUR LORD, -- Grace, mercy, and peace to you. I received your letter which has refreshed me in my bonds. I cannot but testify unto you, my dear brother, what sweetness I find in our Master's cross; but alas, what can I either do or suffer for Him? I am not able, by tongue, pen, or sufferings, to provoke many to fall in love with Him: but He knoweth, whom I love to serve in the Spirit, what I would do and suffer by His own strength, so being that I might make my Lord Jesus lovely and sweet to many thousands in this land. I think it amongst God's wonders, that He will take any praise or glory, or any testimony to His honorable cause, from such a forlorn sinner as I am. But when Christ worketh, He needeth not ask the question, by whom He will be glorious. I know (seeing His glory at the beginning did shine out of poor nothing, to set up such a fair house for men and angels, and so many glorious creatures, to proclaim His goodness, power, and wisdom) that, if I were burnt to ashes, out of the smoke and powder of my dissolved body He could raise glory to Himself. But, alas! Few know the guiltiness that is on my part: it is a wonder, that this good cause has not been marred and spilled in my foul hands. But I rejoice in this, that my sweet Lord Jesus has found something ado, even a ready market for His free grace and incomparable and matchless mercy, in my wants. Only my loathsome wretchedness and my wants have qualified me for Christ, and the riches of His glorious grace. Few know the unseen

and private reckonings betwixt Christ and me; yet His love, His boundless love would not bide away, nor stay at home with Himself. How joyful is my heart, that ye write that ye are desirous to join with me in praising; for it is a charity to help a devour to pay his debts. But when all have helped me, my name shall stand in His account-book under ten thousand thousands of sums unpaid. But it easeth my heart that His dear servants will but speak of my debts to such a sweet Creditor. I desire that He may lay me in His own balance and weigh me, if I would not fain have a feast of His boundless love made to my own soul, and to many others. One thing I know, that we shall not at all be able to come near His Excellency, with eye, heart, or tongue; for He is above all created thoughts. All nations before Him are as nothing, and less than nothing: He sitteth in the circuit of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers before Him. Oh that men would praise Him!

Ye complain of your private case. Alas! I am not the man to speak to such an one as ye are. Any sweet presence which I have had in this town, is, I know, for this cause, that I might express and make it known to others. But I never find myself nearer Christ, that royal and princely One, than after a great weight and sense of deadness and gracelessness. I think that the sense of our wants, when withal we have a restlessness and a sort of spiritual impatience under them and can make a din, because we want Him whom our soul loveth, is that which maketh an open door to Christ. And when we think we are going backward, because we feel deadness, we are going forward; for the more sense, the more life; and no sense argueth no life.

And for your complaints of your ministry, I now think all I do too little. Plainness, freedom, watchfulness, fidelity, shall swell upon you, in exceeding large comforts, in your sufferings. The feeding of

Christ's lambs in private visits lions and catechizing, in painful preaching, and fair, honest, and free warning of the flock, is a sufferer's garland. Oh, ten thousand times blessed are they who are honored of Christ to be faithful and painful in wooing a bride to Christ! My dear brother, I know that ye think more on this than I can write; and I rejoice that your purpose is, in the Lord's strength, to back your wronged Master; and to come out and call yourself Christ's man when so many are now denying Him.

Help me with your prayers; and desire, from me, other brethren to take courage for their Master.

ABERDEEN, Aug. 15, 1637

LI. To MR FULK ELLIS

Ellis was an Irish Presbyterian serving as a captain in the Scottish army.

WORTHY AND MUCH HONOURED IN OUR LORD, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.

1. I am glad of our more than paper acquaintance. Seeing we have one Father, it reckoneth the less, though we never see one another's face. I profess myself most unworthy to follow the camp of such a worthy and renowned Captain as Christ.

2. As for our lovely and beloved church in Ireland, my heart bleedeth for her desolation; but I believe that our Lord is only lopping the vine-trees, but not intending to cut them down, or root them out. It is but folly to measure the Gospel by summer or winter weather: the summer-sun of the saints shineth not on them in this life. How should we have complained, if the Lord had turned the same providence that we now stomach at upside down, and had ordered matters thus, that first the saints should have enjoyed heaven, glory, and ease, and then Methuselah's days of sorrow and daily miseries? We would think a short heaven no heaven. Certainly His ways pass finding out.

3. Ye complain of the evil of heart-atheism: but it is to a greater atheist than any man can be, that ye write of that. Oh, light findeth not that reverence and fear which a plant of God's setting should find in our soul! How do we by nature, as others, detain and hold captive the truth of God in unrighteousness, and so make God's light a bound prisoner? Certainly there cometh great mist and clouds from the lower part of our souls, our earthly affections, to the higher part, which is our conscience, either natural or renewed: as smoke in a lower house

breaketh up, and defileth the house above. If we had more practice of obedience, we should have more sound light. I think, lay aside all other guiltiness, that this one, the violence done to God's candle in our soul, were a sufficient ditty against us. There is no helping of this but by striving to stand in awe of God's light. I see there is a necessity that we protest against the doings of the Old Man, and raise up a party against our worst half, to accuse, condemn, sentence, and with sorrow bemoan, the dominion of sin's kingdom; and withal make law, in the New Covenant, against our guiltiness. For Christ once condemned sin in the flesh, and we are to condemn it over again. And if there had not been such a thing as the grace of Jesus, I should have long since given up with heaven, and with the expectation to see God. But grace, grace, free grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, white and fair, and large Saviour-mercy, have been, and must be, the rock that we drowned souls must swim to. New washing, renewed application of purchased redemption, by that sacred blood that sealet the free Covenant, is a thing of daily and hourly use to a poor sinner. And even when we have won the castle, then must we eternally sing, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb, who has saved us, and washed us in His own blood.'

ABERDEEN, Sept. 7, 1637

LII. To MR MATTHEW MOWAT, minister of Kilmarnock

Mowat was one of seven leading ministers in the west of Scotland whom Parliament after the Restoration brought before them to demand their agreement to the establishment of episcopacy, thinking their agreement would influence others. On their refusal they were imprisoned.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, -- I am refreshed with your letters. I would take all well at my Lord's hands that He has done, if I knew that I could do my Lord any service in my suffering; suppose my Lord would make a stop-hole of me, to fill a hole in the wall of His house, or a pinning in Zion's new work. For any place of trust in my Lord's house, as steward, or chamberlain, or the like, surely I think myself (my very dear brother, I speak not by any proud figure or traps) unworthy of it; nay, I am not worthy to stand behind the door. When I hear that the men of God are at work, and speaking in the name of our Lord Jesus, I think myself but an outcast, or outlaw, chased from the city to lie on the hills, and live amongst the rocks and out-fields. Oh that I might but stand in Christ's out-house, or hold a candle in any low vault of His house! But I know this is but the vapors that arise out of a quarrelous and unbelieving heart to darken the wisdom of God; and your fault is just mine, that I cannot believe my Lord's bare and naked word. I must either have an apple to play me with, and shake hands with Christ, and have seal, caution, and witness to His word, or else I count myself loose; howbeit, I have the word and faith of a King! Oh, I am made of unbelief, and cannot swim but where my feet may touch the ground! But surely, brother, ye shall have my advice (howbeit, alas! I cannot follow it myself, not to contend with the honest and faithful Lord of the house; for, go He or come He, He is aye gracious in His departure.

There are grace, and mercy, and loving-kindness upon Christ's back parts; and when He goes away, the proportion of His face, the image of that fair Sun that stayeth in eyes, senses, and heart, after He is gone, leaveth a mass of love behind it in the heart. The sound of His knock at the door of His Beloved, after He is gone and passed, leaveth a share of joy and sorrow both. So we have something to feed upon till He return: and He is more loved in His departure, and after He is gone, than before, as the day in the declining of the sun, and towards the evening, is often most desired.

And as for Christ's cross, I never received evil of it, but what was of mine own making: when I miscooked Christ's physic, no marvel that it hurt me. For since it was on Christ's back, it has always a sweet smell, and these 1600 years it keepeth the smell of Christ.

I believe that our Lord once again will water with His dew the withered hill of Mount Zion in Scotland. Remember our Covenant.

Your excuse for advice to me is needless. Alas! Many sit beside light, as sick folk beside meat, and cannot make use of it. Grace be with you.

Your brother in Christ.

ABERDEEN, Sept. 7, 1637

LIII. To JAMES BAUTIE, theological student

LOVING BROTHER, -- I received your letter and render you thanks for the same; but I have not time to answer all the heads of it, as the bearer can inform you.

