



A Selection from his Letters

by

Samuel Rutherford

About *A Selection from his Letters* by Samuel Rutherford

Title: A Selection from his Letters
URL: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/rutherford/letters.html>
Author(s): Rutherford, Samuel (1600-1661)
Publisher: Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library
Date Created: 2000-07-09
CCEL Subjects: All; Classic;
LC Call no: BX8915
LC Subjects: Christian Denominations
Protestantism
Post-Reformation
Other Protestant denominations
Presbyterianism. Calvinistic Methodism

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Foreword

Samuel Rutherford nearly ended his days on a scaffold. But he was already on his deathbed when he was summoned to appear at the bar of the Scottish House to answer a charge of treason. ‘Tell them,’ he said to the officers, ‘that I have a summons already from a superior Judge and indicator, and I behave to answer my first summons; and see your day arrives I shall be where few kings and great folk come.’ That higher summons he answered on March 29, 1661.

Charles II had returned to his throne largely by the assistance of the Presbyterians of England and Scotland, after the exchange of solemn assurances of religious and political liberty and tolerance. But once in the seat of power again Charles and his government showed their true colours. A carefully packed Scottish Parliament — ‘the Drunken Parliament’ — assembled on New Year’s Day, 1661. One of its actions was to mark for execution four of the outstanding leaders of the Covenantors, among whom was Rutherford, then Principal of New College and Rector of the University of St. Andrew. Not the least of his crimes was the authorship of a then famous book, *Lex Rex*, ‘the Law, the King’, a denunciation of despotism and a plea for constitutional monarchy. Its standpoint is today a democratic commonplace, but it was then adjudged as ‘full of seditious and treasonable matter’. The book was publicly burned at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh and before New College in St. Andrew. It was then that Parliament sent for its author.

Born in 1600 at Jedburgh and graduated at Edinburgh in 1621, Rutherford became two years later the very youthful Professor of Humanity, or Latin, in the University. In 1627 he settled as parish minister at Anwoth in Galloway. Coming into conflict with the authorities he was in 1636 deprived of his ministerial functions and banished to Aberdeen; where, though he was not imprisoned, he found the experience irksome in the extreme. In 1638, however, the Kirk Assembly swept away the bishops and restored Rutherford to his parish, and in the following year he was appointed Professor of Divinity at St. Andrew. From 1643 to 1647 he took an important part in the work of the Westminster Assembly of divines as one of the Scottish Commissioners.

Most of the letters, 220 out of 365, were written during his exile in Aberdeen. It is, perhaps, not surprising that they catch him often in moods of depression, grieving over his absent friends and his ‘dumb Sabbaths’. But there are also times when he has been caught into the seventh heaven and tries to tell of unutterable things. Yet he is constantly reminding himself and his correspondents that the reality of the nearness and love of Christ is not to be measured by our feelings. For the rest, the letters are here to speak for themselves.

I have not made an anthology of striking passages picked out of the context, but have preferred a representative selection of the letters themselves, though few are reproduced quite completely. The omissions are partly to avoid repetition: writing to several people in much the same condition at about the same time Rutherford naturally gives much the same counsel. Partly the omitted sentences are concerned with the ecclesiastical, theological and political argumentation of his day, and would either be of little interest or would take too much explanation before they could be made intelligible to most of us. The guiding aim has been to select what might be of interest and practically helpful to present-day readers. In some instances I have given information about the correspondents,

but of many little is known and often that little would not be very illuminating. So far as the date is ascertainable the letters are arranged chronologically.

Rutherford's varied and pungent vocabulary is a delight, but it presents somewhat of a problem. The usage of some words, such as 'professor' and 'painful', has changed since the seventeenth century, and the unwary may be misled. Many more of his words have gone out of use altogether and some are not even in an ordinary dictionary. Not a few are familiar only to the Scot. So I have done what I could by the provision of a Glossary. It may be noted, however, that Rutherford follows the characteristic practice of much sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writing, including the Book of Common Prayer and Shakespeare, of frequently using synonymous words together: as 'niffer and exchange', 'I dow not, I cannot', 'wale and choose'. It is thus often possible to make a good guess at the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Selections from the letters have frequently been printed, often in a very bowdlerized version. An admirable complete edition was issued by Dr Andrew Boner in 1863, and was several times reprinted. Samuel Rutherford and Some of his Correspondents, by Dr Alexander White (1894) is also to be commended to those who can find a copy.

HUGH MARTIN

I. To LADY KENMURE, at a time of illness and spiritual depression

Lady Jane Campbell, Viscountess of Kenmure, was the third daughter of Archibald Campbell, seventh Earl of Argyle, and sister to the Marquis of Argyle who was beheaded in 1661. She was remarkable for ability and Christian devotion, and for her generous help to those who suffered for conscience' sake. She had many troubles of her own, which are reflected in these letters. She lost two daughters in infancy and her husband died in 1634. Her son, who succeeded to the title, also died before attaining his majority, in 1649. The last of Rutherford's letters to her is dated in 1661, just after the execution of her brother. She herself lived to a great age, though suffering all her life from bad health. Forty-seven letters to her from Rutherford have been preserved, and sixteen of them are quoted in this selection. See below, numbers II, IV, V, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XIX, XX, XLVIII, LX, LXX.

MADAM, — All dutiful obedience in the Lord remembered. I have heard of your Ladyship's infirmity and sickness with grief; yet I trust ye have learned to say, 'It is the Lord, let Him do whatsoever seemeth good in His eyes.' For there be many Christians most like unto young sailors, who think the shore and the whole land doth move, when the ship and they themselves are moved; just so, not a few do imagine that God moveth and saileth and changeth places, because their giddy souls are under sail, and subject to alteration, to ebbing and flowing. But 'the foundation of the Lord abideth sure'. God knoweth that ye are His own. Wrestle, fight, go forward, watch, fear, believe, pray; and then ye have the infallible symptoms of one of the elect of Christ within you.

Ye have now, Madam, a sickness before you; and also after that a death. Gather then now food for the journey. God give you eyes to see through sickness and death, and to see something beyond death. Now, I believe ye have only these two shallow brooks, sickness and death, to pass through; and ye have also a promise that Christ shall do more than meet you, even that He shall come Himself, and go with you foot for foot, yea and bear you in His arms. O then! O then! for the joy that is set before you; for the love of the Man (who is also 'God over all, blessed forever') that is standing on the shore to welcome you, run your race with patience. The Lord go with you. Your Lord will not have you, nor any of His servants, to exchange for the worse. Death in itself includeth both the death of the soul and the death of the body; but to God's children the bounds and the limits of death are abridged and drawn into a more narrow compass. So that when ye die, a piece of death shall only seize upon you, or the least part of you shall die, and that is the dissolution of the body; for in Christ ye are delivered from the second death; and, therefore, as one born of God, commit not sin (although ye cannot live and not sin), and that serpent shall but eat your earthly part. As for your soul, it is above the law of death. But it is fearful and dangerous to be a debtor and servant to sin; for the count of sin ye will not be able to make good before God, except Christ both count and pay for you.

I trust also, Madam, that ye will be careful to present to the Lord the present estate of this decaying kirk. For what shall be concluded in Parliament anent her, the Lord knoweth.

Stir up your husband, your brother, and all with whom you are in favour and credit, to stand upon the Lord's side against Baal. I have good hope your husband loveth the peace and prosperity

of Zion: the peace of God be upon him. Thus, not willing to weary your Ladyship farther, I commend you, now and always, to the grace and mercy of that God who is able to keep you, that you fall not. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

ANWOTH, July 27, 1628

II. To LADY KENMURE, on the occasion of the death of her infant daughter

MADAM, — Saluting your Ladyship with grace and mercy from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. I was sorry, at my departure, leaving your Ladyship in grief, and would be still grieved at it if I were not assured that ye have one with you in the furnace whose visage is like unto the Son of God. I am glad that ye have been acquainted from your youth with the wrestlings of God, knowing that if ye were not dear to God, and if your health did not require so much of Him, He would not spend so much physic upon you. All the brethren and sisters of Christ must be conform to His image and copy in suffering (Rom. 8.29). And some do more vividly resemble the copy than others. Think, Madam, that it is a part of your glory to be enrolled among those whom one of the elders pointed out to John, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’ Ye have lost a child: nay she is not lost to you who is found to Christ. She is not sent away, but only sent before, like unto a star, which going out of our sight doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere. We see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short hour, what she wanteth of time that she hath gotten of eternity; and ye have to rejoice that ye have now some plenishing up in heaven. Build your nest upon no tree here; for ye see God hath sold the forest to death; and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may fly and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock. What ye love besides Jesus, your husband, is an adulterous lover. Now it is God’s special blessing to Judah, that He will not let her find her paths in following her strange lovers. ‘Therefore, behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns and make a wall that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them’ (Hos. 2.6-7). O thrice happy Judah, when God buildeth a double stone wall betwixt her and the fire of hell! The world, and the things of the world, Madam, is the lover ye naturally affect beside your own husband Christ. The hedge of thorns and the wall which God buildeth in your way, to hinder you from this lover, is the thorny hedge of daily grief, loss of children, weakness of body, iniquity of the time, uncertainty of estate, lack of worldly comfort, fear of God’s anger for old unrepented-of sins. What lose ye, if God twist and plait the hedge daily thicker? God be blessed, the Lord will not let you find your paths. Return to your first husband. Do not weary, neither think that death walketh towards you with a slow pace. Ye must be riper ere ye be shaken. Your days are no longer than Job’s, that were ‘swifter than a post, and passed away as the ships of desire, and as the eagle that hasteth for the prey’ (9. 25, 26, margin). There is less sand in your glass now than there was yesternight. This span-length of ever-posting time will soon be ended. But the greater is the mercy of God, the more years ye get to advise, upon what terms, and upon what conditions, ye cast your soul in the huge gulf of never-ending eternity. The Lord

hath told you what ye should be doing till He come; ‘wait and hasten (saith Peter,) for the coming of the Lord’; all is night that is here, in respect of ignorance and daily ensuing troubles, one always making way to another, as the ninth wave of the sea to the tenth; therefore sigh and long for the dawning of that morning, and the breaking of that day of the coming of the Son of man, when the shadows shall flee away. Persuade yourself the King is coming; read His letter sent before Him, ‘Behold, I come quickly.’ Wait with the wearied night-watch for the breaking of the eastern sky, and think that you have not a morrow. I am loath to weary you; show yourself a Christian, by suffering without murmuring; — in patience possess your soul: they lose nothing who gain Christ. I commend you to the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus.

