Letters to Severall Persons of Honour

by John Donne

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LETTERS TO SEVERALL PERSONS OF HONOUR

This edition is limited to six hundred copies

LETTERS TO SEVERALL PERSONS OF HONOUR

BY JOHN DONNE

THE TEXT EDITED, WITH NOTES, BY CHARLES EDMUND MERRILL, Jr.

NEW YORK STURGIS & WALTON COMPANY 1910

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TO PAYSON MERRILL

QUALEM NEQUE CANDIDIOREM TERRA TULIT, NEQUE CUI ME SIT DEVINCTIOR ALTER

NOTE

The Letters to Severall Persons of Honour, now for the first time reprinted in their original form, were collected and published by John Donne, Jr., in 1651, twenty years after the death of the author. Apparently the sales were not large, for three years later the original sheets were rebound with a new title page and put on the market as a second edition. Not many copies of the earlier, and still fewer of the later date, have come down to us.

In the present volume changes from and additions to the original text are indicated by brackets, with a single exception: errors in punctuation have been corrected without comment when, and only when, they seem seriously to impair the intelligibility of the text. In the case of a few letters the reading followed is that of the original manuscripts, for which I am indebted to the great kindness of Mr. Edmund Gosse.

Readers of Mr. Gosse’s brilliant study, The Life and Letters of John Donne

(London: Heinemann, 1899) will not need to be reminded of the obligations under which he has placed all later students of Donne's life and work. I have, in addition, to thank him for generous encouragement and for many helpful suggestions, specific and general.

C. E. M., Jr.

Huntington, Long Island October 14, 1910.

LETTERS TO SEVERALL PERSONS OF HONOUR

JOHN DONNE

From an engraving by Pierre Lombart, prefixed to the Poems of 1633, after a portrait of Donne at the age of forty.

(Facsimile of Title Page of Original Edition.)

LETTERS

TO SEVERALL PERSONS OF HONOUR:

WRITTEN BY JOHN DONNE Sometime Deane of St Pauls London.

Published by John Donne Dr. of the Civill Law.

LONDON, Printed by J. Flesher, for Richard Marriot, and are to be sold at his shop in St Dunstans Church-yard under the Dyall. 1651.

To the most virtuous

and excellent Lady, Mris.

BRIDGET DUNCH.

Madam,

It is an argument of the Immortality of the Soul, that it can apprehend, and imbrace such a Conception; and it may be some kinde of Prophecy of the continuance and lasting of these Letters, that having been scattered, more then Sibyls leaves, I cannot say into parts, but corners of the World, they have recollected and united

themselves, meeting at once, as it were, at the same spring, from whence they flowed, but by Succession.

But the piety of Æneas to Anchises, with the heat and fervour of his zeale, had been dazelled and extinguished by the fire of Troy, and his Father become his Tombe, had not a brighter flame appeared in his Protection, and Venus herself descended with her embraces, to protect her Martiall Champion; so that there is no safer way to give a perpetuity to this remnant of the dead Authour, but by dedicating it to the Altar of Beauty and perfection; and if you, Madam, be but pleased to shed on it one beame of your Grace and Favour, that very Adumbration will quicken it with a new Spirit, and defend it from all fire (the fate of most Letters) but the last; which, turning these into ashes, shall revive the Authour from his Urne, and put him into a capacity of celebrating you, his Guardian Angell, who has protected that part of his Soul, that he left behinde him, his Fame and Reputation.

The courtesies that you conferre upon the living may admit of some allay, by a possibility of a Retaliation; but what you bestow upon the Dead is a Sacrifice to pure Virtue; an ungifted Deity, 'tis true, without Oblation, Altar, or Temple, if she were not enshrined in your noble brest, but I must forever become her votary, if it be but for giving me this Inclination, and desire of being

Madam Your most humble servant Jo. Donne.

A COLLECTION of Letters written to severall Persons of Honour.

[i.]

To the worthiest Lady Mrs Bridget White.

Madame,

I Could make some guesse whether souls that go to heaven, retain any memory of us that stay behinde, if I knew whether you ever thought of us, since you enjoyed your

heaven, which is your self, at home. Your going away hath made London a dead carkasse. A Tearm and a Court do a little spice and embalme it, and keep it from putrefaction, but the soul went away in you: and I think the onely reason why the plague is somewhat slackned is because the place is dead already, and no body left worth the killing. Wheresoever you are, there is London enough: and it is a diminishing of you to say so, since you are more then the rest of the world. When you have a desire to work a miracle, you will return hither, and raise the place from the dead, and the dead that are in it; of which I am one, but that a hope that I have a room in your favour keeps me alive, which you shall abundantly confirme to me, if by one letter you tell me that you have received my six; for now my letters are grown to that bulk, that I may divide them like Amadis the Gaules book, and tell you that this is the first letter of the second part of the first book.

Your humblest, and affectionate servant J. D.

Strand, S. Peters day at nine.

[ii.]

To the worthiest Lady Mrs B. W.

Madame,

I Think the letters which I send to you single lose themselves by the way for want of a guide, or faint for want of company. Now, that on your part there be no excuse, after three single letters, I send three together, that every one of them may have two witnesses of their delivery. They come also to waite upon another letter from Sr E. Herbert, of whose recovery from a Fever, you may apprehend a perfecter contentment then we, because you had none of the former sorrow. I am an Heretique if it be sound Doctrine, that pleasure tasts best after sorrow. For my part, I can love health well enough, though I be never sick; and I never needed my Mistris frowns and disfavours, to make her favours acceptable to me. In States, it is a weakness to

stand upon a defensive war, and safer not to be invaded, then to have overcome: so in our souls health, an innocence is better then the heartiest repentance. And in the pleasures of this life, it is better that the variety of the pleasures give us the taste and appetite to it, then a sowre and sad interruption quicken our stomack; for then we live by Physick. I wish therefore all your happinesses such as this intire, and without flaw, or spot of discontentment; and such is the love and service of

Your humblest and affectionatest servant J. D.

Strand S. Peters day at 4.

[iii.]

To the same.

Madame,

This letter which I send enclosed hath been yours many moneths, and hath languished upon my table for a passage so long, that as others send news in their letters, I send an antiquity in mine. I durst not tear it, after it was yours: there is some sacriledge in defacing any thing consecrated to you, and some impiety to despaire that any thing devoted to you should not be reserved to a good issue. I remember I should have sent it by a servant, of whose diligence I see I was too confident. I know not what it says: but I dare make this letter no longer, because being very sure that I always think the same thoughts of you, I am afraid I should fall upon the same words, and so send one letter twice together.

Your very affectionate servant J. D.

Novemb. 8.

[iv.]

To the Honourable Lady Mrs B. W.

Madame,

I Have but small comfort in this letter; the messenger comes too easily to me, and I am too sure that the letter shall be delivered. All adventures towards you should be of more difficulty and hazard. But perchance I need not lament this; it may be so many of my letters are lost already that it is time that one should come, like Jobs servant, to bring word that the rest were lost. If you have had more before, this comes to aske how they were received; and if you have had none, it comes to try how they should have been received. It comes to you like a bashfull servant, who, though he have an extreme desire to put himself in your presence, yet hath not much to say when he is come: yet hath it as much to say as you can think; because what degrees soever of honour, respect, and devotion you can imagine or beleeve to be in any, this letter tells you that all those are in me towards you. So that for this letter you are my Secretary; for your worthiness, and your opinion that I have a just estimation of them [?it], write it: so that it is as long, and as good, as you think it; and nothing is left to me, but, as a witness, to subscribe the name of

Your most humble servant J. D.

Though this letter be yours, it will not misbecome or disproportion it that I mention your Noble brother, who is gone to Cleave, not to return till towards Christmas, except the business deserve him not so long.

[v.]

To the Honourable L. the Lady Kingsmel upon the death of her Husband.

Madame,

Those things which God dissolves at once, as he shall do the Sun, and Moon, and those bodies at the last conflagration, he never intends to reunite again; but in those things, which he takes in pieces, as he doth man, and wife, in these divorces by death, and in single persons, by the divorce of body and soul, God hath another

purpose to make them up again. That piece which he takes to himself, is presently cast in a mould, and in an instant made fit for his use; for heaven is not a place of a proficiency, but of present perfection. That piece which he leaves behinde in this world, by the death of a part thereof, growes fitter and fitter for him, by the good use of his corrections, and the intire conformity to his will. Nothing disproportions us, nor makes us so uncapable of being reunited to those whom we loved here, as murmuring, or not advancing the goodness of him, who hath removed them from hence. We would wonder, to see a man, who in a wood were left to his liberty, to fell what trees he would, take onely the crooked, and leave the streightest trees; but that man hath perchance a ship to build, and not a house, and so hath use of that kinde of timber: let not us, who know that in Gods house there are many Mansions, but yet have no modell, no designe of the forme of that building, wonder at his taking in of his materialls, why he takes the young, and leaves the old, or why the sickly overlive those that had better health. We are not bound to think that souls departed, have devested all affections towards them, whom they left here; but we are bound to think, that for all their loves they would not be here again: Then is the will of God done in Earth, as it is in Heaven, when we neither pretermit his actions, nor resist them; neither pass them over in an inconsideration, as though God had no hand in them, nor go about to take them out of his hands, as though we could direct him to do them better. As Gods Scriptures are his will, so his actions are his will; both are Testaments, because they testifie his minde to us. It is not lawfull to adde a scedule to either of his wills: as they do ill, who adde to his written will, the Scriptures, a scedule of Ap[o]cryphall books, so do they also, who to his other will, his manifested actions, adde Apocryphall conditions, and a scedule of such limitations as these, If God would have stayed thus long, or, If God would have proceeded in this or this manner, I could have born it. To say that our afflictions are greater then we can bear, is so near to despairing, as that the same words express both; for when we consider Caines words in that originall tongue in which God

spake, we cannot tell whether the words be, My punishment is greater then can be born; or, My sin is greater then can be forgiven. But, Madame, you who willingly sacrificed your self to God, in your obedience to him, in your own sickness, cannot be doubted to dispute with him about any part of you which he shall be pleased to require at your hands. The difference is great in the loss of an arme, or a head; of a child, or a husband: but to them, who are incorporated into Christ, their head, there can be no beheading; upon you, who are a member of the spouse of Christ, the Church, there can fall no widowhead, nor orphanage upon those children to whom God is father. I have not another office by your husbands death, for I was your Chaplaine before, in my daily prayers; but I shall inlarge that office with other Collects then before, that God will continue to you, that peace which you have ever had in him, and send you quiet, and peaceable dispositions in all them with whom you shall have any thing to do in your temporall estate and matters of this world. Amen.

Your Ladiships very humble and thankfull servant in Christ Jesus J. Donne.

At my poor house at S. Pauls. 26. Octob. 1624.

[vi.]

To my honoured friend Sr T. Lucey.

SIR,

I Make account that this writing of letters, when it is with any seriousness, is a kind of extasie, and a departure and secession and suspension of the soul, wch doth then cõmunicate itself to two bodies: And, as I would every day provide for my souls last convoy, though I know not when I shall die, and perchance I shall never die, so for these extasies in letters, I oftentimes deliver my self over in writing when I know not when those letters shall be sent to you, and many times they never are, for I have a little satisfaction in seeing a letter written to you upon my table, though I meet no

opportunity of sending it. Especially this summer, when either by my early retiring home, or your irresolutions of your own purposes, or some other possessions of yours, you did lesse reveale to me your progresses, and stations, and where I might crosse you by letters, then heretofore: I make shift to lay little fault upon you, because my pardon might be easier, if I transgress into a longer and busier letter then your Countrey sports admit; but you may read it in winter: And by that time I may more clearly express my self for those things which have entred into me, concerning your soul: for as the greatest advantage which mans soul is thought to have beyond others, is that which they call Actum reflexum, and iteratum, (for Beasts do the same things as we do, but they do not consider nor remember the circumstances and inducements, and by what power and faculty it is that they do them) so of those which they call Actum reflexum the noblest is that which reflects upon the soul itself, and considers and meditates it. Into which considerations when I walke after my slow and unperfect pace, I begin to think that as litigious men tryed with suits admit any arbitrement; and Princes travailed with long and wastfull war descend to such conditions of peace, as they are soon after ashamed to have embraced: so Philosophers, and so all sects of Christians, after long disputations and controversies, have allowed many things for positive and dogmaticall truths which are not worthy of that dignity. And so many doctrines have grown to be the ordinary diet and food of our spirits, and have place in the pap of Catechismes, which were admitted but as Physick in that present distemper, or accepted in a lazie weariness, when men, so they might have something to relie upon, and to excuse themselves from more painfull inquisition, never examined what that was. To which indisposition of ours the Casuists are so indulgent, as that they allow a conscience to adhere to any probable opinion against a more probable, and do never binde him to seek out which is the more probable, but give him leave to dissemble it and to depart from it, if by mischance he come to know it. This, as it appears in all sciences, so most manifestly in Physick, which for a long time considering nothing, but plain

curing and that but by example and precedent, the world at last longed for some certain Canons and Rules, how these cures might be accomplished; And when men are inflamed with this desire, and that such a fire breaks out, that it rages and consumes infinitly by heat of argument, except some of authority interpose. This produced Hippocrates his Aphorismes; and the world slumbred or took breath in his resolution divers hundreds of years: And then in Galens time, which was not satisfied with the effect of curing, nor with the knowledge how to cure, broke out another desire of finding out the causes why those simples wrought those effects. Then Galen rather to stay their stomachs then that he gave them enough, taught them the qualities of the four Elements, and arrested them upon this, that all differences of qualities proceeded from them. And after (not much before our time), men perceiving that all effects in Physick could not be derived from these beggerly and impotent properties, of the Elements, and that therefore they were driven often to that miserable refuge of specifique form, and of antipathy and sympathy, we see the world hath turned upon new principles which are attributed to Paracelsus, but (indeed) too much to his honour. Certainly it is also so in the Physick of our soul, Divinity, for in the Primitive Church when amongst the Fathers there were so divers opinions of the state of the soul, presently after this life, they easily inclined to be content to do as much for them dead as when they were alive, and so concurred in a charitable disposition to pray for them; which manner of prayer then in use no Christian Church at this day, having rereived better light, will allow of. So also when in the beginning of S. Augustines time Grace had been so much advanced that mans Nature was scarce admitted to be so much as any means or instrument (not onely no kinde of cause) of his own good works: And soon after in S. Augustines time also mans free will (by fierce opposition and arguing against the former error) was too much overvalued, and admitted into too near degrees of fellowship with Grace; those times admitted a doctrine and form of reconciliation, which though for reverence to the time, both the Dominicans and Jesuits at this day in their great

quarrell about Grace and Free will would yet seem to maintaine, yet indifferent and dispassioned men of that Church see there is no possibility in it, and therefore accuse it of absurdity and almost of heresie. I think it falls out thus also in the matter of the soul: for Christian Religion presuming a soul, and intending principally her happiness in the life to come, hath been content to accept any way which hath been obtruded, how this soul is begun in us. Hence it is that whole Christian Churches arest themselves upon propagation from parents; and other whole Christian Churches allow onely infusion from God. In both which opinions there appear such infirmities as it is time to look for a better: for whosoever will adhere to the way of propagation can never evict necessarily and certainly a naturall immortality in the soul, if the soul result out of matter, nor shall he ever prove that all mankind hath any more then one soul: as certainly of all beasts, if they receive such souls as they have from their parents, every species can have but one soul. And they which follow the opinion of infusion from God, and of a new creation, (which is now the more common opinion), as they can very hardly defend the doctrin of original sin (the soul is forced to take this infection, and comes not into the body of her own disposition), so shall they never be able to prove that all those whom we see in the shape of men have an immortall and reasonable soul, because our parents are as able as any other species is to give us a soul of growth and of sense, and to perform all vitall and animall functions, and so without infusion of such a soul may produce a creature as wise and well disposed as any horse or Elephant, of which degree many whom we see come far short; nor hath God bound or declared himself that he will always create a soul for every embryon, there is yet therefore no opinion in Philisophy, nor Divinity, so well established as constrains us to beleeve, both that the soul is immortall, and that every particular man hath such a soul: which since out of the great mercy of our God we do constantly beleeve, I am ashamed that we do not also know it by searching farther: But as sometimes we had rather beleeve a Travellers lie then go to disprove him, so men rather cleave to these ways then seek

new: yet because I have meditated therein, I will shortly acquaint you with what I think; for I would not be in danger of that law of Moses, That if a man dig a pit, and cover it not, he must recompense those which are damnified by it: which is often interpreted of such as shake old opinions, and do not establish new as certain but leave consciences in a worse danger then they found them in. I beleeve that law of Moses hath in it some mysterie and appliablenesse; for by that law men are onely then bound to that indemnity and compensation, if an Oxe or an Asse (that is, such as are of a strong constitution and accustomed to labour) fall therein; but it is not said so, if a Sheep or a Goat fall: no more are we, if men in a sillinesse or wantonnesse will stumble or take a scandall, bound to rectifie them at all times. And therefore because I justly presume you strong and watchful enough, I make account that I am not obnoxious to that law, since my meditations are neither too wide nor too deep for you, except onely that my way of expressing them may be extended beyond your patience and pardon, which I will therefore tempt no longer at this time.

Your very affectionate friend and servant and lover I. Donne.

From Micham, my close prison ever since I saw you, 9 Octob.

[vii.]

To the Noblest Knight Sr Edward Herbert L. of Cherbury; sent to him with his Book Biathanatos.

SIR,

I Make accompt that this book hath enough performed that which it undertook, both by argument and example. It shall therefore the lesse need to be it self another example of the Doctrine. It shall not therefore kill it self; that is, not bury it self; for if it should do so, those reasons, by which that act should be defended or excused were also lost with it. Since it is content to live, it cannot chuse a wholsomer aire

then your Library, where Authors of all complexions are presented. If any of them grudge this book a room, and suspect it of new or dangerous doctrine, you who know us all, can best moderate. To those reasons which I know your love to me will make in my favour and discharge, you may adde this, that though this doctrine hath not been taught nor defended by writers, yet they, most of any sort of men in the world, have practised it.

Your very true and earnest freind and servant and lover J. Donne.

[viii.]

To Sr Robert Carre now Earle of Ankerum, with my Book Biathanatos at my going into Germany.

SIR,

I Had need do somewhat towards you above my promises; How weak are my performances, when even my promises are defective? I cannot promise, no not in mine own hopes, equally to your merit towards me. But besides the Poems, of which you took a promise, I send you another Book to which there belongs this History. It was written by me many years since; and because it is upon a misinterpretable subject, I have always gone so near suppressing it, as that it is onely not burnt: no hand hath passed upon it to copy it, nor many eyes to read it: onely to some particular friends in both Universities, then when I writ it, I did communicate it: And I remember, I had this answer, That certainly, there was a false thread in it, but not easily found: Keep it, I pray, with the same jealousie; let any that your discretion admits to the sight of it, know the date of it; and that it is a Book written by Jack Donne, and not by D[r]. Donne: Reserve it for me, if I live, and if I die, I only forbid it the Presse, and the Fire: publish it not, but yet burn it not; and between those, do what you will with it. Love me still, thus farre, for your own sake, that when you withdraw your love from me, you will finde so many unworthinesses in me, as you

grow ashamed of having had so long, and so much, such a thing as

Your poor servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[ix.]

To the Countesse of Bedford.

Madam,

Amongst many other dignities which this letter hath by being received and seen by you, it is not the least, that it was prophesied of before it was born: for your brother told you in his letter, that I had written: he did me much honour both in advancing my truth so farre as to call a promise an act already done; and to provide me a means of doing him a service in this act, which is but doing right to my self: for by this performance of mine own word, I have also justified that part of his Letter which concerned me; and it had been a double guiltinesse in me, to have made him guilty towards you. It makes no difference that this came not the same day, nor hears the same date as his; for though in inheritances and worldly possessions we consider the dates of Evidences, yet in Letters, by which we deliver over our affections, and assurances of friendship, and the best faculties of our souls, times and daies cannot have interest, nor be considerable, because that which passes by them, is eternall, and out of the measure of time. Because therefore it is the office of this Letter, to convey my best wishes, and all the effects of a noble love unto you, (which are the best fruits that so poor a soil, as my poor soul is, can produce) you may be pleased to allow the Letter thus much of the souls privilege, as to exempt it from straitnesse of hours, or any measure of times, and so beleeve it came then. And for my part, I shall make it so like my soul, that as that affection, of which it is the messenger, begun in me without my knowing when, any more then I know when my soul began; so it shall continue as long as that.

Your most affextionate friend and servant J. D.

[x.]

To the right honourable the Countess of Montgomery.

MADAM,

Of my ability to doe your Ladiship service, any thing spoken may be an embleme good enough; for as a word vanisheth, so doth any power in me to serve you; things that are written are fitter testimonies, because they remain and are permanent: in writing this Sermon which your Ladiship was pleased to hear before, I confesse I satisfie an ambition of mine own, but it is the ambition of obeying your commandment, not onely an ambition of leaving my name in your memory, or in the your Cabinet: and yet, since I am going out of the Kingdom, and perchance out of the world, (when God shall have given my soul a place in heaven) it shall the lesse diminish your Ladiship, if my poor name be preserved about you. I know what dead carkasses things written are, in respect of things spoken. But in things of this kinde, that soul that inanimates them, never departs from them: The Spirit of God that dictates them in the speaker or writer, and is present in his tongue or hand meets himself again (as we meet our selves in a glass) in the eies and ears and hearts of the hearers and readers: and that Spirit, which is ever the same to an equall devotion, makes a writing and a speaking equall means to edification. In one circumstance, my preaching and my writing this Sermon is too equall: that that your Ladiship heard in a hoarse voyce then, you read in a course hand now: but in thankfulnesse I shall lift up my hands as clean as my infirmities can keep them, and a voyce as clear as his spirit shall be pleased to tune in my prayers for your Ladyship in all places of the world, which shall either sustain or bury

Your Ladiships humble servant in Christ Iesus J. D.

[xi.]

To Sir H. R. [To Sir H. G.]

If a whole year be but Annus ab Annulo, because it returns into it self, what Annululus shall be diminutive enough, to express our weekly revolutions? In chaines the least linkes have most curiosity, but that can be no emblem of us: but they have also the most strength, and that may. The first sphere onely which is resisted by nothing, absolves his course every day; and so doth true friendship well placed, often iterate in act or purpose, the same offices. But as the lower spheres, subject to the violence of that, and yet naturally encouraged to a reluctation against it, have therefore many distractions, and eccentricities, and some trepidations, and so return but lamely, and lately to the same place, and office: so that friendship which is not moved primarily by the proper intelligence, discretion, and about the naturell center, vertue, doth perchance sometimes, some things, somewhat like true friendship; but hath many deviations, which are strayings into new loves, (not of other men; for that is proper to true wise friendship, which is not a marr[y]ing; but of other things) and hath such trepidations as keep it from shewing it self, where great persons do not love; and it returns to the true first station and place of friendship planetarily, which is uncertainly and seldome. I have ever seen in London and our Court, as some colours, and habits, and continuances, and motions, and phrases, and accents, and songs, so friends in fashion and in season: and I have seen them as sodainly abandoned altogether, though I see no change in them, nor know more why they were left, then why they were chosen. To do things by example, and upon confidence of anothers judgment may be some kinde of a second wisdome; but it is but writing by a copy: or indeed it is the hardest of all, and the issue of the first wisdome, for I cannot know that this example should be followed, except I knew that it is good, and so I judge my Judge. Our assent therefore, and arrest, must be upon things, not persons. And when we are sure we are in the right way, for great persons, we may be glad of their company, if they go our way; we may for them change our place, but not our end, nor our way, if there be but one, us [as] in

Religion. In persevering in it, it concerns as [us] much what our companions be, but very much what our friends. In which I know I speak not dangerously nor mis-appliably to you, as though I averted you from any of those friends, who are of other impressions then you or I in some great circumstances of Religion. You know I never fettered nor imprisoned the word Religion; not straightning it Frierly, ad Religiones factitias, (as the Romans call well their orders of Religion) nor immuring it in a Rome, or a Wittemberg, or a Geneva; they are all virtuall beams of one Sun, and wheresoever they finde clay hearts, they harden them, and moulder them into dust; and they entender and mollifie waxen. They are not so contrary as the North and South Poles; and that [?] they are connaturall pieces of one circle. Religion is Christianity, which being too spirituall to be seen by us, doth therefore take an apparent body of good life and works, so salvation requires an honest Christian. These are the two Elements, and he which elemented from these, hath the complexion of a good man, and a fit friend. The diseases are, too much intention into indiscreet zeal, and too much remisnesse and negligence by giving scandall: for our condition and state in this, is as infirm as in our bodies; where physitians consider only two degrees; sicknesse, and neutrality; for there is no health in us. This, Sir, I use to say to you, rather to have so good a witnesse and corrector of my meditations, then to advise; and yet to do that too, since it is pardonable in a friend: Not to slack you towards those friends which are religious in other clothes then we; (for Amici vitia si feras facis tua, is true of such faults) but to keep you awake against such as the place where you must live will often obtrude, which are not onely naked, without any fashion of such garments, but have neither the body of Religion, which is morall honestly, and sociable faithfulness, nor the soul, Christianity. I know not how this paper scaped last week which I send now; I was so sure that I enwrapped it then, that I should be so still, but that I had but one copy; forgive it as you use to do. From Micham in as much haste, and with as ill Pen and Inke, as the letter can accuse me of; but with the last and the next weeks heart and

affection.

Yours very truely and affectionately J. Donne.

[xii.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

This letter hath more merit, then one of more diligence, for I wrote it in my bed, and with much pain. I have occasion to sit late some nights in my study, (which your books make a prety library) and now I finde that that room hath a wholesome emblematique use: for having under it a vault, I make that promise me, that I shall die reading, since my book and a grave are so near. But it hath another unwholesomenesse, that by raw vapors rising from thence, (for I can impute it to nothing else) I have contracted a sicknesse which I cannot name nor describe. For it hath so much of a continuall Cramp, that it wrests the sinews, so much of a Tetane, that it withdraws and puls the mouth, and so much of the Gout, (which they whose counsell I use, say it is) that it is not like to be cured, though I am too hasty in three days to pronounce it. If it be the Gout, I am miserable; for that affects dangerous parts, as my neck and brest, and (I think fearfully) my stomach, but it will not kill me yet; I shall be in this world, like a porter in a great house, ever nearest the door, but seldomest abroad: I shall have many things to make me weary, and yet not get leave to be gone. If I go, I will provide by my best means that you suffer not for me, in your bonds. The estate which I should leave behinde me of any estimation, is my poor fame, in the memory of my friends, and therefore I would be curious of it, and provide that they repent not to have loved me. Since my imprisonment in my bed, I have made a meditation in verse, which I call a Litany; the word you know imports no other then supplication, but all Churches have one forme of supplication, by that name. Amongst ancient annals (I mean some 800 years) I have met two Letanies in

Latin verse, which gave me not the reason of my meditations, for in good faith I thought not upon them then, but they give me a defence, if any man to a Lay man, and a private, impute it as a fault, to take such divine and publique names, to his own little thoughts. The first of these was made by Ratpertus a Monk of Suevia; and the other by S. Notker, of whom I will give you this note by the way, that he is a private Saint, for a few Parishes; they were both but Monks, and the Letanies poor and barbarous enough; yet Pope Nicolas the 5, valued their devotion so much, that he canonized both their Poems, and commanded them for publike service in their Churches: mine is for lesser Chappels, which are my friends, and though a copy of it were due to you, now, yet I am so unable to serve my self with writing it for you at this time, (being some 30 staves of 9 lines) that I must intreat you to take a promise that you shall have the first, for a testimony of that duty which I owe to your love, and to my self, who am bound to cherish it by my best offices. That by which it will deserve best acceptation, is, That neither the Roman Church need call it defective, because it abhors not the particular mention of the blessed Triumphers in heaven; nor the Reformed can discreetly accuse it, of attributing more then a rectified devotion ought to doe. The day before I lay down, I was at London where I delivered your Letter for Sr Ed. Conway, and received another for you, with the copy of my Book, of which it is impossible for me to give you a copy so soon, for it is not of much lesse then 300 pages. If I die, it shall come to you in that fashion that your Letter desires it. If I warm again, (as I have often seen such beggers as my indisposition is, end themselves soon, and the patient as soon) you and I shal speak together of that, before it be too late to serve you in that commandment. At this time I onely assure you, that I have not appointed it upon any person, nor ever purposed to print it: which later perchance you thought, and grounded your request thereupon. A Gent. that visited me yesterday told me that our Church hath lost Mr Hugh Broughton, who is gone to the Roman side. I have known before, that Serarius the Jesuit was an instrument from Cardinall Baronius to draw him to Rome, to accept a

stipend, onely to serve the Christian Churches in controversies with the Jews, without indangering himself to change of his perswasion in particular deductions between these Christian Churches, or being enquired of, or tempted thereunto. And I hope he is no otherwise departed from us. If he be, we shall not escape scandall in it; because, though he be a man of many distempers, yet when he shall come to eat assured bread, and to be removed from partialities, to which want drove him, to make himself a reputation, and raise up favourers; you shall see in that course of opposing the Jews, he will produce worthy things: and our Church will perchance blush to have lost a Souldier fit for that great battell; and to cherish onely those single Duellisms, between Rome and England, or that more single, and almost self-homicide, between the unconformed Ministers, and Bishops. I writ to you last week that the plague increased; by which you may see that my Letters————opinion of the song, not that I make such trifles for praise; but because as long as you speak comparatively of it with mine own, and not absolutely, so long I am of your opinion even at this time; when I humbly thank God, I ask & have, his comfort of sadder meditations; I doe not condemn in my self, that I have given my wit such evaporations, as those, if they be free from prophaneness, or obscene provocations. Sr, you would pity me if you saw me write, and therefore will pardon me if I write no more: my pain hath drawn my head so much awry, and holds it so, that mine eie cannot follow mine hand: I receive you therefore into my prayers, with mine own weary soul, and commend my self to yours. I doubt not but next week I shall be good news to you, for I have mending or dying on my side, which is two to one. If I continue thus, I shall have comfort in this, that my B. Saviour exercising his Justice upon my two worldly parts, my fortune, and body, reserves all his mercy for that which best tasts it, and most needs it, my soul. I professe to you truly, that my lothnesse to give over now, seems to my self an ill sign, that I shall write no more.

Your poor friend, and Gods poor patient, Jo. Donne.

[xiii.]

To my worthy and honoured friend Mr George Garet.

Sir,

I Am sorry, if your care of me have made you importune to any body else; yet I cannot be very sorry because it gives new testimonies of your favour to me, of which I shall ever be very glad, and (that which is my onely vertue) thankfull: so desperate fortunes as mine may well make friends loth to doe curtesies, because an inability in deserving or requiring takes from them the honour of having done a curtesie, and leaves it but the poor name of an alms; and alms may be given in easier proportions, and more meritoriously. But Sr, by what name or weight soever you esteem this kindnesse which you have done me, I value it so, as might alone perswade me of your care of me; in recompense of which, you must be pleased to accept new assurances that I am

Your very affectionate servant, J. Donne.

I pray let my service be presented by you to Mr Roope.

[xiv.]

To Mr George Garet.

Sir,

I Have not received that Letter, which by this, I perceive you sent to London; if there were anything in that, by which I might have taken occasion to have done you service before this time, I have a double reason of grief for the want of it. I came from thence upon Thursday, where I left Sir Tho. Roe so indulgent to his sorrow, as it had been an injury to have interrupted it with my unusefull company. I have done nothing of that kinde as your Letter intimates, in the memory of that good Gentlewoman; if I had, I should not finde any better use of it, then to put it into your

hands. You teach me what I owe her memory; and if I pay that debt so, you have a part and interest in it, by doing me the honour of remembring it: and therefore it must come quickly to you. I hope not for return from Court, till I come thither; which if I can be master of my self, or servant to my self, which I think is all one, I hope to do some ten daies hence, making it my way to the Bathe. If you find any there that have not forgot my name, continue me in their favour, and hold in your self a firm assurance that I am

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xv.]

To Mrs Martha Garet.

Madame,

Though there be much merit, in the favour your brother hath done me in a visit, yet that which doth enrich and perfect it, is, that he brought you with him; which he doth, as well by letting me see how you do, as by giving me occasions, and leave to talk with you by this Letter: if you have any servant, which wishes you better then I, it must be because he is able to put his wishes into a better frame, and expresse them better, and understand proportion, and greatnesse better then I. I am willing to confesse my impotencie; which is, that I know no wish good enough for you; if any doe, my advantage is, that I can exceed his, by adding mine to it. You must not think that I begin to think thus, when you begin to hear it, by a Letter; As sometimes by the changing of the winde, you begin to hear a Trumpet, which sounded long before you heard it; so are these thoughts of you familiar and ordinary in me, though they have seldome the help of this conveyance to your knowledge: I am loth to leave; for as long as in any fashion, I can have your brother and you here, you make my house a kinde of Dorvey [Dorney]; but since I cannot stay you here, I will come thither to you; which I do, by wrapping up in this paper, the heart of

Your most affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xvi.]