It is a sweet law of the New Covenant and a privilege of the new burgh that citizens pay according to their means. For the New Covenant saith not, So much obedience by ounce weights and no less, under the pain of damnation.' Christ taketh as poor men may give. Where there is a mean portion He is content with the less, if there be sincerity; broken sums, and little, feckless obedience will be pardoned, and hold the foot with Him. Know ye not that our kindly Lord retaineth His good old heart yet? He breaketh not a bruised reed, nor quencheth the smoking flax; if the wind but blow, He holdeth His hand about it till it rise to a flame. The law cometh on with three O-yeses, with all the heart; with all the soul, and with all the strength'; and where would poor folks, like you and me, furnish all these sums? It feareth me (nay, it is most certain) that, if the payment were to come out of our purse, when we should put our hand into our bag, we should bring out the wind, or worse. But the New Covenant seeketh not heapmete, nor stented obedience, as the condition of it, because forgiveness has always place. Hence I draw this conclusion: that to think matters betwixt Christ and us go back for want of heaped measure, is a piece of old Adam's pride, who would either be at legal payment, or nothing. We would still have God in our common, and buy His kindness with our merits.

No marvel, then, of whisperings, Whether you be in the covenant or not? For pride maketh loose work of the covenant of grace, and will not let

Christ be full bargain maker. To speak to you particularly and shortly:
All the truly regenerated cannot determinately tell you the measure of
their dejections; because Christ beginneth young with many, and stealth
into their heart, see they wit of themselves, and becometh homely with
them, with little din or noise. I grant that many are blinded, in
rejoicing in a good-cheap conversion, that never cost them a sick
night. But for that; I would say, if other marks be found that Christ
is indeed come in, never make plea with him because he will not answer,
Lord Jesus, how camest Thou in? Whether in at door or window?' Make Him
welcome, since He is come. The wind bloweth where it listeth'; all the
world's wisdom cannot perfectly render a reason why the wind should be
a month in the east, six weeks possibly in the west, and the space only
of an afternoon in the south or north. You will not find out all the
steps of Christ's way with a soul, do what ye can.

You object, the truly regenerate should love God for Himself; and ye
fear that you love Him more for His benefits (as incitements and
motives to love Him) than for Himself. I answer, To love God for
Himself, as the last end; and also for His benefits, as incitements and
motives to love Him, may very well stand together; as a son loveth his
mother, because she is his mother, howbeit she be poor: and he loveth
her for an apple also. You will not say, I hope, that benefits are the
only reason and ground of your love: it seems there is a better
foundation for it.

Comparing the state of one truly regenerate, whose heart is a temple of
the Holy Ghost, and yours, which is full of uncleanness and corruption,
ye stand dumb and discouraged, and dare not sometimes call Christ
heartedly your own. I answer: 1. The best regenerate have their
defilements that will clog behind them all their days; and, wash as
they will, there will be filth in their bosom. But let not this put you

from the well. I answer: 2. Albeit there may be some squint look to an idol, yet love in its own measure may be found. For glory must purify and perfect our love, it never will till then be absolutely pure. Yet if the idol reign, and have the whole of the heart, and the keys of the house, and Christ only be made an underling to run errands, all is not right; therefore, examine well.

The assurance of Jesus' love, ye say, would be the most comfortable news that ever ye heard. Oh, that ye knew and felt it, as I have done! I wish you a share of my feast; sweet, sweet has it been to me. If my Lord had not given me this love, I should have fallen through the causeway of Aberdeen ere now! But for you, hang on, your feast is not far off; ye shall be filled ere ye go. There is as much in our Lord's pantry as will satisfy all His bairns, and as much wine in His cellar as will quench all their thirst. Hunger on, for there is meat in hunger for Christ. Never go from Him, but fash Him (who yet is pleased with the importunity of hungry souls) with a dish-full of hungry desire till He fill you.

Ye crave my mind, whether sound comfort may be found in prayer, when conviction of a known idol is present. I answer: An idol, as an idol, cannot stand with sound comforts; for that comfort that is gotten at Dagon's feet is a cheat or blafume. Yet sound comfort, and conviction of an eye to an idol, may as well dwell together as tears and joy. But let this do you no ill; I speak it for your encouragement, that ye may make the best of our joys as ye can, albeit you find them mixed with moles.

Brother, excuse my brevity, for time straiteneth me, that I get not my mind said in these things, but must refer that to a new occasion, if God offer it. Brother, pray for me. Grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

LIV. To MR ROBERT BLAIR

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, -- The reason ye give for not writing to me affecteth me much, and giveth me a dash, when such an one as ye conceive an opinion of me, or of anything in me. The truth is, when I come home to myself, oh, what penury do I find, and how feckless is my supposed stock, and how little have I! He to whom I am as crystal, and who seeth through me, and perceiveth the least mote that is in me, knoweth that I speak of what I think and am convinced of: but men cast me through a gross and wide sieve. My very dear brother, the room of the least of all saints is too great for the like of me. But lest this should seem art to fetch home reputation, I speak no more of it. It is my worth to be Christ's ransomed sinner and sick one. His relation to me is, that I am sick, and He is the Physician of whom I stand in need. Alas! How often play I fast and loose with Christ! He bindeth, I loose; He buildeth, I cast down; He trimmeth up a salvation for me, and I mar it; I cast out with Christ, and He agreeth with me again, twenty times a-day; I forfeit my kingdom and heritage, I lose what I had; but Christ is at my back, and following on, to stoop and take up what falleth from me. For my faith and reputation with Christ is, that I am a creature that God will not put any trust into. I was, and am, bewildered with temptations, and wanted a guide to heaven. Oh what have I to say of that excellent, surpassing, and supereminent thing, they call, The Grace of God, the way of free redemption in Christ! And when poor, poor I, dead in law, was sold, fettered, and imprisoned in justice's closet-ward, which is hell and damnation; when I, a wretched one, lighted upon noble Jesus, eternally kind Jesus, tender-hearted Jesus (nay, when He lighted upon me first, and knew me), I found that He

scorned to take a price, or anything like hire, of angels, or seraphim, or any of his creatures. And, therefore, I would praise Him for this, that the whole army of the redeemed ones sit rent-free in heaven. Our holding is better than blench: we are all freeholders. And seeing that our eternal feu-duty is but thanks, oh woeful me! That I have but spilled thanks, lame, and broken, and miscarried praises, to give Him. My dear brother, I shall think it comfort, if ye speak my name to our Well-beloved. Wherever ye are, I am mindful of you. Oh that the Lord would yet make the light of the moon in Scotland as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold brighter. For myself, as yet I have received no answer whither to go. I wait on. Oh that Jesus had my love! Let matters frame as they list, I have some more to do with Christ; yet I would fain we were nearer.

Now the great Shepherd of the sheep, the very God of peace, establish and confirm you till the day of His coming.

ABERDEEN, Sept. 9, 1637

LVI. To EARLSTON, the younger

WORTHY AND DEAR BROTHER, -- I forget you not in my bonds. I know that you are looking to Christ; and I beseech you to follow your look. I can say more of Christ now by experience (though He be infinitely above and beyond all that can be said of Him), than when I saw you. I am drowned over head and ears in His love. Sell, sell, sell all things for Christ. Sir, make sure work of your salvation: build not upon sand; lay the foundation upon the rock of Zion. Strive to be dead to this world, and to your will and lusts; let Christ have a commanding power and a king's throne in you. Walk with Christ, howbeit the world should take the hide off your face: I promise you that Christ will win the field. Your pastors cause you to err. Except you see Christ's word, go not one foot with them. Countenance not the reading of that Romish service-book. Keep your garments clean, as ye would walk with the Lamb clothed in white. Learn to discern the Bridegroom's tongue, and to give yourself to prayer and reading. Ye were often a hearer of me. I would put my heart's blood on the doctrine which I taught, as the only way to salvation: go not from it, my dear brother. What I write to you, I write to your wife also. Mind heaven and Christ, and keep the spunk of the love of Christ which you have gotten. Christ will blow on it if ye entertain it; and your end shall be peace. There is a fire in our Zion. I assure you, howbeit we be nicknamed Puritans, that all the powers of the world shall not prevail against us. Remember, though a sinful man write it to you, that those people shall be in Scotland as a green olive-tree, and a field blessed of the Lord; and that it shall be proclaimed, Up, up with Christ, and down, down with all contrary powers.'