ANWOTH, Jan, 15, 1629

III. To MARION MCNAUGHT, when his wife was ill

Marion McNaught, a niece of Viscount Kenmure, married William Fullerton, Provost of Kirkcudbright. She was a close and lifelong friend of Rutherford. The manner in which he discusses with her the most profound questions of Christian doctrine and personal religion, as well as the tangled affairs of Church and State, are sufficient evidence of her outstanding gifts and graces. Forty-five letters to her have survived. Letters VI and XXXIX below are also to her.

LOVING AND DEAR SISTER, — If ever you would pleasure me, entreat the Lord for me, now when I am so comfortless, and so full of heaviness, that I am not able to stand under the burthen any longer. The Almighty hath doubled His stripes upon me, for my wife is so sore tormented night and day, that I have wondered why the Lord tarrieth so long. My life is bitter unto me, and I fear the Lord be my contrair party. It is (as I now know by experience) hard to keep sight of God in a storm, especially when He hides Himself, for the trial of His children. If He would be pleased to remove His hand, I have a purpose to seek Him more than I have done. Happy are they that can win away with their soul. I am afraid of His judgments. I bless my God that there is a death, and a heaven. I would weary to begin again to be a Christian, so bitter is it to drink of the cup that Christ drank of, if I knew not that there is no poison in it. Pray that God would not lead my wife into temptation. Woe is my heart, that I have done so little against the kingdom of Satan in my calling; for he would fain attempt to make me blaspheme God in His face. I believe, I believe, in the strength of Him who hath put me in His work, he shall fail in that which he seeks. I have comfort in this, that my Captain, Christ, hath said, I must fight and overcome the world, and with a weak, spoiled, weaponless devil, ‘the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me’. Desire Mr Robert to remember me, if he love me. Grace, grace be with you, and all yours.

Remember Zion. Hold fast that which you have, that no man take the crown from you. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

ANWOTH, Nov. 17, 1629

IV. To LADY KENMURE

MADAM, — I have longed exceedingly to hear of your life, and health, and growth in the grace of God. I entreat you, Madam, let me have two lines from you, concerning your present condition. I know you are in grief and heaviness; and if it were not so, you might be afraid, because then your way would not be so like the way that our Lord saith leadeth to the New Jerusalem. Sure I am, if you knew what were before you, or if you saw some glances of it, you would, with gladness, swim through the present floods of sorrow, spreading forth your arms out of desire to be at land. If God have given you the earnest of the Spirit, as part of the payment of the principal sum, ye have to rejoice; for our Lord will not lose His earnest, neither will He go back, or repent Him of His bargain. If you find, at some time, a longing to see God, joy in the assurance of that sight (although the sight be but like the pass over, that cometh about only once in the year), peace of conscience, liberty of prayer, the doors of God's treasury opened to the soul, and a clear sight of Himself, saying, with a smiling countenance, 'Welcome to me, afflicted soul'; this is the earnest which He giveth sometimes, and which maketh glad the heart; and is an evidence that the bargain will hold. But to the end ye may get this earnest, it were good to come in terms of speech with God, both in prayer and hearing of the word, for the Christ that saveth you is a speaking Christ; the church knoweth Him by His voice (Song of Solomon 2.8), and can discern His tongue amongst a thousand. When our Lord cometh, He speaketh to the heart in the simplicity of the Gospel.

I have neither tongue nor pen to express to you the happiness of such as are in Christ. When ye have sold all that ye have, and bought the field wherein this pearl is, ye will think it no bad market; for if ye be in Him, all His is yours, and ye are in Him; therefore, 'because He liveth, ye shall live also' (John 14.19). 'Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me when I am, to behold My glory that Thou hath given me' (John 17.24). Amen, dear Jesus, let it be according to that word. I wonder that ever your heart should be cast down, if ye believe this truth. I and they are not worthy at Jesus Christ, who will not suffer forty years trouble for Him, since they have such glorious promises. But we fools believe those promises as the man that read Plato's writings concerning the immortality of the soul: so long as the book was in his hand he believed all was true, and that the soul could not die; but so soon as he laid by the book, he began to imagine that the soul is but a smoke or airy vapor, that perisheth with the expiring of the breath. So we at starts do assent to the sweet and precious promises; but, laying aside God's book, we begin to call all in question. It is faith indeed to believe without a pledge, and to hold the heart constant at this work; and when we doubt, to run to the Law and to the Testimony, and stay there. Madam, hold you here: here is your Father's testament — read it; in it He hath left you remission of sins and life everlasting. If all that you have in this world be crosses and troubles, down-castings, frequent desertions and departures of the Lord, still He purposeth to do you good at your latter end, and to give you rest from the days of adversity. 'It is good to bear the yoke of God in your youth.' Turn ye to the strong hold, as a prisoner of hope. 'For the vision is for an appointed time, but at the last it shall speak,

and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it surely will come, it will not tarry.' Hear Himself saying, 'Come, my people (rejoice, He calleth you), enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be past.' Believe, then, believe and be ye saved: think it not hard, if ye get not your will nor your delights in this life; God will have you to rejoice in nothing but Himself. 'God forbid that ye should rejoice in any thing but the cross of Christ.' Grace, grace be with you. The great Messenger of the Covenant preserve you in body and spirit.

Yours in the Lord

ANWOTH, Feb. 1, 1630

V. To LADY KENMURE

MADAM, — Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you. I received your Ladyship's letter, in the which I perceive your case in this world smelleth of a fellowship and communion with the Son of God in His sufferings. Ye cannot, ye must not, have a more pleasant or more easy condition here, than He had, who 'through afflictions was made perfect' (Heb. 2.10). We may indeed think, Cannot God bring us to heaven with ease and prosperity? Who doubteth but He can? But His infinite wisdom thinketh and decreeth the contrary; and we cannot see a reason for it, yet He hath a most just reason. We never with our eyes saw our own soul; yet we have a soul. We see many rivers, but we know not their first spring and original fountain; yet they have a beginning. Madam, when ye are come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters and to your wearisome journey, and shall see, in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, ye shall then be forced to say, 'If God had done otherwise with me than He hath done, I had never come to the enjoying of this crown of glory.' It is your part now to believe, and suffer, and hope, and wait on; for I protest, in the presence of that all-discerning eye, who knoweth what I write and what I think, that I would not want the sweet experience of the consolations of God for all the bitterness of affliction. Nay, whether God come to His children with a rod or a crown, if He come Himself with it, it is well. Welcome, welcome, Jesus, what way soever Thou come, if we can get a sight of Thee! And sure I am, it is better to be sick, providing Christ come to the bedside and draw by the curtains, and say, 'Courage, I am thy salvation', than to enjoy health, being lusty and strong, and never to be visited of God

My wife now, after long disease and torment, for the space of a year and a month, is departed this life. The Lord hath done it; blessed be His name. I have been diseased of a fever tertian for the space of thirteen weeks, and am yet in the sickness, so that I preach but once on the Sabbath with great difficulty. I am not able either to visit or examine the congregation. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

ANWOTH, June 26, 1630.

VI. To MARION MCNAUGHT, when persecuted for her principles

WELL-BELOVED SISTER, — I have been thinking, since my departure from you, of the pride and malice of your adversaries; and ye may not (since ye have had the Book of Psalms so often) take hardly with this; for David's enemies snuffed at him, and through the pride of their heart said, 'The Lord will not require it' (Ps. 10.13). I beseech you, therefore, in the bowels of Jesus, set before your eyes the patience of your forerunner Jesus, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously (I Pet. 2.23). And since your Lord and Redeemer with patience received many a black stroke on His glorious back, and many a buffet of the unbelieving world, and says of Himself, 'I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting' (Isa. 50.6); follow Him and think it not hard that you receive a blow with your Lord. Take part with Jesus of His sufferings, and glory in the marks of Christ. If this storm were over, you must prepare yourself for a new wound; for, five thousand years ago, our Lord proclaimed deadly war betwixt the Seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent.