To Sir Thomas Roe.

SIR,

It is an ease to your friends abroad, that you are more a man of businesse then heretofore; for now it were an injury to trouble you with a busie Letter. But by the same reason I were inexcusable if I should not write at all, since the lesse, the more acceptable; therefore, Sir, though I have no more to say, but to renew the obligations I have towards you, and to continue my place in your love, I would not forbear to tell you so. If I shall also tell you, that when this place affords any thing worth your hearing, I will be your relator, I think I take so long a day, as you would forget the debt, it appears yet to be so barren. Howsoever with every commodity, I shall say something, though it be but a descant upon this plain song, that I am

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xvii.]

To all my friends: Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

I Am not weary of writing; it is the course but durable garment of my love; but I am weary of wanting you. I have a minde like those bodies, which have hot Livers, and cold stomachs; or such a distemper as travelled me at Paris; a Fever, and dysentery: in which that which is physick to one infirmity, nourishes the other. So I abhor nothing more then sadnesse, except the ordinary remedy, change of company. I can allow my self to be Animal sociale, appliable to my company, but not gregale, to herd my self in every troup. It is not perfectly true which a very subtil, yet very deep

wit Averroes says, that all mankinde hath but one soul, which informes and rules us all, as one Intelligence doth the firmament and all the Starres in it; as though a particular body were too little an organ for a soul to play upon. And it is as imperfect which is taught by that religion wch is most accommodate to sense (I dare not say to reason (though it have appearance of that too) because none may doubt but that that religion is certainly best, which is reasonablest) That all mankinde hath one protecting Angel; all Christians one other, all English one other, all of one Corporation and every civill coagulation or society one other; and every man one other. Though both these opinions expresse a truth; which is, that mankinde hath very stronge bounds to cohabit and concurre in other then mountains and hills during his life. First, common, and mutuall necessity of one another; and therefore naturally in our defence and subventions we first flie to our selves; next, to that which is likest, other men. Then, naturall and inborn charity, beginning at home, which perswades us to give, that we may receive: And legall charity, which makes us also forgive. Then an ingraffing in one another, and growing together by a custome of society: and last of all, strict friendship, in which band men were so presumed to be coupled, that our Confessor King had a law, that if a man be killed, the murderer shall pay a sum felago suo, which the interpreters call, fide ligato, et comite vitæ. All these bands I willingly receive, for no man is lesse of himself then I: nor any man enough of himself. To be so, is all one with omnipotence. And it is well marked, that in the holy Book, wheresoever they have rendered Almighty, the word is Self-sufficient. I think sometimes that the having a family should remove me farre from the curse of Væ soli. But in so strict obligation of Parent, or Husband, or Master, (and perchance it is so in the last degree of friendship) where all are made one, I am not the lesse alone, for being in the midst of them. Therefore this oleum lætitiæ, this balme, of our lives, this alacrity which dignifies even our service to God, this gallant enemy of dejection and sadnesse, (for which and wickednesse the Italian allows but one word, Triste: And in full condemnation whereof it was

prophesied of our blessed Saviour, Non erit tristis, in his conversation) must be sought and preserved diligently. And since it grows without us, we must be sure to gather it from the right tree. They which place this alacrity only in a good conscience, deal somewhat too roundly with us, for when we aske the way, they shew us the town afar off: Will a Physitian consulted for health and strength, bid you have good sinews and equall temper? It is true, that this conscience is the resultance of all other particular actions; it is our triumph and banquet in the haven; but I would come towards that also, (as Mariners say) with a merry winde. Our nature is Meteorique, we respect (because we partake so) both earth and heaven, for as our bodies glorified shall be capable of spirituall joy, so our souls demerged into those bodies, are allowed to partake earthly pleasure. Our soul is not sent hither, only to go back again: we have some errand to do here: nor is it sent into prison, because it comes innocent: and he which sent it, is just. As we may not kill our selves, so we may not bury our selves: which is done or endangered in a dull Monastique sadnesse, which is so much worse then jolity (for upon that word I durst————And certainly despair is infinitely worse, then presumption: both because this is an excesse of love, that of fear; and because this is up, that down the hill; easier, and more stumbling. Heaven is expressed by singing, hell by weeping. And though our blessed Saviour be never noted to have laughed, yet his continuance [countenance] is said ever to be smiling. And that even moderate mirth of heart, and face, and [is] all I wish to my self; and perswade you to keep. This alacrity is not had by a general charity and equanimity to all mankinde, for that is to seek fruit in a wildernesse: nor from a singular friend, for that is to ketch it out of your own pocket: but the various and abundant grace of it, is good company. In which no rank, no number, no quality, but ill, and such a degree of that as may corrupt and poyson the good, is exempt. For in nearer then them, your friend, and somewhat nearer then he, in your self you must allow some inordinatenesse of affections and passions. For it is not true that they are not natural, but stormes and tempests of our bloud and

humours: for they are naturall, but sickly. And as the Indian priests expressed an excellent charity, by building Hospitalls and providing chirurgery for birds and beasts lamed by mischance, or age, or labour: so must we, not cut off, but cure these affections, which are the bestiall part.

[xviii.]

To Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

Every tuesday I make account that I turn a great hour-glass, and consider that a weeks life is run out since I writ. But if I aske my self what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed it without hurting any, so may the Spider in my window. The primitive Monkes were excusable in their retirings and enclosures of themselves: for even of them every one cultivated his own garden and orchard, that is, his soul and body, by meditation, and manufactures; and they ought the world no more since they consumed none of her sweetnesse, nor begot others to burden her. But for me, if I were able to husband all my time so thriftily, as not onely not to wound my soul in any minute by actuall sinne, but not to rob and cousen her by giving any part to pleasure or businesse, but bestow it all upon her in meditation, yet even in that I should wound her more, and contract another guiltinesse: As the Eagle were very unnaturall if because she is able to do it, she should pearch a whole day upon a tree, staring in contemplation of the majestie and glory of the Sun, and let her young Eglets starve in the nest. Two of the most precious things which God hath afforded us here, for the agony and exercise of our sense and spirit, which are a thirst and inhiation after the next life, and a frequency of prayer and meditation in this, are often envenomed, and putrefied, and stray into a corrupt disease: for as God doth thus occasion, and positively concurre to evill, that when a man is purposed to do a great sin, God infuses some good

thoughts which make him choose a lesse sin, or leave out some circumstance which aggravated that; so the devill doth not only suffer but provoke us to some things naturally good, upon condition that we shall omit some other more necessary and more obligatory. And this is his greatest subtilty; because herein we have the deceitfull comfort of having done well, and can very hardly spie our errour because it is but an insensible omission, and no accusing act. With the first of these I have often suspected my self to be overtaken; which is, with a desire of the next life: which though I know it is not merely out of a wearinesse of this, because I had the same desires when I went with the tyde, and enjoyed fairer hopes then now: yet I doubt worldly encombrances have encreased it. I would not that death should take me asleep. I would not have him meerly seise me, and onely declare me to be dead, but win me, and overcome me. When I must shipwrack, I would do it in a Sea, where mine impotencie might have some excuse; not in a sullen weedy lake, where I could not have so much as exercise for my swimming. Therefore I would fain do something; but that I cannot tell what, is no wonder. For to chuse, is to do: but to be no part of any body, is to be nothing. At most, the greatest persons, are but great wens, and excrescences; men of wit and delightfull conversation, but as moalls for ornament, except they be so incorporated into the body of the world, that they contribute something to the sustentation of the whole. This I made account that I begun early, when I understood the study of our laws: but was diverted by the worst voluptuousnes, which is an Hydroptique immoderate desire of humane learning and languages: beautifull ornaments to great fortunes; but mine needed an occupation, and a course which I thought I entred well into, when I submitted my self to such a service, as I thought might imploy[ed] those poor advantages, which I had. And there I stumbled too, yet I would try again: for to this hour I am nothing, or so little, that I am scarce subject and argument good enough for one of mine own letters: yet I fear, that doth not ever proceed from a good root, that I am so well content to be lesse, that is dead. You, Sir, are farre enough from these descents, your vertue keeps

you secure, and your naturall disposition to mirth will preserve you; but lose none of these holds, a slip is often as dangerous as a bruise, and though you cannot fall to my lownesse, yet in a much lesse distraction you may meet my sadnesse, for he is no safer which falls from an high tower into the leads, then he which falls from thence to the ground: make therefore to your self some mark, and go towards it alegrement. Though I be in such a planetary and erratique fortune, that I can do nothing constantly, yet you may finde some constancy in my constant advising you to it.

Your hearty true friend J. Donne.

I came this evening from M. Jones his house in Essex, where M. Martin hath been, and left a relation of Captain Whitcocks [Whitelock's] death, perchance it is no news to you, but it was to me; without doubt want broke him; for when M. Hollands company by reason of the plague broke, the Captain sought to be at Mris Jones house, who on her husbands absence declining it, he went in the night, his boy carrying his cloakbag, on foot to the Lord of Sussex, who going next day to hunt, the Captain not then sick, told him he would see him no more. A Chaplain came up to him, to whom he delivered an account of his understanding, and I hope, of his beliefe, and soon after dyed; and my Lord hath buryed him with his own Ancestors. Perchance his life needed a longer sicknesse, but a man may go faster and safer, when he enjoys that day light of a clear and sound understanding, then in the night or twilight of an ague or other disease. And the grace of Almighty God doth every thing suddenly and hastily, but depart from us, it enlightens us, warms us, heats us, ravishes us, at once. Such a medicin, I fear, his inconsideration needed; and I hope as confidently that he had it. As our soul is infused when it is created, and created when it is infused, so at her going out Gods mercy is had by asking, and that is asked by having. Lest your Polesworth carrier should cousen me, I send my man with this letter early to London, whither this Tuesday all the Court come to a Christening at Arondell house, and stay in town so that I will sup with the good Lady, and write again to-morrow to you, if any thing be occasioned there, which concerns you, and I

will tell her so; next day they are to return to Hampton, and upon friday the King to Royston.

[xix.]

To Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

If this which I send you inclosed give me right intelligence, I present you a way by which you may redeem all your former wastes, and recompense your ill fortunes, in having sometimes apprehended unsuccessfull suits, and (that which I presume you affect most) ease your self from all future inquisition of widowes or such businesses as aske so over industrious a pursuit, as devest a man from his best happinesse of enjoying himself. I give you (I think) the first knowledge, of two millions confiscated to the Crown of England: of which I dare assure myself the coffers have yet touched none; nor have the Commissioners for suits any thing to oppose against a suit founded upon this confiscation, though they hold never so strictly to their instructions. After you have served your self with a proportion, I pray make a petition in my name for as much as you think may be given me for my book out of this; for, but out of this, I have no imagination. And for a token of my desire to serve him, present M. Fowler with 3 or 4000 li. of this since he was so resolved never to leave his place, without a suit of that value. I wish your cousen in the town, better provided; but if he be not, here is enough for him. And since I am ever an affectionate servant to that journey, acquaint M. Martin from me, how easie it will be to get a good part of this for Virginia. Upon the least petition that M. Brook can present he may make himself whole again, of all which the Kings servants M. Lepton and master Waterouse, have endammaged him. Give him leave to offer to M. Hakevill enough to please himself, for his Aurum Reginæ. And if M. Gherard have no present hopefull designe upon a worthy Widow, let him have so much of this as

will provide him that house and coach which he promised to lend me at my return. If M. Inago Jones be not satisfied for his last Maske (because I hear say it cannot come to much) here is enough to be had: This is but a copy, but if Sir Ro. Cotton have the originall he will not deny it you; if he hath it not, no body else hath it, nor can prevent you; husband it well, which you may easily doe, because I assure my self none of the children nor friends of the party condemned will crosse you or importune the King for any part. If I get no more by it, yet it hath made me a Letter. And Sir (to depart from this Mine) in what part of my Letters soever you find the remembrance of my humble service to my Lord of Bedford, I beseech you ever think them intended for the first, and in that ranke present them. I have yet received but one Letter from you which was of the 10 of December by M. Pory, but you see that as long as there is one egge left in the nest, I never leave laying, nor should although you had sent none since; all at last will not amount to so good a testimony as I would fain give how much I am

Your affectionate servant and lover, J. Donne.

Sir, I write this Letter in no very great degree of a convalescence from such storms of a stomach colick as kept me in a continuall vomiting, so that I know not what I should have been able to doe to dispatch this winde, but that an honest fever came and was my physick: I tell you of it onely lest some report should make it worse, for me thinks that they who love to adde to news should think it a master-piece to be able to say no worse of any ill fortune of mine then it deserves, since commonly it deserves worse then they can say, but they did not, and I am reprieved. I finde dying to be like those facts which denying makes felony: when a sicknesse examines us, and we confess that we are willing to die, we cannot, but those who are——incurre the penalty: and I may die yet, if talking idly be an ill sign. God be with you.

[xx.]

To the same.

SIR,

It is in our State ever held for a good sign to change Prison, and nella Signoria de mi, I will think it so, that my sicknesse hath given me leave to come to my London-prison. I made no doubt but my entrance-pain (for it was so rather then a sicknesse, but that my sadnesse putrefied and corrupted it to that name) affected you also; for nearer Contracts then generall Christianity, had made us so much towards one [another], that one part cannot escape the distemper of the other. I was therefore very carefull, as well to slack any sorrow which my danger might occasion in you; as to give you the comfort of having been heard in your prayers for me, to tell you as soon as my pain remitted what steps I made towards health, which I did last week. This Tuesday morning your man brought me a Letter, which (if he had not found me at London) I see he had a hasty commandment to have brought to Micham. Sr, though my fortune hath made me such as I am, rather a sicknesse and disease of the world then any part of it, yet I esteemed my self so far from being so to you, as I esteemed you to be far from being so of the world, as to measure men by fortune or events. I am now gone so far towards health, as there is not infirmity enough left in me for an assurance of so much noblenesse and truth, as your last Letter is to work upon, that might cure a greater indisposition then I am now in: And though if I had died, I had not gone without testimonies of such a disposition in you towards the reparation of my fortune, or preservation of my poor reputation; yet I would live, and be some such thing as you might not be ashamed to love. Your man must send away this hour in which he visits me; and I have not yet (for I came last night) offered to visit my La. Bedford, and therefore have nothing to say which should make me grudge this straitnesse of time. He tels me he sends again upon Thursday, and therefore I will make an end of this Letter, and perfect it then. I doubt my Letters have not come duly to your hand, and that I writing in my dungeon of Michim without dating have made the Chronologie and sequence of my Letters

perplexed to you; howsoever you shall not be rid of this Ague of my Letters, though perchance the fit change daies. I have received in a narrow compasse three of yours, one with the Catalogue of your Books, another I found here left last Saterday by your man, and this which he brought me this morning. Sir, I dare sit no longer in my wastcoat, nor have any thing worth the danger of a relapse to write. I owe you so much of my health, as I would not mingle you in any occasion of repairing it, and therefore here ask leave to kisse your hands, and bid you good morrow and farewell.

Your very true friend and servant J. Donne.

[xxi.]

To Sr H. G.

Sir,

It should be no interruption to your pleasures, to hear me often say that I love you, and that you are as much my meditation as my self: I often compare not you and me, but the sphear in which your resolutions are, and my wheel; both I hope concentrique to God: for methinks the new Astronomie is thus appliable well, that we which are a little earth, should rather move towards God, then that he which is fulfilling, and can come no whither, should move towards us. To your life full of variety, nothing is old, nor new to mine; and as to that life, all stickings and hesitations seem stupid and stony, so to this, all fluid slipperinesses, and transitory migrations seem giddie and featherie. In that life one is ever in the porch or postern, going in or out, never within his house himself: It is a garment made of remnants, a life raveld out into ends, a line discontinued, and a number of small wretched points, uselesse, because they concurre not: A life built of past and future, not proposing any constant present; they have more pleasures then we, but not more pleasure; they joy oftner, we longer; and no man but of so much understanding as may deliver him from being a fool, would change with a mad-man, which had a better proportion of

wit in his often Lucidis. You know, they which dwell farthest from the Sun, if in any convenient distance, have longer daies, better appetites, better digestion, better growth, and longer life: And all these advantages have their mindes who are well removed from the scorchings, and dazlings, and exhalings of the worlds glory: but neither of our lives are in such extremes; for you living at Court without ambition, which would burn you, or envy, which would devest others, live in the Sun, not in the fire: And I which live in the Country without stupefying, am not in darknesse, but in shadow which is not no light, but a pallid, waterish, and diluted one. As all shadows are of one colour, if you respect the body from which they are cast (for our shadows upon clay will be dirty, and in a garden green, and flowery) so all retirings into a shadowy life are alike from all causes, and alike subject to the barbarousnesse and insipid dulnesse of the Country; onely the emploiment, and that upon which you cast and bestow your pleasure, businesse, or books, gives it the tincture, and beauty. But truly wheresoever we are, if we can but tell our selves truly what and where we would be, we may make any state and place such; for we are so composed, that if abundance, or glory scorch and melt us, we have an earthly cave, our bodies, to go into by consideration, and cool our selves: and if we be frozen, and contracted with lower and dark fortunes, we have within us a torch, a soul, lighter and warmer then any without: we are therefore our own umbrella's, and our own suns. These, Sir, are the sallads and onions of Micham, sent to you with as wholesome affection as your other friends send Melons and Quelque-choses from Court and London. If I present you not as good diet as they, I would yet say grace to theirs, and bid much good do it you. I send you, with this, a Letter which I sent to the Countesse. It is not my use nor duty to doe so, but for your having of it, there were but two consents, and I am sure you have mine, and you are sure you have hers. I also writ to her Lap for the verses she shewed in the garden, which I did not onely to extort them, nor onely to keep my promise of writing, for that I had done in the other Letter, and perchance she hath forgotten the promise; nor onely because I think my Letters just good enough for a

progresse, but because I would write apace to her, whilest it is possible to expresse that which I yet know of her, for by this growth I see how soon she will be ineffable.

[xxii.]

SIR,

Though my friendship be good for nothing else, it may give you the profit of a tentation, or of an affliction: It may excuse your patience; and though it cannot allure, it shall importune you. Though I know you have many worthy friends of all rankes, yet I adde something, since I which am of none, would fain be your friend too. There is some of the honour and some of the degrees of a Creation, to make a friendship of nothing. Yet, not to annihilate my self utterly (for though it seem humblenesse, yet it is a work of as much almightinesse, to bring a thing to nothing, as from nothing) though I be not of the best stuffe for friendship, which men of warm and durable fortunes only are, I cannot say, that I am not of the best fashion, if truth and honesty be that; which I must ever exercise, towards you, because I learned it of you: for the conversation with worthy men, and of good example, though it sow not vertue in us, yet produceth and ripeneth it. Your mans haste, and mine to Micham cuts off this Letter here, yet, as in littell paterns torn from a whole piece, this may tell you what all I am. Though by taking me before my day (which I accounted Tuesday) I make short payment of this duty of Letters, yet I have a little comfort in this, that you see me hereby, willing to pay those debts which I can, before my time.

Your affectionate friend J. Donne.

First Saturday in March. 1607.

You forget to send me the Apology; and many times, I think it an injury to remember one of a promise, lest it confesse a distrust. But of the book, by occasion of reading the Deans answer to it, I have sometimes some want.

[xxiii.]

To the Countesse of Bedford.

Happiest and worthiest Lady,

I Do not remember that ever I have seen a petition in verse, I would not therefore be singular, nor adde these to your other papers. I have yet adventured so near as to make a petition for verse, it is for those your Ladiship did me the honour to see in Twicknam garden, except you repent your making; and having mended your judgement by thinking worse, that is, better, because juster, of their subject. They must needs be an excellent exercise of your wit, which speaks so well of so ill: I humbly beg them of your Ladiship, with two such promises, as to any other of your compositions were threatenings: that I will not shew them, and that I will not beleeve them; and nothing should be so used that comes from your brain or heart. If I should confesse a fault in the boldnesse of asking them, or make a faulte by doing it in a longer Letter, your Ladiship might use your style and old fashion of the Court towards me, and pay me with a Pardon. Here therefore I humbly kisse your Ladiships fair learned hands, and wish you good wishes and speedy grants.

Your Ladiships servant J. Donne.

[xxiv.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere.

Because things be conserved by the same means, which established them, I nurse that friendship by Letters, which you begot so: though you have since strengthened it by more solid aliment and real offices. In these Letters from the Country there is this merit, that I do otherwise unwillingly turn mine eye or thoughts from my books, companions in whom there is no falshood nor forwardnesse: which words, I am glad to observe that the holy Authours often joyne as expressers and relatives to one

another, because else out of a naturall descent to that unworthy fault of frowardnesse, furthered with that incommodity of a little thinne house; I should have mistaken it to be a small thing, which now I see equalled with the worst. If you have laid my papers and books by, I pray let this messenger have them, I have determined upon them. If you have not, be content to do it, in the next three or four days. So, Sir, I kisse your hands; and deliver to you an intire and clear heart; which shall ever when I am with you be in my face and tongue, and when I am from you, in my Letters, for I will never draw Curtain between you and it.

Yours very affectionately J. Donne.

From your house at Micham friday morning.

When you are sometimes at M. Sackvills, I pray aske if he have this book, Baldvinus de officio pii hominis in controversiis; it was written at the conference at Poissy, where Beza was, and he answered it; I long for it.

[xxv.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Hope you are now well come to London, and well, and well comforted in your Fathers health and love, and well contented that we ask you how you doe, and tell you how we are, which yet I cannot of my self; If I knew that I were ill, I were well; for we consist of three parts, a Soul, and Body, and Minde: which I call those thoughts and affections and passions, which neither soul nor body hath alone, but have been begotten by their communication, as Musique results out of our breath and a Cornet. And of all these the diseases are cures, if they be known. Of our souls sicknesses, which are sinnes, the knowledge is, to acknowledge, and that is her Physique, in which we are not dieted by drams and scruples, for we cannot take too much. Of our bodies infirmities, though our knowledge be partly ab extrinseco, from

the opinion of the Physitian, and that the subject and matter be flexible, and various; yet their rules are certain, and if the matter be rightly applyed to the rule, our knowledge thereof is also certain. But of the diseases of the minde, there is no Criterium, no Canon, no rule; for, our own taste and apprehension and interpretation should be the Judge, and that is the disease it self. Therefore sometimes when I finde my self transported with jollity, and love of company, I hang Leads at my heels; and reduce to my thoughts my fortunes, my years, the duties of a man, of a friend, of a husband, of a Father, and all the incumbencies of a family: when sadnesse dejects me, either I countermine it with another sadnesse, or I kindle squibs about me again, and flie into sportfulnesse and company: and I finde ever after all, that I am like an exorcist, which had long laboured about one, which at last appears to have the Mother, that I still mistake my disease. And I still vex my self with this, because if I know it not, no body can know it. And I comfort my self, because I see dispassioned men are subject to the like ignorances. For divers mindes out of the same thing often draw contrary conclusions, as Augustine thought devout Anthony to be therefore full of the holy Ghost, because not being able to read, he could say the whole Bible, and interpret it; and Thyreus the Jesuit for the same reason doth thinke all the Anabaptists to be possessed. And as often out of contrary things men draw one conclusion: as to the Roman Church, magnificence and splendor hath ever been an argument of Gods favour, and poverty & affliction, to the Greek. Out of this variety of mindes it proceeds, that though all our souls would goe to one end, Heaven, and all our bodies must go to one end, the earth: yet our third part the minde, which is our naturall guide here, chooses to every man a severall way: scarce any man likes what another doth, nor advisedly, that which himself. But Sir, I am beyond my purpose; I meant to write a Letter, and I am fallen into a discourse, and I do not only take you from some businesse, but I make you a new businesse by drawing you into these meditations. In which yet let my opennesse be an argument of such love as I would fain expresse in some worthier fashion.

[xxvi.]

To Sir G. F.

SIR,

I Writ to you once this week before; yet I write again, both because it seems a kinde of resisting of grace, to omit any commodity of sending into England, and because any Pacquet from me into England should go, not only without just fraight, but without ballast, if it had not a letter to you. In Letters that I received from Sir H. Wotton yesterday from Amyens, I had one of the 8 of March from you, and with it one from Mrs Danterey, of the 28 of January: which is a strange disproportion. But, Sir, if our Letters come not in due order, and so make not a certain and concurrent chain, yet if they come as Atomes, and so meet at last, by any crooked, and casuall application, they make up, and they nourish bodies of friendship; and in that fashion, I mean one way or other, first or last, I hope all the Letters which have been addressed to us by one another, are safely arrived, except perchance that pacquet by the Cook be not, of which before this time you are cleare; for I received (as I told you) a Letter by M. Nat. Rich, and if you sent none by him, then it was that Letter, which the Cook tells you he delivered to M. Rich; which, with all my criticismes, I cannot reconcile; because in your last Letter, I find mention of things formerly written, which I have not found. However, I am yet in the same perplexity, which I mentioned before; which is, that I have received no syllable, neither from her self, nor by any other, how my wife hath passed her danger, nor do I know whether I be increased by a childe, or diminished by the losse of a wife. I hear from England of many censures of my book, of Mris Drury; if any of those censures do but pardon me my descent in Printing any thing in verse, (which if they do, they are more charitable then my self; for I do not pardon my self, but confesse that I did it against my conscience, that is, against my own opinion, that I should not have done so) I doubt not but they will soon give over that other part of that indictment, which is

that I have said so much; for no body can imagine, that I who never saw her, could have any other purpose in that, then that when I had received so very good testimony of her worthinesse, and was gone down to print verses, it became me to say, not what I was sure was just truth, but the best that I could conceive; for that had been a new weaknesse in me, to have praised any body in printed verses, that had not been capable of the best praise that I could give. Presently after Easter we shall (I think) go to Frankford to be there at the election, where we shall meet Sir H. Wotton and Sir Ro. Rich, and after that we are determined to passe some time, in the Palatinate. I go thither with a great deale of devotion for me thinkes it is a new kinde of piety, that as Pilgrims went heretofore to places which had been holy and happy, so I go to a place now, which shall be so, and more, by the presence of the worthiest Princess of the world, if that marriage proceed. I have no greater errand to the place then that at my return into England, I may be fitter to stand in her presence, and that after I have seen a rich and abundant Countrey, in his best seasons, I may see that Sun which shall always keep it in that height. Howsoever we stray, if you have leasure to write at any time, adventure by no other way, then M. Bruer [Brewer], at the Queens Armes, a Mercer, in Cheapside. I shall omit no opportunity, of which I doubt not to finde more then one before we go from Paris. Therefore give me leave to end this, in which if you did not finde the remembrance of my humblest services to my Lady Bedford, your love and faith ought to try all the experiments of pouders, and dryings, and waterings to discover some lines which appeared not; because it is impossible that a Letter should come from me, with such an ungrateful silence.

Your very true poor friend and servant and lover J. Donne.

This day begins a history, of which I doubt not but I shall write more to you before I leave this town. Monsieur de Rohan, a person for birth, next heire to the Kingdome of Navar, after the Kings children, (if the King of Spaine were weary of it) and for allyance, sonne in law to D. Sully, and for breeding in the wars and estate, the most renarkable man of the Religion, being Governour of S. Jean d’Angeli, one of the

most important towns which they of the Religion hold for their security, finding that some distasts between the Lieutenant and the Maior of the town, and him, were dangerously fomented by great persons, stole from Court, rode post to the town and removed these two persons. He sent his secretary, and another dependent of his to give the Queen satisfaction, who is so far from receiving it, that his messengers are committed to the Bastile likely to be presently tortured; all his friends here commanded to their houses, and the Queens companies of light horse sent already thitherward, and foot companies preparing, which troops being sent against a place, so much concerning those of the Religion to keep, and where they abound in number and strength, cannot chuse but produce effects worthy your hearing in the next Letter.

[xxvii.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

Because I am in a place and season where I see every thing bud forth, I must do so too, and vent some of my meditations to you; the rather because all other buds being yet without taste or virtue, my Letters may be like them. The pleasantnesse of the season displeases me. Every thing refreshes, and I wither, and I grow older and not better, my strength diminishes, and my load growes, and being to passe more and more stormes, I finde that I have not only cast out all my ballast which nature and time gives, Reason and discretion, and so am as empty and light as Vanity can make me; but I have over fraught my self with Vice, and so am riddingly subject to two contrary wrackes, Sinking and Oversetting, and under the iniquity of such a disease as inforces the patient when he is almost starved, not only to fast, but to purge. For I have much to take in, and much to cast out; sometimes I thinke it easier to discharge my self of vice then of vanity, as one may sooner carry the fire out of a room then

the smoake: and then I see it was a new vanity to think so. And when I think sometimes that vanity, because it is thinne and airie, may be expelled with vertue or businesse, or substantiall vice; I finde that I give entrance thereby to new vices. Certainly as the earth and water, one sad, the other fluid, make but one bodie: so to aire and Vanity, there is but one Centium morbi. And that which later Physicians say of our bodies, is fitter for our mindes: for that which they call Destruction, which is a corruption and want of those fundamentall parts whereof we consist, is Vice: and that Collectio stercorum, which is but the excrement of that corruption, is our Vanity and indiscretion: both these have but one root in me, and must be pulled out at once, or never. But I am so farre from digging to it, that I know not where it is, for it is not in mine eyes only, but in every sense, nor in my concupiscence only, but in every power and affection. Sir, I was willing to let you see how impotent a man you love, not to dishearten you from doing so still (for my vices are not infectious nor wandring, they came not yesterday, nor mean to go away to day: they Inne not, but dwell in me, and see themselves so welcome, and find in me so good bad company of one another, that they will not change, especially to one not apprehensive, nor easily accessible) but I do it, that your counsell might cure me, and if you deny that, your example shal, for I will as much strive to be like you as I will wish you to continue good.

[xxviii.]

To the Honourable Kt Sr H. Goodere one of the Gent. of his Majesties privy Chamber.

SIR,

You may remember that long since you delivered Mr Fowler possession of me, but the wide distance in which I have lived from Court, makes me reasonably fear, that now he knows not his right and power in me, though he must of necessity have all,

to whom you and I joyn in a gift of me, as we did to him, so that perchance he hath a servant of me, which might be passed in a book of concealment. If your leisure suffer it, I pray finde whether I be in him still, and conserve me in his love; and so perfect your own work, or doe it over again, and restore me to the place, which by your favour I had in him. For Mr Powell who serves her Maty as Clerk of her counsell, hath told me that Mr Fowler hath some purpose to retire himself; and therefore I would fain for all my love, have so much of his, as to finde him willing when I shall seek him at Court, to let me understand his purpose therein; for if my means may make me acceptable to the Queen and him, I should be very sorry he should make so farre steps therein with any other, that I should fail in it, onely for not having spoke to him soon enough. It were an injury to the forwardnesse of your love to adde more; here therefore I kisse your hands, and commend to you the truth of my love.

Your very affectionate servant and lover Jo. Donne.

From my lodging in the Strand, whither I shall return on Munday, 13 June 1607.

[xxix.]

To Sr H. G.

SIR,

You husband my time thriftily, when you command me to write by such a messenger, as can tell you more then I can write, for so he doth not onely carry the Letter, but is the Letter. But that the naming of some things, may give you occasion to ask him farther, and him to open himself unto you, give me leave to tell you, that the now Spa. Embassadour proceeds in the old pace, the King hath departed from his ordinary way so farre, as to appoint 9 of the Councell to treat with him; but when they came to any approaches, he answered, that he brought onely Commission to propose certain things, which he was ready to doe, but he had no instructions to

treat, but expected them upon an other return from his Master. So that there is no treaty for the marriage begun yet: for I know you have heard Olivarez his free acknowledgement, that til the Prince came, there was no thoght of it. The King in his gests of this progress, hath determined it, not as heretofore, at Windsor, but at Farnham during pleasure: so he is within a journey of Southampton; and even that circumstance adds to some other reasons, that he expects the Prince this Summer, and that Sir W. Crofts, in his last dispatches, enlarged the Prince in his liberty, from his Father, to come away, if he would. Amongst all the irregularities of this age, to me this is as strange as any, That this year there is no peace, and yet no sword drawn in the world; & it is a lost conjecture to think which way any of the Armies will bend. Here it is imagined, that Yukendorfe and Gabor (for, for any concurrence of love, it is but a dream) may so farre distresse Bohemia, as that Tilly must be recalled thither; and that if he be, Brunswikes way is open into Baviere, where he may recompense great losses, whilest Mansfield and Gonzales, and his Excellency and Spinola, keep the ballance even in their parts, by looking upon another. This noble friend of yours is in his last minute, in this Town; and I am going into the Coach with my Lo. to Hanworth. If I might have forborn the sealing the rest till my return from thence, you might have heard something more from

Your very true poor friend and humble servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

No straitnesse makes me forget my service to your daughters: If my Bell were tolling, I should pray for them, and though my Letter be sealing, I leave not out my wishes, that their fortunes may second their goodnesse. Amen.