Sir, pray for me (I name you to the Lord), for further evil is determined against me.

ABERDEEN, Sept. 13, 1637

MUCH HONORED SIR, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I am well.

Christ triumpheth in me, blessed be His name. I have all things. I burden no man. I see that this earth and the fatness thereof is my Father's. Sweet, sweet is the cross of my Lord. The blessing of God upon the cross of my Lord Jesus! My enemies have contributed (beside their design) to make me blessed. This is my palace, not my prison; especially, when my Lord shineth and smileth upon His poor afflicted and sold Joseph, who is separated from his brethren. But, oh, my neglects! Oh, my unseen guiltiness! I imagined that a sufferer for Christ kept the keys of Christ's treasure, and might take out his heart-full of comforts when he pleased; but I see, a sufferer and a witness shall be holden at the door, as well as another poor sinner, and be glad to eat with the bairns, and to take the by-board.

Sir, lay the foundation thus, and ye shall not soon shrink, nor be shaken. Make tight work at the bottom, and your ship shall ride against all storms, if withal your anchor be fastened on good ground; I mean within the vail. And verily I think this is all, to gain Christ. All other things are shadows, dreams, fancies, and nothing.

Sir, remember my love to your mother. I pray for mercy and grace to her; I wish her on-going toward heaven. As I promised to write, so show her that I want nothing in my Lord's service. Christ will not be in such a poor man's common as mine. Grace, grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, Sept. 22, 1637

LVII. To LADY BOYD

MADAM, -- I would have written to your Ladyship ere now, but people's believing there is in me that which I know there is not, has put me out of love with writing to any.

My Lord seeth me a tired man, far behind. I have gotten much love from Christ, but I give Him little or none again. My white side cometh out on paper to men; but at home and within I find much black work, and great cause of a low sail, and of little boasting.

I wish all professors to fall in love with grace. All our songs should be of His free grace. We are but too lazy and careless in seeking of it; it is all our riches we have here, and glory in the bud. I wish that I could set out free grace. I was the law's man, and under the law, and under a curse; but grace brought me from under that hard lord, and I rejoice that I am grace's freeholder. I pay tribute to none for heaven, seeing my land and heritage holdeth of Christ, my new King. Infinite wisdom has devised this excellent way of free-holding for sinners. It is a better way to heaven than the old way that was in Adam's days. It has this fair advantage, that no man's emptiness and want layeth an inhibition upon Christ, or hindereth His salvation; and that is far best for me. But our new Landlord putteth the names of devours, and Adam's forlorn heirs, and beggars, and the crooked and blind, in the free charters. Heaven and angels may wonder that we have got such a gate of sin and hell. Such a back-entry out of hell as Christ made, and brought out the captives by, is more than my poor shallow thoughts can comprehend.

I hear that the prelates are intending banishment for me; but, for more grace, and no other hire, I would make it welcome. The bits of this

clay house, the earth, and the other side of the sea, are my Father's.
If my sweet Lord Jesus would bud my sufferings with a new measure of grace, I were a rich man. But I have not now, of a long time, found such high spring-tides as formerly. The sea is out, the wind of His Spirit calm; and I cannot buy a wind, or, by requesting the sea, cause it to flow again; only I wait on upon the banks and shore-side, till the Lord send a full sea, that with upsails I may lift up Christ. Yet sorrow for His absence is sweet; and sighs, with Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?' have their own delights. Oh that I may gather hunger against His long-looked-for return! Well were my soul, if Christ were the element (mine own element), and that I loved and breathed in Him, and if I could not live without Him.

Remember my service to my lord your son, who was kind to me in my bonds, and was not ashamed to own me. I would be glad that Christ got the morning service of his life, now in his young years. It would suit him well to give Christ his young and green love. Christ's stamp and seal would go far down in a young soul, if he would receive the thrust of Christ's stamp. I would desire him to make search for Christ; for nobles are now but dry friends to Christ.

The grace of God our Father, and the goodwill of Him who dwelt in the Bush, be with your Ladyship.

ABERDEEN, 1637

LVIII. To LADY ROBERT LAND

Like many other of the great ladies of the Covenant, some of whom we have already met in these letters, and others of whom are in the full collection, Lady Robertland was a woman of deep personal faith and of devoted service to the cause of Christ. She was noted, too, for her witty and fascinating conversation and her way of illustrating spiritual truth by most vivid and homely similes and parables.

MISTRESS, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. -- I shall be glad to hear that your soul prospereth, and that fruit growth upon you, after the Lord's husbandry and pains, in His rod that has not been a stranger to you from your youth. It is the Lord's kindness that He will take the scum off us in the fire. Who knoweth how needful winnowing is to us, and what dross we must want ere we enter into the kingdom of God? So narrow is the entry to heaven, that our knots, our bunches and lumps of pride, and self-love, and idol-love, and world-love, must be hammered off us, that we may thring in, stooping low, and creeping through that narrow and thorny entry.

And now for myself, I find it the most sweet and heavenly life to take up house and dwelling at Christ's fireside, and set down my tent upon Christ, that Foundationstone, who is sure and faithful ground and hard under foot. I thank God that God is God, and Christ is Christ, and the earth the earth, and the devil the devil, and the world the world, and that sin is sin, and that everything is what it is; because He has taught me in my wilderness not to shuffle my Lord Jesus, nor to intermix Him with creature-vanities, nor to spin or twine Christ or His sweet love in one web, or in one thread, with the world and the things thereof. Oh, if I could hold and keep Christ all alone, and mix Him

with nothing! Oh, if I could cry down the price and weight of my cursed self, and cry up the price of Christ, and double, and triple, and augment, and heighten to millions the price and worth of Christ. But we are still ill scholars, and will go in at heaven's gates wanting the half of our lesson; and shall still be bairns, so long as we are under time's hands, and till eternity cause a sun to arise in our souls that shall give us wit. We may see how we spill and mar our own fair heaven and our salvation, and how Christ is every day putting in one bone or other, in these fallen souls of ours, in the right place again; and that on this side of the New Jerusalem, we shall still have need of forgiving and healing grace. I find crosses Christ's carved work that He markets out for us, and that with crosses He figureth and portrayeth us to His own image, cutting away pieces of our ill and corruption. Lord cut, Lord carve, Lord wound, Lord do anything that may perfect Thy Father's image in us, and make us meet for glory. Pray for me (I forget you not) that our Lord would be pleased to lend me house-room to preach His righteousness, and tell what I have heard and seen of Him. Forget not Zion that is now in Christ's caums, and in His forge. God bring her out new work. Grace, grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, Jan 4, 1638

LIX. To THE HONORABLE, REVEREND, AND WELL-BELOVED PROFESSORS OF CHRIST AND HIS

TRUTH IN SINCERITY, IN IRELAND

At the time of this letter the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was in a very depressed condition. In 1632, as we have seen, Robert Blair and other ministers were deposed for nonconformity. In the autumn of 1636 the same thing happened to five more. All were obliged to leave the country. In consequence the Church was deprived of many of its best ministers. Rutherford's letter was intended to confirm them in adherence to the cause for which they and their ministers were suffering.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD, AND PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING. --

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you, from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I always, but most of all now in my bonds (most sweet bonds for Christ my Lord) rejoice to hear of your faith and love; and that persecutions and dockings of sinners have not chased away the Wooer from the house.

I persuade you in the Lord that the men of God, now scattered and driven from you, put you upon the right scent and pursuit of Christ; and my salvation on it (if ten heavens were mine) if this way, this way that I now suffer for, this way that the world nicknameth and reproacheth, and no other way, be not the King's gate to heaven. And I shall never see God's face (and, alas, I were a beguiled wretch if it were so!) if this be not the only saving way to heaven. Oh that you would take a prisoner for Christ's word for it (nay, I know you have the greatest King's word for it), that it shall not be your wisdom to speer out another Christ, or another way of worshipping Him, than is

now savingly revealed to you. Therefore, though I never saw your faces, let me be pardoned to write to you, if possibly I could, by any weak experience, confirm and strengthen you in this good way, everywhere spoken against. I can with the greatest assurance (to the honor of our highest, and greatest, and dearest Lord, let it be spoken!) assert (though I be but a child in Christ, and scarce able to walk but by a hold, and the meanest, and less than the least of saints), that we do not come nigh, by twenty degrees, to the due love and estimation of that fairest among the sons of men. Therefore, faint not in your sufferings and hazards for Him. Where can we find a match to Christ, or an equal, or a better than He, among created things? Oh this world is out of all conceit, and all love, with our Well-beloved. Oh that I could sell my laughter, joy, ease, and all for Him, and be content with a straw bed, and bread by weight, and water by measure, in the camp of our weeping Christ! I know that His sackcloth and ashes are better than the fool's laughter, which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. But, alas! we do not harden our faces against the cold north storms which blow upon Christ's fair face. We love well summer-religion, and to be that which sin has made us, even as thin-skinned as if we were made of white paper; and would fain be carried to heaven in a close-covered chariot, wishing from our hearts that Christ would give us surety, and His handwrite, and His seal, or nothing but a fair summer until we be landed in at heaven's gates!