Be you upon Christ's side of it, and care not what flesh can do. Hold yourself fast by your Savior, howbeit you be buffeted, and those that follow Him. Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed' (II Cor. 4.8, 9). If you can possess your soul in patience, their day is coming. Worthy and dear sister, know to carry yourself in trouble; and when you are hated and reproached, the Lord shows it to you — 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant' (Ps. 44.17). 'Unless Thy law had been my delight, I had perished in mine affliction' (Ps. 119.92). Keep God's covenant in your trials; hold you by His blessed word, and sin not; flee anger, wrath, grudging, envying, fretting; forgive a hundred pence to your fellow-servant, because your Lord hath forgiven you ten thousand talents: for, I assure you by the Lord, your adversaries shall get no advantage against you, except you sin, and offend your Lord, in your sufferings. But the way to overcome is by patience, forgiving and praying for your enemies, in doing whereof you heap coals upon their heads, and your Lord shall open a door to you in your trouble: wait upon Him, as the night watch waiteth for the morning. He will not tarry. Go up to your watch-tower, and come not down, but by prayer, and faith, and hope, wait on. When the sea is full, it will ebb again; and so soon as the wicked come to the top of their pride, and are waxed high and mighty, then is their change approaching; they that believe make not haste.

Now, again, I trust in our Lord, you shall by faith sustain yourself and comfort yourself in your Lord, and be strong in His power; for you are in the beaten and common way to heaven, when you are under our Lord's crosses. You have reason to rejoice in it, more than in a crown of gold; and rejoice and be glad to bear the reproaches of Christ. I rest, recommending you and yours forever, to the grace and mercy of God. Yours in Christ.

ANWOTH, Feb, 11, 1631

VII. To LADY KENMURE

MADAM, — I would not omit the opportunity of remembering your Ladyship, still harping upon that string, which in our whole lifetime is never too often touched upon (nor is our lesson well enough learned), that there is a necessity of advancing in the way to the kingdom of God, of the contempt of the world, of denying ourself and bearing of our Lord's cross, which is no less needful for us than daily food. And among many marks that we are on this journey, and under sail toward heaven, this is one, when the love of God so filleth our hearts, that we forget to love, and care not much for the having, or wanting of, other things. For this cause God's bairns take well with spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance (Heb. 10.34). That day that the earth and the works therein shall be burned with fire (II Pet. 3.10), your hidden hope and your life shall appear. And therefore, since ye have not now many years to your endless eternity, and know not how soon the sky above your head will rive, and the Son of man will be seen in the clouds of heaven, what better and wiser course can ye take, than to think that your one foot is here, and your other foot in the life to come, and to leave off loving, desiring, or grieving, for the wants that shall be made up when your Lord and ye shall meet. Then shall ye rejoice 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory — and your joy shall no one take from you.' It is enough that the Lord has promised you great things; only let the time of bestowing them be His own. It is not for us to set an hour-glass to the Creator of time. It will be; for God has said it, bide His harvest. His day is better than your day; He putteth not the hook in the corn, till it be ripe and full-eared. The great Angel of the Covenant bear you company, till the trumpet shall sound, and the voice of the archangel awaken the dead.

Ye shall find it your only happiness, under whatsoever thing disturbeth and crosseth the peace of your mind in this life, to love nothing for itself, but only God for Himself. Our love to Him should not begin on earth as it shall be in heaven; for the bride taketh not, by a thousand degrees, so much delight in her wedding garments as she does in her bridegroom; so we, in the life to come, howbeit clothed with glory as with a robe, shall not be so much affected with the glory that goeth about us, as with the Bridegroom's joyful face and presence. Madam, if ye can win to this here, the field is won.

Fearing to be tedious to you, I break off here, commending you (as I trust to do while I live), your person, ways, burdens, and all that concerneth you, to that Almighty who is able to bear you and your burdens. I still remember you to Him who will cause you one day to laugh.

ANWOTH, Jan. 14, 1632

VIII. To JOHN KENNEDY, on his deliverance from shipwreck

John Stuart, Provost of Aye, another correspondent of Rutherford (Letter XXIX), was told that a ship of his, bound from Rochelle to Aye, had been captured by the Turks. The rumour proved incorrect, for at length it arrived in the roads. Kennedy, an intimate friend of Stuart, was so overjoyed that he went out to it in a small boat. But a violent storm suddenly arose and he was driven out to sea and given up for drowned. But three days later Kennedy, who had managed to land safely on another part of the coast, returned home. Kennedy was member for Aye of the Scottish Parliament from 1664 to 1666, and was then Provost of the town. He was also a member of the General Assembly of the Church for some years.

MY LOVING AND MOST AFFECTIONATE BROTHER IN CHRIST, — I salute you with grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I promised to write to you, and although late enough, yet I now make it good. I heard with grief of your great danger of perishing by the sea, and of your merciful deliverance with joy. Sure I am, brother, that Satan will leave no stone unrolled, as the proverb is, to roll you off your Rock, or at least to shake and unsettle you: for at that same time the mouths of wicked men were opened in hard speeches against you, by land, and the prince of the power of the air was angry with you by sea. See then how much ye are obliged to that malicious murderer, who would beat you with two rods at one time; but, blessed be God, his arm is short; if the sea and wind would have obeyed him, ye had never come to land. Thank your God, who saith, 'I have the keys of hell and death (Rev 1.18); 'I kill, and I make alive' (Deut. 32.39): 'The Lord bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up' (I Sam. 2.6). Ye were knocking at these black gates, and ye found the doors shut; and we do all welcome you back again.

I trust that ye know that it is not for nothing that ye are sent to us again. The Lord knew that ye had forgotten something that was necessary for your journey; that your armour was not as yet thick enough against the stroke of death. Now, in the strength of Jesus dispatch your business; that debt is not forgiven, but fristed: death has not bidden you farewell, but has only left you for a short season. End your journey ere the night come upon you. Have all in readiness against the time that ye must sail through that black and impetuous Jordan; and Jesus, Jesus, who knoweth both those depths and the rocks, and all the coasts, be your pilot. The last tide will not wait you for one moment. If ye forget anything, when your sea is full, and your foot in that ship, there is no returning again to fetch it. What ye do amiss in your life to-day, ye may amend it to-morrow; for as many suns as God maketh to arise upon you, ye have as many new lives; but ye can die but once, and if ye mar or spill that business, ye cannot come back to mend that piece of work again. No man sinneth twice in dying ill; as we die but once, so we die but ill or well once. You see how the number of your months is written in God's book; and as one of the Lord's hirelings, ye must work till the shadow of the evening come upon you, and ye shall run out your glass even to the last pickle of sand. Fulfill your course with joy, for we take nothing to the grave with us, but a good or evil conscience. And, although the sky clear after this storm, yet clouds will engender another.

Ye contracted with Christ, I hope, when first ye began to follow Him, that ye would bear His cross. Fulfill your part of the contract with patience, and break not to Jesus Christ. Be honest,

brother, in your bargaining with Him; for who knoweth better how to bring up children than our God? For (to lay aside His knowledge, of the which there is no finding out) He has been practiced in bringing up His heirs these five thousand years; and His bairns are all well brought up, and many of them are honest men now at home, up in their own house in heaven, and are entered heirs to their Father's inheritance. Now, the form of His bringing up was by chastisements, scourging, correcting, nurturing; and see if He maketh exception of any of His bairns; no, His eldest Son and His Heir, Jesus, is not excepted (Rev. 3.19; Heb. 12.7-8; 2.10). Suffer we must; ere we were born God decreed it, and it is easier to complain of His decree than to change it. Forward then, dear brother, and lose not your grips.

Now I commend you, your whole soul, and body, and spirit, to Jesus Christ and His keeping, hoping that ye will live and die, stand and fall, with the cause of our Master, Jesus. The Lord Jesus Himself be with your spirit. Your loving brother in our Lord Jesus.

ANWOTH, Feb. 2, 1632

IX. To LADY KENMURE, on the perils of rank and prosperity

MADAM, — I determined, and was desirous also, to have seen your Ladyship, but because of a pain in my arm I could not. I know ye will not impute it to any unsuitable forgetfulness of your Ladyship, from whom, at my first entry to my calling in this country (and since also), I received such comfort in my affliction as I trust in God never to forget, and shall labour by His grace to recompense in the only way possible to me; and that is, by presenting your soul, person, house, and all your necessities, in prayer to Him, whose I hope you are, and who is able to keep you till that Day of Appearance, and to present you before His face with joy.

I am confident your Ladyship is going forward in the begun journey to your Lord and Father's home and kingdom. Howbeit ye want not temptations within and without. And who among the saints has ever taken that castle without stroke of sword? The Chief of the house, our Elder brother, our Lord Jesus, not being excepted, who won His own house and home, due to Him by birth, with much blood and many blows. Your Ladyship has the more need to look to yourself, because our Lord has placed you higher than the rest, and your way to heaven lieth through a more wild and waste wilderness than the way of many of your fellow-travellers — not only through the midst of this wood of thorn, the cumbersome world, but also through these dangerous paths, the vain-glory of it; the consideration whereof has often moved me to pity your soul, and the soul of your worthy and noble husband. And it is more to you to win heaven, being ships of greater burden, and in the main sea, than for little vessels, that are not so much in the mercy and reverence of the storms, because they may come quietly to their port by launching amongst the coast. For the which cause ye do much, if in the midst of such a tumult of business, and crowd of temptations, ye shall give Christ Jesus His own court and His own due place in your soul. I know and am persuaded, that that lovely One, Jesus, is dearer to you than many kingdoms; and that ye esteem Him your Well-beloved,

and the Standard-bearer among ten thousand (Song of Sol. 5.10). And it becometh Him full well to take the place and the board head in your soul before all the world. I knew and saw Him with you in the furnace of affliction; for there He wooed you to Himself, and chose you to be His; and now He craveth no other hire of you but your love, and that He get no cause to be jealous of you. And, therefore, dear and worthy lady, be like to the fresh river, that keepeth its own fresh taste in the salt sea.