[xxx.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

This Tuesday morning, which hath brought me to London, presents me with all your

Letters. Me thought it was a rent day, I mean such as yours, and not as mine; and yet such too, when I considered how much I ought you for them, how good a mother, how fertill and abundant the understanding is, if she have a good father; and how well friendship performs that office. For that which is denied in other generations is done in this of yours: for here is superfetation, childe upon childe, and that which is more strange twins at a latter conception. If in my second religion, friendship, I had a conscience, either errantem to mistake good and bad and indifferent, or opinantem to be ravished by others opinions or examples, or dubiam to adhere to neither part, or scrupulosam to incline to one, but upon reasons light in themselves, or indiscussed in me, (which are almost all the diseases of conscience) I might mistake your often, long, and busie Letters, and fear you did but intreat me to have mercy upon you and spare you; for you know our Court took the resolution, that it was the best way to dispatch the French Prince back again quickly, to receive him solemnly, ceremoniously, and expensively, when he hoped a domestique and durable entertainment. I never meant to excell you in weight nor price, but in number and bulk I thought I might, because he may cast up a greater summe who hath but forty small monies, then he with twenty Portuguesses. The memory of friends, (I mean onely for Letters) neither enters ordinarily into busied men, because they are never emploied within, nor into men of pleasure, because they are never at home. For these wishes therefore which you won out of your pleasure and recreation, you were as excusable to me if you writ seldome, as Sir H. Wotton is, under the oppression of businesse, or the necessity of seeming so; or more then he, because I hope you have both pleasure and businesse: onely to me, who have neither, this omission were sinne; for though writing be not of the precepts of friendship, but of the counsels, yet, as in some cases to some men counsels become precepts, and though not immediately from God, yet very roundly and quickly from his Church, (as selling and dividing goods in the first time, continence in the Romane Church, and order and decencie in ours) so to me who can do nothing else, it seems to binde my

conscience to write; and it is sinne to doe against the conscience, though that erre. Yet no mans Letters might be better wanted then mine, since my whole Letter is nothing else but a confession that I should and would write. I owed you a Letter in verse before by mine own promise, and now that you think that you have hedged in that debt by a greater by your Letter in verse, I think it now most seasonable and fashionable for me to break. At least, to write presently, were to accuse my self of not having read yours so often as such a Letter deserves from you to me. To make my debt greater (for such is the desire of all, who cannot or mean not to pay) I pray read these two problemes: for such light flashes as these have been my hawkings in my sorry [Surrey?] journies. I accompany them with another ragge of verses, worthy of that name for the smalnesse, and age, for it hath long lien among my other papers, and laughs at them that have adventured to you: for I think till now you saw it not, and neither you, nor it should repent it. Sir, if I were any thing, my love to you might multiply it, and dignifie it: But infinite nothings are but one such; yet since even Chymera's have some name and titles, I am also

Yours.

[xxxi.]

To your selfe.

SIR,

If this Letter finde you in a progresse, or at Bath, or at any place of equall leasure to our Spâ, you will perchance descend to reade so low meditations as these. Nothing in my L. of Salisburies death exercised my poor considerations so much, as the multitude of libells. It was easily discerned, some years before his death, that he was at a defensive war, both for his honour and health, and (as we then thought) for his estate: and I thought, that had removed much of the envy. Besides, I have just reasons to think, that in the chiefest businesses between the Nations, he was a very

good patriot. But I meant to speake of nothing but the libells, of which, all which are brought into these parts, are so tastelesse and flat, that I protest to you, I think they were made by his friends. It is not the first time that our age hath seen that art practised, That when there are witty and sharp libels made which not onely for the liberty of speaking, but for the elegancie, and composition, would take deep root, and make durable impressions in the memory, no other way hath been thought so fit to suppresse them, as to divulge some course [coarse], and railing one: for when the noise is risen, that libels are abroad, mens curiositie must be served with something: and it is better for the honour of the person traduced, that some blunt downright railings be vented, of which everybody is soon weary, then other pieces, which entertain us long with a delight, and love to the things themselves. I doubt not but he smoothered some libels against him in his life time. But I would all these (or better) had been made then, for they might have testified that the Authors had meant to mend him, but now they can have no honest pretence. I dare say to you, where I am not easily misinterpreted, that there may be cases, where one may do his Countrey good service, by libelling against a live man. For, where a man is either too great, or his Vices too generall, to be brought under a judiciary accusation, there is no way, but this extraordinary accusing, which we call Libelling. And I have heard that nothing hath soupled and allayed the D. of Lerma in his violent greatnesse, so much as the often libels made upon him. But after death, it is, in all cases, unexcusable. I know that Lucifer, and one or two more of the Fathers who writ libellous books against the Emperours of their times, are excused by our writers, because they writ not in the lives of those Emperours. I am glad for them that they writ not in their lives, for that must have occasioned tumult, and contempt, against so high and Soveraign persons. But that doth not enough excuse them to me, for writing so after their death; for that was ignoble, and uselesse, though they did a little escape the nature of libels, by being subscribed and avowed: which excuse would not have served in the Star-chamber, where sealed Letters have been judged Libels; but these

of which we speake at this present, are capable of no excuse, no amolishment, and therefore I cry you mercy, and my self too, for disliking them, with so much diligence, for they deserve not that. But Sir, you see by this, and by my Letter of last week, from hence the peremptory barrennesse of this place, from whence we can write nothing into England, but of that which comes from thence. Till the Lady Worster came hither, I had never heard any thing to make me imagine that Sir Rob. Rich was in England; the first hour that I had knowledge of it, I kisse his hands by this Letter. I make account to be in London, transitorily, about the end of August. You shall do me much favour, if I may finde a Letter from you (if you shall not then be there) at the Lady Bartlets: I shall come home in much ignorance, nor would I discern home by a better light, or any other then you. I can glory of nothing in this voyage, but that I have afflicted my Lady Bedford with few Letters. I protest earnestly to you, it troubles me much more to dispatch a pacquet into England, without a Letter to her, then it would to put in three. But I have been heretofore too immodest towards her, and I suffer this Purgatory for it. We make accounts to leave this place within 8 or 10 days, and hence to make our best haste to the Count Maurice, where we think to finde again the young Palatine: all this I tell you only because when you know, that we shall run too fast to write any more Letters, you may easily pardon the importunities and impertinencies of this, and cast into no lower place of your love

Your very true friend and servant J. Donne.

Spâ, 26 July here 1612.

[xxxii.]

To my Lord G. H.

SIR,

I Am near the execution of that purpose for France; though I may have other ends,

yet if it do but keep me awake, it recompenses me well. I am now in the afternoon of my life, and then it is unwholesome to sleep. It is ill to look back, or give over in a course; but worse never to set out. I speake to you at this time of departing, as I should do at my last upon my death-bed; and I desire to deliver into your hands a heart and affections, as innocent towards you, as I shall to deliver my soul into Gods hands then. I say not this out of diffidence, as though you doubted it, or that this should look like such an excuse, as implyed an accusation; but because my fortune hath burdened you so, as I could not rectifie it before my going, my conscience and interpretation (severer I hope then yours towards my self) calls that a kinde of demerit, but God who hath not only afforded us a way to be delivered from our great many debts, contracted by our Executorship to Adam, but also another for our particular debts after, hath not left poor men unprovided, for discharge of morall and civill debts; in which, acknowledgement, and thankfulnesse is the same, as repentance and contrition is in spiritual debts: and though the value and dignity of all these be not perchance in the things, but in the acceptation, yet I cannot doubt of it, either in God, or you. But Sir, because there is some degree of thankfulnesse in asking more (for that confesses all former obligations, and a desire to be still in the same dependency) I must intreat you to continue that wherein you have most expressed your love to me, which is, to maintain me in the same room in my Lady Bedfords opinion, in the which you placed me. I professe to you that I am too much bound to her, for expressing every way her care of my fortune, that I am weary before she is; and out of a loathnesse, that so good works should be bestowed upon so ill stuffe, or that so much ill fortune should be mingled with hers, as that she should misse any thing that she desired, though it were but for me. I am willing to depart from farther exercising her indevours in that kinde. I shall be bold to deliver my poor Letters to her Ladiships hands, through yours, whilest I am abroad though I shall ever account my self at home, whilest I am in your memory.

Your affectionate servant and lover J. Donne.

[xxxiii.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

Nature hath made all bodies alike, by mingling and kneading up the same elements in every one. And amongst men, the other nature, Custome, hath made every minde like some other; we are patterns, or copies, we informe, or imitate. But as he hath not presently attained to write a good hand, which hath equalled one excellent Master in his A, another in his B, much lesse he which hath sought all the excellent Masters, and imployed all his time to exceed on one Letter, because not so much an excellency of any, nor every one, as an evennesse and proportion, and respect to one another gives the perfection: so is no man vertuous by particular example. Not he that doth all actions to the pattern of the most valiant, or liberall, which Histories afford: nor he which chuses from every one their best actions, and thereupon doth something like those. Perchance such may be in via perficiendorum, which Divines allow to Monasticall life, but not perfectorum, which by them is only due to Prelacy. For vertue is even, and continuall, and the same, and can therefore break no where, nor admit ends, nor beginnings: it is not only not broken, but not tyed together. He is not vertuous, out of whose actions you can pick an excellent one. Vice and her fruits may be seen, because they are thick bodies, but not vertue, which is all light, and vices have swellings and fits, and noise, because being extreams, they dwell far asunder, and they maintain both a forein war against vertue, and a civill against one another, and affect Soveraignty, as vertue doth society. The later Physitians say, that when our naturall inborn preservative is corrupted or wasted, and must be restored by a like extracted from other bodies; the chief care is that the Mummy have in it no excelling quality, but an equally digested temper: And such is true vertue. But men who have preferred money before all, think they deal honourably with vertue, if they compare her with money: And think that as money is not called base, till the allay

exceed the pure; so they are vertuous enough, if they have enough to make their actions currant, which is, if either they get praise, or (in a lower abasing) if they incurre not infamy or penalty. But you know who said, Angusta innocentia est ad legem bonum esse: which rule being given for positive Laws, severe mistakers apply even to Gods Law, and (perchance against his Commandment) binde themselves to his Counsails, beyond his Laws. But they are worse, that thinke that because some men formerly wastfull, live better with half their rents then they did with all, being now advantaged with discretion and experience, therefore our times need lesse moral vertue then the first, because we have Christianity, which is the use and application of all vertue: as though our religion were but an art of thrift, to make a little vertue go far. For as plentifull springs are fittest, and best become large Aqueducts, so doth much vertue such a steward and officer as a Christian. But I must not give you a Homily for a Letter. I said a great while since, that custome made men like; we who have been accustomed to one another are like in this, that we love not business: this therefore shall not be to you nor me a busie Letter. I end with a probleme, whose errand is, to aske for his fellowes. I pray before you ingulfe your self in the progresse, leave them for me, and such other of my papers as you will lend me till you return. And besides this Allegoricall lending, send me truely your counsails, and love God and me, whilest I love him and you.

[xxxiv.]

To my very true and very good friend Sir Henry Goodere.

SIR,

At some later reading, I was more affected with that part of your Letter, which is of the book, and the namelesse Letters, then at first. I am not sorry, for that affection were for a jealousie or suspicion of a flexibility in you. But I am angry, that any should think, you had in your Religion peccant humours, defective, or abundant, or

that such a booke, (if I mistake it not) should be able to work upon you; my comfort is, that their judgment is too weak to endanger you, since by this it confesses, that it mistakes you, in thinking you irresolved or various: yet let me be bold to fear, that that sound true opinion, that in all Christian professions there is way to salvation (which I think you think) may have been so incommodiously or intempestively sometimes uttered by you; or else your having friends equally near you of all the impressions of Religion, may have testified such an indifferency, as hath occasioned some to further such inclinations, as they have mistaken to be in you. This I have feared, because hertofore the inobedient Puritans, and now the over obedient Papists attempt you. It hath hurt very many, not in their conscience, nor ends, but in their reputation, and ways, that others have thought them fit to be wrought upon. As some bodies are as wholesomly nourished as ours, with Akornes, and endure nakednesse, both which would be dangerous to us, if we for them should leave our former habits, though theirs were the Primitive diet and custome: so are many souls well fed with such formes, and dressings of Religion, as would distemper and misbecome us, and make us corrupt towards God, if any humane circumstance moved it, and in the opinion of men, though none. You shall seldome see a Coyne, upon which the stamp were removed, though to imprint it better, but it looks awry and squint. And so, for the most part, do mindes which have received divers impressions. I will not, nor need to you, compare the Religious. The channels of Gods mercies run through both fields; and they are sister teats of his graces, yet both diseased and infected, but not both alike. And I think, that as Copernicisme in the Mathematiques hath carried earth farther up, from the stupid Center; and yet not honoured it, nor advantaged it, because for the necessity of appearances, it hath carried heaven so much higher from it: so the Roman profession seems to exhale, and refine our wills from earthly Drugs, and Lees, more then the Reformed, and so seems to bring us nearer heaven; but then that carries heaven farther from us, by making us pass so many Courts, and Offices of Saints in this life, in all our petitions, and lying in a painfull prison in the

next, during the pleasure, not of him to whom we go, and who must be our Judge, but of them from whom we come, who know not our case. Sir, as I said last time, labour to keep your alacrity and dignity in an even temper: for in a dark sadnesse, indifferent things seem abominable, or necessary, being neither; as trees, and sheep to melancholique night-walkers have unproper shapes. And when you descend to satisfie all men in your own religion, or to excuse others to al[l], you prostitute your self and your understanding, though not a prey, yet a mark, and a hope, and a subject, for every sophister in Religion to work on. For the other part of your Letter, spent in the praise of the Countesse, I am always very apt to beleeve it of her, and can never beleeve it so well, and so reasonably, as now, when it is averred by you; but for the expressing it to her, in that sort as you seem to counsaile, I have these two reasons to decline it. That that knowledge which she hath of me, was in the beginning of a graver course, then of a Poet, into which (that I may also keep my dignity) I would not seem to relapse. The Spanish proverb informes me, that he is a fool which cannot make one Sonnet, and he is mad which makes two. The other stronger reason, is my integrity to the other Countesse, of whose worthinesse though I swallowed your opinion at first upon your words, yet I have had since an explicit faith, and now a knowledge: and for her delight (since she descends to them) I had reserved not only all the verses, which I should make, but all the thoughts of womens worthinesse. But because I hope she will not disdain, that I should write well of her Picture, I have obeyed you thus far, as to write: but intreat you by your freindship, that by this occasion of versifying, I be not traduced, nor esteemed light in that Tribe, and that house where I have lived. If those reasons which moved you to bid me write be not constant in you still, or if you meant not that I should write verses; or if these verses be too bad, or too good, over or under her understanding, and not fit; I pray receive them, as a companion and supplement of this Letter to you: and as such a token as I use to send, which use, because I wish rather they should serve (except you wish otherwise) I send no other; but after I have told you,

that here at a Christning at Peckam, you are remembered by divers of ours and I commanded to tell you so, I kisse your hands, and so seal to you my pure love, which I would not refuse to do by any labour or danger.

Your very true friend and servant J. Donne.

[xxxv.]

To Sr G. M.

If you were here, you would not think me importune, if I bid you good morrow every day; and such a patience will excuse my often Letters. No other kinde of conveyance is better for knowledge, or love: What treasures of Morall knowledge are in Senecaes Letters to onely one Lucilius? and what of Naturall in Plinies? how much of the storie of the time, is in Ciceroes Letters? And how all of these times, in the Jesuites Eastern and Western Epistles? where can we finde so perfect a Character of Phalaris, as in his own Letters, which are almost so many writs of Execution? Or of Brutus, as in his privie seals for monie? The Evangiles and Acts, teach us what to beleeve, but the Epistles of the Apostles what to do. And those who have endevoured to dignifie Seneca above his worth, have no way fitter, then to imagine Letters between him and S. Paul. As they think also that they have expressed an excellent person, in that Letter which they obtrude, from our B[lessed] Saviour to King Agabarus. The Italians, which are most discursive, and think the world owes them all wisdome, abound so much in this kinde of expressing, that Michel Montaig[n]e saies, he hath seen, (as I remember) 400 volumes of Italian Letters. But it is the other capacity which must make mine acceptable, that they are also the best conveyers of love. But, though all knowledge be in those Authors already, yet, as some poisons, and some medicines, hurt not, nor profit, except the creature in which they reside, contribute their lively activitie, and vigor; so much of the knowledge buried in Books perisheth, and becomes ineffectuall, if it be not

applied, and refreshed by a companion, or friend. Much of their goodnesse, hath the same period, which some Physicians of Italy have observed to be in the biting of their Tarentola, that it affects no longer, then the flie lives. For with how much desire we read the papers of any living now, (especially friends) which we would scarce allow a boxe in our cabinet, or shelf in our Library, if they were dead? And we do justly in it, for the writings and words of men present, we may examine, controll, and expostulate, and receive satisfaction from the authors; but the other we must beleeve, or discredit; they present no mean. Since then at this time, I am upon the stage, you may be content to hear me. And now that perchance I have brought you to it, (as Thom. Badger did the King) now I have nothing to say. And it is well, for the Letter is already long enough, else let this probleme supply, which was occasioned by you, of women wearing stones; which, it seems, you were afraid women should read, because you avert them at the beginning, with a protestation of cleanlinesse. Martiall found no way fitter to draw the Romane Matrons to read one of his Books, which he thinks most morall and cleanly, then to counsell them by the first Epigram to skip the Book, because it was obscene. But either you write not at all for women, or for those of sincerer palates. Though their unworthinesse, and your own ease be advocates for me with you, yet I must adde my entreaty, that you let goe no copy of my Problems, till I review them. If it be too late, at least be able to tell me who hath them.

Yours J. Donne.

[xxxvi.]

To Sr H. G.

I Send not my Letters as tribute, nor interest, not recompense, nor for commerce, nor as testimonials of my love, nor provokers of yours, nor to justifie my custome of writing, nor for a vent and utterance of my meditations; for my Letters are either

above or under all such offices; yet I write very affectionately, and I chide and accuse my self of diminishing that affection which sends them, when I ask my self why: onely I am sure that I desire that you might have in your hands Letters of mine of all kindes, as conveyances and deliverers of me to you, whether you accept me as a friend, or as a patient, or as a penitent, or as a beadsman, for I decline no jurisdiction, or refuse any tenure. I would not open any doore upon you, but look in when you open it. Angels have not, nor affect not other knowledge of one another, then they list to reveal to one another. It is then in this onely, that friends are Angels, that they are capable and fit for such revelations when they are offered. If at any time I seem to studie you more inquisitively, it is for no other end but to know how to present you to God in my prayers, and what to ask of him for you; for even that holy exercise may not be done inopportunely, no nor importunely. I finde little errour in that Grecians counsell, who saies, If thou ask any thing of God, offer no sacrifice, nor ask elegantly, nor vehemently, but remember that thou wouldest not give to such an asker: Nor in his other Countriman, who affirms sacrifice of blood to be so unproportionable to God, that perfumes, though much more spirituall, are too grosse. Yea words which are our subtillest and delicatest outward creatures, being composed of thoughts and breath, are so muddie, so thick, that our thoughts themselves are so, because (except at the first rising) they are ever leavened with passions and affections: And that advantage of nearer familiarity with God, which the act of incarnation gave us, is grounded upon Gods assuming us, not our going to him. And, our accesses to his presence are but his descents into us; and when we get any thing by prayer, he gave us before hand the thing and the petition. For, I scarce think any ineffectuall prayer free from both sin, and the punishment of sin: yet as God seposed a seventh of our time for his exterior worship, and as his Christian Church early presented him a type of the whole year in a Lent, and after imposed the obligation of canonique hours, constituting thereby morall Sabbaths every day; I am farre from dehorting those fixed devotions: But I had rather it were bestowed upon

thanksgiving then petition, upon praise then prayer; not that God is indeared by that, or wearied by this; all is one in the receiver, but not in the sender: and thanks doth both offices; for, nothing doth so innocently provoke new graces, as gratitude. I would also rather make short prayers then extend them, though God can neither be surprised, nor besieged: for, long prayers have more of the man, as ambition of eloquence, and a complacencie in the work, and more of the Devil by often distractions: for, after in the beginning we have well intreated God to hearken, we speak no more to him. Even this Letter is some example of such infirmitie, which being intended for a Letter, is extended and strayed into a Homilie. And whatsoever is not what it was purposed, is worse; therefore it shall at last end like a Letter by assuring you I am

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To your selfe.

SIR,

Sir Germander Pool, your noble friend and fellow in Armes, hath been at this house. I finde by their diligent inquiring from me, that he hath assured them that he hath much advanced your proceeding, by his resignation; but cooled them again with this, that the L. Spencer pretends in his room. I never feared his, nor any mans diligence in that; I feared onely your remisnesse, because you have a fortune that can endure, and a nature that can almost be content to misse. But I had rather you exercised your Philosophy and evennesse in some things else. He doth not nothing which falls cleanly and harmelesly; but he wrastles better which stands. I know you can easily forgive your self any negligences and slacknesses, but I am glad that you are ingaged to so many friends, who either by your self, or fame have knowledge of it. In all the rest of them there is a worthinesse, and in me a love which deserves to be satisfied. In this therefore, as you are forward in all things else, be content to do

more for your friends then you would for your self; endevour it, that is effect it.

Your very true friend and love J. Donne.

Tuesday.

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To Sir H. G.

SIR,

In the History or style of friendship, which is best written both in deeds and words, a Letter, which is of a mixed nature, and hath something of both, is a mixed Parenthesis: It may be left out, yet it contributes, though not to the being, yet to the verdure, and freshnesse thereof. Letters have truly the same office, as oaths. As these amongst light and empty men, are but fillings, and pauses, and interjections; but with weightier, they are sad attestations: So are Letters to some complement, and obligation to others. For mine, as I never authorized my servant to lie in my behalfe, (for if it were officious in him, it might be worse in me) so I allow my Letters much lesse that civill dishonest, both because they go from me more considerately, and because they are permanent; for in them I may speak to you in your chamber a year hence before I know not whom, and not hear my self. They shall therefore ever keep the sincerity and intemeratenesse of the fountain, whence they are derived. And as wheresoever these leaves fall, the root is in my heart, so shall they, as that sucks good affections towards you there, have ever true impressions thereof. This much information is in very leaves, that they can tell what the tree is, and these can tell you I am a friend, and an honest man. Of what generall use, the fruit should speake, and I have none: and of what particular profit to you, your application and experimenting should tell you, and you can make none of such a nothing; yet even of barren Sycamores, such as I, there were use, if either any light flashings, or scorching vehemencies, or sudden showres made you need so shadowy an example

or remembrancer. But (Sir) your fortune and minde do you this happy injury, that they make all kinde of fruits uselesse unto you; Therefore I have placed my love wisely where I need communicate nothing. All this, though perchance you read it not till Michaelmas, was told you at Micham, 15. August. 1607.

[xxxix.]

To my most worthy friend Sir Henry Goodere.

SIR,

Because evennesse conduces as much to strength and firmnesse as greatnesse doth, I would not discontinue my course of writing. It is a sacrifice, which though friends need not, friendship doth; which hath in it so much divinity, that as we must be ever equally disposed inwardly so to doe or suffer for it, so we must sepose some certain times for the outward service thereof, though it be but formall and testimoniall: that time to me towards you is Tuesday, and my Temple, the Rose in Smith-field. If I were by your appointment your Referendarie for news, I should write but short Letters, because the times are barren. The low Countries, which used to be the Mart of news for this season, suffering also, or rather enjoying a vacation. Since therefore I am but mine own Secretary (and what's that?) I were excusable if I writ nothing, since I am so: Besides that, your much knowledge brings you this disadvantage, that as stomachs accustomed to delicacies, finde nothing new or pleasing to them when they are sick; so you can hear nothing from me (though the Countrey perchance make you hungry) which you know not. Therefore in stead of a Letter to you, I send you one to another, to the best Lady, who did me the honour to acknowledge the receit of one of mine, by one of hers; and who only hath power to cast the fetters of verse upon my free meditations: It should give you some delight, and some comfort, because you are the first which see it, and it is the last which you shall see of this kinde from me.

Your very affectionate lover and servant J. Donne.

Micham the 14 August.

[xl.]

To Sir I. H.

Sir,

I Would not omit this, not Commodity, but Advantage of writing to you. This emptinesse in London, dignifies any Letter from hence, as in the seasons, earlinesse and latenesse, makes the sowrenesse, and after the sweetnesse of fruits acceptable and gracious. We often excuse and advance mean Authors, by the age in which they lived, so will your love do this Letter; and you will tell your self, that if he which writ it knew wherein he might expresse his affection, or any thing which might have made his Letter welcommer, he would have done it. As it is, you may accept it so, as we do many China manufactures, of which when we know no use, yet we satisfie our curiosity in considering them, because we knew not how, nor of what matter they were made. Near great woods and quarries it is no wonder to see faire houses, but in Holland which wants both, it is. So were it for me who am as farre removed from Court, and knowledge of forein passages, as this City is now from the face and furniture of a City, to build up a long Letter, and to write of my self were but to inclose a poor handfull of straw for a token in a Letter: yet I will tell you, that I am at London onely to provide for Monday, when I shall use that favour which my Lady Bedford hath afforded me, of giving her name to my daughter; which I mention to you, as well to shew that I covet any occasion of a gratefull speaking of her favours, as that, because I have thought the day is likely to bring you to London, I might tell you, that my poor house is in your way and you shall there finde such company, as (I think) you will not be loth to accompany to London.

Your very true friend J. Donne.

6 Aug. 1608.

[xli.]

To Sir H. Wootton.

SIR,

That which is at first but a visitation, and a civill office, comes quickly to be a haunting, and an uncivill importunity: my often writing might be subject to such a misinterpretation, if it were not to you, who as you know that the affection which suggests and dictates them, is ever one, and continuall, and uninterrupted, may be pleased to think my Letters so too, and that all the pieces make but one long Letter, and so I know you would not grudge to read any intire book of mine, at that pace, as you do my Letters, which is a leafe a week: especially such Letters as mine, which (perchance out of the dulnesse of the place) are so empty of any relations, as that they oppresse not your meditations, nor discourse, nor memory. You know that for aire we are sure we apprehend and enjoy it, but when this aire is rarified into fire, we begin to dispute whether it be an element, or no: so when Letters have a convenient handsome body of news, they are Letters; but when they are spun out of nothing, they are nothing, or but apparitions, and ghosts, with such hollow sounds, as he that hears them, knows not what they said. You (I think) and I am much of one sect in the Philosophy of love; which though it be directed upon the minde, doth inhere in the body, and find piety entertainment there: so have Letters for their principall office, to be seals and testimonies of mutuall affection, but the materialls and fuell of them should be a confident and mutuall communicating of those things which we know. How shall I then who know nothing write Letters? Sir, I learn knowledge enough out of yours to me. I learn that there is truth and firmnesse and an earnestness of doing good alive in the world; and therefore, since there is so good company in it, I have not so much desire to go out of it, as I had, if my fortune

would afford me any room in it. You know I have been no coward, nor unindustrious in attempting that; nor will I give it over yet. If at last, I must confesse, that I dyed ten years ago, yet as the Primitive Church admitted some of the Jews Ceremonies not for perpteuall use, but because they would bury the Synagogue honourably, though I dyed at a blow then when my courses were diverted, yet it wil please me a little to have had a long funerall, and to have kept my self so long above ground without putrefaction. But this is melancholique discourse; To change therefore from this Metaphoricall death to the true, and that with a little more relish of mirth, let me tell you the good nature of the executioner of Paris: who when Vatan was beheaded, (who dying in the profession of the Religion, had made his peace with God in the prison, and so laid nothing at the place of execution) swore he had rather execute forty Huguenots, then one Catholique, because the Huguenot used so few words, and troubled him so little, in respect of the dilatory ceremonies of the others, in dying. Cotton the great Court Jesuit hath so importuned the Q[ueen] to give some modifications to the late interlocutory arrest against the Jesuits, that in his presence, the C[ount] Soisons, who had been present in the Court at the time of the arrest, and Servin the Kings Advocate, who urged it, and the Premier president, were sent for: They came so well provided with their books, out of which they assigned to the Q. so many, so evident places of seditious doctrine, that the Q. was well satsified, that it was fit by all means to provide against the teaching of the like doctrine in France. The D[uke] of Espernon is come to Paris, with (they say) 600 horse in his train; all which company, came with him into the Court: which is an insolency remarkable here. They say that scarce any of the Princes appear in the streets, but with very great trains. No one enemy could wast the treasures of France so much, as so many friends do: for the Q. dares scarce deny any, that so she may have the better leave to make haste to advance her Marquis of Ancre, of whose greatnesse, for matter of command, or danger, they have no great fear, he being no very capable nor stirring man: and then for his drawing of great benefits from the Q.

they make that use of it, that their suits passe with lesse opposition. I beleeve the treasure is scattered, because I see the future receipt charged with so very many and great pensions. The Q. hath adventured a little to stop this rage of the Princes importunity, by denying a late suit of Soissons: which though the other Princes grudge not that Soisson should faile, for he hath drawn infinite sums already, yet they resent it somewhat tenderly, that any of them should be denyed, when the Marquis obtains. That which was much observed in the Kings more childish age, when I was last here, by those whom his father appointed to judge, by an assiduous observation, his naturall inclination, is more and more confirmed, that his inclinations are cruell, and tyrannous; and when he is any way affected, his stammering is so extreme, as he can utter nothing. They cannot draw him to look upon a son of the Marquis, whom they have put into his service. And he was so extremely affectionate towards the younger son of Beaufort, that they have removed him to a charge which he hath, as he is made Prieur of Malta; but yet there passe such Letters between them, by stealth and practise, as (though it be between children) it is become a matter of State, and much diligence used to prevent the Letters. For the young Marquis of Vervueil, the K[ing] speaks often of transplanting him into the Church, and once this Christmas delighted himself to see his young brother in a Cardinalls habit. Sir, it is time to take up, for I know, that any thing, from this place, as soon as it is certain, is stale. I have been a great while more mannerly towards my Lady Bedford, then to trouble her with any of mine own verses, but having found these French verses accompanied with a great deal of reputation here, I could not forbear to aske her leave to send them. I writ to you by Mr Pory the 17 of Jan. here, and he carried that Letter to Paris, to gather news, like a snowball. He told me that Pindar is gone to Constantinople with Commission to remove and succeed Glover: I am afraid you have neglected that businesse. Continue me in M[r.] Martins good opinion. I know I shall never fall from it, by any demerit of mine, and I know I need not fear it, out of any slacknesse or slipperinesse

in him, but much businesse may strangle me in him. When it shall not trouble you to write to me, I pray do me the favour to tell me, how many you have received from me, for I have now much just reason to imagine, that some of my Pacquets have had more honour then I wished them: which is to be delivered into the hands of greater personages, then I addressed them unto. Hold me still in your own love, and proceed in that noble testimony of it, of which your Letter by M. Pory spoke, (which is the only Letter that I have received, since I came away) and beleeve me that I shall ever with much affection, and much devotion joine both your fortune and your last best happinesse, with the desire of mine own in all my civill and divine wishes as the only retribution in the power of

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xlii.]