How many of us have been here deceived, and have fainted in the day of trial! Amongst you there are some of this stamp. I shall be sorry if my acquaintance A.T. has left you: I will not believe that he dare to stay away from Christ's side. I desire that ye show him this from me; for I loved him once in Christ, neither can I change my mind suddenly of him. But the truth is, that many of you, and too many also of your neighbor

Church of Scotland, have been like a tenant that sitteth mail-free and knoweth not his holding whill his rights be questioned. And now I am persuaded, that it will be asked at every one of us, on what terms we brook Christ; for we have sitten long mail-free.

Many take but half a grip of Christ, and the wind bloweth them and Christ asunder. Indeed, when the mast is broken and blown into the sea, it is an art then to swim upon Christ to dry land. It is even possible that the children of God, in a hard trial, lay themselves down as hidden in the lee-side of a bush whill Christ their Master be taken, as Peter did; and lurk there, whill the storm be over-past. All of us know the way to a whole skin; and the singlest heart that is has a by-purse that will contain the denial of Christ, and a fearful backsliding. Oh, how rare a thing it is to be loyal and honest to Christ, when He has a controversy with the shields of the earth! I wish all of you would consider, that this trial is from Christ; it is come upon you unbought. Do not now joule, or bow, or yield to your adversaries in a hair-breadth. Christ and His truth will not divide; and His truth has not latitude and breadth, that ye may take some of it and leave other some of it. It is not possible to twist and compound a matter betwixt Christ and Antichrist; and, therefore, ye must either be for Christ, or ye must be against Him. I know and am persuaded that Christ shall again be high and great in this poor, withered and sun-burnt Kirk of Scotland; and that the sparks of our fire shall fly over the sea and round about to warm you and other sister churches; and that this tabernacle of David's house, that is fallen, even the Son of David's waste places, shall be built again. And I know the prison, crosses, persecutions and trials of the two slain witnesses that are now dead and buried (Rev. 11.9) and of the faithful professors, have a back-door and back-entry of escape; and that death and hell and the world and the

tortures shall all cleave and split in twain, and give us free passage and liberty to go through toll-free: and we shall bring all God's good metal out of the furnace again, and leave behind us but our dross and scum. We may then beforehand proclaim Christ to be victorious. He is crowned King of Mount Zion: God did put the crown upon His head (Ps. 2.6; 21.3) and who dare take it off again?

Two special things ye are to mind: First, try and make sure your profession; that ye carry not empty lamps. Alas! security, security is the bane and wrack of the most part of the world. Oh how many professors go with a golden lustre, and are gold-like before men (who are but witnesses to our white skin) and yet are but bastard and base metal! False under water, not seen, is dangerous, and that is a leak and rift in the bottom of an enlightened conscience; often failing and sinning against light. Woe is me that the holy profession of Christ is made a stage garment by many, to bring home a vain fame, and Christ is made to serve men's ends.

Know, secondly, except men martyr and slay the body of sin in sanctified self-denial, they shall never be Christ's martyrs and faithful witnesses. Oh if I could be master of that house-idol myself, my own mind, my own will, wit, credit, and ease, how blessed were I! Oh, but we have need to be redeemed from ourselves, rather than from the devil and the world! O wretched idol, myself! when shall I see thee wholly decourted, and Christ wholly put in thy room? Oh, if Christ, Christ had the full place and room of myself, that all my aims, purposes, thoughts, and desires would coast and land upon Christ, and not upon myself! And howbeit we cannot attain to this denial of me and mine, that we can say, I am not myself, myself is not myself, mine own is no longer mine own', yet our aiming at this in all we do shall be accepted: for alas! I think I shall die but minting and aiming to be a

Christian. Is it not our comfort, that Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, is come betwixt us and God in the business, so that green and young heirs, the like of sinners, have now a Tutor that is God! And now, God be thanked, our salvation is bottomed on Christ. Sure I am, the bottom shall never fall out of heaven and happiness to us. I would give over the bargain a thousand times, were it not that Christ's free grace has taken our salvation in hand.

Pray, pray and contend with the Lord, for your sister church; for it would appear that the Lord is about to speer for His scattered sheep, in the dark and cloudy day. Oh that it would please our Lord to set up again David's old wasted and fallen tabernacle in Scotland, that we might see the glory of the second temple in this land! And, howbeit He has caused the blossom to fall off my one poor joy, that was on this side of heaven, even my liberty to preach Christ to His people, yet I am dead to that now, so that He would hew and carve glory, glory for evermore, to my royal King out of my silence and sufferings.

I entreat you earnestly for the aid of your prayers, for I forget not you; and I salute, with my soul in Christ, the faithful pastors, and honorable and worthy professors in that land. Now the God of peace, that brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight. Grace, grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, Feb. 4, 1638

LX. To LADY KENMURE, on the death of her son, John, second Viscount Kenmure

MADAM, -- Grace, mercy, and peace, be to you. I know that you are near many comforters, and that the promised Comforter is near at hand also; yet because I found your Ladyship comfortable to myself in my sad days, that are not yet over my head, it is my part, and more in many respects (howbeit I can do little, God knoweth, in that kind), to speak to you in your wilderness-lot. I know, dear and noble lady, this loss of your dear child came upon you one piece and part of it after another; and that you were looking for it, and that now the Almighty has brought on you that which you feared; and that your Lord gave you lawful warning: and I hope for his sake who brewed and masked this cup in heaven, you will gladly drink, and salute and welcome the cross. I am sure it is not your Lord's mind to feed you with judgment and wormwood, and to give you waters of gall to drink (Jer. 9.15). I know that your cup is sugared with mercy; and that the withering of the bloom, the flower, even the white and red of worldly joys, is for no other end, but to secure the reversion of your heart and love. Madam, subscribe to the Almighty's will: put your hand to the pen, and let the cross of your Lord Jesus have your submissive and resolute amen. If you ask and try whose this cross is, I dare say that it is not all your own, the best half of it is Christ's. If Christ and ye be halvers of this suffering, and He say, 'Half Mine', what should ail you? And I am sure that I am here right upon the style of the word of God: The fellowship of Christ's sufferings' (Phil. 3.10); Tho remnant of the afflictions of Christ' (Col. 1.24); The reproach of Christ' (Heb. 11.26). It were but to shift the comforts of God, to say, Christ had never such a cross as

mine: He had never a dead child, and so this is not His cross; neither can He, in that meaning, be the owner of this cross.' But the word maketh no exception. In all their afflictions He was afflicted' (Isa. 63:9). It may be, that ye think not many of the children of God in such a hard case as yourself; but what would ye think of some, who would exchange afflictions? But I know that yours must be your own alone, and Christ's together.

I confess it seemed strange to me, that your Lord should have done that which seemed to ding out the bottom of your worldly comforts; but we see not the ground of the Almighty's sovereignty. He goeth by on our right hand, and on our left hand, and we see Him not.' We see but pieces of the broken links of the chains of His providence; and he coggeth the wheels of His own providence, that we see not. Do not wonder to see the Judge of the world weave, into one web, your mercies and the judgments of the house of Kenmure. He can make one web of contraries.

I would gladly plead for the Comforter's part of it, not against you, Madam, but against your grief, which will have its own violent incursions in your soul: and I think it be not in your power to help it. But I must say, there are comforts allowed upon you; and, therefore, want them not. It is a Christian art to comfort yourself in the Lord; to say,

I was obliged to render back again this child to the Giver: and if I have had four years' loan of him, and Christ eternity's possession of him, the Lord has kept condition with me. If my Lord would not have him and me to tryst both in one hour at death's door-threshold together, it is His wisdom so to do; I am satisfied. My tryst is suspended, not broken off, nor given up.' Madam, I would that I could divide sorrow with you, for your ease. But I am but a beholder: it is easy to me to

speaking; the God of comfort speak to you, and allure you with His feasts of love.