Madam, many eyes are upon you, and many would be glad your Ladyship should spill a Christian, and mar a good professor. Lord Jesus, mar their godless desires, and keey the conscience whole without a crack! If there be a hole in it, so that it take in water at a leak, it will with difficulty mend again. It is a dainty, delicate creature, and a rare piece of the workmanship of your Maker; and therefore deal gently with it, and keep it entire, that amidst this world's glory your Ladyship may learn to entertain Christ. And whatsoever creature your Ladyship findeth not to smell of Him, may it have no better relish to you than the white of an egg.

Madam, it is a part of the truth of your profession to drop words in the ears of your noble husband continually of eternity, judgment, death, hell, heaven, the honorable profession, the sins of his father's house. He must reckon with God for his father's debt; forgetting of accounts payeth no debt. Nay, the interest of a forgotten bond runneth up with God to interest upon interest. I know he looketh homeward, and loveth the truth; but I pity him with my soul, because of his many temptations. Satan layeth upon men a burden of cares, above a load (and maketh a pack horse of men's souls), when they are wholly set upon this world. We owe the devil no such service. It were wisdom to throw off that load into a mire, and cast all our cares over upon God. Look for crosses, and while it is fair weather mend the sails of the ship. Now hoping your Ladyship will pardon my tediousness, I recommend your soul and person to the grace and mercy of our Lord, in whom I am your Ladyship's obedient.

ANWOTH, Nov, 15, 1633

X. To LADY KENMURE, on the death of her husband

MY VERY NOBLE AND WORTHY LADY, — So oft as I call to mind the comforts that I myself, a poor friendless stranger, received from your Ladyship here in a strange part of the country, when my Lord took from me the delight of mine eyes (Ezek. 24.1), as the Word speaketh (which wound is not yet fully healed and cured), I trust your Lord shall remember that, and give you comfort now at such a time as this, wherein your dearest Lord has made you a widow, albeit I must out of some experience say, the mourning for the husband of your youth be, by God's own mouth, the heaviest worldly sorrow (Joel 1.8). And though this be the weightiest burden that ever lay upon your back; yet ye know (when the fields are emptied and your husband now asleep in the Lord), if ye shall wait upon Him who hideth His face for a while, that it lieth upon God's honor and truth to fill the field, and to be a Husband to the widow. Let your faith and patience be seen, that it may be known

your only beloved first and last has been Christ. And, therefore, now ware your whole love upon Him; He alone is a suitable object for your love and all the affections of your soul. God has dried up one channel of your love by the removal of your husband. Let now that speat run upon Christ.

And I dare say that God's hammering of you from your youth is only to make you a fair carved stone in the high upper temple of the New Jerusalem. Your Lord never thought this world's vain painted glory a gift worthy of you; and therefore would not bestow it on you, because He is to propane you with a better portion. Let the movable go; the inheritance is yours. Ye are a child of the house, and joy is laid up for you, it is long in coming, but not the worse for that. I am now expecting to see, and that with joy and comfort, that which I hoped of you since I knew you fully; even that ye have laid such strength upon the Holy One of Israel, that ye defy troubles, and that your soul is a castle that may be besieged, but cannot be taken. And withal consider how in all these trials (and truly they have been many) your Lord has been loosing you at the root from perishing things, and hunting after you to grip your soul. Madam, for the Son of God's sake, let Him not miss His grip, but stay and abide in the love of God, as Jude saith (Jude 21).

Now. Madam, I hope your Ladyship will take these lines in good part; and wherein I have fallen short and failed to your Ladyship, in not evidencing what I was obliged to your more-than-undeserved love and respect, I request for a full pardon for it. Again, my dear and noble lady, let me beseech you to lift up your head, for the day of your redemption draweth near. And remember, that star that shined in Galloway is now shining in another world. Now I pray that God may answer, in His own style, to your soul, and that He may be to you the God of all consolations.

ANWOTH, Sept. 14, 1634

XI. To lady KENMURE, when he expected to be removed from Anwoth

MAIDAM, — My humble obedience in the Lord remembered. Know it has pleased the Lord to let me see, by all appearance, that my labours in God's house here are at an end; and I must now learn to suffer, in the which I am a dull scholar. By a strange providence, some of my papers, anent the corruptions of this time, are come to the King's hand. I know, by the wise and well-affected I shall be censured as not wise nor circumspect enough; but it is ordinary, that that should be a part of the cross of those who suffer for Him. Yet I love and pardon the instrument; I would commit my life to him, howbeit by him this has befallen me. But I look higher than to him. I make no question of your Ladyship's love and care to do what ye can for my help, and am persuaded that, in my adversities, your Ladyship will wish me well. I seek no other thing but that my Lord may be honored by me in giving a testimony. I was willing to do Him more service; but seeing He will have no more of my labours, and this land will thrust me out, I pray for grace to learn to be acquaint with misery, if I may give so rough a name to such a mark of those who shall be crowned with Christ. And howbeit I will possibly prove a faint-hearted, unwise man in that, yet I dare say I intend otherwise; and I desire not to go on the lee-side or sunny side of religion, or to put truth betwixt

me and a storm: my Savior did not do so for me, who in His suffering took the windy side of the hill. No farther; but the Son of God be with you.

ANWOTH, Dec. 5, 1634

XII. To lady KENMURE, on the eve of his banishment to Aberdeen

NOBLE AND ELECT LADY, — That honor that I have prayed for these sixteen years, with submission to my Lord's will, my kind Lord has now bestowed upon me, even to suffer for my royal and princely King Jesus, and for His kingly crown, and the freedom of His kingdom that His Father has given Him. The forbidden lords have sentenced me with deprivation, and confinement within the town of Aberdeen. I am charged in the King's name to enter against the 20th day of August next, and there to remain during the Kings pleasure, as they have given it out. Howbeit Christ's green cross, newly laid upon me, be somewhat heavy, while I call to mind the many fair days sweet and comfortable to my soul and to the souls of many others, and how young ones in Christ are plucked from the breast, and the inheritance of God laid waste; yet that cross of Christ is accompanied with sweet refreshments, with the joy of the Holy Ghost, with faith that the Lord hears the sighing of a prisoner, with undoubted hope (as sure as my Lord liveth) after this night to see daylight, and Christ's sky to clear up again upon me, and His poor kirk; and that in a strange land, among strange faces, He will give favor in the eyes of men to His poor oppressed servant, who do not but love that lovely One, that princely One, Jesus, the Comforter of his soul. All would be well, if I were free of old challenges for guiltiness, and for neglect in my calling, and for speaking too little for my Well-beloved's crown, honor, and kingdom. This is my only exercise, that I fear I have done little good in my ministry.

I apprehend no less than a judgment upon Galloway, and that the Lord shall visit this whole nation for the quarrel of the Covenant. But what can be laid upon me, or any the like of me, is too light for Christ. Christ do not bear more, and would bear death and burning quick, in His quick servants, even for this honorable cause that I now suffer for. Yet for all my complaints (and He knoweth that I dare not now dissemble), He was never sweeter and kinder than He is now. My dear worthy Lady, I give it to your Ladyship, under my own hand, my heart writing as well as my hand welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet and glorious cross of Christ; welcome, sweet Jesus, with Thy light cross. Thou hast now gained and gotten all my love from me; keep what Thou hast gotten! Only woe, woe is me, for my bereft flock, for the lambs of Jesus, that I fear shall be fed with dry breasts. But I spare now. Madam, I dare not promise to see your Ladyship, because of the little time I have allotted me; and I purpose to obey the King, who has power of my body; and rebellion to kings is unbeseeming Christ's ministers. Madam, bind me more (if more can be) to your Ladyship; and write thanks to your brother, my Lord of Lorn, for what he has done for me, a poor and unknown stranger to his Lordship. I shall pray for him and his house, while I live. Now, Madam, commending your Ladyship, and the sweet child, to the tender mercies of the Lord Jesus, and His good-will who dwelt in the Bush.

EDINBURGH, July 28, 1636

XIII. To LADY KENMURE

MY VERY HONORABLE AND DEAR LADY, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I cannot forget your Ladyship, and that sweet child. I desire to hear what the Lord is doing to you and him. To write to me were charity. I cannot but write to my friends, that Christ has trysted me in Aberdeen; and my adversaries have sent me here to be feasted with love banquets with my royal, high, high, and princely King Jesus. Madam, why should I smother Christ's honesty? I dare not conceal His goodness to my soul; He looked fremed and unco-like upon me when I came first here; but I believe Himself better than His looks. God forgive them that raise an ill report upon the sweet cross of Christ. It is but our weak and dim eyes, and our looking only to the black side that makes us mistake. Those who can take that crabbed tree handsomely upon their back, and fasten it on cannily, shall find it such a burden as wings unto a bird, or sails to a ship. Madam, rue not of your having chosen the better part. Upon my salvation, this is Christ's truth I now suffer for. If I found but cold comfort in my sufferings, I would not beguile others; I would have told you plainly. But the truth is, Christ's crown, His sceptre, and the freedom of His kingdom, is that which is now called in question; because we will not allow that Christ should pay tribute and be a vassal to the shields of the earth, therefore the sons of our mother are angry at us. But it becometh not Christ to hold any man's stirrup. It is little to see Christ in a book. They talk of Christ by the book and the tongue, and no more; but to come nigh Christ, and embrace Him, is another thing. Madam, I write to your honor, for your encouragement in that honorable profession Christ has honored you with. Ye have gotten the sunny side of the bras, and the best of Christ's good things; and howbeit you get strokes and sour looks from your Lord, yet believe His love more than your own feeling, for this world can take nothing from you that is truly yours, and death can do you no wrong. Your rock does not ebb and flow, but your sea. That which Christ has said, He will bide by it.