To the Honorable Knight Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

If I would go out of my way for excuses, or if I did not go out of my way from them; I might avoid writing now because I cannot chuse but know, that you have in this town abler servants, and better understanding the persons and passages of this Court. But my hope is not in the application of other mens merits, to me however abundant. Besides, this town hath since our comming hither, afforded enough for all to say. That which was done here the 25 of March, and which was so long called a publication of the marriages, was no otherwise publique then that the Spa[nish] Ambassador, having that day an audience, delivered to the Queen that his Master was well pleased with all those particulars which had been formerly treated. And the French Ambassador in Spain is said to have had instruction, to do the same office in that Court, the same day. Since that, that is to say, these 4 last days, it hath been solemnized with more outward bravery then this Court is remembered to have

appeared in. The main bravery was the number of horses which were above 800 Caparazond. Before the daies, the town was full of the 5 Challengers cartells, full of Rodomontades: but in the execution, there were noe personall reencounters, nor other triall of any ability, then running at the Quintain, and the Ring. Other particulars of this, you cannot chuse but hear too much, since at this time there come to you so many French men. But lest you should beleeve too much, I present you these 2 precautions, that for their Gendarmery, there was no other trial then I told you; & for their bravery, no true stuffe. You must of necessity have heard often of a Book written against the Popes jurisdiction, about three moneths since, by one Richer, a Dr and Syndique of the Sorbonists, which Book hath now been censured by an assembly of the Clergie of this Archbishoprick, promoved with so much diligence by the Cardinall Peroun [du Perron], that for this businesse he hath intermitted his replie to the Kings answer, which now he retires to intend seriously: I have not yet had the honour to kisse his Graces hand, though I have received some half-invitations to do it. Richer was first accused to the Parliament, but when it was there required of his delators to insist upon some propositions in his Book, which were either against Scripture, or the Gallican Church, they desisted in that pursuit. But in the censure which the Clergie hath made, though it be full of modifications and reservations of the rights of the King, and the Gallican Churches, there is this iniquitie, that being to be published by commandment of the Assembly, in all the Churches of Paris, which is within that Diocese, and almost all the Curates of the Parishes of Paris being Sorbonists, there is by this means a strong party of the Sorbonists themselves raised against Richer; yet against this censure, and against three or four which have opposed Richer in print, he meditates an answer. Before it should come forth I desired to speak with him, for I had said to some of the Sorbonist of his party, that there was no proposition in his Book, which I could not shew in Catholique authors of 300 years: I had from him an assignation to meet, and at the hour he sent me his excuse, which was, that he had been traduced to have had

conference with the Ambassadors of England, and the States, and with the D[uke] of Bovillon, and that he had accepted a pension of the King of England; and withall, that it had been very well testified to him that day, that the Jesuits had offered to corrupt men with rewards to kill him. Which I doubt not but he apprehended for true, because a messenger whom I sent to fixe another time of meeting with him, found him in an extreme trembling, and irresolutions: so that I had no more, but an intreaty to forbear comming to his house, or drawing him out of it, till it might be without danger or observation. They of the Religion held a Synod at this time in this Town, in which the principall businesse is to rectifie, or at least to mature, against their Provinciall Synod, which shall be held in May, certain opinions of Tilenus a Divine of Sedan, with which the Churches of France are scandalized. The chief point is, Whether our salvation be to be attributed to the passive merit of Christ, which is his death, or to his active also, which is his fulfilling of the Law. But I doubt not but that will be well composed, if Tilenus who is here in person with two other assistants, bring any disposition to submit himself to the Synod, and not onely to dispute. I doe (I thank God) naturally and heartily abhorre all schism in Religion so much, as, I protest, I am sorry to finde this appearance of schism amongst our adversaries the Sorbonists; for I had rather they had held together, to have made a head against the usurpations of the Ro[man] Church, then that their disuniting should so enfeeble them, as that the Parliament should be left alone to stand against those tyrannies. Sir, you will pardon my extravagancies in these relations. I look upon nothing so intentively as these things, nor fals there any thing within my knowledge, which I would conceal from you. Though it concern not you to know it, yet me thinks it concerns me to tell it. That Cook of which you writ to me, is come hither, and hath brought me other Letters, but not those of which you writ to me, which pacquet, he saies, you received again of him; whether by his falshood, or by your diligence in seeking a worthier messenger, I know not; but I am sure I never lost any thing with more sorrow, because I am thereby left still in uncertainties, and

irresolutions, of that which I desire much to know in womens businesses. If you write this way any more, chuse no other means, then by Mr Bruer at the Queens Arms, a Mercer in Cheapside: he shall alwaies know where we are, and we are yet in a purpose to go from hence within a fortnight, and dispose our selves to be at Frankford the 25 of May, when the election of the Emperor shall be there. Though I be meerly passive in all this pilgrimage, yet I shall be willing to advance that design; because upon my promise that I would doe so, Sir Rob. Rich gave me his, that he would divert from his way to Italy so much, as to be there then. When I came to this Town I found Mr Matthew, diligent to finde a means to write to you; so that at this time, when there go so many, I cannot doubt but he provides himself, therefore I did not ask his commandement, nor offer him the service of this Pacquet. Sir, you are not evener to your self, in your most generall wishes of your own good, then I am in my particular, of which none rises in me, that is not bent upon your enjoying of peace and reposednesse in your fortunes, in your affections, and in your conscience; more then which I know not how to wish to

Your very affectionate servant and lover J. Donne.

Paris the 9 Apr. 1612. here.

[xliii.]

To Sir H. Wotton.

Octob. the 4th 1622. almost ad midnight.

SIR,

All our moralities are but our out-works, our Christianity is our Citadel; a man who considers duty but the dignity of his being a man, is not easily beat from his outworks, but from his Christianity never; and therefore I dare trust you, who contemplates them both. Every distemper of the body now, is complicated with the spleen, and when we were young men we scarce ever heard of the spleen. In our

declinations now, every accident is accompanied with heavy clouds of melancholy; and in our youth we never admitted any. It is the spleen of the minde, and we are affected with vapors from thence; yet truly, even this sadnesse that overtakes us, and this yeelding to the sadnesse, is not so vehement a poison (though it be no Physick neither) as those false waies, in which we sought our comforts in our looser daies. You are able to make rules to your self, and our B[lessed] Saviour continue to you an ability to keep within those rules. And this particular occasion of your present sadnesse must be helped by the rule, for, for examples you will scarce finde any, scarce any that is not encombred and distressed in his fortunes. I had locked my self, sealed and secured my self against all possibilities of falling into new debts, and in good faith, this year hath thrown me 400l lower then when I entred this house. I am a Father as well as you, and of children (I humbly thank God) of as good dispositions; and in saying so, I make account that I have taken my comparison as high as I could goe; for in good faith, I beleeve yours to be so: but as those my daughters (who are capable of such considerations) cannot but see my desire to accommodate them in this world, so I think they will not murmure if heaven must be their Nunnery, and they associated to the B. virgins there: I know they would be content to passe their lives in a Prison, rather then I should macerate my self for them, much more to suffer the mediocrity of my house, and my means, though that cannot preferre them: yours are such too, and it need not that patience, for your fortune doth not so farre exercise their patience. But to leave all in Gods hands, from whose hands nothing can be wrung by whining but by praying, nor by praying without the Fiat voluntas tua. Sir, you are used to my hand, and, I think have leisure to spend some time in picking out sense, in ragges; else I had written lesse, and in longer time. Here is room for an Amen; the prayer——so I am going to my bedside to make for all you and all yours, with

Your true friend and servant in Chr. Jesus J. Donne.

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A. V. Merced.

SIR,

I Write not to you out of my poor Library, where to cast mine eye upon good Authors kindles or refreshes sometimes meditations not unfit to communicate to near friends; nor from the high way, where I am contracted, and inverted into my self; which are my two ordinary forges of Letters to you. But I write from the fire side in my Parler, and in the noise of three gamesome children; and by the side of her, whom because I have transplanted into a wretched fortune, I must labour to disguise that from her by all such honest devices, as giving her my company, and discourse, therefore I steal from her, all the time which I give this Letter, and it is therefore that I take so short a list, and gallop so fast over it. I have not been out of my house since I received your pacquet. As I have much quenched my senses, and disused my body from pleasure, and so tried how I can indure to be mine own grave, so I try now how I can suffer a prison. And since it is but to build one wall more about our soul, she is still in her own Center, how many circumferences soever fortune or our own perversnesse cast about her. I would I could as well intreat her to go out, as she knows whither to go. But if I melt into a melancholy whilest I write, I shall be taken in this manner: and I sit by one too tender towards these impressions, and it is so much our duty, to avoid all occasions of giving them sad apprehensions, as S. Hierome accuses Adam of no other fault in eating the Apple, but that he did it Ne contristaretur delicias suas. I am not carefull what I write, because the inclosed Letters may dignifie this ill favoured bark, and they need not grudge so course a countenance, because they are now to accompany themselves, my man fetched them, and therefore I can say no more of them then themselves say. Mris Meauly intreated me by her Letter to hasten hers, as I think, for by my troth I cannot read it. My Lady was dispatching in so much haste for Twicknam, as she gave no word to a

Letter which I sent with yours; of Sir Tho. Bartlet, I can say nothing, nor of the plague, though your Letter bid me: but that he diminishes, the other increases, but in what proportion I am not clear. To them at Hammersmith, and Mris Herbert I will do your command. If I have been good in hope, or can promise any little offices in the future probably, it is comfortable, for I am the worst present man in the world; yet the instant, though it be nothing, joynes times together, and therefore this unprofitableness, since I have been, and will still indevour to be so, shall not interrupt me now from being

Your servant and lover J. Donne.

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To the best Knight Sir H. Wootton.

SIR,

When I saw your good Countesse last, she let me think that her message by her foot-man would hasten you up. And it furthered that opinion in me, when I knew how near M. Mathews day of departing this kingdome was. To counterpoyse both these, I have a little Letter from you brought to me to Micham yesterday, but left at my lodging two days sooner: and because that speaks nothing of your return, I am content to be perplexed in it: and as in all other, so in this perplexity to do that which is safest. To me it is safest to write, because it performes a duty, and leaves my conscience well: and though it seem not safest for the Letter, which may perish, yet I remember that in the Crociate [Crusade] for the warres in the Holy Land, and so in all Pilgrimages enterprised in devotion, he which dies in the way, enjoys all the benefit and indulgences which the end did afford. Howsoever, all that can encrease my merit; for, as where they immolate men, it is a scanter devotion, to sacrifice one of many slaves or of many children, or an onely child, then to beget and bring up one purposely to sacrifice it, so if I ordain this Letter purposely for destruction, it is

the largest expressing of that kinde of piety, and I am easie to beleeve (because I wish it) your hast hither: Not that I can fear any slacknesse in that business which drew you down, because your fortune and honour are a paire of good spurs to it; but here also you have both true businesse and many Quasi negotia, which go two and two to a businesse; which are visitations, and such, as though they be not full businesses, yet are so near them that they serve as for excuses, in omissions of the other. As when abjuration was in use in this land, the State and law was satisfied if the abjuror came to the sea side, and waded into the sea, when windes and tydes resisted, so we think our selves justly excusable to our friends and our selves, if when we should do businesse, we come to the place of businesse, as Courts and the houses of great Princes and officers. I do not so much intimate your infirmity in this, as frankly confesse mine own. The master of Latine language says, Oculi & aures aliorum te speculantur & custodiunt. So those two words are synonimous, & only the observation of others upon me, is my preservation from extream idlenesse, else I professe, that I hate businesse so much, as I am sometimes glad to remember that the Roman Church reads that verse A negotio perambulante in tenebris, which we reade from the pestilence walking by night, so equall to me do the plague and businesse deserve avoiding, but you will neither beleeve that I abhor businesse, if I enlarge this Letter, nor that I would afford you that ease which I affect. Therefore returne to your pleasures.

Your unprofitablest friend J. Donne.

March 14. 1607[8].

It is my third Letter: which I tell you, because I found not Mr Rogers, but left the Letter which I sent last, with a stranger at Cliffords Inne.

[xlvi.]

To Sir H. G.

Sir,

This 14 of November last I received yours of the 9, as I was in the street going to sup with my Lady Bedford; I found all that company forepossessed with a wonder why you came not last saturday. I perceive, that as your intermitting your Letters to me, gave me reason to hope for you, so some more direct addresse or conscience of your businesse here, had imprinted in them an assurance of your comming. This Letter shall but talke, not discourse; it shall but gossip, not consider, nor consult, so it is made halfe with a prejudice of being lost by the way. The King is gone this day for Royston: and hath left with the Queen a commandment to meditate upon a Masque for Christmas, so that they grow serious about that already; that will hasten my Lady Bedfords journey, who goes within ten days from hence to her Lord, but by reason of this, can make no long stay there. Justinian the Venetian [ambassador] is gone hence, and one Carraw [Carow] come in his place: that State hath taken a fresh offence at a Friar, who refused to absolve a Gentleman, because he would not expresse in confession, what books of Father Paul, and such, he knew to be in the hands of any others; the State commanded him out of that territory in three hours warning, and he hath now submitted himself, and is returned as prisoner for Mantua, and so remains as yet. Sir H. Wootton who writ hither, addes also that upon his knowledge there are 14000 as good Protestants as he in that State. The Duke Joyeuse is dead, in Primont [Peidmont], returning from Rome, where M. Mole [Molé] who went with the L[ord] Rosse, is taken into the Inquisition, and I see small hope of his recovery, for he had in some translations of Plessis books talked of Babylon and Antichrist. Except it fall out that one Strange a Jesuit in the Tower, may be accepted for him. To come a little nearer my self, Sir Geffery Fenton one of his Majesties Secretaries in Ireland is dead; and I have made some offer for the place, in preservation whereof, as I have had occasion to imploy all my friends, so I have not found in them all (except Bedford) more hast and words (for when those two are together, there is much comfort even in the least) then in the L. Hay. In good

faith he promised so roundly, so abundantly, so profusely, as I suspected him, but performed what ever he undertook, (and my requests were the measures of his undertakings) so readily and truly, that his complements became obligations, and having spoke like a Courtier, did like a friend. This I tell you, because being farre under any ability of expressing my thankfulnesse to him by any proportionall service, I do, as much as I can, thank him by thanking of you, who begot, or nursed these good impressions of me in him. Sir, as my discretion would do, my fortune doth bring all my debts into one hand, for I owe you what ever Court friends do for me, yea, whatsoever I do for myself, because you almost importune me, to awake and stare the Court in the face. I know not yet what conjecture to make of the event. But I am content to go forward a little more in the madnesse of missing rather then not pretend; and rather wear out, then rust. It is extreme late; and as this Letter is nothing, so if ever it come to you, you will know it without a name, and therefore I may end it here.

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To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

Though you escape my lifting up of your latch by removing, you cannot my Letters; yet of this Letter I do not much accuse my self, for I serve your Commandment in it, for it is only to convey to you this paper opposed to those, with which you trusted me. It is (I cannot say the waightyest, but truly) the saddest lucubration and nights passage that ever I had. For it exercised those hours, which, with extreme danger to her, whom I should hardly have abstained from recompensing for her company in this world, with accompanying her out of it, encreased my poor family with a son. Though her anguish, and my fears, and hopes, seem divers and wild distractions from this small businesse of your papers, yet because they all narrowed themselves,

and met in Via regia, which is the consideration of our selves, and God, I thought it time not unfit for this despatch. Thus much more then needed I have told you, whilest my fire was lighting at Tricombs [at] 10 a clock.

Yours ever intirely J. Donne.

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To the Honourable Knight H. G.

SIR,

Your Son left here a Letter for me, from you. But I neither discern by it that you have received any of mine lately; which have been many, and large, and too confident to be lost, especially since, (as I remember) they always conveyed others to that good Lady; neither do I know where to finde, by any diligence, your sons lodging. But I hope he will apprehend that impossibility in me, and finde me here, where he shall also finde as much readinesse to serve him, as at Polesworth. This Letter of yours makes me perceive, that that Lady hath expressed her purpose to you in particular, for the next term. Accordingly, I make my promises: for since one that meant but to flatter, told an Emperour, that his benefits were to be reckoned from the day of the promise, because he never failed, it were an injury from me to the constancy of that noble Lady, if I should not, as soon as the promises, do some act of assurance of the performance; which I have done, as I say, in fixing times to my creditors; for by the end of next terme, I will make an end with the world, by Gods grace. I lack you here, for my L. of Dorset, he might make a cheap bargain with me now, and disingage his honour, which in good faith, is a little bound, because he admitted so many witnesses of his large disposition towards me. They are preparing for a Masque of Gentlemen: in which M. Villars is, and M. Karre, whom I told you before my L. Chamberlain had brought into the bed-chamber. I pray, if you make not so thick goings as you used, send this Letter to that good woman, for it is not

only mine. If I could stay this Letter an hour, I should send you something of Savoy, for Sir Rob. Rich, who is now come from Court, hath laid a commandment upon me by message to waite upon him; and I know his busines, because he never sought me, but in one kinde. But the importunity of the houre excuses me, and delivers you from further trouble from

Your very true friend and servant J. Donne.

13 Decemb.

[xlix.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Love to give you advantages upon me, therefore I put my self in need of another pardon from you, by not comming to you; yet I am scarce guilty enough to spend much of your vertue from you, because I knew not of your being come till this your Letter told me so, in the midst of dinner at Peckham, this Monday. Sir, I am very truly yours; if you have overvalued me in any capacity, I will do what I can to overtake your hopes of me. I wish my self whatsoever you wish me; and so I do, what ever you wish your self. I am prisoner and close; else I had not needed this pardon, for I long much, and much more by occasion of your Letter, to see you: when you finde that good Lady emptiest of businesse and pleasure, present my humble thanks; you can do me no favour, which I need not, nor any, which I cannot have some hope to deserve, but this; for I have made her opinion of me, the ballance by which I weigh my self. I will come soon enough to deliver my thanks to Sir J. Harr[ington] for your ease, whom I know I have pained with an ilfavoured Letter; but my heart hath one style, and character, and is yours in wishing, and in thankfulnesse.

J. Donne.

Peckham Monday afternoon.

[I.]

To the Honourable Sir R. D.

Sir,

I Gave no answer to the Letter I received from you upon Tuesday, both because I had in it no other commandment by it but to deliver your Letter therein, which I did, and because that Letter found me under very much sadnesse, which (according to the proportion of ills that fall upon me) is since also increased, so that I had not written now, if I had been sure to have been better able to write next week, which I have not much appearance of: yet there was committed to my disposition (that is, left at my house in my absence) a Letter from Sir W. Lover, but it was some hours after all possibility of sending it by the carrier, so that Mr W. Stanhope giving me the honour of a visite at that time, and being instantly to depart, for your parts, did me the favour to undertake the delivery of it to you. With me, Sir, it is thus: there is not one person (besides my self) in my house well. I have already lost half a child, and with that mischance of hers, my wife fallen into an indisposition, which would afflict her much, but that the sicknesse of her children stupefies her: of one of which, in good faith, I have not much hope. This meets a fortune so ill provided for physique and such relief, that if God should ease us with burials, I know not well how to performe even that. I flatter my self in this, that I am dying too: nor can I truly dye faster, by any waste, then by losse of children. But Sir, I will mingle no more of my sadness to you, but wil a little recompense it, by telling you that my L. Harrington, of whom a few days since they were doubtfull, is so well recovered that now they know all his disease to be the Pox, and Measels mingled. This I heard yesterday: for I have not been there yet. I came as near importunity as I could, for an answer from Essex house, but this was all, that he should see you shortly himselfe.

Your servant J. Donne.

I cannot tell you so much, as you tell me, of any thing from my Lord of Som[erset] since the Epithalamion, for I heard nothing.

[li.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere.

Sir,

I Have but one excuse for not sending you the Sermon that you do me the honour to command, and I foresee that before I take my hand from this paper, I shall lose the benefit of that excuse; it is that for more than twenty days, I have been travelled [travailed] with a pain, in my right wrist, so like the Gout, as makes me unable to write. The writing of this Letter will implore a commentary for that, that I cannot write legibly; for that I cannot write much, this Letter will testifie against me. Sir, I beseech you, at first, tell your company, that I decline not the service out of sullennesse nor lazinesse, nor that any fortune damps me so much, as that I am not sensible of the honour of their commanding it, but a meer inexperience whether I be able to write eight hours or no; but I will try next week, and either do it, for their service, or sink in their service. This is Thursday: and upon Tuesday my Lady Bedford came to this town: this afternoon I presented my service to her, by Mris Withrington: and so asked leave to have waited upon them at supper: but my messenger found them ready to go into their Coach: so that a third Letter which I received from Mris Dudley, referring me to Mris Withringtons relation of all that State, I lose it till their return to this town. To clear you in that wherein I see by your Letter that I had not well expressed my self in mine, Sir Ed. Herbert writ to Sir Ed. Sackvil, not to presse the King to fix any certain time of sending him, till he was come over, and had spoken with the King: Sir Ed. Sackvil collects upon that, that Sir Ed. H. means to go again; I think it is only, that he would have his honour so saved,

as not to seem to be recalled, by having a successor, before he had emptied the place. We hear nothing from my Lord of Doncaster; nor have we any way to send to him. I have not seen my Lady Doncaster, for she crost to Penhurst, and from thence to Petworth; my Lady Isabella came to this Town, where, before her comming, a Letter attended her from my Lady of Tichfield: and thither she went, with their servants, who staid her comming. Hither came lately Letters with goodspeed from Vienna, in which there is no mention of any such defeat, as in rumour C[ount] Mansfeld hath been said to have given to the D[uke] of Bavyer [Bavaria] but their forces were then within such distance, as may have procured something before this time. Those which watched advantages in the Court of the Emperour, have made that use of C[ount] Mansfelds proceedings, as that my Lord Digby complains, that thereby the forwardnesse in which his negotiation was, is somewhat retarded. He proceeds from thence into Spain. The D. of Bavyer hath presented the Emperour an account of 1200ml [£1,200,000] sterling in that warre, to be reimbursed: and finding the Palatinate to be in treaty, hath required a great part of Austria for his security, and they say, it is so transacted; which is a good signe of a possibility in the restitution of the Palatinate. For any thing I discern, their fears are much greater from Hungary, then from Bohemia; and the losse of Canon, in a great proportion, and other things, at the death of Bucquoy, was much greater, then they suffered to be published. We here Spinola is passed over at Rhenebery [Rheinsberg]; if it be so, they are no longer distracted, whether he would bend upon Juliers, or the Palatinate. I know not what you hear from your noble son in law, who sees those things clearly in himself, and in the near distance; but I hear here, that the King hath much lost the affection of the English in those parts. Whether it proceed from any sowrenesse in him, or that they be otherwise taken off, from applying themselves to him, I know not. My Lord of S. Albons [St. Albans] hath found so much favour as that a pension of 2000 l. will be given him; he desires that he might have it for [——] years, that so he might transferre it upon his creditors, or that in place of it he might have 8000 l.

for he hath found a disposition in his creditors (to whom I hear he hath paid 3000 l. since by retyring) to accept 8000 l. for all his debts, which are three times as much. I have been some times with my L. of Canterbury, since by [sic] accident, to give you his own words. I see him retain his former cheerfulnesse here and at Croydon, but I do not hear from Court, that he hath any ground for such a confidence, but that his case may need favour, and not have it. That place, and Bedington, and Chelsey, and Highgate, where that very good man my Lord Hobard is, and Hackney, with the M[aster] of the Rolls, and my familiar Peckham, are my circumferrence. No place so eccentrique to me, as that I lye just at London; and with those fragmentary recreations I must make shift to recompense the missing of that contentment which your favour opens to me, and my desire provokes me to, the kissing of your hands at Polesworth. My daughter Constance is at this time with me, for the emptinesse of the town hath made me, who otherwise live upon the almes of others, a housekeeper, for a moneth; and so she is my servant below stairs, and my companion above: she was at the table with me, when your Letter was brought, and I pay her a piece of her petition in doing her this office, to present her service to my Lady Nethersoles, and her very good sister. But that she is gone to bed two hours before I writ this, she should have signed with such a hand as your daughter Mary did to me, that which I testifie for her, that she is as affectionate a servant to them all, as their goodnesse hath created any where. Sir, I shall recompense my tediousnesse, in closing mine eyes with a prayer for yours, as for mine own happinesse, for I am almost in bed; if it were my last bed, and I upon my last businesse there, I should not omit to joyn you with

Your very humble and very thankfull servant in Christ Jesus J. Donne.

Aug. 30. 1611.[21]

[lii.]

To his honourable friend Sr H. G.

SIR,

To you that are not easily scandalized, and in whom, I hope, neither my Religion nor Morality can suffer, I dare write my opinion of that Book in whose bowels you left me. It hath refreshed, and given new justice to my ordinary complaint, That the Divines of these times, are become meer Advocates, as though Religion were a temporall inheritance; they plead for it with all sophistications, and illusions and forgeries: And herein are they likest Advocates, that though they be feed by the way, with Dignities, and other recompenses, yet that for which they plead is none of theirs. They write for Religion, without it. In the main point in question, I think truly there is a perplexity (as farre as I see yet) and both sides may be in justice, and innocence; and the wounds which they inflict upon the adverse part, are all se defendendo: for, clearly, our State cannot be safe without the Oath; since they professe, that Clergie-men, though Traitors, are no Subjects, and that all the rest may be none to morrow. And, as clearly, the Supremacy which the Ro[man] Church pretend, were diminished, if it were limited; and will as ill abide that, or disputation, as the Prerogative of temporall Kings, who being the onely judges of their prerogative, why may not Roman Bishops, (so enlightened as they are presumed by them) be good witnesses of their own supremacie, which is now so much impugned? But for this particular Author, I looked for more prudence, and humane wisdome in him, in avoiding all miscitings, or misinterpretings, because at this time, the watch is set, and every bodies hammer is upon that anvill; and to dare offend in that kinde now, is, for a theef to leave the covert, and meet a strong hue and cry in the teeth: and yet truly this man is extremely obnoxious in that kinde; for, though he have answered many things fully, (as no book ever gave more advantage then that which he undertook) and abound in delicate applications, and ornaments, from the divine and prophane authors, yet being chiefly conversant about two points, he prevaricates in both. For, for the matter, which is the first, he referres it intirely, and namely, to

that which D[ean] Morton hath said therein before, and so leaves it roundly: And for the person (which is the second) upon whom he amasses as many opprobries, as any other could deserve, he pronounceth, that he will account any answer from his adversary, slaunder, except he do (as he hath done) draw whatsoever he saith of him, from Authors of the same Religion, and in print: And so, he having made use of all the Quodlibetaries, imputations against the other, cannot be obnoxious himself in that kinde, and so hath provided safely. It were no service to you, to send you my notes upon the Book, because they are sandy, and incoherent ragges, for my memory, not for your judgment; and to extend them to an easinesse, and perspicuity, would make them a Pamphlet, not a Letter. I will therefore deferre them till I see you; and in the mean time, I will adventure to say to you, without inserting one unnecessary word, that the Book is full of falsifications in words, and in sense, and of falshoods in matter of fact, and of inconsequent and unscholarlike arguings, and of relinquishing the King, in many points of defence, and of contradiction of himself, and of dangerous and suspected Doctrine in Divinitie, and of silly ridiculous triflings, and of extreme flatteries, and of neglecting better and more obvious answers, and of letting slip some enormous advantages which the other gave, and he spies not. I know (as I begun) I speak to you who cannot be scandalized, and that neither measure Religion (as it is now called) by Unitie, nor suspect Unity, for these interruptions. Sir, not onely a Mathematique point, which is the most indivisible and unique thing which art can present, flowes into every line which is derived from the Center, but our soul which is but one, hath swallowed up a Negative, and feeling soul; which was in the body before it came, and exercises those faculties yet; and God himselfe, who only is one, seems to have been eternally delighted, with a disunion of persons. They whose active function it is, must endevour this unity in Religion: and we at our lay Altars (which are our tables, or bedside, or stools, wheresoever we dare prostrate our selves to God in prayer) must beg it of him: but we must take heed of making misconclusions upon the want of it:

for, whether the Maior and Aldermen fall out, (as with us and the Puritans; Bishops against Priests) or the Commoners voyces differ who is Maior, and who Aldermen, or what their Jurisdiction, (as with the Bishop of Rome, or whosoever) yet it is still one Corporation.

Your very affectionate servant and lover J. Donne.

Micham, Thursday late.

Never leave the remembrance of my poor service unmentioned when you see the good Lady.

[liii.]

To Sr T. H.

SIR,

This evening, which is 5 October, I finde your Letter of Michaelmas day, and though I see by it, that it is a return of a Letter, not of the last weeks, and thereupon make account, that my last weeks Letter hath satisfied you in some things which this Letter commands, concerning Pauls, yet for other things I would give you a drowsie relation, for it is that time of night, tho[u]gh I called it evening. At the Kings going from hence, upon Munday last, we made account to have seen Sir John Sutclin Secretary, and Sir Rob. Weston Chancellor of the Exchequer, but they are not done, but both are fixed: my L. Cranfield received his staffe, with these two suits obtained from the King, That all Assignations might be transferred into the Exchequer, and so no paiments charged upon the Customes, nor Receivers, nor the Court of Wards, &c. And that for a time there might be a damp cast upon Pensions, till they might be considered. In the Low Countries the Armies stirre not. In the Palatinate Sir H. Vere attempting the regaining of Stenie Castle, was surprised with the Enemy in so much strength, that they write it over for a Master-piece, that he was able to make a retreat to Manheme [Mannheim]: so that now the Enemy is got on that side the River which

Heydelberg is on, and I know nothing that can stand in his way. My L. Digby comes from Vienna, before he goes into Spain, by Count Mansfield, by the Palatinate, by Paris; and therefore upon his comming, I shall be able to say something to you. In Sir John Sutclin I presume you see an end of Sir Ro. Naunton, and we see an end of Mr Tho. Murray too; I beleeve he comes no more to the Prince. For the triall of my L. of Canterburies irregularity, there is a Commission to sixe Bishops, London, Winchester, Rochester, and three onely elect, Lincoln, S. Davids, and Exeter: two Judges, L. Hobard, and Dodridge; two Civilians, Sir H. Martin, and D[r.] Steward. The consecration of these elect Bishops, and consequently, my being Dean, must attend the issue of this Commission. Sir Tho. Roe is gone. The Proclamations of putting off the Parliament, till February, are like to outrun this Letter. It is very late; and it is one act, to say Grace after Supper, and to commend my self into the hands of my blessed Saviour, in my bed, and so close this Letter, and mine eies, with the same blessing upon all your family. Amen

Your poor servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[liv.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Receive this 14 your Letter of the 10. yet I am not come to an understanding how these Carriers keep daies: for I would fain think that the Letters which I sent upon Thursday last might have given you such an account of the state of my family, that you needed not have asked by this. But Sir, it hath pleased God to adde thus much to my affliction, that my wife hath now confessed her self to be extremely sick; she hath held out thus long to assist me, but is now overturn'd, & here we be in two beds, or graves; so that God hath marked out a great many of us, but taken none yet. I have passed ten daies without taking any thing; so that I think no man can live

more thriftily. I have purged and vexed my body much since I writ to you, and this day I have missed my fit: and this is the first time, that I could discern any intermission. This is enough, the rest I will spend upon the parts of your Letter: Your Letter at Pauls is delivered. In the History of that remove, this onely perchance may be news to you, that Mr Alabaster hath got of the King the Deans best Living worth above 300l, which the Dean had good hope to have held a while. Of that which you writ concerning a Book of the Nullity, I have heard no syllable any other way. If you have received it by good hands, I beleeve it with you: otherwise the report is naturally very incredible. Though the answering of it be a work for some, both of better abilities really, and in common reputation also, yet I was like enough to have had some knowledge thereof. You mention again some thing which it seems you are not willing I should understand of my Lady Huntington: some of your former Letters, have spoken of some other former Letters, (which I never saw) which speak of the matter as of a history and thing done; and these later Letters speak of it Prophetically, as of a future contingent. I am glad the often remembrance of it, gives me often occasion of thankfulnesse to her, for retaining me in her memory, and of professing my self in my end, and ways, her most humble servant. For your Parliament businesse, I should be very sorry, if you came not up, because I presume you had seposed many businesses, to have been done at that time; but in the ways wherein you have gone, I protest I am diffident. For first, for that L[ord] whom you solicited by Letters through me, I tell you with the whispering of a secret, but the confidence of a friend, that you will be deceived whensoever you think that he should take any delight in doing you a courtesie. And I am afraid, the true heartinesse of the other noble Gentleman M. Howard, will be of small use in this perticular, if he have but solicited my L. his father to reserve a blanke for his friend, for my L. hath suffered more denialls, even in places where he sent names, then could have been feared. Besides M. How[ard] hath not written to his father therein, but to M. Woodward, who perceiving those Letters to be written, before his purpose

of being Knight for the shire, thinkes these Letters extinguished. You made me offer so long since of a place (it was when you writ into the west) yet I could think it no merit to have offered you one since, otherwise it hath been since in my power, for since the Mr of the Rolls provided me one, Sir Ed. Herbert, who makes haste away, made me a present of his; and I have had a third offer. The businesse of your last weeks Letter concerning the widow, is not a subject for a feverous mans consideration. Therefore I only send you back those Letters which you sent; and aske you leave to make this which I am fain to call my good day, so much truly good, as to spend the rest of it with D[octor] Layfield, who is, upon my summons, at this hour come to me. My Physicians have made me afraid, that this disease will work into my head, and so put me into lightnesses, therefore I am desirous that I be understood before any such danger overtake me.

Your true poor servant J. Donne.

14. March.

[lv.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir H. G.