My removal from my flock is so heavy to me, that it maketh my life a burden to me; I had never such a longing for death. The Lord help and hold up sad clay.

Madam, desire my Lord Argyle to see for provision to a pastor for his poor people. Grace be with you.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT, Oct, 1, 1639

LXI. To MR JAMES WILSON

DEAR BROTHER, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you. -- I bless our rich and only wise Lord, who careth so for His new creation that He is going over it again, and trying every piece in you, and blowing away the motes of His new work in you. Alas! I am not so fit a physician as your disease requireth. Sweet, sweet, lovely Jesus be your physician, where His under-chirurgeons cannot do anything for putting in order the wheels, paces, and goings of a marred soul. I have little time; but yet the Lord has made me so to concern myself in your condition, that I dare not be altogether silent.

First: ye doubt, from II Cor. 13.5, whether ye be in Christ or not? And so, whether you are a reprobate or not? I answer two things to the doubt. -- I. Ye owe charity to all men, but most of all to lovely and loving Jesus, and some also to your self; especially to your renewed self, because your new self is not yours, but another Lord's, even the work of His own Spirit. Therefore, to slander His work is to wrong Himself. Love thinketh no evil: if ye love grace, think not ill of grace in yourself. The great Advocate pleadeth hard for you; be upon the Advocate's side, O poor feared client of Christ! He pleadeth for you, whereof your letter (though too, too full of jealousy) is a proof. For, if ye were not His, your thoughts (which, I hope, are but the suggestions of His Spirit, that only bringeth the matter into debate to make it sure to you) would not be such nor so serious as these, Am I His?' or Whose am I?' 2. Dare ye forswear your Owner and say in cold blood, I am not His'? What nature or corruption saith at starts in you, I regard not. Your thoughts of yourself, when sin and guiltiness round you in the ear, and when you have a sight of your deserving, are

Apocrypha and not Scripture, I hope. I charge you by the mercies of God, be not that cruel to grace and the new birth as to cast water on your own coal by misbelief.

Secondly: Ye say, that ye know not what to do. Your Head once said the same word, or not far from it. Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say?' (John 12.27). And faith answered Christ's What shall I say?' with these words: O tempted Savior, askest Thou, "What shall I say?" Say, "Pray, Father, save Me from this hour." What course can ye take but pray and first Christ His own comforts? Oh,' say ye, I cannot pray'? Answer -- Honest sighing is faith breathing and whispering him in the ear. The life is not out of faith where there is sighing, looking up with the eyes, and breathing toward God. But what shall I do in spiritual exercises?' ye say. Answer -- I. In my weak judgment, ye should first say, I would glorify God in believing David's salvation, and the Bride's marriage with the Lamb, and love the church's slain Husband, although I cannot for the present believe mine own salvation.'

2. Say I will not pass from my claim: suppose Christ should pass from His claim to me, I shall not go back upon my side. Howbeit my love to Him be not worth a drink of water, yet Christ shall have it, such as it is.'

3. Say, I shall rather spill twenty prayers, than not pray at all.

Let my broken words go up to heaven: when they come up into the Great Angel's golden censer, that compassionate Advocate will put together my broken prayers, and perfume them.' Words are but the accidental of prayer.

Oh,' say ye, I am slain with hardness of heart, and troubled with confused and melancholious thoughts.' Answer -- My dear brother, what would you conclude thence? Down in Christ's hospital, where sick and distempered souls are under cure, it is not worth a straw. Give Christ time to end His work in your heart. I charge you to make psalms of

Christ's praises for His begun work of grace. Make Christ your music and your song; for complaining and feeling of want does often swallow up your praises. Borrow joy and comfort from the Comforter. Bid the Spirit do His office in you; and remember that faith is one thing and the feeling and notice of faith another.

But alas! dear brother, it is easy for me to speak words and syllables of peace. There is but one Creator, ye know. Oh that ye may get a letter of peace sent to you from heaven!

Pray for me, and for grace to be faithful, and for gifts to be able, with tongue and pen, to glorify God. I forget you not.

ST ANDREWS, Jan. 8, 1640

LXII. To LADY BOYD

MADAM, -- I received your Ladyship's letter; but because I was still going through the country for the affairs of the church, I had no time an answer it.

I had never more cause to fear than I have now, when my Lord has restored me to my second created heaven on earth, and has turned my apprehended fears into joys, and great deliverance to His church, whereof I have my share and part. Alas! that weeping prayers, answered and sent back from heaven with joy, should not have laughing praises! Oh that this land would repent, and lay burdens of praises upon the top of the fair Mount Zion! Madam, except this land be humbled, a Reformation is rather my wonder than belief, at this time. But surely it must be a wonder, and what is done already is a wonder.

Your Ladyship is blessed with children who are honored to build up Christ's waste places again. I believe that your Ladyship will think them well bestowed on that work, and that Zion's beauty is your joy. This is a mark and evidence from heaven, which helpeth weak ones to hold their grip, when other marks fail them.

I hope that your Ladyship is at a good understanding with Christ, and that, as becometh a Christian, ye take Him up aright: for many mistake and misshape Christ in His comings and goings. Your wants and falls proclaim that ye have nothing of your own but what ye borrow; nay, yourself is not your own, but Christ has given Himself to you. Put Christ to the bank, and heaven shall be your interest and income. Love Him, for ye cannot over-love Him. Take up your house in Christ. Let Him dwell in you, and abide in Him; and then ye may look out of Christ, and laugh at the clay-heavens that the sons of men are seeking after on

this side of the water. Christ mindeth to make your losses grace's great advantage. If I had known long since, as I do now (though still, alas! I am ignorant) what was in Christ, I would not have been so late in starting to the gate to seek Him. Oh what can I do or say to Him who has made the North render me back again! But when my faith was asleep, Christ was awake; and now, when I am awake, I say He did all things well. O infinite wisdom! O incomparable loving-kindnesses! Alas, that the heart I have is so little and worthless for such a Lord as Christ is!

I put all the favors which ye have bestowed on my brother upon Christ's score; in whose books are many such counts, and who will requite them. I wish you to be builder more and more upon the stone laid in Zion, and then ye shall be the more fit to have a hand in rebuilding our Lord's fallen tabernacle in this land; in which ye shall find great peace when ye come to grips with death, the king of terrors.

The God of peace be with your Ladyship, and keep you blameless till the day of our Lord Jesus.

ST ANDREWS

LXIII. To LADY FINGASK

MADAM, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. -- Though not acquainted, yet, at the desire of a Christian, I make bold to write a line or two unto you, by way of counsel, howbeit I be most unfit for that.

I hear, and I bless the Father of lights for it, that ye have a spirit set to seek God, and that the posture of your heart is to look heavenward, which is a work and cast of the Mediator Christ's right hand, who putteth on the heart a new frame. For the which I would have your Ladyship to see a tie and bond of obedience laid upon you, that all may be done, not so much from obligation of law, as from the tie of free love; that the law of ransom-paying by Christ may be the chief ground of all our obedience, seeing that ye are not under the law, but under grace. Withal, know that unbelief is a spiritual sin, and so not seen by nature's light; and that all which conscience saith is not Scripture. Suppose that your heart bear witness against you for sins done long ago: yet, because many have pardon with God that have not peace with themselves, ye are to stand and fall by Christ's esteem and verdict of you, and not by that which your heart saith.

Let faith hing by this small thread, that He loved you before He laid the corner-stone of the world, and therefore He cannot change His mind; because He is God and resteth in His love. Neither is sin in you a good reason wherefore ye should doubt of Him, or think, because sin has put you in the courtesy and reverence of justice, that therefore He is wrath with you: neither is it presumption in you to lay the burden of your salvation on One mighty to save, so being that ye lay aside all confidence in yourself, your worth and righteousness. True faith is humble, and seeth no way to escape but only in Christ. And I believe

that ye have put an esteem and high price upon Christ: and they cannot but believe and so be saved, who love Christ and to whom He is precious. And it were not like God, if ye should choose Him as your liking and He not choose you again. Nay, He has prevented you in that, for ye have not chosen Him, but He has chosen you.