Madam, I find folks here kind to me; but in the night, and under their breath. My Master's cause may not come to the crown of the causeway. Others are kind according to their fashion. Many think me a strange man, and my cause not good; but I care not much for man's thoughts or approbation. I think no shame of the cross. The preachers of the town pretend great love, but the prelates have added to the rest this gentle cruelty (for so they think of it), to discharge me of the pulpits of this town. The people murmur and cry out against it; and to speak truly (howbeit) Christ is most indulgent to me otherwise), my silence on the Lord's day keeps me from being exalted above measure, and from startling in the heat of my Lord's love. Some people affect me, for the which cause, I hear the preachers here purpose to have my confinement changed to another place; so cold is northern love; but Christ and I will bear it. I have wrestled long with this sad silence. I said, what aileth Christ at my service? And my soul has been at a pleading with Christ, and at yea and nay. But I will yield to Him, providing my suffering may preach more than my tongue did; for I give not Christ an inch but for twice as good again. In a word, I am a fool, and He is God. I will hold my peace hereafter.

Let me hear from your Ladyship, and your dear child. Pray for the prisoner of Christ, who is mindful of your ladyship.

ABERDEEN, Nov. 22, 1636

XIV. To LADY KENMURE

MADAM, — Grace, mercy and peace be to you. I received your Ladyship's letter. It refreshed me in my heaviness. The blessing and prayer of a prisoner of Christ come upon you. Nothing grieveth me but that I eat my feasts my lone, and that I cannot edify His saints. My silence eats me up, but He has told me He thanketh me no less than if I were preaching daily.

Your Ladyship wrote to me that ye are yet an ill scholar. Madam, ye must go in at heaven's gates, and your book in your hand, still learning. You have had your own large share of troubles, and a double portion; but it saith your Father counteth you not a bastard; full-begotten bairns are nurtured (Heb. 12.8). I long to hear of the child. I write the blessings of Christ's prisoner and the mercies of God to him.

Madam, it is not long since I did write to your Ladyship that Christ is keeping mercy for you; and I bide by it still, and now I write it under my hand. Love Him dearly. Win in to see Him; there is in Him that which you never saw. He is aye nigh; He is a tree of life, green and blossoming, both summer and winter. There is a nick in Christianity, to the which whosoever cometh, they see and feel more than others can do. Now the blessing of our dearest Lord Jesus, and the blessing of him that is 'separate from his brethren', come upon you. Yours, at Aberdeen, the prisoner of Christ.

ABERDEEN

XV To LADY BOYD

Lady Boyd, whose maiden name was Christian Hamilton, was the daughter of a distinguished lawyer and inherited his abilities and strength of character. She was a trusted friend of many of the leading ministers of the Church of Scotland in her day. When she died the whole Scottish Parliament suspended its sitting to attend her funeral. See also letters LVII, LXII and LXV.

MADAM, — Grace, mercy and peace be unto you. The Lord has brought me to Aberdeen, where I see God in few. This town has been advised upon of purpose for me; it consisteth either of Papists, or men of Gallio's naughty faith. It is counted wisdom, in the most, not to countenance a confined

minister; but I find Christ neither strange nor unkind; for I have found many faces smile upon me since I came hither. I am heavy and sad, considering what is betwixt the Lord and my soul, which none seeth but He. I find men have mistaken me; it would be no art (as I now see) to spin small and make hypocrisy a goodly web, and to go through the market as a saint among men, and yet steal quietly to hell, without observation: so easy is it to deceive men. I have disputed whether or no I ever knew anything of Christianity, save the letters of that name. Men see but as men, and they call ten twenty and twenty an hundred; but O! to be approved of God in the heart and in sincerity is not an ordinary mercy. My neglects while I had a pulpit, and other things whereof I am ashamed to speak, meet me now, so as God maketh an honest cross my daily sorrow. Like a fool, I believed, under suffering for Christ, that I myself should keep the key of Christ's treasures, and take out comforts when I listed, and eat and be fat: but I see now a sufferer for Christ will be made to know himself, and will be holden at the door as well as another poor sinner, and will be fain to eat with the bairns, and to take the by-board, and glad to do so. My blessing on the cross of Christ that has made me see this! Oh! if we could take pains for the kingdom of heaven! But we sit down upon some ordinary marks of God's children, thinking we have as much as will separate us from a reprobate; and thereupon we take the play and cry, 'Holiday!' and thus the devil casteth water on our fire, and blunteth our zeal and care. But I see heaven is not at the door; and I see, howbeit my challenges be many, I suffer for Christ, and dare hazard my salvation upon it; for sometimes my Lord cometh with a fair hour and O! but His love be sweet, delightful, and comfortable.

Madam, I know your Ladyship knoweth this, and that made me bold to write of it, that others might reap somewhat by my bonds for the truth; for I should desire, and I aim at this, to have my Lord well spoken of, and honored, howbeit He should make nothing of me but a bridge over a water.

Thus recommending your Ladyship, your son and children, to His grace, who has honored you with a name and room among the living in Jerusalem, and wishing grace to be with your Ladyship.
 ABERDEEN

XVI. To MR ROBERT BLAIR

Blair became minister of Bangor in Northern Ireland in 1623. But after nine years there he was deposed for nonconformity with a number of other ministers. A group of them took ship to emigrate to America in search of religious liberty but were forced by the weather to return, which is the occasion of this letter. In 1638 Blair was called to be minister in Aye and later in St. Andrew, where he became a close friend of Rutherford. In 1661 he was summoned before the Privy Council for a sermon on the Covenant and deprived of his church. He died in 1666. See also Letter LIV.

REVEREND AND DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER, — Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be unto you.

It is no great wonder, my dear brother, that ye be in heaviness for a season, and that God's will (in crossing your design and desires to dwell amongst a people whose God is the Lord) should move you. I deny not but ye have cause to inquire what His providence speaketh in this to you; but God's directing and commanding Will can by no good logic be concluded from events of providence. The Lord sent Paul on many errands for the spreading of His Gospel, where he found lions in his way. A promise was made to His people of the Holy Land, and yet many nations were in the way, fighting against, and ready to kill them that had the promise, or to keep them from possessing the good land which the Lord their God had given them. I know that ye have most to do with submission of spirit; but I persuade myself that ye have learned, in every condition wherein ye are cast, therein to be content, and to say, 'Good is the will of the Lord, let it be done.' I believe that the Lord tacketh His ship often to fetch the wind, and that He purposeth to bring mercy out of your sufferings and silence, which (I know from mine own experience) is grievous to you. Seeing that He knoweth our willing mind to serve Him, our wages and stipend is running to the fore with our God, even as some sick soldiers get pay, when they are bedfast and not able to go to the field with others.

When they have eaten and swallowed us up, they shall be sick and vomit us out living men again; the devil's stomach cannot digest the Church of God. Suffering is the other half of our ministry, howbeit the hardest; for we would be content that our King Jesus should make an open proclamation, and cry down crosses, and cry up joy, gladness, ease, honor, and peace. But it must not be so; through many afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of God. Not only by them, but through them, must we go; and wiles will not take us past the cross. It is folly to think to steal to heaven with a whole skin

For myself, I am here a prisoner confined in Aberdeen, threatened to be removed to Caithness, because I desire to edify in this town; and am openly preached against in the pulpits in my hearing.

There are none here to whom I can speak; I dwell in Kedar's tents. Refresh me with a letter from you.

Dear brother, upon my salvation, this is His truth that we suffer for. Courage! Courage! Joy, Joy, for evermore! O for help to set my crowned lying on high! O for love to Him Who is altogether lovely — that love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown!

I remember you, and bear your name on my breast to Christ. I beseech you, forget not His afflicted prisoner.

Your brother and fellow prisoner.

ABERDEEN, Feb. 7, 1637

XVII. To ROBERT GORDON OF KNOCKBREX

Robert Gordon lived in the next parish to Anwoth. He was a prominent figure in Church life in Scotland.

MY VERY WORTHY AND DEAR FRIEND, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. Though all Galloway should have forgotten me, I would have expected a letter from you ere now; but I will not expound it to be forgetfulness of me.

Now, my dear brother, I cannot show you how matters go betwixt Christ and me. I find my Lord going and coming seven times a day. His visits are short; but they are both frequent and sweet. I dare not for my life think of a challenge of my Lord. I hear ill tales, and hard reports of Christ, from the Tempter and my flesh; but love believeth no evil. I may swear that they are liars, and that apprehensions make lies of Christ's honest and unalterable love to me. I dare not say that I am a dry tree, or that I have no room at all in the vineyard, but yet I often think that the sparrows are blessed, who may resort to the house of God in Anwoth, from which I am banished.