Sir,

After I have told you, that the Lady Hay dyed last Tuesday, and that to her end she was anguished with the memory of the execution of that fellow which attempted her in the coach, I have told you all which hath fallen out here. Except between you and me that may be worth the telling, that my L. Chancellor gave me so noble and so ready a dispatch, accompanied with so fatherly advise, and remorse for my fortunes, that I am now, like an Alchymist, delighted with discoveries by the way, though I attain not mine end. It spent me so little time after your going, that, although you speak in your Letter of good dispatch in your going, yet I might have overtaken you. And though perchãce if I had gone, it might have been inconvenient for me, to have

put my self into my L. Chamberlains presence, if that sicknesse be earnest at Ashby, and so I should nothing have advanced my businesse, yet I should have come to that noble Lady with better confidence, and more assurance of a pardon, when I had brought a conscience, that I came despoiled of all other respects, only to kisse her hands, in whose protection I am, since I have nor desire other station, then a place in her good opinion. I took so good contentment in the fashion which my L. Chancellor used towards me, that out of a voluptuous loathnesse to let that taste go out of my mouth, I forbear to make any further tryall in that businesse till the King come into these quarters. So that, Sir, I am here in place to serve you, if either I be capable of your commandments, or this town give any thing worth the writing. As often as you see your noble friend, and her good sister, allow my name a room in your discourse; it is a short one, and you will soon have done. But tell them not my desire to do them service, for then you engage your self in a longer discourse, then I am worthy. Only in pursuit of your commandment I sent the Paquet to the Post, for in mine own understanding, there should appear small hope of arriving by that way, except you know otherwise that the LL. [Lords] mean to make some stay in their return, in those parts: but the Letter is brought back again, for the Post went away yesterday, and they knew of no occasion of sending till next week. Therefore except I can inform my self of some good means, I will retain it, till I have a fresh commandment from you. I see M. Taverner still in this town, the Lady Carey went from hence but yesterday. I am in some perplexity what to doe with this pacquet, till some good fortune, or your Letters clear me.

Your humble servant J. Donne.

Aug. 19.

[lvi.]

To Sir H. Goodere at Polesworth.

SIR,

It is true that M. Gherard told you, I had that commandment from the King signified to me by my L[ord] and am still under it, and we are within fourteen days of our time for going. I leave a scattered flock of wretched children, and I carry an infirme and valetudinary body, and I goe into the mouth of such adversaries, as I cannot blame for hating me, the Jesuits, and yet I go. Though this be no service to my Lord: yet I shall never come nearer doing him a service, nor do any thing liker a service then this. Yesterday we had news by Sir Nowell Carou [Noel Caron], from Paris, that the D[uke] of Savoy was elected King of Bohemia; which would cut off a great part of the occasion of our going: but it is not much credible in it self, nor at all beleeved here, because it is not signified from Savoy, nor Heidelberg. Since M. Gher [Mr. Gerrard] continues your Gazittier, I need tell you nothing of the Q[ueen] of Frances estate. For your commandment in memory of M. Martin, I should not have sate so many processes, if I could incline my thoughts that way. It is not lazinesse, it is not gravity, nor coldnesse towards his memory, or your service; for I have thought of it oftener, and longer, then I was wont to do in such things, and nothing is done. Your last pacquet, in which your daughter and I were joynt-commissioners, was brought to me, because she was at Hampton, with the Queens body: but I sent her part to her, and my La[dy] Uvedalls to her, who presents her service to you by me now, and says she will write next week, and so will I too, by Gods grace. You forget me absolutely and intirely, whensoever you forget me to that noble Countesse. God blesse you in all, Amen.

Your true servant in Jes. Chr. J. Donne.

9 Martii.

[lvii.]

To the best Knight Sir H. G.

SIR,

At your conveniency, I pray send my Lady Bedford this inclosed, but be pleased to put your self to some inconvenience, (if it be so) to kisse my Lady Ruthins [Ruthyn's] hands in my name, and to present my very humble service to her, and tell her, that no ill conscience of having deserved her, but only an obedience to her commandments, keeps me from saying to her self thus much; that this day I received a letter from my L[ord] of Kent, written yesterday at Wrest: in that his Lordship[s] sends me word, that that favour which he hath formerly done me, in giving me Blouham [Blonham], is now likely to fall upon me, because the Incumbent is dangerously ill: and because this is the season in which he removes from Wrest thither, he desires (for I give you his own word) that he may be accommodate there, (if it fall now) as heretofore. Out of my absolute and intire readiness to serve that family, I sent back his messenger with this answer, that I esteemed it a great part of my good fortune, that I should become worthy to be commanded by him. If my Lady will be pleased to direct me in what particular manner I may best serve her purposes, I shall gladly waite upon her at any time, to receive her command with as much devotion and thankfulnesse as I received the benefit. I beseech you make her beleeve it, as in any place you beleeve

Your poor servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

26 Febr. 1621.

[lviii.]

To my best of friends Sir H. G.

Sir,

I Heard not from you this week; therefore I write more willingly, because it hath in it so much more merit. And I might do it very cheaply, since to convey to you this Letter, which mine hath the honour to bring, any little Letter would serve, and be

acceptable for that. Because it came not last week, I went now to solicite it, and she sent it me next day with some thankes, and some excuse that she knew not me, when I was with her. You know, I do not easily put my self into those hazards, nor do much brag of my valor now, otherwise then I purposed it for a service to you. The newest thing that I know in the world, is my new son: whose mothers being well takes off from me any new waight upon my fortune. I hear in Newgate, that M. Mathew is dead. The Catholiques beleeve it there: perchance out of a custome of credulity. But the report is close prisoner; for I never met it abroad. This is my third letter, all which I sent by Spelty whom my boy found at Abington house. I have now two of the best happinesses which could befall me, upon me; which are, to be a widower and my wife alive, which may make you know, that it is but for your ease, that this letter is no longer, in this leasure in which (having nothing else to write) I might vary a thousand ways that I am

Your very affectionate servant J. Donne.

Monday at night.

[lix.]

To my worthy friend G. K.

SIR,

I Receive this heare [hour] that I begin this return, your Letter by a servant of Sir G. Greseley, by whom also I hasten this dispatch. This needs no enlargement since it hath the honour to convey one from M. Gherard. But though by telling me, it was a bold letter, I had leave to open it, and that I have a little itch to make some animadversions & Criticismes upon it (as that there is a ciphar too much in the sum of the Kings debts, and such like) yet since my eyes do easily fall back to their distemper, and that I am this night to sup at Sir Ar. Ingrams, I had rather forfeit their little strength at his supper, then with writing such impertinencies: the best spending

them, is upon the rest of your Letter, to which, Sir, I can only say in generall, that Some appearances have been here, of some treatise concerning this Nullity, which are said to proceed from Geneva; but are beleeved to have been done within doors, by encouragements of some whose names I will not commit to this letter. My poor study having lyen that way, it may prove possible that my weak assistance may be of use in this matter, in a more serious fashion, then an Epithalamion. This made me therefore abstinent in that kinde; yet by my troth, I think I shall not scape. I deprehend in my self more then an alacrity, a vehemency to do service to that company; and so, I may finde reason to make rime. If it be done, I see not how I can admit that circuit of sending them to you, to be sent hither; that seems a kinde of praying to Saints, to whom God must tell first, that such a man prays to them to pray to him. So that I shall lose the honour of that conveyance; but, for recompense, you shall scape the danger of approving it. My next Letter shall say more of this. This shall end with delivering you the remembrance of my Lady Bartlet, who is present at the sealing hereof.

Your very true and affectionate servant J. Donne.

Jan. 19.

Which name when there is any empty corner in your discourse with that noble Lady at Ashby, I humbly beseech you to present to her as one more devoted to her service then perchance you will say.

[lx.]

To Sir G. B.

SIR,

Between the time of making up my other Letters, and the hour that your man limited me to call for them, came to my house an other pacquet directed to him: for by this time, the carrier is as wise, as his horse, to go to the house that he hath used to go. I

found liberty in the superscription to open, and so I did; but for that part which concerns him, I must attend his comming hither, for I know not where to seek him; and besides, I have enough to say for that part which concerns my self. Sir, even in the Letter it self to me, I deprehend much inclination, to chide me: and it is but out of your habit of good language that you spare me. So little occasion as that postscript of mine, could not bring you so near to it, if nothing else were mistaken, which (so God help me) was so little, that I remember not what it was, and I would no more hear again what I write in an officious Letter, then what I said at a drunken supper. I had no purpose to exercise your diligence in presenting my name to that Lady, but either I did, or should have said, that I writ onely to fill up any empty corner in your discourse. So, Sir, the reading of the Letter, was a kinde of travell to me, but when I came to the paper inclosed, I was brought to bed of a monster. To expresse my self vehemently quickly, I must say, that I can scarce think, that you have read M. Gherards letter rightly, therefore I send you back your own again. I will not protest against my being such a knave, for no man shall have that from me, if he expect it: but I will protest against my being such a fool, as to depose any thing in him with hope of locking it up, and against that lownesse, of seeking reputation by so poor a way. I am not so sorry, that I am a narrow man, as that for all the narrownesse, you have not seen through me yet, nor known me perfectly; for I might think by this, (if I had not other testimony) that I have been little in your contemplation. Sixteen letters from M. Gherard, could not (I think) perswade a Middlesex Jury of so much dishonesty in

Your true servant J. Donne.

[lxi.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir G. P.

SIR,

I Would have intermitted this week without writing, if I had not found the name of my Lady Huntington in your Letter. The devotion which I owe, and (in good faith) pay in my best prayers for her good in all kinde awakens me to present my humble thanks for this, that her Ladiship retains my name in her memory: she never laid obligation upon any man, readier to expresse his acknowledgement of them, to any servant of her servants; I am bound to say much of this, for your indemnity; because though I had a little preparation to her knowledge in the house where I served at first, yet I think, she took her characters of me, from you: And, at what time soever she thought best of me in her life, I am better than that, for my goodnesse is my thankfulnesse, and I am every day fuller of that then before, to her Lap. I say nothing to you of forein names in this Letter, because your son Sir Francis is here. For that which you write concerning your son, I onely gave my man Martin in charge, to use his interest in the Keeper, that your son should fall under no wants there, which it seems your son discharged, for I hear not of them. For other trifles, I bad my man let him have whatsoever he asked, so, as it might seem to come from him, and not me; and laying that look upon it, it came to almost nothing. Tell both your daughters a peece of a storie of my Con. which may accustome them to endure disappointments in this world: An honourable person (whose name I give you in a schedule to burn, lest this Letter should be mis-laid) had an intention to give her one of his sons, and had told it me, and would have been content to accept what I, by my friends, could have begged for her; but he intended that son to my Profession, and had provided him already 300l a year, of his own gift in Church livings, and hath estated 300l more of inheritance for their children: and now the youth, (who yet knows nothing of his fathers intention nor mine) flies from his resolutions for that Calling, and importunes his Father to let him travell. The girle knows not her losse, for I never told her of it: but truly, it is a great disappointment to me. More then these, Sir, we must all suffer, in our ways to heaven, where, I hope you and all yours shall meet

Your poor friend, and affectionate servant J. Donne.

18 Octob. 1622.

[lxii.]

To my much honoured friend Sr T. Lucy.

SIR,

I Have scarce had at any time any thing so like news to write to you, as that I am at this Town; we came from Spâ with so much resolution of passing by Holland. But at Ma[a]stricht we found that the lownesse, and slacknesse of the River, would incommodate us so much, as we charged [changed] our whole gests, and came hither by Land. In the way at Lo[u]vaine we met the E[arl] of Arondel, to recompense the losse wee had of missing my L. Chandis [Chandos] and his company, who came to Spâ within a few hours after we came away. Sir Ed. Conaway [Conway], by occasion of his bodies indisposition, was gone home before: he told me he had some hope of you about Bartholomewtide: But because I half understood by a Letter from you, that you were determined upon the Countrie till Michaelmas, I am not so earnest in endevouring to prolong our stay in these parts, as otherwise I should. If I could joine with him in that hope of seeing you on this side the water; and if you should hold that purpose of comming at that time, I should repent extremely my laying of our journies; for (if we should by miracle hold any resolution) we should be in England about that time, so that I might misse you both here, and there. Sir, our greatest businesse is more in our power then the least, and we may be surer to meet in heaven then in any place upon earth; and whilst we are distant here, we may meet as often as we list in Gods presence, by soliciting in our prayers for one another. I received 4 Letters from you at Spâ by long circuits. In the last, one from my L[ord] Dorset: I, who had a conscience of mine own unworthinesse of any favour from him, could not chuse but present my thanks for

the least. I do not therefore repent my forwardnesse in that office; and I beseech you not to repent your part therein. Since we came to this Town, there arrived an Extraordinary from Spain, with a reconfirmation of the D[uke] d'Aumals Pension, which is thereby 2400l a year, & he brings the title of Count, to Rodrigo de Calderon, who from a very low place, having grown to be Secretary to Lerma, is now Ambassador here, and in great opinion of wisdome: They say yet he goes to Prague with the Marquis Spinola, and the G[raf] Buquoy, to congratulate the Emperour; but we all conclude here, that persons of such quality, being great in matter of Warre, are not sent for so small an emploiment: we beleeve certainly, that they deliberate a Warre, and that the reduction of Aix being not worthy this diligence, their intentions must be upon Cleve[s], for the new Town which the two Princes make by Collen [Cologne] despites them much. The Elector of Ments [Maintz] hath lately been here, upon pretence of comming in devotion to Sichem, and shortly the Electors of Colein [Cologne] and Saxony are to be here severally: all concurs to a disposition of such a Warre, and the Landsgrave of Hasse [Hesse] (who is as yet in the Union) is much solicited and caressed by this party, and I doubt, will prove a frail and corruptible man. I durst think confidently, that they will at least proceed so far towards a Warre, as to try how France will dispose it self in the businesse: for it is conceived that the D. of Bovillon [Bouillon] brought to our K[ing] good assurances from the Qu[een] Regent, that she would pursue all her husbands purposes in advancing the designes of those Princes who are in possession of Cleve[s], and in the Union. If she declare her self to do so, when they stirre, they are like to divert their purposes; but if she stand but neutrall (as it is likely, considering how Spanish the Court is at this time) I see not that the Princes of the Union are much likely to retard them. Sir, you see what unconcerning things I am fain to write of, lest I should write of myself, who am so little a history or tale, that I should not hold out to make a Letter long enough to send over a Sea to you; for I should dispatch my self in this one word that I am

Your affectionate servant and lover J. Donne.

Aug. 16. here. 1622.

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To the honourable Knight Sir H. G.

SIR,

Since I received a Letter by your sonne, whom I have not yet had the honour to see, I had a Letter Pacquet from you by Mr Roe: To the former, I writ before: In this I have no other commandement from you, but to tell you, whether Mr Vill[i]ers have received from the K[ing] any additions of honour, or profit. Without doubt he hath yet none. He is here, practising for the Mask; of which, if I mis-remember not, I writ as much as you desire to know, in a Letter which seems not to have been come to you, when you writ. In the Savoy business, the King hath declared himself by an engagement, to assist him with 100000l a year, if the Warre continue. But I beleeve, he must farm out your Warwickshire Benevolence for the paiment thereof. Upon the strength of this engagement, Sir Rob. Rich becomes confident in his hopes. If you stood in an equall disposition for the West, and onely forbore, by reason of Mr Martins silence, I wonder; for I think, I told you, that he was gone; and I saw in Sir Tho. Lucies hand, a Letter from him to you, which was likely to tell you as much. Since I came from Court, I have stirred very little: Now that the Court comes again to us, I may have something which you may be content to receive from

Your very affectionate servant J. Donne.

18. Decemb.

[lxiv.]

To my good friend Sr H. G.

Sir,

The Messenger who brought me your Letter presented me a just excuse, for I received them so late upon Thursday night, that I should have dispatched before I could begin; yet I have obeyed you drowsily, and coldly, as the night and my indisposition commanded: yet perchance those hinderances have done good, for so your Letters are the lesse curious, in which, men of much leasure may soon exceed, when they write of businesse, they having but a little. You mention two more letters then I send. The time was not too short for me to have written them, (for I had an whole night) but it was too short to work a beleefe in me, that you could think it fit to go two so divers ways to one end. I see not, (for I see not the reason) how those letters could well have concurred with these, nor how those would well have been drawn from them, in a businesse wholly relating to this house. I was not lazie in disobeying you, but (I thought) only thrifty, and your request of those was not absolute, but conditioned, if I had leasure. So though that condition hinder them not, since another doth (and you forethought that one might) I am not stubborn. The good Countesse spake somewhat of your desire of letters; but I am afraid she is not a proper Mediatrix to those persons, but I counsail in the dark. And therefore return to that, of which I have clear light, that I am always glad, when I have any way to expresse my love; for in these commandements you feed my desires, and you give me means to pay some of my debts to you: the interest of which I pay in all my prayers for you, which, if it please not God to shew here, I hope we shall finde again together in heaven, whither they were sent. I came this morning to say thus much, and because the Porter which came to Micham summoned me for this hour to London: from whence I am this minute returning to end a little course of Physick.

Yours very truly J. Donne.

Friday 8 in the morning.

[lxv.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Writ to you yesterday taking the boldnesse to put a letter into the good Ladies pacquet for you. This morning I had this new occasion of writing, that Sir Tho. Roe, who brought this inclosed Letter to me, and left it unsealed, intreated me to take the first opportunity of sending it. Besides that which is in that letter (for he read it to me) I came to the knowledg in Yorkhouse that my L[ord] Chancellor hath been moved, and incensed against you; and asking Sir Tho. Roe, if he were directly or occasionally any cause of that, he tells me thus much, that Sir W. Lover, and Sir H. Carey, have obtained of my L[ord], to have a Pursevant, and consequently a Sergeant sent into the Countrey for you. My L. grounds this earnestnesse against you, upon some refusing to appear upon processe which hath been taken out against you. And I perceive Sir. Ed. Eston, and both the other, admit consultations, of ways by petition to the King, or Counsail, or L[ord] Chamberlain, or any other. The great danger, obliquely likely to fall, is that when it comes to light, how you stand towards M. Mathew, you may lose the ease which you have by colour of that extent, and he may lose the benefit, of having had so much of his estate concealed. You will therefore at least pardon my advising you, to place those sums, which by your retiring I presume you do imploy upon payment of debts, in such places as that these particular friends be not forced to leave being so. I confesse, the going about to pay debts, hastens importunity. I finde in my self, that where I was not asked money before, yet when I offered to pay next Terme, they seem loth to afford me that time, which might justly have been desperate before: but that which you told me out of the Countrey, with the assistance which I hope to finde here, (especially if your indevour may advance it at Dorset house) I hope will inable me to escape clamor, and an ill conscience, in that behalf. One thing more I must tell you; but so softly,

that I am loath to hear my self: and so softly, that if that good Lady were in the room, with you and this Letter, she might not hear. It is, that I am brought to a necessity of printing my Poems, and addressing them to my L. Chamberlain. This I mean to do forthwith; not for much publique view, but at mine own cost, a few Copies. I apprehend some incongruities in the resolution; and I know what I shall suffer from many interpretations: but I am at an end of much considering that; and, if I were as startling in that kinde, as ever I was, yet in this particular, I am under an unescapable necessity, as I shall let you perceive, when I see you. By this occasion I am made a Rhapsoder of mine own rags, and that cost me more diligence, to seek them, then it did to make them. This made me aske to borrow that old book of you, which it will be too late to see, for that use, when I see you: for I must do this, as a valediction to the world, before I take Orders. But this is it, I am to aske you; whether you ever made any such use of the letter in verse, A nostre Countesse chez vous, as that I may not put it in, amongst the rest to persons of that rank; for I desire very very much, that something should bear her name in the book, and I would be just to my written words to my L[ord] Harrington, to write nothing after that. I pray tell me as soon as you can, if I be at liberty to insert that; for if you have by any occasion applied any pieces of it, I see not, that it will be discerned, when it appears in the whole piece. Though this be a little matter, I would be sorry not to have an account of it, within as little after Newyears tide, as you could. I have something else to say, of M. Villars [Villiers], but because I hope to see you here shortly, and because new additions, to the truths or rumours, which concern him, are likely to be made by occasion of this Masque, I forbear to send you the edition of this Mart, since I know it will be augmented by the next: of which, if you prevent it not by comming, you shall have by letter an account from

Your very affectionate friend and servant J. Donne.

Vigilia St Tho. 1614.

[lxvi.]

To the worthy Knight Sir Tho. Lucy.

SIR,

Your letter comes to me, at Grace after supper; it is part of the prayer of that Grace, that God will blesse you, and all yours with his best blessings of both kinds. I would write you news; but your love to me, may make you apt to over-beleeve news for my sake. And truly all things that are upon the stage of the world now, are full of such uncertainties, as may justly make any man loth to passe a conjecture upon them; not only because it is hard to see how they will end, but because it is misintertable [sic] and dangerous to conjecture otherwise, then some men would have the event to be. That which is especially in my contemplation, which is the issue of my L[ord] of Canterburies businesse (for, thereupon depends the consecration of my predecessor, upon which the Deanery devolves to the King) is no farther proceeded in yet, then that some of the 10 Commissioners have met once; and upon Saterday next there will be a fuller meeting, and an entrance into the businesse, upon which, much, very much in consequence, depends. Of my L. of Donc[aster] we are only assured, that he is in a good way of convalescence; but of any audience nothing yet. Slacken not your hold of my L. Treasurer, for I have been told that you are in his care. I send you a Copy of that Sermon, but it is not my copy, which I thought my L. of South-hampton would have sent me backe. This you must be pleased to let me have again, for I borrow it: for the other, I will pretermit no time to write it; though in good faith, I have half forgot it. If in any letter I leave out the name of the La[dy] Hunt[ington] or La[dy] Burdell, or your daughters, tell them, that I named them. I take the falshood upon me; for I intend it very readily, and very humbly, where I am good for any thing in any of their services. Our blessed Saviour continue and enlarge his blessings to you all, Amen.

Your humble servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

11 Octob. 1621.

Why do you say nothing of, my little book of Cases.

[lxvii.]

To Sir G. B.

Sir,

It is one of my blinde Meditations to think what a miserable defeat it would be to all these preparations of braverie, if my infirmity should overtake others: for, I am at least half blinde, my windows are all as full of glasses of Waters, as any Mountebanks stall. This messenger makes haste, I thank him for it; therefore I onely send you this Letter, which was sent to me about three daies past, and my promise to distribute your other Letters, according to your addresses, as fast as my Monsieur can doe it; for, for any personall service, you must be content, at this time, to pardon

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

Decemb. 23.

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To Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

Agreeably to my fortune, and thoughts, I was crawld this back way from Keyston; through my broken casement at Bedford, I saw, for my best dish at dinner, your Coach; I studied your gests, but when I knew where you were, I went out of this Town, in a doubt whether I should turn in to Wrest; and you know the wisdome of the Parliament is, to resolve ever in the Negative: Therefore it is likeliest I shall not come in there; yet, let me give you in passing, thus much account of my self: I thought to kisse my L[ord] Spencers hands, at one house, and have passed three. If

you know nothing to the contrary, risen since I came from London, I am likely to have a room in my L. of Dov. train, into the Countrie; if I have, I do not ask, but use the leave of waiting upon you at home: There and ever elswhere, our blessed Saviour blesse you, and all yours in which number, I pray, account ever

Your very thankfull servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[lxix.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Cannot obey you, if you go to morrow to Parsons-green; your company, that place, and my promise are strong inducements, but an Ague flouts them all, of which I have had two such threatenings, that I provide against it by a little Physick. This is one fetter; but I have a pair: for I attend Sir Geo. Mores answer in a little businesse, of which I can have no account till his return, so I am fastened here, till after Sunday. As you are sure that I love you thorowly, so think this a good expressing of that, that I promise now, that I will certainly goe with you on Munday, in despite of these interruptions, and serve you with my company to the Bathe; which journie, it is time to hasten. But I pray think this promise so much worth, that it may deserve your comming this way on Munday, for I make it with that reservation. God send you Hawks and fortunes of a high pitch.

Your honest affectionate J. Donne.

[lxx.]

To Sir T. R.

SIR,

I Have bespoke you a New-years-gift, that is, a good New year, for I have offered

your name with my soul heartily to God in my mornings best Sacrifice: If for custome you will doe a particular office in recompense, deliver this Letter to your Lady, now, or when the rage of the Mask is past. If you make any haste into the Country, I pray let me know it. I would kisse your hands before you goe, which I doe now, and continue

Your affectionate servant and lover J. Donne.

Micham, the last of 1607. as I remember.

[lxxi.]

To Sir Henry Goodere.

Sir,

I Speak to you before God, I am so much affected with yesterdaies accident, that I think I prophane it in that name. As men which judge Nativities, consider not single Starres, but the Aspects, the concurrence and posture of them; so in this, though no particular past arrest me, or divert me, yet all seems remarkable and enormous. God, which hath done this immediately without so much as a sickness, will also immediately without supplement of friends, infuse his Spirit of comfort, where it is needed and deserved. I write this to you from the Spring Garden, whither I withdrew my self to think of this; and the intensenesse of my thinking ends in this, that by my help Gods work should be imperfected, if by any means I resisted the amasement.

Your very true friend J. Donne.

[lxxii.]

To my good friend G. H.

Sir,

The little businesse which you left in my hands is now dispatched; if it have hung

longer then you thought, it might serve for just excuse, that these small things make as many steps to their end, and need as many motions for the warrant, as much writing of the Clerks, as long expectation of a Seal, as greater. It comes now to you sealed, and with it as strong and assured seals of my service and love to you, if it be good enough for you. I owe you a continuall tribute of Letters. But, Sir, even in Princes and Parents, and all States that have in them a naturall Soveraignty, there is a sort of reciprocation, and as [?] descent to doe some offices due to them that serve them: which makes me look for Letters from you, because I have another as valuable a pawn therefore, as your friendship, which is your promise; lest by the Jailors fault this Letter stick long, I must tell you, that I writ and sent it 12 Decemb. 1600.

Your friend and servant and lover J. Donne.

12. Decemb. 1600.

[lxxiii.]

To your self.

SIR,

I Send you here a Translation; but it is not onely to beleeve me, it is a great invention to have understood any piece of this Book, whether the gravity of the matter, or the Poeticall form, give it his inclination, and principium motus; you are his center, or his spheare, and to you as to his proper place he addresses himself. Besides that all my things, not onely by obligation, but by custome, know that that is the way they should goe. I spake of this to my L[ady] of Bedford, thinking then I had had a copy which I made long since, at Sea, but because I finde it not, I have done that again: when you finde it not unseasonable, let her see it; and if you can think it fit, that a thing that hath either wearied, or distasted you, should receive so much favour, put it amongst her papers: when you have a new stomach to it, I will

provide you quickly a new Copy.

Your very true friend and servant and lover J. Donne.

At my Micham Hospitall, Aug. 10.

[lxxiv.]

To the gallant Knight Sir Tho. Lucy.

SIR,

Because in your last Letter, I have an invitation to come to you, though I never thought my self so fallen from my interest, which, by your favour, I prescribe in, in you, and therefore when in the spring I hoped to have strength enough, to come into those parts, upon another occasion, I always resolved to put my self into your presence too, yet now I aske you more particularly how you dispose of your self; for though I have heard, that you purpose a journey to the Bath, and from thence hither, yet I can hope, that my service at Lincolns Inne being ended for next Terme, I may have intermission enough to waite upon you at Polesworth, before the season call you to Bath. I was no easie apprehender of the fear of your departing from us; neither am I easie in the hope of seeing you intirely over suddenly. God loves your soul if he be loth to let it go inch-meale, and not by swallowings; and he loves it too, if he build it up again stone after stone; his will is not done except his way, and his leasure be observed. In my particular, I am sorry, if my ingenuity and candor in delivering myself in those points, of which you speak to me, have defaced those impressions which were in you before: if my freedome have occasioned your captivity, I am miserably sorry. I went unprofitably and improvidently, to the utmost end of Truth, because I would go as farre as I could to meet Peace; if my going so far in declaring my self, brought you where you could not stop. But as I was as confident in your strength, as in mine own, so am I still, in him, who strengthens all our infirmities and will, I doubt not, bring you and me together, in all those

particulars, so as we shall not part in this world, nor the next. Sir, your own soul cannot be more zealous of your peace, then I am: and God, who loves that zeale in me, will not suffer you to suspect it. I am surprised with a necessity of writing now, in a minute; for I sent to Bedford house to informe my self of means to write, and your daughter sent me word, of a present messenger, and therefore the rest of this I shall make up in my prayers to our blessed Saviour, for all happinesses to you.

Your poor servant in Chr. Jesus J. Donne.

Drury house the 22 of Decemb. 1607.

[lxxv.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

This is a second Letter: the enclosed was written before. Now we are sure that Heidelberge is taken, and entred with extreme cruelties. Almost all the defendors forsook their stations; only Sir Ger[ald] Herbert maintained his nobly, to the repulsing of the enemy three times, but having ease in the other parts, 800 new fresh men were put upon his quarter, and after he had broke 4 Pikes, and done very well, he was shot dead in the place. Man[n]heim was soon after besieged, and is still. Heydelth [Heidelberg] was lost the 6 of this moneth; the K[ing] upon news of this, sent to the Spanish Ambassa[d]our, that the people were like to resent it, and therefore, if he doubted ought, he should have a Guard: but I do not see, that he seems to need it, in his own opinion neither in truth does he; the people are flat: or trust in God, and the Kings ways. Sir Hor[atio] Vere hath written to his wife, (as I am told) a Letter in the nature of a will, for the disposing of his estate and children, as though he did not account to see her any more, but yet Man[n]heim cannot be lost, but by storming. Your man stays, and our bell rings me into the Church; there Sir, I shall recommend you to Gods goodnesse, with

Your friend J. Donne.

24 Septemb.

[lxxvi.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Live so farre removed, that even the ill news of your great losse (which is ever swiftest and loudest) found me not till now; your letter speaks it not plain enough but I am so accustomed to the worst, that I am sure it is so in this. I am almost glad that I knew her so little: for I would have no more additions to sorrow; if I should comfort you, it were an almes acceptable in no other title, then when poor give to poor; for I am more needy of it then you. And I know you well provided of Christian, and learned, and brave defences against all humane accidents. I will make my best haste after your messenger: and if my self and the place had not been ill provided of horses, I had been the messenger, for you have taught me by granting more to deny no request.

Your honest unprofitable friend J. Donne.

Pyesford 3 a clock just as yours came.

[lxxvii.]

To Sir G. H.

SIR

I Cannot yet serve you with those books of which your Letter spake. In recompense I will tell you a story, which if I had had leasure to have told it you when it was fresh, which was upon Thursday last, might have had some grace for the rareness, and would have tried your love to me, how farre you would adventure to beleeve an

improbable thing for my sake who relates it. That day in the morning, there was some end made, by the E[arl] of Salisbury and others, who were Arbitrators in some differences between Her[t]ford and Mounte[a]gle. Her[t]ford was ill satisfied in it, and declared himself so farre as to say, he expected better usage in respect not only of his cause but of his expence and service in his Ambassage: to which Salisbury replied, that considered how things stood between his Majesty and Her[t]ford house at the Kings enterance, the King had done him especiall favour in that employment of honour and confidence, by declaring in so publique and great an act and testimony, that he had no ill affections toward him. Her[t]ford answered, that he was then and ever an honest man to the King: and Salisbury said, he denied not that, but yet solemnly repeated his first words again. So that Her[t]ford seemed not to make answer, but pursuing his own word, said, that whosoever denied him to have been an honest man to the King, lyed. Salisbury asked him if he directed that upon him, Her[t]ford said, upon any who denied this. The earnestnes of both was such, as Salisbury accepted it to himself, and made protestation before the LL. [Lords] present, that he would do nothing else, till he had honorably put off that lye. Within an hour after, Salisbury sent him a direct challenge, by his servant Mr Knightley; Her[t]ford required only an hours leisure of consideration (it is said, it was onely to inform himself of the especiall danger, in dealing so with a Counsellor) but he returned his acceptation: And all circumstances were so clearly handled between them, that St James was agreed for the place, and they were both come from their severall lodgings, and upon the way to have met, when they were interrupted by such as from the King were sent to have care of it. So these two have escaped this great danger; but (by my troth) I fear earnestly that Mistresse Bolstrod will not escape that sicknesse in which she labours at this time. I sent this morning to aske of her passage of this night; and the return is, that she is as I left her yesternight, and then by the strength of her understanding, and voyce, (proportionally to her fashion, which was ever remisse) by the eavennesse and life of her pulse, and by her temper,

I could allow her long life, and impute all her sicknesse to her minde. But the History of her sicknesse, makes me justly fear, that she will scarce last so long, as that you when you receive this letter, may do her any good office, in praying for her; for she hath not for many days received so much as a preserved Barber[r]y, but it returnes, and all accompanied with a Fever, the mother, and an extream ill spleen. Whilest I write this Tuesday morning, from Bartlet house one brings me a pacquet to your Master: he is gone; and that Lady and all the company is from town. I thought I might be pardoned, if I thought my self your man for that service to open it, which I did, and for the Letters I will deliver them. What else you bid Foster do in his Letter, bid him do it there, for (so God help me) I know not what it is. I must end now, else the carrier will be gone. God be with you.