And the more your Ladyship drink of this love, there is the more room, and the greater delight and desire for this love. Be homely, and hunger for a feast and fill of His love; for that is the borders and march of heaven. Nothing has a nearer resemblance to the color and hue and lustre of heaven than Christ loved. Remember what He is. When twenty thousand millions of heaven's lovers have worn their hearts threadbare of love, all is nothing, yea, less than nothing, to His matchless worth and excellency. Oh so broad and so deep as the sea of His desirable loveliness is! Glorified spirits, triumphing angels, the crowned and exalted lovers of heaven, stand without His loveliness and cannot put a circle on it.

Alas! what do I? I but spill and lose words in speaking highly of Him who will bide and be above the music and songs of heaven, and never be enough praised by us all; to whose boundless and bottomless love I recommend your Ladyship.

ST ANDREWS, March 27, 1640

LXV. To LADY BOYD, on the loss of several friends

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, -- Ye look like the house whereof ye are a branch: the cross is a part of the life rent that lieth to all the sons of the house. I desire to suffer with you, if I could take a lift of your house-trial off you; but ye have preached it ere I knew anything of God. Your Lord may gather His roses, and shake His apples, at what season of the year He pleaseth. Each husbandman cannot make harvest when he pleaseth, as He can do. Ye are taught to know and adore His sovereignty, which He exerciseth over you, which yet is lustred with mercy. The child has but changed a bed in the garden, and is planted up higher, nearer the sun, where he shall thrive better than in this outfield muir-ground. Ye must think your Lord would not want him one hour longer; and since the date of your loan of him was expired (as it is, if ye read the lease), let Him have His own with gain, as good reason were. I read on it an exaltation and a richer measure of grace, as the sweet fruit of your cross; and I am bold to say, that that college where your Master has set you now shall find it.

Dearest brother, go on and faint not. Something of yours is in heaven, beside the flesh of your exalted Savior; and ye go on after your own. Time's thread is shorter by one inch than it was. An oath is sworn and past the seals, whether afflictions will or not, ye must grow and live and triumph and reign and be more than a conqueror. For your Captain who leadeth you on, is more than conqueror, and He maketh you partaker of His conquest and victory. Did not love to you compel me, I would not fetch water to the well, and speak to one who knoweth better than I can do what God is doing with him.

Remember my love to your wife, to Mr John and all friends there. Let us

be helped by your prayers, for I cease not to make mention of you to the Lord, as I can.

ST ANDREW, May 28, 1640

MADAM, -- Impute it not to a disrespectful forgetfulness of your Ladyship, who ministered to me in my bonds, that I write not to you. I wish that I could speak or write what might do good to your Ladyship; especially now when I think we cannot but have deep thoughts of the deep and bottomless ways of our Lord, in taking away, with a sudden and wonderful stroke, your brethren and friends. Ye may know, that all who die for sin die not in sin; and that none can teach the Almighty knowledge.' No man can say What does Thou?' It is true that your brethren saw not many summers; but adore and fear the sovereignty of the great Potter, who maketh and marreth His clay-vessels when and how it pleaseth Him.

The under-garden is absolutely His own, and all that growth in it. His absolute liberty is law-abiding. The flowers are His own. If some be but summer apples, He may pluck them down before others. Oh what wisdom is it to believe, and not to dispute; to subject the thoughts to His court, and not to repine at any act of His justice? He has done it: all flesh be silent! It is impossible to be submissive and religiously patient, if ye stay your thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes; as, Oh the place!' Oh the time!' Oh if this had been, this had not followed!' Oh the linking of this accident with this time and place! Look up to the master motion and the first wheel. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!' His providence halteth not, but goeth with even and equal legs. Yet are they not the greatest sinners upon whom the tower of Siloam fell. Was not time's lease expired? and the sand of heaven's sand-glass, set by our Lord, run out?

And who can tell what thoughts of love and peace our Lord has to your children? I trust He will make them famous in executing the written judgments upon the enemies of the Lord, and that they shall bear stones upon their shoulders for building that fair city that is called The Lord is there' (Ezek. 48.35). Therefore, Madam, let the Lord make out of your father's house any work, even of judgment, that He pleaseth. What is wrath to others is mercy to you and your house. It is faith's work to claim and challenge loving-kindness out of all the roughest strokes of God. Do that for the Lord which ye will do for time: time will calm your heart at that which God has done, and let our Lord have it now. What love ye did bear to friends now dead, seeing they stand now in no need of it, let it fall as just legacy to Christ.

And, since ye will not alter upon Him who will not change upon you, I durst, in my weakness, think myself no spiritual seer if I should not prophesy that daylight is near, when such a morning-darkness is upon you; and that this trial of your Christian mind towards Him (whom you dare not leave, howbeit He should slay you) shall close with a doubled mercy. It is time for faith to hold fast as much of Christ as ever ye had, and to make the grip stronger, and to cleave closer to Him, seeing Christ loveth to be believed in and trusted to. The glory of laying strength upon one that is mighty to save is more than we can think. That piece of service, believing in a smiting Redeemer, is a precious part of obedience. Oh what glory to Him to lay over the burden of our heaven upon Him that purchased for us an eternal kingdom! O blessed soul, who can adore and kiss His lovely free grace!

The rich grace of Christ be with your spirit.

ST ANDREW, Oct. 15, 1640

LXVI. To MR. TAYLOR, on her son's death

MISTRESS, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you -- Though I have no relation worldly or acquaintance with you, yet (upon the testimony and importunity of your elder son now at London, where I am, but chiefly because I esteem Jesus Christ in you to be in place of all relations) I make bold, in Christ, to speak my poor thoughts to you concerning your son lately fallen asleep in the Lord. I know that grace rooteth not out the affections of a mother, but putteth them on His wheel who maketh all things new, that they may be refined: therefore, sorrow for a dead child is allowed to you, though by measure and ounce-weights. The redeemed of the Lord have not a dominion, or lordship, over their sorrow and other affections, to lavish out Christ's goods at their pleasure. For ye are not your own, but bought with a price'; and your sorrow is not your own. Nor has He redeemed you by halves; and therefore, ye are not to make Christ's cross no cross. He commandeth you to weep: and that princely One, who took up to heaven with Him a man's heart to be a compassionate High Priest, became your fellow and companion on earth by weeping for the dead (John 11.35). And, therefore, ye are to love that cross, because it was once at Christ's shoulders before you: so that by His own practice He has over-gilded and covered your cross with the Mediator's lustre. The cup ye drink was at the lip of sweet Jesus, and He drank of it. The kind and compassionate Jesus, at every sigh you give for the loss of your now glorified child (so I believe, as is meet), with a man's heart crieth, Half Mine'.

I was not a witness to his death, being called out of the kingdom; but, if you will credit those whom I do credit (and I dare not lie), he died

comfortably. It is true, he died before he did so much service to Christ on earth, as I hope and heartily desire that your son Mr Hugh (very dear to me in Jesus Christ) will do. But that were a real matter of sorrow if this were not to counterbalance it, that he has changed service-houses, but has not changed services or Master. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him' (Rev. 22.3). What he could have done in this lower house, he is now upon that same service in the higher house; and it is all one: it is the same service and same Master, only there is a change of conditions. And ye are not to think it a bad bargain for your beloved son, where he has gold for copper and brass, eternity for time.

I believe that Christ has taught you (for I give credit to such a witness of you as your son Mr Hugh) not to sorrow because he died. All the knot must be, He died too soon, he died too young, he died in the morning of his life.' This is all; but sovereignty must silence your thoughts. I was in your condition: I had but two children, and both are dead since I came hither. The supreme and absolute Former of all things giveth not an account of any of His matters. The good Husbandman may pluck His roses, and gather in His lilies at mid-summer, and, for aught I dare say, in the beginning of the first summer month, and He may transplant young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun, and a more free air, at any season of the year. What is that to you or me? The goods are His own. The Creator of time and winds did a merciful injury, if I dare borrow the word, to nature, in landing the passenger so early. They love the sea too well, who complain of a fair wind and a desirable tide, and a speedy coming ashore, especially a coming ashore in that land where all the inhabitants have everlasting joy upon their heads. He cannot be too

early in heaven; his twelve hours were not short hours. And withal, if you consider this, had you been at his bed-side, and should have seen Christ coming to him, you could not have adjourned Christ's free love, who would want him no longer. And dying in another land, where his mother could not close his eyes, is not much. The whole earth is his Father's; any corner of his Father's house is good enough to die in. It may be, the living child (I speak not of Mr Hugh) is more grief to you than the dead. Ye are to wait on, if at any time God shall give him repentance. Christ waited as long possibly on you and me, certainly longer on me: and if He should deny repentance to him, I could say something to that: but I hope better things of him. And think this a favor, that He has bestowed upon you fine, free grace, that is, mercy without hire; ye paid nothing for it: and who can put a price upon any thing of royal and princely Jesus Christ? And God has given to you to suffer for Him the spoiling of your goods. Esteem it as an act of free grace also. Ye are no loser, having Himself; and I persuade myself, if you could prize Christ, nothing could be bitter to you. Grace, grace be with you.