Temptations, that I supposed to be stricken dead and laid upon their back, rise again and revive upon me; yea, I see that while I live, temptations will not die. The devil seemeth to brag and boast as much as if he had more court with Christ than I have; and as if he had charmed and blasted my ministry, that I shall do no more good in public. But his wind shaketh no corn. I will not believe that Christ would have made such a mint to have me to Himself, and have taken so much pains upon me as He has done, and then slip so easily from possession, and lose the glory of what He has done. Nay, since I came to Aberdeen, I have been taken up to see the new land, the fair palace of the Lamb; and will Christ let me see heaven, to break my heart, and never give it to me? I shall not think my Lord Jesus giveth a dumb earnest, or putteth His seals to blank paper, or intendeth to put me off with fair and false promises. I see that now which I never saw well before.

(1) I see faith's necessity in a fair day is never known aright; but now I miss nothing so much as faith. Hunger in me runneth to fair and sweet promises; but when I come, I am like a hungry man that wanteth teeth, or a weak stomach having a sharp appetite that is filled with the very sight of meat, or like one stupefied with cold under water, that would fain come to land, but cannot grip anything casten to him. I can let Christ grip me, but I cannot grip Him. I cannot set my feet to the ground, for afflictions bring the cramp upon my faith. All I dow do is to hold out a lame faith to Christ, like a beggar holding out a stump instead of an arm or leg, and cry, 'Lord Jesus, work a miracle! 'Oh what would I give to have hands and arms to grip strongly.

(2) I see that mortification, and to be crucified to the world, is not so highly accounted of by us as it should be. Oh how heavenly a thing it is to be dead and dumb and deaf to this world's sweet music! As I am at this present, I would scorn to buy this world's kindness with a bow of my knee. I scarce now either see or hear what it is that this world offereth me; I know that it is little that it can take from me, and as little that it can give me.

(3) I thought courage, in the time of trouble for Christ's sake, a thing that I might take up at my foot. I thought that the very remembrance of the honesty of the cause would be enough. But I was a fool in so thinking. Christ will be steward and dispenser Himself and none else but He; therefore, now, I count much of one dram weight of spiritual joy. Truly I have no cause to say that I am pinched with penury, or that the consolations of Christ are dried up. Praise, praise with me.

Remember my love to your brother, to your wife, and G.M. Desire him to be faithful, and to repent of his hypocrisy; and say that I wrote it to you. I wish him salvation. Write to me your mind agent C.E. and C.Y., and their wives, and I.G., or any others in my parish. I fear that I am forgotten amongst them; but I cannot forget them.

The prisoner's prayers and blessings come upon you. Grace, grace be with you.

Your brother, in the Lord Jesus.

ABERDEEN, Feb. 9, 1637

XVIII. To ALEXANDER GORDON OF EARLSTON

Alexander Gordon of Earlston, not far from Anwoth, was summoned before the High Commission by the bishop of Glasgow for preventing the intrusion of an unpopular nominee of the bishop into a vacant parish. This charge was not proceeded with, but on a later, similar charge he was heavily fined. He was a leading Churchman and a member of the Scottish Parliament.

MUHH HONORED SIR, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I received your letter, which refreshed me. Except from your son, and my brother, I have seen few letters from my acquaintance in that country; which maketh me heavy. But I have the company of a Lord who can teach us all to be kind, and has the right gate of it. It pleaseth Him to come and dine with a sad prisoner, and a solitary stranger. But I verily think now, that Christ has led me up to a nick in Christianity that I was never at before. I think all before was but childhood and bairn's play. I look back to what I was before, and I laugh to see the sand-houses I built when I was a child.

At first the remembrance of many fair feast-days with my Lord Jesus in public, which are now changed into silent Sabbaths, raised a great tempest, and (if I may speak so) made the devil ado in my soul. The devil came in, and would prompt me to lay the blame on Him as a hard master. But now these mists are blown away, and I am not only silenced as to all quarreling, but fully satisfied. Christ beareth me good company. He has eased me, when I saw it not, lifting the cross off my shoulders, so that I think it to be but a feather, because underneath are everlasting arms. Nothing breaketh my heart, but that I cannot get the daughters of Jerusalem to tell them of my Bridegroom's glory. I charge you in the name of Christ that ye tell all that ye come to of it, and yet it is above telling and understanding. Oh, if all the kingdom were as I am, except my bonds! I write now what

I have seen as well as heard. Now and then my silence burneth up my spirit; but Christ has said, 'Thy stipend is running up with interest ill in heaven, as if thou wert preaching'; and this from a King's mouth rejoiceth my heart. At other times I am sad, dwelling in Kedar's tents

There are none (that I yet know of) but two persons in this town that I dare give my word for. And the Lord has removed my brethren and my acquaintance far from me; and it may be, that I shall be forgotten in the place where the Lord made me the instrument to do some good. But I see that this is vanity in me; let Him make of me what He pleaseth.

Sir, write to me, I beseech you. I pray you also be kind to my afflicted brother. Remember my love to your wife; and the prayer and blessing of the prisoner of Christ be on you. Frequent your meetings for prayer and communion with God, they would be sweet meetings to me.

Yours in the Lord Jesus.

ABERDEEN, Feb. 16, 1637

XIX. To LADY KENMURE

MADAM, — I hope that ye are wrestling and struggling on, in this dead age, wherein folks have lost tongue, and legs, and arms for Christ. I urge upon you, Madam, a nearer communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by in Christ, that we never saw, and new foldings of love in Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love, there are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep; and sweat, and labour, and take pains for Him; and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can. He will be won with labour. Now, Madam, I assure you, the greatest part but play with Christianity; they put it by-hand easily. I thought it had been an easy thing to be a Christian, and that to seek God had been at the next door; but O, the windings and turnings that He has led me through! And I see yet much way to the ford.

I pray God I may not look to the world for my joys, and comforts, and confidence — that were to put Christ out of His office. Now, the presence of the great Angel of the covenant be with you and that sweet child.

Yours in the Lord Jesus.

ABERDEEN, March 7, 1637

XX. To lady KENMURE

MADAM, — Upon the offered opportunity of this worthy bearer, I could not omit to answer the heads of your letter.

Firstly, I think not much to set down on paper some good things agent Christ, and to feed my soul with raw wishes to be one with Christ; for a wish is but broken and half love. But verily to obey this, 'Come and see', is a harder matter! Oh, I have smoke rather than fire, and guessing rather than real assurances of Him. I cannot believe without a pledge. I cannot take God's word without a caution. But this is my way; for His way is, 'After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13).

Secondly, Ye write, 'that I am filled with knowledge, and stand not in need of these warnings.' But certainly my light is dim when it cometh to handy-grips. And how many have full coffers and yet empty bellies! Light, and the saving use of light, are far different. Oh, what need then have I to have the ashes blown away from my dying-out fire! I may be a bookman and (yet) be an idiot and stark fool in Christ's way. Learning will not beguile Christ.

Thirdly, I find you complaining of yourself. And it becometh a sinner so to do. I am not against you in that; the more sense of sin, the less sin. I would love my pain, and soreness, and my wounds, howbeit these should bereave me of my night's sleep, better than my wounds without pain.

Fourthly, Be not afraid for little grace. Christ soweth His living seed, and He will not lose His seed. If He have the guiding of my flock and state, it shall not miscarry. Our spilled works, losses, deadness, coldness, wretchedness, are the ground upon which the Good Husbandman laboureth.

Fifthly, Ye write, 'that His compassions fail not, notwithstanding that your service to Christ miscarrieth.' To which I answer:

God forbid that there were buying and selling, and blocking for as good again, betwixt Christ and us; for then free grace might go to play. But we go to heaven with light shoulders; and the vessels, great and smalls that we have, are fastened upon the sure Nail (Isa. 22.23-24). The only danger is, that we give grace more to do than God gives it; that is by turning God's grace into wantonness.

Sixthly, Ye write, 'few see your guiltiness; and you cannot be free with many as with me'. I answer, Blessed be God, Christ and we are not heard before men's courts: it is at home, betwixt Him and us, that our pleas are taken away. Grace be with you. Yours in the Lord Jesus.
ABERDEEN

XXI. To MR WILLIAM DALGLEISH, minister of the Gospel

Dagleish was minister of a neighbouring parish and was responsible for the parish of Anwoth also until Rutherford took charge of it. He later became minister of Cramond, from which he was ejected in 1662. See also Letter XXXVIII.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. — I am well. My Lord Jesus is kinder to me than ever He was.

Brother, this is His own truth I now suffer for. He has sealed my sufferings with His own comforts, and I know that He will not put His seal upon blank paper. His seals are not dumb nor delusive, to confirm imaginations and lies. Go on, my dear brother, in the strength of the Lord, not fearing man who is a worm, nor the son of man that shall die. Providence has a thousand keys, to open a thousand sundry doors for the deliverance of His own, when it is even come to a “conclamatum est”. Let us be faithful, and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for Him, and lay Christ’s part on Himself, and leave it there. Duties are ours, events are the Lord’s. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God’s providence, and beginneth to say, ‘How wilt Thou do this and that?’ we lose ground. We have nothing to do there. It is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office, and steer His own helm. There is nothing left to us, but to see how we may be approved of Him, and how we may roll the weight of our weak souls in well-doing upon Him who is God Omnipotent: and when what we thus essay miscarrieth, it will be neither our sin nor cross.