Yours intirely.

You know me without a name, and I know not how this Letter goes.

[lxxviii.]

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Had destined all this Tuesday, for the Court, because it is both a Sermon day, and the first day of the Kings being here. Before I was to go forth, I had made up this inclosed pacquet for you, and then came this messenger with your pacquet, of which if you can remember the number, you cannot expect any account thereof from me, who have not half an hour left me before I go forth, and your messenger speakes of a necessity of returning homward before my returning home. If upon the delivery of them, or any other occasion, there intervene new subject of writing, I shall relieve my self upon Tuesday, if Tamworth carrier be in town. To the particulars of the Letter to my self, I will give this paper, and line. Of my Lady Badford, I must say so much as must importune you to burn the Letter; for I would say nothing of her upon

record, that should not testifie my thankfulnesse for all her graces. But upon this motion which I made to her by letter, and by Sr Tho. Roes assistance, if any scruple should arise in her, she was somewhat more startling, then I looked for from her: she had more suspicion of my calling, a better memory of my past life, then I had thought her nobility could have admitted: of all which, though I humbly thank God, I can make good use, as one that needs as many remembrances in that kinde, as not only friends but enemies can present, yet I am afraid, they proceed in her rather from some ill impression taken from D[octor] Burges, then that they grow in her self. But whosoever be the conduit, the water is the holy Ghosts, and in that acceptation I take it. For her other way of expressing her favour to me, I must say, it is not with that cheerfulnesse, as heretofore she hath delivered her self towards me. I am almost sorry, that an Elegy should have been able to move her to so much compassion heretofore, as to offer to pay my debts; and my greater wants now, and for so good a purpose, as to come disengaged into that profession, being plainly laid open to her, should work no farther but that she sent me 30l. which in good faith she excused with that, which is in both parts true, that her present debts were burdensome, and that I could not doubt of her inclination, upon all future emergent occasions, to assist me. I confesse to you, her former fashion towards me, had given a better confidence; and this diminution in her makes me see, that I must use more friends, then I thought I should have needed. I would you could burn this letter, before you read it, at least do when you have read it. For, I am afraid out of a Contemplation of mine own unworthinesse, and fortune, that the example of this Lady, should work upon the Lady where you are: for though goodnesse be originally in her, and she do good, for the deeds sake, yet, perchance, she may think it a little wisdome, to make such measure of me, as they who know no better, do. Of any new treaty of a match with Spain, I hear nothing. The warres in the Low countries, to judge by their present state, are very likely to go forward. No word of a Parliament, and I my self have heard words of the K[ing] as directly against any such purpose, as any can sound. I

never heard word, till in your letter, of any stirres in Scotland, for that of the French K. which you aske, it hath this good ground, That in the Assembly there a proposition hath been made, and well entertained, that the K[ing] should be declared, to have full Jurisdiction in France; and no other person to have any. It hath much of the modell and frame of our Oath of Allegeance, but with some modification. It is true, it goes farther then that State hath drove in any publique declarations, but not farther than their Schools have drove often and constantly: the easinesse that it hath found in passing thus farre without opposition, puts (perchance unnecessarily) in me a doubt, that they are sure to choak it, at the Royall assent, and therefore oppose it not, by the way, to sweeten the conveyance of their other purposes. Sir, if I stay longer I shall lose the Text, at Court, therefore I kisse your hand, and rest

Your very true servant J. Donne.

We hear (but without second as yet) that Sir Rich[ard] Philips brother in France, hath taken the habit of a Capuchin.

[lxxix.]

To Sir Thomas Lucy.

SIR,

This first of Aprill I received yours of 21 of Martii, which being two days after the ordinary Smithfield day, I could do no more, but seal this letter to be sent to you next Tuesday, because I foresee that I shall not then be in town. Whatsoever I should write now, of any passages of these days, would lose the verdure before the letter came to you, only give me leave to tell you that I need none of those excuses, which you have made to your self in my behalfe, for my not writing. For your son in law came to me, so near the time of his going away, as it had been impossible to have recovered him with a letter at so farre a distance, as he was lodged. And my L. Hunt.

messenger received that answer, which, I hope, before this time, you know to be true, that I had sent the day before, by the infallible carrier of Smithfield. The Emperours death may somewhat shorten our way; for I discern now no reason of going to Vienna; but I beleeve it wil extẽd our busines; so that I promise my self no speedier return by that. If I write no letters into England out of these parts, I cannot be without your pardon, if I write not to you, but if I write to any and leave you out, lay all the faults which you have ever pardoned in me, to my charge again. I foresee some reasons, which may make me forbeare; but no slacknesse of mine own, shall. Sir, if I have no more the commodity of writing to you here in England, (as, we may be gon before next Tuesday) I tell you, in this departing from you, with the same truth and earnestnesse as I would be beleeved to speake in my last departing, and transmigration from the whole world, that I leave not behinde me a heart, better affected to you, nor more devoted to your service, then I carry with me. Almighty God blesse you, with such a reparation in your health, such an establishment in your estate, such a comfort in your children, such a peace in your conscience, and such a true cheerfulnesse in your heart, as may be strong seales to you, of his eternall gracious purpose upon you. This morning I spend in surveying and emptying my Cabinet of Letters; and at the top of all I light upon this Letter lately received, which I was loth to bury. I chose to send it you, to mine own condemnation; because a man so busie as he is, descending to this expressing of himself in verse, I am inexcusable towards you, for disobeying a commandment of yours, of that kinde; but I relie upon the generall, that I am sure you are sure, that I never refuse any thing for lazinesse, nor morosity, and therefore make some other excuse for me. You have been so long used to my hand that I stand not to excuse the hasty raggednesse of this Letter. The very ilnesse of the writing, is a good argument that I forced a time, in the fulnesse of businesse, to kisse your hand, and to present my thanks as for all your favours, and benefits, so principally for keeping me alive in the memory of the noblest Countesse, whose commandement, if it had been her Laps pleasure to have any

thing said or done in her service, at Heydelberg, I should have been glad to have received. Sir, God blesse you, & spiritu principali confirmet te; and

Your very true and affectionate servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

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To the honourable Knight Sr Henry Goodere.

SIR,

As you are a great part of my businesse, when I come to London, so are you when I send. More then the office of a visitation brings this Letter to you now; for I remember that about this time you purposed a journey to fetch, or meet the Lad[y] Huntington. If you justly doubt any long absence, I pray send to my lodging my written Books: and if you may stay very long, I pray send that Letter in which I sent you certain heads which I purposed to enlarge, for I have them not in any other paper: and I may finde time in your absence to do it, because I know no stronger argument to move you to love me, but because you have done so, doe so still, to make my reason better, and I shall at last prescribe in you

Yours, J. Donne.

Micham Wednesday.

[lxxxi.]

To Sir H. G. at Polesworth.

SIR,

This 25 I have your letter of 21, which I tell you so punctually, because by it, nor by any other, I doe not discern that you received my pacquet of Books; not that I looked for so quick a return of the Sermon, nor of my Cases of conscience, but that I forget so absolutely what I write, and am so sure that I write confidently to you, that it is

some pain to remain in any jealousie that any Letter is miscarried. That which I writ to you of my L. Treasur[er's] disposition to you, I had from Mr Har[ington]; and I understood it to be his desire to convey it through me. The last account which we have of my L. Donc[aster] is, by Letters of the 2o of this; by which also we saw, that the first Letters of his convalescence, were but propheticall; for he was let blood a second time, and is not strong enough yet to receive audience. Though I be not Dean of Pauls yet, my L[ord] of Warwick hath gone so low, as to command of me the office of being Master of my game, in our wood about him in Essex. I pray be you content to be my officer too, the Steward of my services to all to whom you know them to be due in your walk, and continue your own assurance that I am

Your affectionate servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[lxxxii.]

To my worthy friend F. H.

SIR,

I Can scarce doe any more this week then send you word why I writ not last. I had then seposed a few daies for my preparation to the Communion of our B[lessed] Saviours body; and in that solitarinesse and arraignment of my self, digested some meditations of mine, and apparelled them (as I use) in the form of a Sermon: for since I have not yet utterly delivered my self from this intemperance of scribling (though I thank God my accesses are lesse and lesse vehement) I make account that to spend all my little stock of knowledge upon matter of delight, were the same error, as to spend a fortune upon Masks and Banqueting houses: I chose rather to build in this poor fashion, some Spittles, and Hospitals, where the poor and impotent sinner may finde some relief, or at least understanding of his infirmity. And if they be too weak to serve posterity, yet for the present by contemplation of them, &c.

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To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Have the honour of your Letter, which I am almost sorry to have received: some few daies before the receit thereof D[octor] Turner, who accompanied my L. Carow [Carey] to Sion to dinner, shewed me a Letter from you, from which I conceived good hopes that your businesses, being devolved into the hands of the Treasurer, had been in much more forwardnesse, then by your Letter to me they appear to be. I beseech God establish them, and hasten them, and with them, or without them, as he sees most conducible to his purpose upon you, continue in you a relying upon him, and a satisfaction in his waies. I know not whether any Letter from your son, or any other report, may have given you any mention of me; he writ to me from the Compter, that he was under a trifling arrest, and that 3l and some little more would discharge him. I sent my man with that money, but bid him see it emploied for his discharge: he found more actions, and returned. Next day he writ to me that 8l would discharge him, and that Mr Selden would lay down half. But Mr Selden and I speaking together, thought it the fittest way, to respite all, till, in a few daies, by his writing to you, we might be directed therein; and in the mean time, took order with the Keeper to accommodate him, and I bade my man Martin, as from himself, to serve his present want with some things. Since we told him, that we would attend a return of his Letter to you, I heard no more of him, but I hear he is out. Whosoever serves you with relations from this Town, I am sure prevents me of all I can say. The Palatinate is absolutely lost; for before this Letter come to you, we make account that Heydelberg and Frankindale is lost, and Manheme [Mannheim] distressed, Mansfield came to Breda, and Gonzales to Brussels, with great losses on both sides, but equall. The P[rince] of Orange is but now come to Breda, and with him, all that he is able to make, even out of the Garrisons of their Towns. The ways of victuall to

Spinolaes Army, are almost all precluded by him, and he likely to put upon the raising of Spinola, between whom and the Town, there are hotter disputes, then ever our times saw. The Secretary of the States here shewed me a Letter yesternight, that the Town spends 6000 pound of powder a day, and hath spent since the siege 250m pounds. Argits Regiment and my L. Vaux, are so diminished by commings away, as that both (I think) make not now in Muster above 600. Mr Gage is returning to Rome, but of this Negotiation I dare say nothing by a Letter of adventure. The direction which his Maty gave for Preachers, had scandalized many; therefore he descended to pursue them with certain reasons of his proceedings therein; and I had commandment to publish them in a Sermon at the Crosse, to as great a Congregation as ever I saw together, where they received comfortable assurance of his Maties constancy in Religion, and of his desire that all men should be bred in the knowledge of such things, as might preserve them from the superstition of Rome. I presume it is but a little while before we shall see you here, but that little time is likely to produce many things greatly considerable. Present, I pray, my thankfull services to your good daughters. I can give them no better a room in my prayers, and wishes, then my poore Constance hath, and they have that; so have you Sir, with

J. Donne.

[lxxxiv.]

To the worthiest Knight Sir Henry Goodere.

SIR,

Our blessed Saviour, who abounds in power and goodnesse towards us all, blesse you, and your family, with blessings proportioned to his ends in you all, and blesse you with the testimony of a rectified conscience, of having discharged all the offices of a father, towards your discreet and worthy daughters, and blesse them with a satisfaction, and quiescence, and more, with a complacency and a joy, in good ends,

and ways towards them, Amen. Your man brought me your Letter of the 8 of December this 21 of the same, to Chelsey, and gives me the largenesse till friday to send a letter to Pauls house. There can scarce be any peece of that, or of those things whereof you require light from me, that is not come to your knowledge, by some clearer way, between the time of your Letter, and this. Besides the report of my death hath thus much of truth in it, that though I be not dead, yet I am buried. Within a few weeks after I immured my self in this house, the infection strook into the town, into so many houses, as that it became ill manners to make any visits. Therefore I never went to Knoll, nor Hanworth, nor Kenton [Keyston], nor to the Court, since the Court came into these quarters, nor am yet come to London; therefore I am little able to give you account of high stages. Perchance you look not so low, as our ordinary Gazetta, and that tells us, (with a second assurance) that the D[uke] of Brunswick, Christian, is dead of an Ague. My L[ord] of Dorset even upon the day, when he should have been installed with his six fellowes, fell sick at London; and at Court (which does not exalt all men) his Fever was exalted to the plague; but he is in good convalescence. Of the Navy I hear of no great lim[b] come back yet, but my L. of Essex; something of the disappointing of the designe they had, is imputed to some difference, in point of command, betweem him and the Mr of the Ordinance, my L. of Valencia, but as yet there is little manifested. Already is issued a Proclamation, that there be no disbanding of the Souldiers, upon their landing, in what part soever, and that his Majesty hath present imployment for them. What the business at Haghe [Hague] hath been, I know nothing, but I hear, that their offer of pawning of Jewells to a very very great value, to the States or private men, hath found no acceptance, at least found no money. Occasionally I heard from the Haghe, that the Queen having taken into her care, the promoving and advancing of some particular mens businesses, by way of recommendations to the Duke, expressed her self very royally, in your behalf. This I tell you not, as though you knew it not, but because I had the fortune to see it in a Letter of the simple

Gentlewoman, from thence; by which name, if you know her not, I have omitted heretofore to tell you a good tale. They continue at Court, in the resolution of the Queen pastorall; when Q[ueen] Anne loved gamboils, you loved the Court; perchance you may doubt whether you be a thorough Courtier, if you come not up to see this, The Queen a Shepperdesse; but I speak not this, by way of counsail, to draw you up, it is not only Non Dominus, sed ego, but nec Deus nec ego, to call you hither, but upon fair appearances of usefull commings. Mr George Herbert is here at the receipt of your letter, and with his service to you, tells you that all of Uvedall house are well. I reserve not the mention of my Lady Huntington to the end of my Letter, as grains to make the gold weight, but as tincture to make the better gold, when you finde room to intrude so poor and impertinent a name, as mine is, in her presence. I beseech you, let her Lad[yship] know, that she hath sowed her favours towards me, in such a ground, that if I be grown better (as I hope I am) her favours are grown with me, and though they were great when she conferred them, yet, (if I mend every day) they increase in me every day, and therefore every day multiply my thankfulnesse towards her Ladiship: say what you will (if you like not this expression) that may make her Ladiship know, that I shall never let fall the memory, nor the just valuation of her noble favours to me, nor leave them unrequited in my Exchequer, which is, the blessings of God upon my prayers. If I should write another sheet, I should be able to serve your curiosity no more of Dukes nor LL. [Lords] nor Courts, and this half line serves to tell you, that I am truly

Your poor friend and humble servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[lxxxv.]

To my honoured friend G. G. Esquire.

SIR,

Neither your Letters, nor silence, needs excuse; your friendship is to me an abundant

possession, though you remember me but twice in a year: He that could have two harvests in that time, might justly value his land at a high rate; but, Sir, as we doe not onely then thank our land, when we gather the fruit, but acknowledge that all the year she doth many motherly offices in preparing it: so is not friendship then onely to be esteemed, when she is delivered of a Letter, or any other reall office, but in her continuall propensnesse and inclination to do it. This hath made me easie in pardoning my long silences, and in promising my self your forgivenesse for not answering your Letter sooner. For my purpose of proceeding in the profession of the law, so farre as to a title you may be pleased to correct that imagination, wheresoever you finde it. I ever thought the study of it my best entertainment, and pastime, but I have no ambition, nor designe upon the style. Of my Anniversaries, the fault that I acknowledge in my self, is to have descended to print any thing in verse, which though it have excuse even in our times, by men who professe, and practise much gravitie, yet I confesse I wonder how I declined to it, and do not pardon my self. But for the other part of the imputation of having said too much, my defẽce is, that my purpose was to say as well as I could: for since I never saw the Gentlewoman, I cannot be understood to have bound my self to have spoken just truths, but I would not be thought to have gone about to praise her, or any other in rime, except I took such a person, as might be capable of all that I could say. If any of those Ladies think that Mistris Drewry was not so, let that Lady make her self fit for all those praises in the book, and they shall be hers. Sir, this messenger makes so much haste that I cry you mercy for spending any time of this letter in other imployment then thanking you for yours. I hope before Christmas to see England, and kisse your hand, which shall ever, (if it disdain not that office) hold all the keyes of the liberties and affection, and all the faculties of

Your most affectionate servant, J. D.

Paris the 14 of Aprill, here, 1612.

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To my honoured friend G. G. Esquire.

SIR,

I Should not only send you an account by my servant, but bring you an account often my self, (for our Letters are our selves and in them absent friends meet) how I do, but that two things make me forbear that writing: first, because it is not for my gravity, to write of feathers, and strawes, and in good faith, I am no more, considered in my body, or fortune. And then because whensoever I tell you how I doe, by a Letter, before that Letter comes to you, I shall be otherwise, then when it left me. At this time, I humbly thank God, I am only not worse; for I should as soon look for Roses at this time of the year, as look for increase of strength. And if I be no worse all spring, then now, I am much better, for I make account that those Church services, which I would be very loth to decline, will spend somewhat; and, if I can gather so much as will bear my charges, recover so much strength at London, as I shall spend at London, I shall not be loth to be left in that state wherein I am now, after that's done; But I do but discourse, I do not wish; life or health, or strength, (I thank God) enter not into my prayers for my self; for others they do; and amongst others, for your sick servant, for such a servant taken so young, and healed so long, is half a child to a master, and so truly I have observed that you have bred him with the care of a father. Our blessed Saviour look graciously upon him, and glorifie himself in him, by his way of restitution to health; And by his way of peace of conscience in

Your very true friend and servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

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SIR,

This advantage you, and my other friends, have by my frequent Fevers, that I am so much the oftener at the gates of heaven, and this advantage by the solitude and close imprisonment that they reduce me to after, that I am thereby the oftener at my prayers; in which, I shall never leave out your happinesse; and, I doubt not, but amongst his many other blessings, God will adde to you some one for my prayers. A man would almost be content to dye, (if there were no other benefit in death) to hear of so much sorrow, and so much good testimony from good men, as I, (God be blessed for it) did upon the report of my death. Yet, I perceive it went not through all; for, one writ unto me, that some (and he said of my friends) conceived, that I was not so ill, as I pretended, but withdrew my self, to save charges, and to live at ease, discharged of preaching. It is an unfriendly, and God knows, an ill grounded interpretation: for in these times of necessity, and multitudes of poor there is no possibility of saving to him that hath any tendernesse in him; and for affecting my ease, I have been always more sorry, when I could not preach, then any could be, that they could not hear me. It hath been my desire, (and God may be pleased to grant it me) that I might die in the Pulpit; if not that, yet that I might take my death in the Pulpit, that is, die the sooner by occasion of my former labours. I thanke you, for keeping our George in [in] your memory. I hope God reserves it for so good a friend as you are, to send me the first good news of him. For the Diamond Lady, you may safely deliver Roper whatsoever belongs to me, and he will give you a discharge for the money. For my L[ord] Percy, we shall speake of it, when we meet at London; which, as I do not much hope before Christmas, so I do not much fear at beginning of Tearm; for I have intreated one of my fellowes to preach to my Lord Maior, at Pauls upon Christmas day, and reserved Candlemas day to my self for that service, about which time also will fall my Lent Sermon, except my Lord Chamberlaine beleeve me to be dead, and leave me out; for as long as I live, and am not speechlesse, I would not decline that service. I have better leasure to write, then you to read, yet I will not oppress you with too much letter. God blesse you, and

your sonne, as

Your poor friend and humble servant in Christ Jesus J. Donne.

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To the Lady G.

Madam,

I Am not come out of England, if I remain in the Noblest part of it, your minde; yet I confesse, it is too much diminution to call your minde any part of England, or of this world, since every part even of your body deserves titles of higher dignity. No Prince would be loth to die, that were assured of so faire a tombe to preserve his memory: but I have a greater vantage then so; for since there is a Religion in friendship, and a death in absence, to make up an intire frame there must be a heaven too: and there can be no heaven so proportionall to that Religion, and that death, as your favour. And I am gladder that it is a heaven, then that it were a Court, or any other high place of this world, because I am likelier to have a room there then here; and better cheap. Madam, my best treasure is time; and my best imployment of that is to study good wishes for you, in which I am by continuall meditation so learned, that your own good Angell, when it would do you most good, might be content to come and take instructions from

Your humble and affectionate servant J. Donne.

[lxxxix.]

To your selfe.

Sir,

The first of this moneth I received a Letter from you; no Letter comes so late, but that it brings fresh newes hither. Though I presume Mr Pore [Pory], and since, Sir

Rob. Rich came after the writing of that Letter, yet it was good newes to me, that you thought me worthy of so good a testimony. And you were subtile in the disguise: for you shut up your Letter, thus, Lond. 22. in our stile, but I am not so good a Cabalist, as to finde in what moneth it was written. But, Sir, in the offices of so spirituall a thing as friendship, so momentary a thing as time, must have no consideration. I keep it therefore to read every day, as newly written: to which vexation it must be subject, till you relieve it with an other. If I ought you not a great many thankes for every particular part of it, I should yet thanke you for the length; and love it, as my mistresses face, every line and feature, but best all together. All that I can do towards retribution, is, (as other bankrupts do in prison) to make means by Commissioners, that a great debt may be accepted by small summes weekly. And in that proportion I have paid my tribute to you, almost ever since I came; and shall still do so. You know that they say, those are the strongest, and the firmest, and most precious things, which are composed of the most, and smallest parts. I will flatter my self therefore, that the number of my Letters may at last make a strong argument of my desire to serve you, but because I remember, out of this Philosophy, that they should be little, as well as many, lest this Letter should not get into the building, it shall be no bigger; thus much addition will not much disfigure it, that it sweare to you that I am

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

Sir, I cry you mercy for sealing your sisters letter, but I deliver you up my authority, and I remember you, that you have hers to open it again. You will the easilier forgive me, that I write no newes, when you observe by this transgression, that I live in a place which hath quenched in me even the remembrances of good manners. By naming her, I have made my postscript the worthyest place of my letter: and therefore I chuse that place to present my service to all the company at our lodging; in which house, if I cannot get room for a pallat, at my return, my comfort is, that I can ever hope to be so near them as the Spittle in the Savoy, where they receive

Travellers.

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To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

Though I have left my bed, I have not left my bed-side; I sit there still, and as a Prisoner discharged sits at the Prison doore, to beg Fees, so sit I here, to gather crummes. I have used this leisure, to put the meditations had in my sicknesse, into some such order, as may minister some holy delight. They arise to so many sheetes (perchance 20.) as that without saying for that furniture of an Epistle, That my Friends importun'd me to Print them, I importune my Friends to receive them Printed. That, being in hand, through this long Trunke, that reaches from Saint Pauls, to Saint James, I whisper into your earre this question, whether there be any uncomlinesse, or unseasonablenesse, in presenting matter of Devotion, or Mortification, to that Prince, whom I pray God nothing may ever Mortifie, but Holinesse. If you allow my purposes in generall, I pray cast your eye upon the Title and the Epistle, and rectifie me in them: I submit substance, and circumstance to you, and the poore Author of both,

Your very humble and very thankfull Servant in Christ Jesus J. Donne.

[xci.]

To your selfe.

Sir,

Age becomes nothing better then Friendship; therefore your Letters, which are ever good effects of friendship, delight to be old before I receive them: for it is but a fortnight since those Letters which you sent by Captain Peter found me at Spâ;

presently upon the receit, I adventured by your leave to bestow the first minutes upon this Letter to your faire Noble Sister; And because I found no voice at Spâ of any Messenger, I respited my Writing to you, till I came thus much nearer. Upon the way hither, another Letter from you overtooke me, which by my L[ord] Chandos love to me for your sake, was sent after me to Ma[a]stricht: He came to Spâ within two houres after I went away; which I tell you to let you see, that my Fortune hath still that spitefull constancy, to bring me near my desires, and intercept me. If I should write to you any newes from this place, I should forestall mine owne Market, by telling you before hand that which must make me acceptable to you at my comming. I shall sneake into London, about the end of August. In my remotest distances I did not more need your Letters than I shall then. Therefore if you shall not be then in London, I beseech you to think mee at Constantinople, and write one large Letter to be left at my Ladie Bartlets, my lodging; for I shall come in extreame darknesse and ignorance, except you give me light. If Sir John Brooke be within your reach, present my humble service and thankfulnesse to him; if he be not, I am glad, that to my Conscience, which is a thousand witnesses, I have added you for one more, that I came as near as I could to doe it. I shall run so fast from this place, through Antwerpe, and some parts of Holland, that all that love which you could perchance be content to expresse by Letters if I lay still, may be more thriftily bestowed upon that one Letter, which is by your favour, to meet me, and to welcome to London

Your unworthy, but very true Friend, J. Donne.

[xcii.]

Sir,

It is one ill affection of a desperate debtor, that he dares not come to an account, nor take knowledge how much he owes; this makes me that I dare not tell you how

manie letters I have received from you since I came to this Towne; I had three the first by the Cooke, who brought none but yours, nor ever came to me, to let me know what became of the rest: the two other of the 7. and 8. of March, came in a letter which Sir H. Wotton writ to me from Amyens; there is not a size of paper in the Palace, large enough to tell you how much I esteeme my selfe honoured in your remembrances; nor strong enough to wrap up a heart so ful of good affections towards you, as mine is. When any thing passes between Sir Thomas Roe and you, tell him I am not the lesse his Servant, for not saying so by often letters: for by my troth, I am that so much as he could desire I should be, when he began to love me. Sir Thomas Lucies businesse, and perchance sadnesse forbid me writing now. I have written to him (whilest I lived in darknesse, whether my Letters came to you or no) by another way; and if my poore Letters were any degree of service, I should doe it often, and rather be mine own Post then leave any thing undone, to which he would give such an interpretation, as that it were an Argument of my Devotion to him. For my purpose of proceeding in the profession of the Law, so far as to a Title, you may be pleased to correct that imagination where you finde it. I ever thought the study of it my best entertainment and pastime, but I have no ambition, nor design upon the Stile. Of my Anniversaries the fault which I acknowledge in my selfe is to have descended to print any thing in Verse, which though it have excuse, even in our times, by example of men which one would thinke should as little have done it, as I; yet I confesse I wonder how I declined to it, and doe not pardon my self. But for the other part of the imputation, of having said so much, my defence is, that my purpose was to say as well as I could: for since I never saw the Gentlewoman, I cannot be understood to have bound my selfe to have spoken just Truth: but I would not be thought to have gone about to praise any bodie in rime, except I tooke such a Person, as might be capable of all that I could say. If any of those Ladies think that Mistris Drury was not so, let that Ladie make her selfe fit for all those praises in the Booke, and it shall be hers. Nothing is farther from colour or ground of Truth, then that

which you write of Sir Robert Druries going to Masse. No man of our Nation hath been more forward to apply himselfe to the Church of the Religion where he hath come, nor to relieve their wants, where that Demonstration hath beene needfull. I know not yet whether Sir John Brookes purpose of being very shortly here, be not a just reason to make me forbear writing to him. I am sure that I would fainest do that in writing or abstaining which should be most acceptable to him. It were in vain to put into this letter any relation of the Magnificence which have been here at publication of these marriages; for at this time there come into England so many Frenchmen, as I am sure you shall heare all at least. If they speak not of above eight hundred horse well caparosond, you may believe it: and you may believe, that no Court in Christendome had beene able to have appeared so brave in that kinde. But if they tell you of any other stuffe then Copper, or any other exercise of armes then running at the Quintain, and the Ring, you may be bold to say Pardone moy. Sir, this messenger makes so much haste that I cry you mercy for spending any time of this Letter, in other imployment, then thanking you for yours, and promising you more before my remove from hence. I pray venture no Letter to me by any other way then M. John Bruer [Brewer] at the Queens Armes a Mercer in Cheapside, who is always like to know where we are; And make me by loving me still, worthy to be

Your friend and servant J. Donne.

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To my Honoured friend Mr George Gerrard.

Sir,

I Cannot chuse but make it a presage that I shall have no good fortune in England, that I mist the honour of enjoying that company, which you brought to town. But I beseech you let my ill luck determine in that ominousnesse: for if my not comming should be by her or you interpreted for a negligence or coldnesse in me, I were

already in actual and present affliction. For that Ecclesiasticall Lady of whom you write, since I presume it is a work of darknesse that you go about, we will deferre it for winter. Perchance the cold weather, may be as good physique to you, as she, for quenching you. I have changed my purpose of going to Windsor, and will go directly into the Wight: which I tell you not as a concerning thing, but in obedience to your commandment, as one poor testimony that I am

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xciv.]

To my very worthy friend Mr George Gerrard.

Sir,

This is the fourth of this moneth, and I receive your Pacquet so late, that I have scarce waking time enough to tell you so, or to write any thing but dreams. I have both your Letters, mother and daughter, and am gladder of them, then if I had the mother and daughter here in our neighbourhood; you know I mean Sir H. Gooderes parties. Sir, you do me double honour when my name passes through you to that Noble Lady in whose presence you are. It is a better end and a better way to that then I am worth. I can give you nothing in recompense of that favour, but good counsell: which is to speake sparingly of any ability in me, lest you indanger your own reputation, by overvaluing me. If I shall at any time take courage by your Letter, to expresse my meditations of that Lady in writing, I shall scarce think lesse time to be due to that employment, then to be all my life in making those verses, and so take them with me and sing them amongst her fellow Angels in Heaven. I should be loath that in any thing of mine, composed of her, she should not appear much better then some of those of whom I have written. And yet I cannot hope for better expressings then I have given of them. So you see how much I should wrong her, by making her but equall to others. I would I could be beleeved, when I say that all that

is written of them, is but prophecy of her. I must use your favour in getting her pardon, for having brought her into so narrow, and low-roost a room as my consideration, or for adventuring to give any estimation of her, and when I see how much she can pardon, I shall the better discern how far farther I may dare to offend in that kinde. My noble neighbour is well, and makes me the steward of his service to you. Before this Letter reaches you, I presume you will bee gathering towards these parts, and then all newes will meet you so fast, as that out of your abundance you will impart some to

Your affectionate friend to serve you J. Donne.

[xcv.]

To your selfe.

Sir,

All your other Letters, which came to me by more hazardous waies, had therefore much merit in them; but for your Letter by M. Pory, it was but a little degree of favour, because the messenger was so obvious, and so certain, that you could not chuse but write by him. But since he brought me as much Letter as all the rest, I must accept that, as well as the rest. By this time, M. Garret, when you know in your conscience that you have sent no Letter, you beginne to look upon the superscription, and doubt that you have broken up some other bodies Letter: but whose so ever it were it must speak the same language, for I have heard from no body. Sir, if there be a Proclamation in England against writing to me, yet since it is thereby become a matter of State, you might have told M. Pory so. And you might have told him, what became of Sir Tho. Lucies Letter, in my first pacquet, (for any Letter to him makes any paper a pacquet, and any peece of single money a Medall) and what became of my Lady Kingsmels in my second, and of hers in my third, whom I will not name to you in hope that it is perished, and you lost the honour of

giving it. Sir, mine own desire of being your servant, hath sealed me a Patent of that place during my life, and therefore it shall not be in the power of your forbidding, (to which your stiffe silence amounts) to make me leave being

Your very affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xcvi.]

To my Honoured friend M. George Garrat.

Sir,

I Would I were so good an Alchimist to perswade you that all the vertue of the best affections, that one could expresse in a sheet, were in this ragge of paper. It becomes my fortune to deale thus in single money; and I may hit better with this hail-shot of little Letters (because they may come thick) then with great bullets; and trouble my friends lesse. I confesse it were not long enough if it came to present my thankes for all the favours you have done me; but since it comes to begge more, perchance it may be long enough, because I know not how short you will be with an absent friend. If you will but write that you give me leave to keep that name still, it shall be the gold of your Letter: and for allay, put in as much newes as you will. We are in a place where scarce any money appeares, but base: as, I confesse, all matters of Letters is in respect of the testimonies of friendship; but obey the corruption of this place, and fill your Letters with worse stuffe then your own. Present my service to all those Gentlemen whom I had the honour to serve at our lodging; I cannot flie an higher pitch, then to say, that I am so much their servants as you can say I am. At the Queens armes in Cheapside, which is a Mercers, you may hear of one M. John Brewer, who will convey any Letter directed to me at Sir Rob. Druries at Amiens, though he know not me: and I should be glad to hear that this first that I sent into England had the fortune to finde you.