Your brother and well-wisher.

LONDON, 1645

LXVII. To BARBARA HAMILTON

Barbara Hamilton was the wife of a merchant in Edinburgh. Her spirit may be judged from the following incident. When the Rev. Robert Blair and other ministers were deposed by the bishops in Ireland (see Letter XVI), they came to Scotland in 1637. But the Scottish bishops then threatened them with even more severe treatment. Barbara Hamilton suggested that they should present a petition to the Privy Council for permission to preach and undertook to get it into the hands of the Treasurer. Mr Blair accordingly drew up the petition. Barbara Hamilton gathered a number of like-minded Edinburgh matrons and ranged them in a line from the street to the door of the Council House, putting the petition into the hands of the oldest of the women. The treasurer, suspecting that any petition would be troublesome, pushed past her. But Barbara Hamilton then took the paper and gripped the Treasurer's arm firmly, saying, Stand, my lord, in Christ's name I charge you, until I speak with you.' The Treasurer halted. Here,' she said, is a supplication of Mr Blair asking for liberty to preach the Gospel. I charge you to befriend the matter, as you would expect God to befriend you in your distress.' The Treasurer promised to do his best, and as a result Blair's petition was granted. This letter was written on the occasion of the death of her son-in-law.

WORTHY FRIEND, -- Grace be to you. I do unwillingly write unto you of that which God has done concerning your son-in-law; only, I believe ye look not below Christ, and the highest and most supreme act of Providence, which moveth all wheels. And certainly, what came down enacted and concluded in the great book below the throne, and signed and subscribed with the hand which never did wrong, should be kissed

and adored by us.

We see God's decrees when they bring forth their fruits, all actions, good and ill, sweet and sour, in their time; but we see not presently the after-birth of God's decree, namely, His blessed end, and the good that He bringeth out of the womb of His holy and spotless counsel. We see His working, and we sorrow; the end of His counsel lieth hidden, and underneath the ground, and therefore we cannot believe. Even amongst men, we see hewn stones, timber, and an hundred scattered parcels and pieces of an house, all under-tools, hammers, and axes, and saws; yet the house, the beauty and use of so many lodgings and ease rooms, we neither see nor understand for the present; these are but in the mind and head of the builder, as yet. We see red earth, unbroken clods, furrows, and stones; but we see not summer, lilies, roses, the beauty of a garden.

If ye give the Lord time to work ye shall see it was your good, that your son has changed dwelling-places, but not his Master. Christ thought good to have no more of his service here; yet, His servants shall serve Him' (Rev. 22.3). He needeth not us nor our service, either on earth or in heaven. But ye are to look to Him who giveth the hireling both his leave and his wages, for his naked aim and purpose to serve Christ, as well as for his labours. It is put up in Christ's account, that such a laborer did sweat forty years in Christ's vineyard; howbeit he got not leave to labour so long, because He who accepteth of the will for the deed counteth so. None can teach the Lord to lay an account.

He numbereth the drops of rain, and knoweth the stars by their names; it would take us much studying to give a name to every star in the firmament, great or small.

If the sufferings of some other with you in that loss could ease you,

ye want them not. But He can do no wrong. He cannot halt; His goings
are equal who has done it. I know our Lord aimeth at more
mortification; let Him not come in vain to your house and lose the
pains of a merciful visit. God, the Founder, never melteth in vain;
howbeit to us He seemeth often to lose both fire and metal. But I know
ye are more in this work than I can be. There is no cause to faint or
be weary.

Grace be with you; and the rich consolations of Jesus Christ sweeten
your cross and support you under it.

LONDON, Oct 15, 1645

LXVIII. To A CHRISTIAN BROTHER, on the death of his daughter

REVEREND AND BELOVED IN THE LORD, -- It may be that I have been too long silent, but I hope that ye will not impute it to forgetfulness of you.

As I have heard of the death of your daughter with heaviness of mind on your behalf, so am I much comforted that she has evidenced to yourself and other witnesses the hope of the resurrection of the dead. As sown corn is not lost (for there is more hope of that which is sown than of that which is eaten) (I Cor. 15.42, 43), so also is it in the resurrection of the dead: the body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory'. I hope that ye wait for the crop and harvest; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.' Then they are not lost who are gathered into that congregation of the first-born, and the general assembly of the saints. Though we cannot outrun nor overtake them that are gone before, yet we shall quickly follow them: and the difference is, that she has the advantage of some months or years of the crown, before you and her mother. And we do not take it ill, if our children outrun us in the life of grace; why then are we sad, if they outstrip us in the attainment of the life of glory? It would seem, that there is more reason to grieve that children live behind us, than that they are glorified and die before. All the difference is in some poor hungry accidents of time, less or more, sooner or later. So the godly child, though young, died a hundred years old; and you could not now have bestowed her better, though the choice was Christ's, not yours.

The King and Prince of ages can keep them better than you can do. While

she was alive, you could intrust her to Christ, and recommend her to His keeping: now, by an after-faith, you have resigned her unto Him, in whose bosom do sleep all that are dead in the Lord: you would have lent her to glorify the Lord upon earth, and He has borrowed her, with promise to restore her again, to be an organ of the immediate glorifying of himself in heaven. Sinless glorifying of God is better than sinful glorifying of Him. And sure your prayers concerning her are fulfilled.

If the fountain be the love of God, as I hope it is, ye are enriched with losses. You know all I can say better, before I was in Christ, than I can express it. Grace be with you.

LONDON, Jan. 6, 1646

LXIX. To A CHRISTIAN GENTLEWOMAN, on her death-bed

MISTRESS, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. -- If death, which is before you and us all, were any other thing than a friendly dissolution, and a change, not a destruction of life, it would seem a hard voyage to go through such a sad and dark trance, so thorny a valley, as is the wages of sin. But I am confident the way ye know, though your foot never trod in that black shadow. The loss of life is gain to you. If Christ Jesus be the period, the end, and lodging home, at the end of your journey, there is no fear; ye go to a friend. And since ye have had communion with Him in this life, and He has a pawn or pledge of yours, even the largest share of your love and heart, ye may look death in the face with joy.

But though He be the same Christ in the other life that ye found Him to be here, yet He is so far in His excellency, beauty, sweetness, irradiations, and beams of majesty, above what He appeared here, when He is seen as He is, that ye shall misken Him, and He shall appear a new Christ: as water at the fountain, apples in the orchard and beside the tree, have more of their native sweetness, taste, and beauty, than when transported to us some hundred miles.

I mean not that Christ can lose any of His sweetness in the carrying, or that He, in His Godhead and loveliness of presence, can be changed to the worse, betwixt the little spot of the earth that ye are in, and the right hand of the Father far above all heavens. But the change will be in you, when ye shall have new senses, and the soul shall be a more deep and more capacious vessel, to take in more of Christ; and when means (the chariot, the Gospel, that He is now carried in, and ordinances that convey Him) shall be removed. Sure ye cannot now be

said to see Him face to face; or to drink of the wine of the highest fountain, or to take in seas and tides of fresh love immediately, without vessels or messengers, at the Fountain itself, as ye will do a few days hence, when ye shall be so near as to be with Christ.

Death is but an awesome step, over time and sin, to sweet Jesus Christ, who knew and felt the worst of death, for death's teeth hurt Him. We know death has no teeth now, no jaws, for they are broken. It is a free prison; citizens pay nothing for the grave. The jailer who had the power of death is destroyed: praise and glory be to the First-begotten of the dead.

The worst possible that may be is, that ye leave behind you children, husband and the church of God in miseries. But ye cannot get them to heaven with you for the present. Ye shall not miss them, and Christ cannot miscount one of the poorest of His lambs. No lad, no girl, no poor one shall be a-missing in the day that the Son shall render up the kingdom to His Father.

As for the church which ye leave behind you, the government is upon Christ's shoulders, and He will plead for the blood of His saints. The Bush has been burning above five thousand years, and we never yet saw the ashes of this fire. Yet a little while, and the vision shall not tarry: it will speak, and not lie. I am more afraid of my duty, than of the Head Christ's government. He cannot fail to bring judgment to victory.