Brother, remember the Lord’s word to Peter; ‘Simon, lovest thou me? — Feed my sheep.’ No greater testimony of our love to Christ can be, than to feed carefully and faithfully His lambs.

I am in no better neighborhood with the ministers here than before: they cannot endure that any speak of me, or to me. Thus I am, in the meantime, silent, which is my greatest grief.

I hope, brother, that ye will help my people; and write to me what ye hear the Bishop is to do with them. Grace be with you. Your brother in bonds.

ABERDEEN

XXII. To MR HUGH MACKAIL, minister of the Gospel at Irvine

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, — I bless you for your letter. He is come down as rain upon the mown grass; He has revived my withered root, and He is as the dew of herbs. I am most secure in this prison. Salvation is for walls in it, and what think ye of these walls? He maketh the dry plant to bud as the lily, and to blossom as Lebanon. The great Husbandman’s blessing cometh down upon the plants of righteousness: who may say this, my dear brother, if I, His poor exiled stranger and prisoner, may not say it? Though all the world should be silent, I cannot hold my peace. No preaching, no book, no learning, could give me that which it behaved me to come and

get in this town. But what of all this, if I were not misted and confounded and astonished how to be thankful, and how to get Him praised for evermore!

Some have written to me that I am possibly too joyful at the cross; but my joy overleapeth the cross, it is bounded and terminated upon Christ. I know that the sun will overcloud and eclipse, and that I shall again be put to walk in the shadow: but Christ must be welcome to come and go, as He thinketh meet. I hope, when a change cometh, to cast anchor at midnight upon the Rock which He has taught me to know in this daylight; whither I may run, when I must say my lesson without book, and believe in the dark. I am sure it is sin to tarrow at Christ's good meat, and not to eat when He saith, 'Eat, O well-beloved, and drink abundantly.' If He bear me on His back, or carry me in His arms over this water, I hope for grace to set down my feet on dry ground, when the way is better. But this is slippery ground: my Lord thought good I should go by a hold, and lean on my Well-beloved's shoulder. It is good to be ever taking from Him. I desire that He may get the fruit of praises, for dawting and thus dandling me on His knee: and I may give my bond of thankfulness, so being I have Christ's back-bond again for my relief, that I shall be strengthened by His powerful grace to pay my vows to Him. But, truly, I find that we have the advantage of the brae upon our enemies: we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us; and they know not wherein our strength lieth.

Pray for me. Grace be with you.
Your brother in Christ.

ABERDEEN

XXIII. To JOHN EWART, Bailie of Kirkcudbright

Me VERY WORTHY AND DEAR FRIEND, — I cannot but most kindly thank you for the expressions of your love. Your love and respect to me is a great comfort to me.

I bless His high and glorious name, that the terrors of great men have not affrighted me from openly avouching the Son of God. Nay, His cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bare; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails are to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbor. I have not much cause to fall in love with the world; but rather to wish that He who sitteth upon the floods would bring my broken ship to land, and keep my conscience safe in these dangerous times; for wrath from the Lord is coming on this sinful land.

It were good that we prisoners of hope know of our stronghold to run to, before the storm come on; therefore, Sir, I beseech you by the mercies of God and comforts of His spirit, by the blood of your Savior, and by your compearance before the sin-revenging Judge of the world, keep your garments clean, and stand for the truth of Christ, which ye profess. When the time shall come that your eye strings shall break, your face wax pale, your breath grow cold, and this house of clay shall

totter, and your one foot shall be over the march, in eternity, it will be your comfort and joy that ye gave your name to Christ. The greatest part of the world think heaven at the next door, and that Christianity is an easy task; but they will be beguiled. Worthy sir, I beseech you, make sure work of salvation. I have found my experience, that all I could do has had much ado in the day of my trial; and, therefore, lay up a sure foundation for the time to come.

I cannot requite you for your undeserved favors to me and my now afflicted brother. But I trust to remember you to God. Remember me heartily to your kind wife.

Yours, in his only Lord Jesus.

ABERDEEN, March 13, 1637

XXIV. To WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

Probably one of his Anwoth parishioners.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER, — I rejoice to hear that Christ has run away with your young love, and that ye are so early in the morning matched with such a Lord; for a young man is often a dressed lodging for the devil to dwell in. Be humble and thankful for grace; and weigh it not so much by weight, as if it be true. Christ will not cast water on your smoking coal; He never yet put out a dim candle that was lighted at the Sun of Righteousness. I recommend to you prayer and watching over the sins of your youth; for I know that missive letters go between the devil and young blood. Satan has a friend at court in the heart of youth; and there pride, luxury, lust, revenge, forgetfulness of God, are hired as his agents. Happy is your soul if Christ man the house, and take the keys Himself, and command all, as it suiteth Him full well to rule wherever He is. Keep Christ, and entertain Him well. Cherish His grace; blow upon your own coal; and let Him tutor you.

Now for myself: know that I am fully agreed with my Lord. Christ has put the Father and me into each other's arms. Many a sweet bargain He made before, and He has made this among the rest. I reign as king over my crosses. I will not flatter a temptation, nor give the devil a good word: I defy hell's iron gates. God has passed over my quarreling of Him at my entry here, and now He feedeth and feasteth with me. Praise, praise with me; and let us exalt His name together. Your brother in Christ.

ABERDEEN, March 13, 1637

XXV. To MR GEORGE GILLESPIE

Gillespie died in 1648, at the age of 36. In spite of his youth he had been sent as one of the four ministerial Commissioners of the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly in 1643, where his learning and effective speaking made a great impression. At the time of this letter he had been quite recently ordained.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, — I received your letter. As for my case, brother, I bless His glorious name, that my losses are my gain, my prison a palace, and my sadness joyfulness. At my first entry, my apprehensions so wrought upon my cross, that I became jealous of the love of Christ, as being by Him thrust out of the vineyard, and I was under great challenges, as ordinarily melted gold casteth forth a drossy scum, and Satan and our corruption form the first words that the heavy cross speaketh, and say, ‘God is angry, He loveth you not.’ But our apprehensions are not canonical, they indite lies of God and Christ’s love. But since my spirit was settled, and the clay has fallen to the bottom of the well, I see better what Christ was doing. And now my Lord is returned with salvation under His wings. I see not how to be thankful, or how to get help to praise that Royal King, who raiseth up those that are bowed down. And, therefore, let no man scant at Christ’s cross, or raise an ill report upon Him or it; for He beareth the sufferer and it both.

Brother, remember our old covenant and pray for me, and write to me your case. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

ABRDEEN, March 13, 1637

XXVI. To JOHN GORDON OF RUSSO in the parish of Anwoth

MY WORTHY AND DEAR BROTHER, — Misspend not your short sand-glass, which runneth very fast, seek your Lord in time. Let me obtain of you a letter under your hand, for a promise to God, by His grace, to take a new course of walking with God. Heaven is not at the next door; I find it hard to be a Christian. There is no little thrusting and thronging to thrust in at heaven’s gates; it is a castle taken by force; — ‘Many shall strive to enter in, and shall not be able.’

I beseech and obtest you in the Lord, to make conscience of rash and passionate oaths, of raging and sudden avenging anger, of night drinking, of needless companionry, of Sabbath-breaking, of hurting any under you by word or deed, of hating your very enemies. ‘Except ye receive the kingdom of God as a little child,’ and be as meek and sober-minded as a babe, ‘ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ That is a word which should touch you near, and make you stoop and cast yourself down, and make your great spirit fall. I know that this will not be easily done, but I recommend it to you, as you tender your part of the kingdom of heaven.

Brother, I may, from new experience, speak of Christ to you. Oh, if ye saw in Him what I see! A river of God’s unseen joys has flowed from bank to brae over my soul since I parted with you. I wish that I wanted part, so being ye might have; that your soul might be sick of love for Christ,

or rather satiated with Him. This clay-idol, the world, would seem to you then not worth a fig; time will eat you out of possession of it. When the eye-strings break, and the breath growth cold, and the imprisoned soul looketh out of the windows at the clay-house, ready to leap out into eternity, what would you then give for a lamp full of oil? Oh seek it now.

I desire you to correct and curb banning, swearing, lying, drinking, Sabbath-breaking, and idle spending of the Lord's day in absence from the kirk, as far as your authority reacheth in that parish.

I hear that a man is to be thrust into that place, to the which I have God's right. I know that ye should have a voice by God's word in that (Acts 1.15, 16, to the end; 6.3-5). Ye would be loath that any prelate should rout you out of your possession earthly; and this is your right. What I write to you, I write to your wife. Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor.

ABERDEEN, March 14, 1637

XXVII. To LADY HALHILL

DEAR AND CHRISTIAN LADY, — I longed much to write to your Ladyship; but now the Lord offering a fit occasion I would not omit to do it. I cannot but acquaint your Ladyship with the kind dealing of Christ to my soul, in this house of my pilgrimage, that your Ladyship may know that He is as good as He is called. For at my first entry into this trial (being cast down and troubled with challenges and jealousies of His love, whose name and testimony I now bear in my bonds), I feared nothing more than that I was casten over the dyke of the vineyard, as a dry tree. But, blessed be His dear name, the dry tree was in the fire, and was not burnt; His dew came down and quickened the root of a withered plant. And now He is come again with joy, and has been pleased to feast His exiled and amicted prisoner with the joy of His consolations. Now I weep, but am not sad; I am chastened, but I die not; I have loss, but I want nothing; this water cannot drown me, this fire cannot burn me, because of the good-will of Him that dwelt in the Bush. The worst things of Christ, His reproaches, His cross, are better than Egypt's treasures. I would not give, nor exchange, my bonds for the prelates' velvets; nor my prison for their coaches; nor my sighs for all the world's laughter. This clay-idol, the world, has no great court in my soul. Christ has come and run away to heaven with my heart and my love, so that neither heart nor love is mine: I pray God, that Christ may keep both without reversion.