Yours J. Donne.

[xcvii.]

To your fair sister.

Madam,

The dignity, and the good fortune due to your Letter, hath preserved a pacquet so well, that through France and Germany it is at last come to me at Spâ. This good experience makes me in despite of contrary appearances, hope that I shall finde some messenger for this before I remove, though it be but two dayes. For even Miracles are but little and slight things, when any thing which either concernes your worthinesse is in consideration or my valuation of it. If I faile in this hope of a messenger, I shall not grudge to do my self this service of bringing it into England, that you may hear me say there, that I have thus much profited by the honour of your conversation, and Contemplation, that I am, as your vertues are, every where equall; and that that which I shall say then at London, I thought and subscribed at Spâ, which is, that I will never be any thing else, then

Your very humble and affectionate servant J. Donne.

[xcviii.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Henry Goodere.

Sir,

Because to remain in this sort guilty in your Lordships opinion doth not onely defeat all my future indevours, but lay a heavyer burden upon me, of which I am more sensible, which is ingratitude towards your Lordship, by whose favours I have been formerly so much bound; I hope your Lordship will pardon me this care and diligence which I use to rectifie my self towards you. To which purpose I humbly beseech your Lordship, to admit thus much into your consideration, that I neither hunted after this businesse at first, but apprehended it as it was presented to me, and

might perchance have fallen into worse hands, nor proceeded otherwise therein, then to my poor discretion at that time seemed lawfull and requisite and necessary for my reputation, who held my selfe bound to be able to give satisfaction to any who should doubt of the case. Of all which, if your Lordship were returned to your former favourable opinions of me, you might be pleased to make this some argument, that after his Majesty had shewed his inclination to the first motion made in my behalf, I was not earnest to urge and solicit that advantage of priority, but as became me, contented my self to joyne with him who had made a later petition therein: and as soon as I understood how it was opposed or distasted, I threw it down at your Lordships feet, and abandoned it to your pleasure. Which it is necessary for me to say at this time, lest, if he who was interessed with me in that businesse shall have proceeded any farther therein since that time, your Lordship might conceive new suspicions of me. That your Lordships name was at all used therein, or that any words of mine occasioned such an errour in my servant, I am so sorry as nothing but a conscience of a true guiltinesse of having performed an injury to your Lordship (which can never fall upon me) could affect me more. But I, who to the measure of my comprehension, have ever understood your Lordships nobility and evenness, cannot fear that your Lordship will punish an oversight, like a crime: which should be effected upon me, if your Lordship should continue your disfavour towards me, since no penalty could come so burdenous to my minde and to my fortune as that. And since the repose of both consists in your Lordships favour, I humbly intreat to be restored to your favour, giving your Lordship my faith in pawn that I wil be as wary of forfeting it by any second occasion, as I am sorry for this.

Yours J. D.

[xcix.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

I Had rather like the first best; not onely because it is cleanlier, but because it reflects least upon the other party, which, in all jest and earnest, in this affair, I wish avoided. If my Muse were onely out of fashion, and but wounded and maimed like Free-will in the Roman Church, I should adventure to put her to an Epithalamion. But since she is dead, like Free-will in our Church, I have not so much Muse left as to lament her losse. Perchance this businesse may produce occasions, wherein I may expresse my opinion of it, in a more serious manner. Which I speake neither upon any apparent conjecture, nor upon any overvaluing of my abilities, but out of a generall readinesse and alacrity to be serviceable and gratefull in any kinde. In both which poor vertues of mine, none can pretend a more primary interest, then you may, in

Your humble and affectionate servant J. Donne.

[c.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre Gentleman of his Highnesses Bedchamber.

Sir,

I Have often sinned towards you, with a presumption of being pardoned, but now I do it, without hope, and without daring to intreat you to pardon the fault. In which there are thus many degrees of importunity. That I must begge of you to christen a child, which is but a daughter, and in which you must be content to be associated with Ladies of our own alliance, but good women, and all this upon Thursday next in the afternoon. Sir, I have so many and so indeleble impressions of your favour to me, as they might serve to spread over all my poor race. But since I see that I stand like a tree, which once a year beares, though no fruit, yet this Mast of children, and so am sure, that one year or other I should afflict you with this request, I had rather

be presently under the obligations and the thankfulnesse towards you, then meditate such a trouble to you against another year. I was desirous this paper might kisse your hands as soon as you came, that if any other diversions made this inconvenient to you, I might have an other exercise of your favour, by knowing so much from you, who in every act of yours make me more and more

Your humble and thankfull servant J. Donne.

17 Aprill.

[ci.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

Perchance others may have told you, that I am relapsed into my Fever; but that which I must intreat you to condole with me, is, that I am relapsed into good degrees of health; your cause of sorrow for that, is, that you are likely to be the more troubled with such an impertinencie, as I am; and mine is, that I am fallen from fair hopes of ending all; yet I have scaped no better cheap, then that I have paid death one of my Children for my Ransome. Because I loved it well, I make account that I dignifie the memorie of it, by mentioning of it to you, else I should not be so homely. Impute this brevitie of writing to you upon no Subject to my sicknesse, in which men use to talke idly: but my profession of desiring to bee retained in your memorie, impute to your owne Vertues, which have wrought so much upon

Your humble servant John Donne.

[cii.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

I Make account that it is a day of great distribution of Honours at Court: I would not therefore lose my part, and increase therein; since every Letter admitted by you from me, is a new stone in my best building, which is, my roome in your service: so much you adde to me, everie time you give me leave thus to kisse your hands. But, Sir, everie addition preimagins a beeing, and the time of my beeing and Creation is not yet come: which I am sure you will advance; because else I am no competent Subject of your favours, and additions. I know, by your forbearing to tell mee so, that my L[ord] hath had no commoditie to move the K[ing] and if this Paper speake one word of difference, or impatience in my name, by my troth it lies. Onely give it leave to tell you, that that L. whom perchance the K. may bee pleased to heare in it, is an old and momentanie man, and it may be late labouring for his assistance, next Winter. Besides, since it may bee possible that the Master of the Rolles may a little resent this suite, there could be no fitter time, then now, to make him easie, as things stand with him at this time. If you stay in Towne this night, and no longer, I beseech you afford me a few of your late Minutes at your own lodging, where I will wait upon you according to any directions, which by this Gent. or otherwise I shall receive from you.

Your humble servant John Donne.

[ciii.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

If I would calumniate, I could say no ill of that Gentleman: I know not whether my L[ord] or my selfe tooke the first apprehension of it; but I remember that very soone wee concurred in a good opinion of him; thereupon for justifying our owne forwardnesse, wee observed him more th[o]roughly, and found all the way good reason to ratifie our first estimation of him. This gave my L. occasion to send him

abroade in his Service after: how hee satisfied him in that imployment, indeed I know not. But, that I disguise nothing, I remember my L. told mee sometimes in his absence, that hee had not Account from him of some things, which hee had deposed in him. And at his entering into his Coach, at his last going, I asked my L. Goes not the gentleman with you? and hee told mee with some coldnesse no. So that if you bee not pressed to a Resolution, you may bee pleased to forbeare a few dayes, till I may occasionally discerne, whether hee have demerited or sunke in my L. opinion: And then you shall have another Character of him from

Your very humble and thankfull Servant J. Donne.

25. Julii.

[civ.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

The same houre that I received the honour of your commandments, by your letter left at my poore house, I put my selfe upon the way hither. So that I am here in the habite of a Traveller, and (suitable to the rest of my unworthinesses) unfit for great Presences. Therefore, I abstain from waiting upon you presently; besides that in this abstinence, (except I misinterpret the last words of your letter to my advantage) I obey your directions, in sending before I come to you. Howsoever, Sir, I am intirely at your disposing, if you will be pleased to adde this favour to the rest, that I may understand, wherein you will use your Authoritie and Power, which you have over

Your poore and humble servant J. Donne.

[cv.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

This is but a Postscript to the last Letter, and it is onely to tell you, that it was an impertinent jealousie that I conceived of that Gentlemans absence from my L[ord] for he gives that full Testimonie of him that he never discerned any kinde of unfitnesse in him for any imployment, except too much goodnesse; and Conscientiousnesse may sometimes make him somewhat lesse fit for some kindes of businesse, then a man of a looser raine. And this is all, that I conceive to have been in the commandment wherewith you honoured

Your very humble and thankfull servant in Christ Jesus J. Donne.

2. Aug. 1622.

[cvi.]

To my Honoured Friend, Master George Gherard.

Sir,

Your Letter was the more welcome to mee, because it brought your commandment with it, of sending you perfumes: for it is a Service somewhat like a Sacrifice. But yet your commandment surprised me, when neither I had enough to send, nor had means to recover more; that Ladie being out of Towne which gave them me. But Sir, if I had 10000000. I could send you no more then I doe; for I send all. If any good occasion present it selfe to you, to send to my L[ord] Clifford, spare my name a roome, there where you offer him most of your Service. I dare contend with you, that you cannot exceed mee, in desiring to serve him. It is a better office from me to you, that I goe to bed, then that I write a longer letter. For if I doe mine eyes a little more injurie, I shall lose the honour of seeing you at Michaelmas; for by my troth I am almost blinde: you may be content to beleeve that I am always disposed to your service, without exception of any time, since just at midnight, when it is both day, and night, and neither, I tell you that I am

Your affectionate friend and servant J. Donne.

[cvii.]

To my very much honoured friend George Garrard Esquire at Sion.

Sir,

I Know not which of us wonne it by the hand, in the last charge of Letters. If you wonne, you wonne nothing, because I am nothing, or whatsoever I am, you wonne nothing, because I was all yours before. I doubt not but I were better delivered of dangers of relapses, if I were at London; but the very going would indanger me. Upon which true debility, I was forced to excuse my selfe to my Lord Chamberlaine, from whom I had a Letter of command to have Preached the fifth of November Sermon to the King. A service which I would not have declined, if I could have conceived any hope of standing it. I beseech you intreat my Lord Percy in my behalfe, that he will be pleased to name George to my L[ord] Carli[s]le, and to wonder, if not to inquire, where he is. The world is disposed to charge my Lords honour, and to charge my naturall affection with neglecting him, and, God knowes, I know not which way to turn towards him; nor upon any message of mine, when I send to kisse my Lords hands, doth my Lord make any kinde of mention of him. For the Diamond Lady, when time serves, I pray look to it; for I would fain be discharged of it. And for the rest, let them be but remembered how long it hath been in my hands, and then leave it to their discretion. If they incline to any thing, I should chuse shirt Hollond, rather under then above 4 s. Our blessed Saviour multiply his blessings upon that noble family where you are, and your self, and your sonne; as upon all them that are derived from

Your poor friend and servant J. Donne.

[cviii.]

To my very much respected friend Mr. George Garrard.

Sir,

I Thank you for expressing your love to me, by this diligence; I know you can distinguish between the voyces of my love, and of my necessity, if any thing in my Letters sound like an importunity. Besides, I will adde thus out of counsell to you, that you can do nothing so thriftily as to keep in your purpose the payment of the rest of this years rent, (though at your conveniency) for Sir E. H[’s] curiosity being so served at first, I shall be no farther cause, but that the rest be related, and you in as good possession of his love, and to as good use, as your love deserves of him. You mocke us when you aske news from hence. All is created there, or relates thither where you are. For that book which you command me to send, I held it but half an hour: which served me to read those few leafes, which were directed upon some few lines of my book. If you come to town quickly, you may get a fair widow: for Mris Brown is fallen to that state by death of her husband. No man desires your comming more, nor shall be readier to serve you, then

Your affectionate friend and servant J. Donne.

[cix.]

To my Honoured friend Mr George Gherard, over against Salisbury house.

Sir,

I Do not make account that I am come to London, when I get within the wall: that which makes it London is the meeting of friends. I cannot therefore otherwise bid my self welcome to London, then by seeking of you, which both Sir H. Goodere and I do, with so much diligence, as that this messenger comes two dayes before to intreat you from us both, to reserve your self upon Saterday: so that I may, at our coming to London that night, understand at my house where I may send you word of our supping place that night, and have the honour of your company. So you lay more

obligations upon

Your poor unprofitable servant J. Donne.

[cx.]

To the very much Honoured friend George Garret Esquire.

Sir,

When we thinke of a friend, we do not count that a lost thought, though that friend never knew of it. If we write to a friend, we must not call it a lost Letter, though it never finde him to whom it was addressed: for we owe our selves that office, to be mindefull of our friends. In payment of that debt, I send out this Letter, as a Sentinell Perdue; if it finde you, it comes to tell you, that I was possessed with a Fever, so late in the year, that I am afraid I shall not recover confidence to come to London till the spring be a little advanced. Because you did our poor family the favour to mention our George in your Letters to Spain, with some earnestnesse, I should wonder if you never had any thing from thence concerning him; he having been now, divers moneths, in Spaine. If you be in London and the Lady of the Jewell there too, at your conveniency informe me what is looked for at my hands, in that businesse; for I would be loath to leave any thing in my house when I die that were not absolutely mine own. I have a servant, Roper, at Pauls house, who will receive your commandments, at all times. God blesse you and your sonne, with the same blessings which I begge for the children, and for the person of

Your poor friend and humble servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[cxi.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre, Gentleman of his Highnesses Bed-chamber.

Sir,

I Am come to that tendernesse of conscience, that I need a pardon for meaning to come to Newmarket in this weather. If I had come I must have asked you many reall pardons, for the many importunities that I should have used towards you. But since I have divers errands thither, (except I belie my self in that phrase, since it is all one errand to promove mine own business, and to receive your commands) I shall give you but a short respit, since I shall follow this paper within two dayes. And (that I accuse my self, no farther then I am guilty) the principall reason of my breaking the appointment of waiting upon M. Rawlins, was, that I understood the King was from Newmarket; and for comming thither in the Kings absence, I never heard of excuse; except when Butler sends a desperate Patient in a Consumption thither for good aire, which is an ill errand now. Besides that I could not well come till now, (for there are very few dayes past, since I took Orders) there can be no losse in my absence except when I come; my Lord should have thereby the lesse latitude, to procure the Kings Letters to Cambridge. I beseech you therefore, take some occasion to refresh that businesse to his Lordship, by presenting my name, and purpose of comming very shortly: and be content to receive me, who have been ever your servant, to the addition of

Your poor Chaplaine J. Donne.

27 January.

[cxii.]

To the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount of Rochester.

My most Honourable good Lord,

After I was grown to be your Lordships, by all the titles that I could thinke upon, it hath pleased your Lordship to make another title to me, by buying me. You may have many better bargaines in your purchases, but never a better title then to me, nor

any thing which you may call yours more absolutely and intirely. If therefore I appeare before your Lordship sometimes in these Letters of thankfulnesse, it may be an excusable boldnesse, because they are part of your evidences by which you hold me. I know there may be degrees of importunity even in thankfulnesse: but your Lordship is got above the danger of suffering that from me, or my Letters, both because my thankfulnesse cannot reach to the benefits already received, and because the favour of receiving my Letters is a new benefit. And since good Divines have made this argument against deniers of the Resurrection, that it is easier for God to recollect the Principles, and Elements of our bodies, howsoever they be scattered, then it was at first to create them of nothing, I cannot doubt, but that any distractions or diversions in the ways of my hopes, will be easier to your Lordship to reunite, then it was to create them. Especially since you are already so near perfecting them, that if it agreed with your Lordships purposes, I should never wish other station, then such as might make me still, and onely

Your Lordships Most humble and devoted servant J. Donne.

[cxiii.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

Lest you should think your selfe too much beholding to your fortune, and so relie too much upon her hereafter, I am bold to tell you, that it is not onely your good fortune that hath preserved you from the importunity of my visits all this time. For my ill fortune, which is stronger then any mans good fortune hath concurred in the plot to keep us asunder, by infecting one in my house with the Measels. But all that is so safely overworne, that I dare, not onely desire to put my selfe into your presence, but by your mediation, a little farther. For, esteeming my selfe, by so good a title as my Lords own words, to be under his providence, and care of my fortune, I

make it the best part of my studies how I might ease his Lordship by finding out something for my selfe. Which, because I thinke I have done as though I had done him a service therein, I adventure to desire to speake with him, which I beseech you to advance, in addition to your many favours and benefits to me. And if you have occasion to send any of your servants to this town, to give me notice what times are fittest for me to waite, to injoy your favour herein. My businesse is of that nature, that losse of time may make it much more difficult, and may give courage to the ill fortune of

Your humble servant J. Donne.

[cxiv.]

To your selfe.

Sir,

I Make shift to think that I promised you this book of French Satyrs. If I did not, yet it may have the grace of acceptation, both as it is a very forward and early fruit, since it comes before it was looked for, and as it comes from a good root, which is an importune desire to serve you. Which since I saw from the beginning, that I should never do in any great thing, it is time to begin to try now, whether by often doing little services, I can come towards any equivalence. For, except I can make a rule of naturall philosophy, serve also in morall offices, that as the strongest bodies are made of the smallest particles, so the strongest friendships may be made of often iterating small officiousnesses, I feel I can be good for nothing. Except you know reason to the contrary, I pray deliver this Letter according to the addresse. It hath no businesse nor importunity; but as by our Law, a man may be Felo de se, if he kill himself, so I think a man may be Fur de se, if he steale himselfe out of the memory of them, which are content to harbour him. And now I begin to be loath to be lost, since I have afforded my selfe some valuation and price, ever since I received the

stampe and impression of being

Your very humble and affectionate servant J. Donne.

[cxv.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre, Gentleman of his Highnesses Bed chamber.

Sir,

I Have always your leave to use my liberty, but now I must use my bondage. Which is my necessity of obeying a precontract laid upon me. I go to morrow to Camberwell a mile beyond Southwark. But from this town goes with me my brother Sir Tho. Grimes and his Lady, and I with them. There we dine well enough I warrant you, with his father-in-law, Sir Tho. Hunt. If I keep my whole promise, I shall Preach both forenoon and afternoon. But I will obey your commandments for my return. If you cannot be there by 10, do not put your selfe upon the way: for, Sir, you have done me more honour, then I can be worthy of, in missing me so diligently. I can hope to hear M. Moulin again: or ruminate what I have heretofore heard. The onely misse that I shall have is of the honour of waiting upon you; which is somewhat recompensed, if thereby you take occasion of not putting [not] your self to that pain, to be more assured of the inabilities of

Your unworthy servant J. Donne.

[cxvi.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

I Sought you yesterday with a purpose of accomplishing my health, by the honour of kissing your hands. But I finde by my going abroad, that as the first Christians were

forced to admit some Jewish Ceremonies, onely to burie the Synagogue with honour, so my Feaver will have so much reverence and respect, as that I must keep sometimes at home. I must therefore be bold to put you to the pain of considering me. If therefore my Lord upon your deliverie of my last Letter, said nothing to you of the purpose thereof; let me tell you now, that it was, that in obedience of his commandment to acquaint him with any thing which might advantage me, I was bold to present that which I heard, which was that Sir D[udley] Carl[e]ton was likely to bee removed from Venice, to the States; of which if my Lord said nothing to you, I beseech you adde thus much to your many other Favours, to intreate my Lord at his best commodity, to afford mee the favour of speaking with him. But if hee have already opened himselfe so farre to you, as that you may take knowledge thereof to him, then you may ease him of that trouble of giving mee an Audience, by troubling your selfe thus much more, as to tell him in my behalfe, and from mee, that though Sir D. Carlton bee not removed, yet that place with the States lying open, there is a faire field of exercising his favour towards mee, and of constituting a Fortune to me, and (that which is more) of a meanes for mee to doe him particular services. And Sir, as I doe throughly submit the end and effect of all Projects to his Lordships will, so doe I this beginning thereof, to your Advice and Counsell, if you thinke mee capable of it: as, for your owne sake, I beseech you to doe, since you have admitted mee for

Your humble servant J. Donne.

[cxvii.]

To the Honoured Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

I Amend to no purpose, nor have any use of this inchoation of health, which I finde, except I preserve my roome, and station in you. I beginne to bee past hope of dying:

And I feele that a little ragge of Monte Magor [Montemôr], which I read last time I was in your Chamber, hath wrought prophetically upon mee, which is, that Death came so fast towards mee, that the over-joy of that recovered mee. Sir, I measure not my health by my appetite, but onely by my abilitie to come to kisse your hands: which since I cannot hope in the compasse of a few dayes, I beseech you pardon mee both these intrusions of this Letter, and of that within it. And though Schoole-men dispute, whether a married man dying, and being by Miracle raised again, must bee remarried; yet let your Friendship, (which is a Nobler learning) bee content to admit mee, after this Resurrection, to bee still that which I was before, and shall ever continue,

Your most humble and thankfull Servant J. Donne.

20. Mar.

[cxviii.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

When I was almost at Court, I met the Princes Coach: I thinke I obeyed your purposes best, therefore, in comming hither. I am sure I provided best for my selfe thereby; since my best degree of understanding is to bee governed by you. I beseech you give mee an assignation where I may wait upon you at your commoditie this Evening. Till the performance of which commandment from you, I rest here in the red Lion.

Your very thankefull and affectionate Servant J. Donne.

[cxix.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

I Was loth to bee the onely man who should have no part in this great Festivall; I thought therefore to celebrate that well, by spending some part of it in your company. This made mee seek you againe this afternoone, though I were guilty to my selfe of having done so every day since your comming. I confesse such an importunity is worthy to be punished with such a missing; yet, because it is the likeliest reparation of my Fortunes to hope upon Reversions, I would be glad of that Title in you: that, after solemnities, and businesses, and pleasures be passed over, my time may come, and you may afford some of your last leisures to

Your affectionate and humble servant J. Donne.

4 Novemb.

[cxx.]

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

Your mans haste gives me the advantage, that I am excusable in a short Letter, else I should not pardon it to my selfe. I shall obey your commandment of comming so neare you upon Michaelmas day, as by a Message to aske you whether that or the next morning bee the fittest to sollicite your further Favour. You understand all Vertue so well, as you may be pleased to call to minde what thankefulnesse and services are due to you from me, and beleeve them all to bee expressed in this ragge of Paper, which gives you new assurance, that I am ever

Your most humble servant J. Donne.

[cxxi.]

To your selfe.

Sir,

If I shall never be able to do you any reall service, yet you may make this profit of me, that you be hereafter more cautelous in receiving into your knowledge, persons so uselesse, and importune. But before you come to so perfect a knowledge of me, as to abandon me, go forward in your favours to me, so farre, as to deliver this Letter according to the addresse. I think I should not come nearer his presence then by a Letter: and I am sure, I would come no other way, but by you. Be you therefore pleased, by these noble favours to me, to continue in me the comfort which I have in being

Your very humble and thankfull servant J. Donne.

Drury house, 23 Sept.

[cxxii.]

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre.

Sir,

A Few hours after I had the honour of your Letter, I had another from my Lord of Bath and Wells, commanding from the King a Copy of my Sermon. I am in preparations of that, with diligence, yet this morning I waited upon his Lordship, and laid up in him this truth, that of the B. of Canterburies Sermon, to this hour, I never heard syllable, nor what way, nor upon what points he went: And for mine, it was put into that very order, in which I delivered it, more then two moneths since. Freely to you I say, I would I were a little more guilty: Onely mine innocency makes me afraid. I hoped for the Kings approbation heretofore in many of my Sermons; and I have had it. But yesterday I came very near looking for thanks; for, in my life, I was never in any one peece, so studious of his service. Therefore, exceptions being taken, and displeasure kindled at this, I am afraid, it was rather brought thither, then met there. If you know any more, fit for me, (because I hold that unfit for me, to

appear in my Masters sight, as long as this cloud hangs, and therefore, this day forbear my ordinary waitings) I beseech you to intimate it to

Your very humble and very thankfull servant J. Donne.

[cxxiii.]

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

Sir,

I Humbly thanke you, for this continuing me in your memory, and enlarging me so far, as to the memory of my Soveraign, and (I hope) my Master. My Tenets are always, for the preservation of the Religion I was born in, and the peace of the State, and the rectifying of the Conscience; in these I shall walke, and as I have from you a new seal thereof, in this Letter, so I had ever evidence in mine own observation, that these ways were truly, as they are justly, acceptable in his Majesties eare. Our blessed Saviour multiply unto him all blessings; Amen.

Your very true and intire servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

[cxxiv.]

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

Sir.

I Was this morning at your door, somewhat early; and I am put into such a distaste of my last Sermon, as that I dare not practice any part of it, and therefore though I said then, that we are bound to speake aloud, though we awaken men, and make them froward, yet after two or three modest knocks at the door, I went away. Yet I understood after, the King was gone abroad, and thought you might be gone with him. I came to give you an account of that, which does as well. I have now put into my Lord of Bath and Wells hands the Sermon faithfully exscr[c]ibed. I beseech you

be pleased to hearken farther after it; I am still upon my jealousie, that the King brought thither some disaffection towards me, grounded upon some other demerit of mine, and took it not from the Sermon. For, as Card[inal] Cusanus writ a Book Cribratio Alchorani, I have cribrated, and recribated, and post-cribated the Sermon, and must necessarily say, the King who hath let fall his eye upon some of my Poems, never saw, of mine, a hand, or an eye, or an affection, set down with so much study, and diligence, labour of syllables, as in this Sermon I expressed those two points, which I take so much to conduce to his service, the imprinting of persuasibility and obedience in the subject, And the breaking of the bed of whisperers, by casting in a bone, of making them suspect and distrust one another. I remember I heard the old King say of a good Sermon, that he thought the Preacher never had thought of his Sermon, till he spoke it; it seemed to him negligently and extemporally spoken. And I knew that he had weighed every syllable, for halfe a year before, which made me conclude, that the King had before some prejudice upon him. So, the best of my hope is, that some over bold allusions, or expressions in the way, might divert his Majesty, from vouchsafing to observe the frame, and purpose of the Sermon. When he sees the generall scope, I hope his goodnesse will pardon collaterall escapes. I intreated the B[ishop] to aske his Majesty, whether his displeasure extended so farre, as that I should forbear waiting, and appearing in his presence; and I had a return, that I might come. Till I had that, I would not offer to put my self under your roof. To day I come, for that purpose, to say prayers. And if, in any degree, my health suffer it, I shall do so, to morrow. If any thing fall into your observation before that, (because the B. is likely to speake to the King of it, perchance, this night) if it amount to such an increase of displeasure, as that it might be unfit for me to appear, I beseech you afford me the knowledge. Otherwise, I am likely to inquire of you personally, to morrow before nine in the morning, and to put into your presence then

Your very humble and very true, and very honest servant to God and the King and

you J. Donne.

I writ yesterday to my L[ord] Duke, by my L[ord] Carlile, who assured me of a gracious acceptation of my putting myself in his protection.

[cxxv.]

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

Sir,

If I should refuse the liberty which you enlarge to me, of eating in your chamber, you might suspect that I reserved it for greater boldnesses, and would not spend it in this. But, in good faith, I do not eat before, nor can after, till I have been at home; so much hath my this years debility disabled me, even for receiving favours. After the Sermon, I will steal into my Coach home, and pray that my good purpose may be well accepted, and my defects graciously pardoned. Amen.

Yours intirely J. Donne.

I will be at your chamber at one after noon.

[cxxvi.]

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

Sir,

I Pursued my ambition of having the honour to kisse your hands some where, so farre as to inform my selfe occasionally of my great neighbour. And I perceive he is under an inundation of uncertain commers, which he cannot devest, except I had your leave to speake plain to him. A second inconvenience is, that he is so deafe, that we must speak to the whole house, if we will speake to him. And a third is, that I am in a riddling, rather a juggling indisposition, fast and loose, and therefore dare not stirre farre. Yet Sir, I am not thereby unfit to receive the honour of seeing you

here, if greater businesse have not overcome, or worn out, your former inclinablenesse to come into these quarters. If you shall be pleased to say to my man, that you will make as though you dined with me to day, and come, if your businesse require your going to his Lordship, you may dine with him, after you have fasted with me. Today, or any day, which may be more yours, I aske it of you with all earnestnesse, on this side importunity, which is the detestation of

Your humblest and thankfullest servant J. Donne.

[cxxvii.]

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

Sir,

This morning I have received a signification from my Lord Chamberlaine, that his Majesty hath commanded to morrows Sermon at S. James; And that it is the afternoon; (for, into my mouth there must not enter the word, after-dinner, because that day there enters no dinner into my mouth.) Towards the time of the service, I aske your leave, that I may hide my selfe in your outchamber. Or if businesse, or privatenesse, or company make that inconvenient, that you will be pleased to assigne some servant of yours to shew me the Closet, when I come to your chamber. I have no other way there, but you; which I say not, as though I had not assurance enough therein, but because you have too much trouble thereby; nor I have no other end there, then the Pulpit: you are my station, and that my exaltation; And in both, I shall ever endevour to keep you from being sorry for having thought well of, or being ashamed of having testified well for

Your poor and very true servant in Chr. Jrs. J. Donne.

[cxxviii.]

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

Sir,

I Have obeyed the formes of our Church of Pauls so much, as to have been a solemn Christmas man, and tryed conclusions upon my selfe, how I could sit out the siege of new faces, every dinner. So that I have not seen the B[ishop] in some weeks. And I know not whether he be in case, to afford that privacy, which you justly desire. This day, I am in my bondage of entertaining. Suppers I presume, are inconvenient to you. But this evening I will spie upon the B. and give you an account to morrow morning of his disposition; when, if he cannot be intire to you, since you are gone so farre downwards in your favours to me, be pleased to pursue your humiliation so farre as to chuse your day, and either to suffer the solitude of this place, or to change it, by such company, as shall waite upon you, and come as a visitor and overseer of this Hospitall of mine, and dine or sup at this miserable chezmey [chez moi].

Your humblest and thankfullest servant J. Donne.

4 Jan. 1626[7]

[cxxix.]

To my Noble friend Mris Cokain at Ashburne.

My noblest sister,

But that it is sweetened by your command, nothing could trouble me more, then to write of my self. Yet, if I would have it known, I must write it my self; for, I neither tell children, nor servants, my state. I have never good temper, nor good pulse, nor good appetite nor good sleep. Yet, I have so much leasure to recollect my self, as that I can thinke I have been long thus, or often thus. I am not alive because I have not had enough upon me to kill me, but because it pleases God to passe me through many infirmities before he take me either by those particular remembrances, to bring

me to particular repentances, or by them to give me hope of his particular mercies in heaven. Therefore have I been more affected with Coughs in vehemence, more with deafenesse, more with toothach, more with the vurbah, then heretofore. All this mellows me for heaven, and so ferments me in this world, as I shall need no long concoction in the grave, but hasten to the resurrection. Not onely to be nearer that grave, but to be nearer to the service of the Church, as long as I shall be able to do any, I purpose, God willing, to be at London, within a fortnight after your receit of this, as well because I am under the obligation of preaching at Pauls upon Candlemas day, as because I know nothing to the contrary, but that I may be called to Court, for Lent service; and my witnesse is in heaven, that I never left out S. Dunstans, when I was able to do them that service; nor will now; though they that know the state of that Church well, know that I am not so bound, as the world thinks, to preach there; for, I make not a shilling profit of S. Dunstans as a Church man, but as my L[ord] of Dorset gave me the lease of the Impropriation, for a certain rent, and a higher rent, thẽ my predecessor had it at. This I am fain to say often, because they that know it not, have defamed me, of a defectiveness towards that Church; and even that mistaking of theirs I ever have, and ever shall endevour to rectifie, by as often preaching there, as my condition of body will admit. All our company here is well, but not at home now, when I write; for, lest I should not have another return to London, before the day of your Carrier, I write this, and rest

Your very affectionate servant, and friend, and brother J. Donne.

15 Jan. 1630[1] Abrey-hatch.

THE END

NOTES

NOTES

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

“The most virtuous and excellent Lady Mris Bridget Dunch,” was the wife of Edmund Dunch of Wittenham, Berkshire, and the daughter of Sir Anthony Hungerford. Her mother, Elizabeth, was the daughter of Sir Thomas Lucy, son of the Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote whose deer play so large a part in the biographies of Shakespeare, and father of the Sir Thomas who became Donne’s friend and correspondent. Her distinguished services as protectress of “that part of [Donne’s] Soul, that he left behinde him, his Fame and Reputation” seem not to be elsewhere recorded.

I

Mistress Bridget White, to whom the first four letters are addressed, is not otherwise known. Mr. Edmund Gosse is inclined to identify her with the Lady Kingsmill of the fifth letter. This lady, the daughter of Thomas White, Esq., of Southwick, Hants, married Sir Henry Kingsmill in 1612, and lived until 1672. If Mr. Gosse’s conjecture is correct, Mistress White was in her teens when the first four letters were written, and Donne about twenty years her senior. He writes from his lodgings in the Strand, between which and his house at Mitcham, near Croydon, Surrey, he divided his time from 1605 to 1610.