Now, if I have found favor with you, and if ye judge me faithful, my last suit to you is that ye would leave me a legacy; and that is, that my name may be, at the very last, in your prayers: as I desire also, it may be in the prayers of those of your Christian acquaintance with whom ye have been intimate.

LONDON, Jan 9, 1646

LXXI. To LADY ARDROSS

MADAM, -- Oh how sweet is it that the company of the firstborn should be divided into two great bodies of an army, and some in their country, and some in the way to their country! If it were no more than once to see the face of the Prince of this good land, and to be feasted for eternity with the fatness, sweetness, dainties of the rays and beams of matchless glory, and incomparable fountain-love, it were a well-spent journey to creep hands and feet through seven deaths and seven hells, to enjoy Him up at the well-head. Only let us not weary: the miles to that land are fewer and shorter than when we first believed. Strangers are not wise to quarrel with their host, and complain of their lodging. It is a foul way, but a fair home. Oh that I had but such grapes and clusters out of the land as I have sometimes seen and tasted in the place whereof your Ladyship maketh mention! But the hope of it in the end is a heart some convoy in the way.

Grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, in Jesus Christ.

LONDON, Jan. 26, 1646

MADAM, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. It has seemed good (as I hear) to Him, who has appointed bounds for the number of our months, to gather in a sheaf of ripe corn (in the death of your Christian mother) into His garner. She is now above the winter, with a little change of place, not of a Savior; only she enjoyeth Him now without messages, and in His own immediate presence, from whom she heard by letters and messengers before.

I grant, death to her is a very new thing, but heaven was prepared of old. And Christ (as enjoyed in His highest throne, and as loaded with

glory, and incomparably exalted above men and angels, having such a heavenly circle of glorified spirits above, compassing the throne with a song) is to her a new thing; but so new as the first summer rose, or the first-fruits of that heavenly field, or as a new paradise to a traveler, broken and worn out of breath with the sad occurrences of a long and dirty way.

You easily judge, Madam, what a large recompense is made to all her service, her walking with God, and her sorrows, with the first cast of the soul's eye upon the shining and admirably beautiful face of the Lamb, that is in the midst of that fair and white army that is there; and with the first draught and taste of the fountain of life, fresh and new at the well-head.

And now she sitteth for eternity mail-free, in a very considerable land, which has more than four summers in the year. Oh, what spring-time is there! Even the smelling of the odors of that great and eternally blooming Rose of Sharon for ever and ever! What a singing life is there! There is not a dumb bird in all that large field; but all sing and breathe out heaven, joy, glory, dominion to the high Prince of that new-found land. And, verily, the land is the sweeter that Jesus Christ paid so dear a rent for it. And He is the glory of the land: all which, I hope, does not so much mitigate and allay your grief for her part (though truly this should seem sufficient), as the unerring expectation of the dawning of that day upon yourself, and the hope you have of the fruition of that same King and kingdom to your own soul. Certainly the hope of it, when things look so dark-like on both kingdoms, must be an exceedingly great quickening to languishing spirits, who are far from home while we are here. What misery, to have both a bad way all the day, and no hope of lodging at night! But He has taken up your lodging for you.

I can say no more now; but I pray that the very God of peace may
establish your heart to the end.

LONDON, Feb. 24, 1646

Glossary

ACCIDENTS: incidental accompaniments, not essentials.

AIRT, or AIRTH: direction, quarter of the heavens.

BACK-BOND: one gives after an earlier bond, making the person who gave the first bond free.

BACK-ENTRY: back door.

BAILIE: magistrate.

BAIRNS: children.

BANN: curse.

BLAFLUME: a sham or bubble.

BLENCH: white moneys, a pepper-corn or nominal rent.

BLOCK: a bargain.

BODE: to offer with a view to a bargain.

BRAE: slope of a hill.

BROOK: enjoy, possess.

BUD: bribe.

BURROWS: a pledge.

LAW-BURROWS: security given not to injure another or his property.

BY-BOARD: side-table at which the children sat.

BY-HAND: aside.

BY-WORK: a leisure time occupation.

CAUMS: a mould.

CAUSEWAY or CAUSEY: a street. To keep the crown of the causey' is a bold public appearance.

CAUTION: surety.

CHEAP: barter, hence good cheap' or better-cheap' means a good bargain,

COAST: to sail close to the land,

COG: to stop the motion of a wheel.

COLD-RIFE or CAULD-RIFE: chilly, heartless.

COMMON: with reference to sharing a common table. To be in one's common' is to be indebted to.

COMPEAR: to appear at a court of law. So COMPEARANCE, appearing in court in obedience to a summons.

CONTRAIR: contrary to.

COUNTRY: common, in contrast to fine.

DAWTED: petted.

DING: to knock in violently.

DITTY or DITTY: indictment.

DO FOR: to act on behalf of.

DOW: to be able.

DYKE: a wall.

DYVOUR: a debtor, or bankrupt.

EASE-ROOM: a room for leisure and rest.

FASH: to trouble by importunity.

FEARED: alarmed, timid.

FECKLESS: futile, ineffective.

FEU DUTY: yearly ground rent.

FREMD: strange, foreign.

FRIEND-STED: to befriend.

FRYST or FRIST: to postpone possession or action.

GATE: road, way, manner of acting. Start to the gate'; get early on the road.

HAND-FAST: to join hands in a compact or betrothal.

HAND-WRIT: written with one's own hand.

HEAP-METE: full measure.

HEARTSOME: cheerful.

HING: hang.

HOMELY: at home with.

HOME OVER: homewards.

JOUK: to dodge or bend down in order to escape something.

LAIRD: landed proprietor.

LAW-BURROWS: a pledge not to harm.

MAIL: rent or tax.

MARCH: boundary or frontier.

MASK: to infuse.

MINT: to attempt.

MISSIVE: a letter giving authority to act.

NEED-FORCE: by hook or by crook.

NICK: mark, point.

DIFFER: barter or bargain.

OBTEST: to adjure, beseech.

ON-WAITING: patient waiting.

OUTFIELD: waste land,

PACKALDS: bargains.

PAINFUL: painstaking, laborious.

PICKLE: a small grain.

PLEA: a quarrel or dispute.

PROFESSOR: one professing the Christian faith.

PROPANE: to present, to offer a gift.

REVERSION: the right to future possession.

SCAUR: to take fright.

SPEAT or SPAIT: a flood or overflowing stream.

SPEED: to come speed' is to succeed.

SPEAR or SPEER: to ask questions.

SPILL: spoil.

SPUNK: spark.

STARTS: at starts', fitfully.

ASTOUND: an overpowering stroke.

TARROW: reluctant.

THRING: to push forcefully.

TRANCE: passage.

TRYST: to arrange a meeting at a given time and place.

UNCO: uncommon, strange.

UNDER-TOOLS: lesser tools.

WAD SET: mortgage.

WALE: to choose.

WARE: to use or expend.

WHILE or WHILL: until.

WIN: reach, attain to.

Index of Scripture References

Deuteronomy

[1]32:29

1 Samuel

[2]2 [3]12:3

Job

[4]9:25 [5]9:26

Psalms

[6]2:6 [7]10:13 [8]21:3 [9]44:17 [10]78:34 [11]78:36

[12]119:92

Song of Solomon

[13]2:8 [14]5:10

Isaiah

[15]22:23-24 [16]50:6 [17]63:9

Jeremiah

[18]9:15

Ezekiel

[19]24:1 [20]43:11 [21]48:35

Hosea

[22]2:6-7 [23]2:14

Joel

[24]1:8

John

[25]6:37 [26]11:35 [27]12:27 [28]14:19 [29]17:24

Acts

[30]1:15 [31]1:16 [32]6:3-5

Romans

[33]8:29

1 Corinthians

[34]15:42 [35]15:43

2 Corinthians

[36]2:15 [37]2:16 [38]4:8 [39]4:9 [40]13

Galatians

[41]2:10

Ephesians

[42]1:13

Philippians

[43]3:10

Colossians

[44]1:24

Hebrews

[45]2:10 [46]2:10 [47]10:34 [48]11:26 [49]12:7-8 [50]12:8

1 Peter

[51]2:23

2 Peter

[52]3:10

1 John

[53]3:14

Jude

[54]1:21

Revelation

[55]1:18 [56]3:19 [57]11:9 [58]22:3 [59]22:3

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net