Remember my service to the laird, your husband, and to your son, my acquaintance. I wish that Christ had his young love, and that in the morning he would start to the gate, to seek that which the world knoweth not and therefore does not seek it. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

ABERDEEN, March 14, 1637

XXVIII. To PATRICK CARSEN

DEAR AND LOVING FRIEND, — I cannot but, upon the opportunity of a bearer, exhort you to resign the love of your youth to Christ; and in this day, while your sun is high and your youth serveth you, to seek the Lord and His face. For there is nothing out of heaven so necessary for you as Christ. And ye cannot be ignorant but your days will end, and the night of death shall call you from the pleasures of this life: and a doom given out in death standeth for ever — as long as God liveth! Youth, ordinarily, is a post and ready servant for Satan, to run errands; for it is a nest for lust, cursing, drunkenness, blaspheming of God, lying, pride, and vanity. Oh, that there were such an heart in you as to fear the Lord, and to dedicate your soul and body to His service! When the time cometh that your poor soul look out at your prison house of clay, to be set at liberty; then a good conscience, and your Lord's favor, shall be worth all the world's glory. Seek it as your garland and crown.

Grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, March 14, 1637

XXIX. To JOHN STUART, Provost of Aye

Inheriting considerable property from his father, Stuart was lavishly generous in support of those suffering persecution for conscience' sake. Later, owing to the ravages of plague he lost much of his money. He joined with Blair (Letter XVI) in the frustrated attempt to emigrate to America, which is referred to in the next letter. See also Letter XLIX.

MUCH HONORED AND DEAREST IN CHRIST, — Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be upon you.

I expected the comfort of a letter to a prisoner from you, see now. I am here, Sir, putting off a part of my inch of time; and when I awake first in the morning (which is always with great heaviness and sadness), this question is brought to my mind, 'Am I serving God or not?' Not that I doubt of the truth of this honorable cause wherein I am engaged; I dare venture into eternity, and before my Judge, that I now suffer for the truth — because that I cannot endure that my Master, who is a freeborn King, should pay tribute to any of the shields or potsherds of the earth. Oh that I could hold the crown upon my princely King's head with my sinful arm, howbeit it should be struck from me in that service, from the shoulder-blade. But my closed mouth, my dumb Sabbaths, the memory of my communion with Christ, in many fair, fair days in Anwoth, whereas now my Master getteth no service of my tongue as then, has almost broken my faith in two halves. Yet in my deepest apprehensions of His anger, I see through a cloud that I am wrong. And beside, He has visited my soul and watered it with His comforts.

The great men, my friends that did for me, are dried up like winter-brooks of water. All say, 'No dealing for that man; his best will be to be gone out of the kingdom.' So I see they tire of me. But, believe me, I am most gladly content that Christ breaketh all my idols in pieces. It has put a new edge upon my blunted love to Christ; I see that He is jealous of my love, and will have all to Himself. In a word, these six things are my burden: 1. I am not in the vineyard as others are; it may be, because Christ thinketh me a withered tree, not worth its room. But God forbid! 2. Woe, woe is coming upon my harlot-mother, this apostate kirk! The time is coming when we shall wish for doves' wings to flee and hide us. Oh, for the desolation of this land! 3. I see my dear Master Christ going His lone (as it were) mourning in sackcloth. His fainting friends fear that King Jesus shall lose the field. But He must carry the day. 4. My guiltiness and the sins of youth are come up against me, and they would come into the plea in my sufferings, as deserving causes in God's justice; but I pray God, for Christ's sake, that He may never give them that room. 5. Woe is me, that I cannot get my royal, dreadful, mighty, and glorious Prince of the kings of the earth set on high. Sir, ye may help me and pity me in this; and bow your knee, and bless His name, and desire others to do it, that He has been pleased, in my sufferings, to make Atheists, Papists, and enemies about me say, 'It is like that God is with this prisoner.' Let hell and the powers of hell (I care not) be let loose against me to do their worst, so being that Christ, and my Father, and His Father, be magnified in my sufferings. 6. Christ's love has pained me: for howbeit His presence has shamed me, and drowned me in debt, yet He often goes away when my love to Him is burning. He seemeth to look like a proud wooer, who will not look upon a poor match that is dying of love. I will not say He is lordly. But I know He is wise in hiding Himself from a child and a fool, who maketh an idol and a god of one of Christ's kisses, which is idolatry. I fear that I adore His comforts more than Himself, and that I love the apples of life better than the tree of life.

Sir, write to me. Commend me to your wife. Mercy be her portion. Grace be with you.
Yours, in his dearest Lord Jesus.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XXX. To JOIN STUART, Provost of Ayr

WORTHY AND DEAR BELOVED IN OUR LORD, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I was refreshed and comforted by your letter. What I wrote to you for your comfort, I do not remember. I wish I could help you to praise His great and holy name, who keepeth the feet of His saints and has numbered all your goings. I know our dearest Lord will pardon and pass by our honest errors and mistakes when we mind His honor; yet I know none of you have seen the other half and the hidden side of your wonderful return home to us again. I am confident you shall yet say that God's mercy blew your sails back to Ireland again.

Worthy and dear sir, I cannot but give you an account of my present state that you may go an errand for me to my high and royal Master. First, I am very often turning both the sides of my cross,

especially my dumb and silent Sabbaths; not because I desire to find a defect in my Lord's love, but fear of guiltiness is a tale-bearer between me and Christ, and is still whispering ill thoughts of my Lord, to weaken my faith. I would rather a cloud went over my comforts than that my faith should be hurt; for if my Lord get no wrong by me, I verily desire grace not to care what becomes of me. Hence these thoughts awake with me in the morning and go to bed with me. O what service can a dumb body do in Christ's house! O I am a dry tree! If I might but speak to three or four herd boys of my worthy Master, I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors in this land, and to live in any place, in any of Christ's basest outhouses! But He saith, 'Sirrah, I will not send you, I have no errands for you thereaway.' My desire to serve Him is sick of jealousy, lest He be unwilling to employ me Secondly, This is seconded by another. Oh! all that I have done in Anwoth, the fair work that my Master began there, is like a bird dying in the shell; and what will I then have to show of all my labour, in the day of my compearance before Him, when the Master of the vineyard calleth the laborers, and giveth them their hire? Thirdly, But truly, when Christ's sweet wind is in the right airth, I repent, and I pray Christ to take law burrows of my quarrelous unbelieving sadness and sorrow. But I wish He would give me grace to learn to go on my own feet and to learn to do without His comforts, and to give thanks and believe, when the sun is not in my firmament, and when my Well-beloved is from home, and gone another errand.

Now, for any resolution to go to any other kingdom, I dare not speak one word. My hopes of enlargement are cold, my hopes of reentry to my Master's ill-dressed vineyard again are far colder. I have no seat for my faith to sit upon but bare omnipotence and God's holy arm and goodwill. Here I desire to stay and ride at anchor and winter, while God send fair weather again. But there will be sad days see it come to that. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XXXI. To NINIAN MURE, a parishioner

LOVING FRIEND, — I received your letter. I entreat you now, in the morning of your life, to seek the Lord and His face. Beware of the follies of dangerous youth, a perilous time for your soul. Love not the world. Keep faith and truth with all men in your covenants and bargains. Walk with God, for He seeth you. Do nothing but that which ye may and would do if your eye-strings were breaking, and your breath growing cold. Ye heard the truth of God from me, my dear heart, follow it, and forsake it not. Prize Christ and salvation above all the world. To live after the guise and course of the rest of the world will not bring you to heaven; without faith in Christ, and repentance, ye cannot see God. Take pains for salvation; press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. If ye watch not against evils night and day, which beset you, ye will come behind. Beware of lying, swearing, uncleanness, and the rest of the works of the flesh; because 'for these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience'. How sweet soever they may seem for the present, yet the end of these courses is the eternal wrath of God, and utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor.

ABERDEEN, 1637

XXXII To JOHN GORDON OF CARDONESS, the elder

John Gordon, the elder, laird of Cardoness, was a very difficult parishioner, and a man of strong passions. His estate was heavily burdened by debt. Part of the purpose of this letter is a protest against the attempt to meet his debts by an inequitable raising of the rents of the farms and cottages on the estate. And there was a son (to whom a later letter is addressed, letter XXXIV), who was following the 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 compare 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 veil, 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 dow 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

XLII. To THE REV. JOHN FERGUSON OF OCHILTREE

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-stead. 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, tryst 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

XLIII. To ROBERT BROWN OF CARSLUTH

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 Dalgleish], 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 soulswoonings 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

XLVIII. To LADY KENMURE

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

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

(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 heartsomely 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 notes.

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

LV. To ROBERT LENNOX OF DISDOVE, near Gatehouse

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

LVI. To EARLSTON, the younger

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 joute, 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 speak; 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 frist 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

LXIV. To MR DAVID DICKSON, on the death of his son

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 lusted 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

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

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 wants 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

LXX. To LADY KENMURE

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

LXXI. To LADY ARDROSS

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.

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