II

The allusion to the illness of Sir Edward Herbert, afterward Lord Herbert of Cherbury, fixes the date of this letter. He sailed from Dieppe for Dover in February, 1609, and came at once to London. In his Autobiography (ed. Sidney Lee, 2d edition, London, n. d., p. 60) Herbert writes,

“I had not been long in London, when a violent burning fever seized upon me, which brought me almost to my death, though at last I did by slow degrees recover my health.”

This and the preceding letter appear to have been written on the same day.

IV

Perhaps Mistress White's brother accompanied Sir Edward Herbert, who writes (loc. cit.),

"The occasion of my going hither was thus: hearing that a war about the title of Cleves, Juliers, and some other provinces betwixt the Low Countries and Germany, should be made, by the several pretenders to it, and that the French king [Henry IV] himself would come with a great army into those parts; it was now the year of our Lord 1610, when my Lord Chandos and myself resolved to take shipping for the Low Countries, and from thence to pass to the city of Juliers, which the Prince of Orange resolved to besiege. Making all haste thither we found the siege newly begun; the Low Country army assisted by 4000 English under the command of Sir Edward Cecil."

Juliers surrendered on August 22, 1610.

V

Sir Henry Kingsmill died October 26th, 1624, the day on which this letter was written. If the Lady Kingsmel, or Kingsmill, to whom it is addressed, was the Bridget White of the first four letters, the difference in its tone is the more interesting. The girl to whom Donne wrote so gaily fifteen years before, is now a widow, and the poverty-stricken student of 1609 has become the great Dean of Saint Paul's.

VI

To Sir Thomas Lucy, grandson of the Sir Thomas immortalized as Justice Shallow. Lucy was a friend of the Herberts, with whom Donne afterward became intimate, and a man of no mean intellectual power.

Donne gave up his house in Mitcham, where this letter was written, in 1610 and never returned to it. Lucy went abroad with Sir Edward Herbert in 1608. This letter may belong to the autumn of 1607.

VII

This letter, like the next, was written in 1619, and but a few months after Donne's appointment as Divinity Reader to the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn,

"About which time," says Walton, "the Emperour of Germany died, and the Palsgrave, who had lately married the Lady Elizabeth, the King's onely daughter, was elected and crowned King of Bohemia, the unhappy beginning of many miseries in that Nation.

"King James, whose Motto (Beati Pacifici) did truly speak the very thoughts of his heart, endeavoured first to prevent, and after to compose the discords of that discomposed State: and amongst other his endeavours did then send the Lord Hay Earl of Doncaster his Ambassadour to those unsetled Princes; and by a speciall command from his Majesty Dr. Donne was appointed to assist and attend that employment to the Princes of the Union: for which the Earl was most glad, who had alwayes put a great value on him, and taken a complacency in his conversation."

On the eve of his departure Donne placed in the hands of a few friends manuscript copies of unpublished writings for whose preservation he wished to provide.

ΒΙΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ, A Declaration of that Paradoxe, or Thesis, that Selfe-Homicide is not so Naturally Sinne, that it may never be otherwise, wherein the Nature, and the extent of all these lawes, which seem to be violated by this Act, are diligently surveyed, was not published until 1644, thirteen years after Donne's death. The manuscript of the ΒΙΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ which Donne gave to Sir Edward Herbert is now preserved in the Bodleian Library, to which Lord Herbert presented it in 1642, with the letter here printed and with the following inscription:

HUNC LIBRUM AB AUTHORE CUM EPISTOLA QUI PRAEIT ΑΥΤΟΓΡΑΦΩ DONO SIBI DATUM DUM EQUESTRIS OLIM ESSE ORDINIS EDVARDUS HERBERT, JAM BARO DE CHERBURY IN ANGLIA, ET CASTRI INSULAE DE KERRY IN HIBERNIA, E SUA BIBLIOTHECA IN BODLEIANAM TRANSTULIT MERITISS. IN ALMAN MATREM ACAD. OXON. PIETATIS ET

OBSERVANTIAE MNHMOΣYNON, MDCXXII.

VIII

Sir Robert Ker (or Carr) accompanied King James from Scotland on his succession to the throne of England, and in 1603 became Groom of the Bedchamber to Henry, Prince of Wales. For many years he was Donne's "friend at court." In 1633 was made Earl of Ancrum. On the breaking out of the civil war he fled to Holland, where he died in 1654.

Donne's poems remained uncollected until after his death. Poems by J. D. with Elegies on the Author's Death appeared in 1633, and was reissued two years later.

IX

Lucy, the eldest daughter of the first Lord Harrington of Exton, and the wife of the third Earl of Bedford, was the faithful friend and generous patron not only of Donne, but of Jonson, Drayton, Daniel, and many another man of genius. One of Jonson's Epigrams in her honour is not so well known as it deserves to be:

On Lucy, Countess of Bedford

"This morning, timely rapt with holy fire, I thought to form unto my jealous Muse, What kind of creature I could most desire, To honour, serve and love; as poets use. I meant to make her fair, and free, and wise, Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great; I meant the day star should not brighter rise, Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat. I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet, Hating that solemn vice of greatness, pride; I meant each softest virtue there should meet, Fit in that softer bosom to reside. Only a learned, and a manly soul I purposed her; that should, with even powers, The rock, the spindle, and the sheers control Of Destiny, and spin her own free hours. Such when I meant to feign, and wish'd to see, My Muse bade, Bedford write, and that was she!"

In spite of Donne's opinion that "in letters, by which we deliver over our affection, and assurances of friendship ... times and daies cannot have interest," we may note

that this letter must have been written earlier than February 1614, in which month died Lady Bedford's brother, the second Lord Harrington, to whom allusion is here made.

X

Susan, grand-daughter of William, Lord Burleigh, was the first wife of Philip, Earl of Montgomery. As Donne, on the eve of his German tour, leaves a copy of his Biathanatos in the safe-keeping of Sir Edward Herbert, and the manuscript of his poems in the hands of Sir Robert Ker, so he commits to the appropriate custody of the Countess of Montgomery ("A new Susannah, equal to that old," Ben Jonson called her) the manuscript of a sermon, which, when she heard him preach it, she had commended.

The corrections bracketted in the text are from a MS. copy of the original, printed by Mr. Gosse, and reproduced here by his permission.

XI

To Sir Henry Goodyer, as is sufficiently indicated by the allusion to the weekly letter which Donne was in the habit of writing to this most intimate of his friends, and written from Mitcham, therefore not later than 1610. Sir Henry Goodyer, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to James I, was the son of William Goodyer of Monks Kirby. He married his cousin Frances, daughter of Sir Henry Goodyer the elder, and on his father-in-law's death in 1595 succeeded to the family estates at Polesworth. Sir Henry seems to have been an open-minded, open-handed, easy-going man, with the defects of his qualities. His fortune slipped through his fingers and he died (1628) in poverty. I have no doubt that it was to Goodyer that Donne made the present of which Walton writes:

"He gave an hundred pounds at one time to an old friend, whom he had known live plentifully, & by a too liberal heart then decayed in his estate: and when the receiving of it was denied by saying, he wanted not; for as there be some spirits so

generous as to labour to conceal and endure a sad poverty, rather than those blushes that attend the confession of it, so there be others to whom Nature and Grace have afforded such sweet and compassionate souls, as to pity and prevent the distresses of mankind; which I have mentioned because of Dr. Donne's reply, whose answer was, I know you want not what will sustain nature, for a little will do that; but my desire is that you who in the dayes of your plenty have cheered the hearts of so many of your friends, would receive this from me, and use it as a cordiall for the cheering of your own: and so it was received."

Goodyer's epitaph is quoted by Camden in the Remaines concerning Britain:

"To the honour of Sir Henry Goodyer of Powlesworth, a Knight memorable for his vertues, an affectionate Friend of his framed this Tetrastich:

'An ill year of a Goodyer us bereft, Who gone to God, much lack of him here left: Full of good gifts, of body and of mind, Wise, comely, learned, eloquent and kind.'"

XII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. This letter belongs to 1607 or 1608, and was written from Mitcham. Sick in mind and in body, poor in purse and in hopes, Donne's thoughts dwelt on suicide, and the fruit of his meditations was the book "of not much less than three hundred pages," Biathanatos, of which we have already heard. The "meditation in verse which I call a litany" is printed in the Poems (ed. Chambers, Vol. II, p. 174).

The report that Broughton had gone over to Rome was without foundation in fact, though the rumour was of periodical occurrence.

XIII

George Garet, or Gerrard, the son of Sir William Gerrard of Dorney, Bucks, was one of Donne's closest friends, and to him are addressed many of Donne's more personal letters.

For what importunities in his behalf Donne here makes grateful acknowledgment we have no means of determining. The letter probably dates from 1614, when Donne was anxiously seeking profitable employment at Court.

XIV

"That good Gentlewoman," Bridget, wife of Sir Anthony Markham, was the daughter of Lady Bedford's brother, the second Lord Harrington of Exton, and one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to Queen Anne. She died at Lady Bedford's house at Twickenham, May 4th, 1609, about which time this letter was written. Donne's Elegy is printed in his Poems (ed. Chambers, Vol. II, p. 86).

Sir Thomas Roe was the grandson of the Lord Mayor of the same name. He was knighted in 1604 by King James, who, ten years later, appointed him ambassador to the Great Mogul. He died in 1644. To him is addressed Ben Jonson's Epigram, XCVIII.

XV

To George Gerrard's sister, and belonging to the same period as XIII.

XVI

Probably written from Amiens, to which place Donne accompanied Sir Robert Drury in 1611, on that journey during which he had the vision described by Walton:

"Two days after their arrival there [in Paris], Mr. Donne was left alone in that room in which Sir Robert, and he, and some other friends had din'd together. To this place Sir Robert return'd within half an hour, and, as he left, so he found Mr. Donne alone; but in such an Extasie, and, so alter'd as to his looks, as amaz'd Sir Robert to behold him: insomuch that he earnestly desired Mr. Donne to declare what had befaln him in the short time of his absence? to which, Mr. Donne was not able to make a present answer: but, after a long and perplext pause, did at last say, I have seen a dreadful vision since I saw you; I have seen my dear wife pass twice by me through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her

arms: This I have seen since I saw you. To which Sir Robert reply'd; 'Sure Sir, you have slept since I saw you; and, this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for, you are now awake.' To which Mr. Donne's reply was, 'I cannot be surer that I now live, then, that I have not slept since I saw you: and I am as sure, that at her second appearing, she stopt, and look'd me in the face, and vanisht.' Rest and sleep, had not alter'd Mr. Donne's opinion the next day: for he then affirm'd this vision with a more deliberate, and so confirm'd a confidence, that he inclin'd Sir Robert to a faint belief that the Vision was true.—It is truly said, that desire, and doubt, have no rest: and it prov'd so with Sir Robert, for he immediately sent a servant to Drewry house, with a charge to hasten back, and bring him word, whether Mrs. Donne were alive? and if alive, in what condition she was, as to her health?—The twelfth day the Messenger returned with this account—That he found and left Mrs. Donne very sad, and sick in her bed: and, that after a long and dangerous labour, she had been deliver'd of a dead child. And upon examination, the abortion prov'd to be the same day, and about the very hour that Mr. Donne affirm'd he saw her pass by him in his Chamber."

XVII

This letter seems to belong to the same period as the last, and to have been intended by Donne as a sort of circular letter "to all my friends" at home.

XVIII

Written in 1608, as the reference to the sudden death of Captain Edmund Whitelocke indicates. Walton, who quotes a part of this letter, gives the date as September 7th.

Mr. Jones may have been the friend to whose custody Tobie Matthew was committed between his sentence of banishment and his departure from England. (See Note on XLV, below.) Mr. Holland was Henry Holland, the son of Philemon Holland, the translator of Suetonius and much else. The Lord of Sussex was Robert

Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex.

XIX

The postscript to this letter, written, like that which follows it, from Mitcham in the closing years of Donne's residence there, is serious enough, but the letter itself must be understood as extravagant banter, not without a touch of bitterness. "When sadness dejects me," says Donne in a letter (XXV) written about this time, "either I countermine it with another sadnesse, or I kindle squibs about me again, and flie into sportfulnesse." The present letter is the fruit of such a mood.

The Aurum Reginae is the Queen Consort's share (one-tenth) of all fines exacted by the King, which under the old law was due to her. Mr. Hakewill was Queen Anne's Solicitor-General.

XXI

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written after Sir Henry had entered the service of the Earl of Bedford and before Donne's removal from Mitcham to Drury House, therefore in 1609 or 1610. The reference to "the new astronomy" is interesting. In 1609 Keppler announced his discovery of some of the laws governing planetary motion, although it was not until the following year that the Copernican System was, by the discoveries of Galileo, firmly established. Donne's mind seems to have been open to the new knowledge, when Bacon's was firmly closed against it.

XXII

The reference to "my day" for payment of "this duty of letters," enables us to identify Donne's correspondent as Sir Henry Goodyer, to whom Donne was in the habit of writing every Tuesday. (Cf. the first sentence of XVIII.) When the present letter was written Donne was employed in assisting Thomas Morton, Dean of Gloucester, and the leader of the Anglican theologians in the all but interminable controversy with the Jesuits which involved so many of the ablest churchmen of the period. The "Apology" was probably Robert Parson's "confused and worthless

work," the Treatise tending towards Mitigation, in reply to which Sutcliffe published his Subversion in 1606, and Morton, two years later, his Preamble unto an Encounter, which, happily belying its name, went far toward closing the debate.

XXIII

The loss of her ladyship's verses on Donne, which are the subject of this letter, is the more to be regretted as none of her composition survives, though verses in her honour are found in the works of Donne, Ben Jonson, Daniel, Drayton, and other poets. This letter belongs to the same period as XXI.

XXIV

The postscript enables us to date the letter near the end of Donne's residence at Mitcham, when he was engaged in the politico-theological studies which resulted in the composition of the Pseudo-Martyr in 1609.

XXV

Sir Henry Goodyer had lost both father and father-in-law long before his friend had occasion "to reduce to his thoughts the duties of a husband and a father, and all the incumbencies of a family." The reference in this letter to "your father's health and love" therefore seems to preclude the possibility that it was addressed to Goodyer. The absence of a date makes conjecture as to the identity of Donne's correspondent the more difficult. Fortunately the interest of the letter is independent of knowledge of the correspondent to whom it was addressed, consisting as it does in the light which it throws on the mental temperament of the writer.

XXVI

The marriage of the Princess Elizabeth and the Count Palatine took place in February, 1613. This letter with its anticipations of the great event may safely be assigned to the journey on which Donne accompanied Sir Robert Drury in 1611-12. "My book of Mris Drury" is Donne's strange poem in commemoration of the first anniversary of the death in 1610 of Sir Robert Drury's little daughter Elizabeth. An

Anatomie of the World, wherein by occasion of the untimely death of Mistress Elizabeth Drury, the frailty and decay of this whole world is represented, was published in 1611. The extravagance of the homage here paid to a child whom Donne had never seen, and on whose father's bounty he and his family were living, was regarded by some of his friends as savoring rather too patently of insincerity.

In commemoration of the second anniversary of Elizabeth Drury's death, Donne published in 1612 a poem Of the Progresse of the Soule. Wherein, by occasion of the religious death of Mistress Elizabeth Drury, the incommodities of the soule in this life, and her exaltation in the next, are contemplated.

In 1618 Ben Jonson told Drummond "that Done's Anniversarie was profane and full of blasphemies: that he told Mr. Done, if it had been written of the Virgin Marie, it had been something; to which he answered that he described the Idea of a Woman, and not as she was." (Conversations with Drummond, III.)

XXVII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. The mention of "place and season" and the references to suffering of mind, body, and estate, enable us to date this letter from Mitcham in the spring of 1608, when Donne was in his thirty-fifth year.

XXVIII

William Fowler, to whom we have already had a jesting reference (XIX) was Secretary to Queen Anne. It is not clear whether the place to which Donne aspired was the secretaryship, which, as he was informed, Fowler was about to resign, or some other position in the Secretary's gift which Donne was anxious to secure before Fowler went out of office. In either case, his hope was not realized.

XXIX

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written in the summer of 1623 when the Prince and Buckingham were in Spain.

The current news from Bohemia must have been of especial interest to Donne in the light of his experience as the companion of Viscount Doncaster's journey to that unhappy country six years before. (See note to VII.)

XXX

To Sir Henry Goodyer. If the allusion to the "French Prince" refers to the visit of the Prince de Joinville who was "despatched back again" in June, 1607, this letter may be assigned to the summer of that year. "These two problems" are probably part of the Iuvenilia, or Certaine Paradoxes and Problems, written by I. Donne and published posthumously in 1633. The "ragge of verses" survives as the "Verse Letter to Sir Henry Goodyer," printed in Donne's Poems (ed. Chambers, Vol. II, p. 10). In the Poems of 1633 there is a copy of this letter following a text so much better than that of the Letters of 1651, that it has seemed worth while to reprint it in its entirety.

"Sir,—This Teusday morning, which hath brought me to London, presents mee with all your letters. Mee thought it was a rent day, I mean such as yours, and not as mine. And yet such too, when I considered how much I ought you for them. How good a mother, how fertile and abundant the understanding is, if shee have a good father. And how well friendship performes that office. For that which is denyed in other generations is done in this of yours. For hers is superfaetation, child upon child, and, that which is more strange, twinnes at a later conception. If in my second religion, friendship, I had a conscience, either Errantem to mistake good and bad, and indifferent, or Opinantem to be ravished by others opinions or examples, or Dubiam to adhere to neither part, or Scrupulosam to encline to one, but upon reasons light in themselves or indiscussed in mee (which are almost all the diseases of conscience) I might mistake your often, long, and busie letters, and fear you did but interest me to have mercy upon you and spare you. For you know our court tooke the resolution, that it was the best way to dispatch the French Prince backe againe

quickly, to receive him solemnely, ceremoniously; and expensively, when he hoped a domestique and durable entertainment. I never meant to excell you in waight nor price, but in number and bulke I thought I might: Because he may cast up a greater summe who hath but forty small moneyes, than hee with twenty Portuguesses. The memory of friends (I meane only for letters) neither enters ordinarily into busied men, because they are ever employed within, nor into men of pleasure, because they are never at home. For these wishes therefore which you wonne out of your pleasure and recreation, you were as excusable to mee if you writ seldom as Sir H. Wotten [who] is under the oppression of businesse or the necessity of seeming so: Or more than hee, because I hope you have both pleasure and businesse. Only to me, who have neither, this omission were sinne. For though writing be not of the precepts of friendship, but of the counsells: yet, as in some cases to some men counsells become precepts, though not immediately from God, yet very roundly and quickly from this Church, (as selling and dividing goods in the first time, continence in the Roman Church, and order and decency in ours) so to mee who can doe nothing else, it seemes to binde my conscience to write. And it is sinne to doe against the conscience, though that erre; Yet no mans letters may be better wanted than mine, since my whole letter is nothing else but a confession that I should and would write. I ought you a letter in verse before by mine owne promise, & now that you thinke you have hedged in that debt by a greater by your letter in verse I thinke it now most seasonable and fashional for mee to breake. At least, to write presently were to accuse my selfe of not having read yours so often as such a letter deserves from you to mee. To make my debt greater (for such is the desire of all, who cannot or meane not to pay) I pray reade these two problems: for such light flashes as these have beene my hawkings in my Surry journies. I accompany them with another ragge of verses, worthy of that name for the smalnesse, and age, for it hath long lyen among my other papers, and laughs at them that have adventured to you: for I thinke till now you saw it not, and neither you, nor it should repent it. Sir, if I were any thing,

my love to you might multiply it, and dignifie it: But infinite nothings are but one such: Yet since even Chymeraes have some name, and titles, I am also,

"Yours,"

XXXI

That many of the letters headed "To Yourself" were addressed to George Gerrard there is ample evidence; that any of the letters so headed were addressed to another correspondent there is, so far as I know, no reason for believing.

Donne writes from Spa, to which place he accompanied Sir Robert and Lady Drury in May, 1612.

By 1582, the recurring annual error of approximately eleven minutes in the Julian calendar amounted to ten days. Pope Gregory XIII accordingly ordained that ten days should be deducted from the year 1582 by reckoning what according to the old calendar would have been the 5th, as the 15th of October. Spain, Portugal, and part of Italy carried out the Pope's instructions exactly; in France the change was deferred until December, when the 10th was reckoned as the 20th; in the Low Countries the change was from December 15th to December 25th. England did not adopt the change until 1752, when the 3d of September, old style, was reckoned as September 14th. "26 July here (i.e., at Spa) 1612" would, therefore, in England be July 16th, 1612.

Lord Treasurer Salisbury died May 24th, 1612. That contemporary estimate of his abilities which is, perhaps, most in accord with modern judgments is that of Francis Bacon:

"Soon after the death of a great Officer, who was judged no advancer of the King's Matters, the King said to his Sollicitor Bacon, who was his Kinsman: Now tell me truly, what say you of your Cousin that is gone? Mr. Bacon answered, Sir, since your Majesty doth charge me, I'll e'ne deal plainly with you, and give you such a character of him, as if I were to write his Story. I do think he was no fit Counsellor

to make your Affairs better; but yet he was fit to have kept them from growing worse. The King said, On my So'l, Man, in the first thou speakest like a True Man, and in the latter like a Kinsman." (Baconiana, 1679, p. 55.)

XXXII

This letter may conceivably have been addressed to George Hastings, Fourth Earl of Huntingdon. I think, however, that "To my Lord G. H." is the younger Donne's mistake for "To Sir H. G." The reference to Lady Bedford, to whose husband's establishment Sir Henry Goodyer was at this time attached, and the tone of the letter in general seem to me to support this supposition. As Donne left London with Sir Robert Drury late in November, 1611, this letter may be attributed with some confidence to the latter part of that year.

XXXIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. Mr. Gosse places this letter in point of date of composition between VI (October 9th, 1607) and XLV (March 14th, 1608). Certainly the three letters have points of resemblance striking enough to serve as a basis for the inference that they belong to the same period of Donne's life. I know of no external evidence as to date, however, and the internal evidence is of the slightest. If, as I venture to infer from some of the expressions used, the letter was written after Donne had taken orders, it cannot be of earlier date than 1615.

XXXIV

Written from Peckham, the home of Sir Thomas Grymes, the husband of Donne's sister Jane. As the time of Donne's ordination (January, 1615) approached, he applied to several friends, Lady Bedford ("the Countess") and the Countess of Huntingdon ("the other Countess") among them, to help him pay his debts before making his "valediction to the world." Lady Bedford sent him £30; the Countess of Huntingdon responded even more liberally. Six verse letters to Lady Bedford and two to Lady Huntingdon are printed in Donne's Poems (ed. Chambers).

XXXV

Sir George More, Chancellor of the Garter and Lieutenant of the Tower (to whom the news of his daughter's secret marriage to Donne (1601) was "so immeasurably unwelcome, and so transported him, that, as though his passion of anger and inconsideration might exceed theirs of love and errour," he had procured his son-in law's dismissal from the post of Secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton), had, by the date of this letter, become "so far reconciled, as to wish their happinesse, and not to deny them his paternal blessing," though he still "refused to contribute any means that might conduce to their livelihood."

The Donnes had accepted the invitation of Mrs. Donne's cousin, Sir Francis Wooley, to be his guests, on his inheritance in 1602 of the estate of Pyrford, in Surrey, "where they remained with much freedom to themselves, and equal comfort to him for many years," says Walton. In reality their residence at Pyrford extended from some time in 1602 to the winter of 1604-5. To this period the letter belongs. The "entreaty that you let goe no copy of my Problems" may refer to some unrevised MS. of the Iuvenalia. (See note to XXX.)

XXXVI

To Sir Henry Goodyer. "My custom of writing" is one of the many allusions to Donne's weekly letter to Goodyer. I find nothing in the present letter on which to base any very accurate dating.

XXXVII

To George Gerrard. The nearest indication of the date of this letter is found in the mention of Sir Germander Pool. John Chamberlain in a letter to Sir Ralph Winwood, dated March 10th, 1612/13 writes:

"I know not whether I told you in my former, of an odd fray that happened much about that time [February 23d, 1612/13] near the Temple, 'twixt one Hutchison of Grays-Inn, and Sir German Pool; who, assaulting the other upon Advantage, and

cutting off two of his Fingers, besides a Wound or two more before he could draw, the Gentleman finding himself disabled to revenge himself by the Sword, flew in upon him, and, getting him down, tore away all his Eyebrow with his Teeth, and then seizing on his Nose, tore away all of it, and carried it away in his Pockett."

Mr. Gosse suggests that it is not unlikely that Sir Germander's singular disfigurement led to the resignation of which Donne speaks.

With the exception of this letter and the passage just quoted from the Winwood Memorials I have been unable to find in print any reference to Sir Germander. Through the unwearying kindness of Mr. Gosse, however, and the researches of Lord Raglan, undertaken at his instance, I am able to give some particulars of the history of this unlucky knight. He was baptized—as German or Germaine (Germander is a corruption)—in 1573. He fought in Ireland under Montjoy in 1599; he was knighted at Dublin Castle by the Lord Deputy of Ireland on the 20th of April, 1603; and in 1625 he had so far triumphed over his misfortunes as to win the hand of Millicent, daughter of Francis Mundy, Esq., of Markeaton, who bore him a son.

XXXVIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. More than once Donne insists on the sincerity of his letters. So he writes to Mrs. Herbert:

"If this sounds like a flattery, believe it not. I am to my letters rigid as a Puritan, as Cæsar was to his wife. I can as ill endure a suspicion and misinterpretable word as a fault."

XXXIX

The reference to the cessation of hostilities in the Low Countries following the Truce of Bergen (April 19th, 1609) enables us to complete the date of this letter. "The best Lady," here as elsewhere, is the Countess of Bedford. Perhaps the letter to Lady Bedford, enclosed in this letter, and presumably in verse, was written in acknowledgment of her verses on Donne, which are the subject of a letter to her

already given (XXIII).

XL

To Sir John Harington, now best remembered as the translator of Ariosto, and one of the brilliant group of poets and wits which met at the Countess of Bedford's house at Twickenham and which included Ben Jonson, Drayton, Daniel, Donne, and many lesser lights. Harington died in 1612. Donne's daughter Lucy was born at Mitcham in 1608 and died nineteen years later at the Deanery of Saint Paul's.

XLI

Sir Henry Wotton was in England when this letter was written early in 1612, and Donne was probably at Amiens, shortly to proceed to Paris with Sir Robert Drury. The phrase "when I was last here" is the only known evidence of an earlier visit to France.

In the Life of Wotton, Walton writes:

"I must not omit the mention of a love that was there [at Oxford] begun betwixt him and Dr. Donne, sometime Dean of St. Paul's; a man of whose abilities I shall forbear to say anything, because he who is of this nation, and pretends to learning or ingenuity, and is ignorant of Dr. Donne, deserves not to know him. The friendship of these two I must not omit to mention, being such a friendship as was generously elemented; and as it was begun in their youth, and in an University, and there maintained by correspondent inclinations and studies, so it lasted till age and death forced a separation."

XLII

This letter, to Sir Henry Goodyer, was written but a few weeks later than the preceding letter to Sir Henry Wotton. Their arrangement in sequence is one of John Donne, Junior's rare triumphs as an editor of correspondence. The two letters admirably illustrate the manysidedness of Donne's contact with the life of his time, social, political, and ecclesiastical. For the date, see note to XXXI, above.

XLIII

There is no conclusive evidence, internal or external, as to which of Donne's correspondents is here addressed; certainly not Sir Henry Wotton, who was not a father, and who had recently returned from an important embassy in Germany, and who, a year later, became Provost of Eton College, to Bacon's great disappointment. The intimate tone of the letter suggests that it was addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer, who had already begun to be "encombred and distressed in his fortunes."

XLIV

A. V[uestra] Merced, "to your worship," is the common Spanish form of address. The allusion to the plague enables us to assign the letter to 1608, and this date in connection with the references to "My Lady" [Bedford] and to "Twicknam" suggest that Donne's correspondent was Sir Henry Goodyer, in the service of the Earl of Bedford. "Mistress Herbert" is Mrs. Magdalen Herbert, the mother of the saintly George Herbert and his unsaintly brother Edward. Of Mrs. Herbert, after she had become Lady Danvers, Donne speaks in what is perhaps the best remembered of his poems, the lines beginning:

"No spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace As I have seen in one autumnal face,"

and the best remembered of his sermons, except Death's Duel, is that in commemoration of her death.

"Mris Meauly" according to Dr. Jessopp (quoted by Mr. Gosse) is Mistress Meautys, one of the members of Lady Bedford's household, and, if so, possibly a connection of Bacon's faithful follower.

XLV

"M. Mathews" is Toby Matthew, the eldest son of Dr. Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York. Three years before, while travelling in Italy, he had become converted to Romanism. On his return to England in the summer of 1607, his case was laid

before the King, who suggested that he be required to take the oath, abjuring allegiance to Rome. This he refused to do, and was committed to the Fleet prison by Dr. Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, and there visited by Bishop Andrews, Morton, then Dean of Gloucester, Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne, and others. In a letter dated 11th February 1607[8] the voluminous Chamberlain wrote to Carleton:

"Your friend, Tobie Matthew, was called before the Council-table on Sunday in the afternoon, and, after some schooling, the Earl of Salisbury told him that he was not privy to his imprisonment, which he did in no ways approve, as perceiving that so light a punishment would make him rather more proud and perverse. But in conclusion they allotted him six weeks' space to set in order and depart the realm."

He left England accordingly, and lived on the Continent until 1623, when he was forgiven, invited to return, and knighted by the King. Apart from his extraordinary personality his chief claim on our interest is that he was the life-long friend and correspondent of Francis Bacon.

XLVI

To Sir Henry Goodyer. Written between the death of Sir Geoffrey Fenton in October, 1608, and the performance of Ben Jonson's Masque of Queens on February 2d, 1609. Donne was not successful in his attempt to secure the position left vacant by Fenton's death, for all the "haste and words" of Lord Hay and other friends. James Hay was a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in Scotland, and came to England with the King. In 1603 the King appointed him Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and knighted him. In 1606 he was made Lord Hay, and afterwards became Viscount Doncaster, and Earl of Carlisle. Donne accompanied him on his embassy to the Palatinate. (See note on VII, above.)

This letter gives us our earliest mention of a warm friendship that lasted as long as Donne lived. In his will he bequeathed to Carlisle "the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary which hangs in the little dining-chamber."

XLVII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. I cannot identify the “paper” the composition of which helped Donne to pass the anxious hours that brought him a son; but as the letter was written during his residence at Mitcham, where the Donnes went to live shortly after the birth of their son George, the birth here recorded must have been that of Francis, Donne’s fourth child and third son, who was baptized at Mitcham January 8th, 1607, and who died in infancy. John, who survived to be the first editor of these letters, was now three years old.

XLVIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and apparently written during the anxious weeks between Donne’s decision to enter the church and his ordination in January, 1615. (See note on XXXIV, above.) “That good lady” is, of course, the Countess of Bedford, “Mr. Villars” is George Villiers, soon to be the Duke of Buckingham, and “Mr. Karre” is a nephew of Somerset, the present favourite. The “Masque of Gentlemen” may have been Ben Jonson’s The Golden Age Restored, in a Masque at Court, 1615, by the Lords and Gentlemen, the King’s Servants, first printed in the folio of 1616.

Sir Robert Rich, later Earl of Warwick, lived to become Lord High Admiral for the Parliament, 1643-5, 1648-9. Three years after the date of this letter we find Donne planning to meet Sir Robert at Frankfort. (XLII.) Lord Dorset (Richard, third Earl of Dorset) was one of the most generous of Donne’s patrons. To him Donne owed the reversion of St. Dunstan’s.

XLIX

To Sir Henry Goodyer and presumably of later date than the letter to Sir John Harington (XL) of August 6, 1608, which contains our earliest record of Donne’s acquaintance with “that good lady,” the Countess of Bedford, and to which allusion may be made in the last paragraph of the present letter. The Lord Harrington here mentioned must be one of the Harringtons of Exton, probably the second Lord

Harrington, who was Lady Bedford's brother.

The home of Donne's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Gryme, where the Donnes were frequent guests, was in Peckham.

L

To Sir Robert Drury, and written at the lowest ebb of Donne's fortunes, when he was casting about for court preferment of any kind. The marriage of Somerset and Lady Frances Howard, whose marriage to Essex had at length been annulled, took place December 26, 1613. One would be glad to forget that Donne wrote the beautiful epithalamium which connects him with this unholy union, and so gives the approximate date of this letter.

LI

That this letter was written in the year 1621, and not ten years earlier, is evident from the references to contemporary events. The contrast between Donne's circumstances as indicated in the present letter and his situation at the date of the preceding letter is striking. In less than three months from August 30th, 1621, he became Dean of Saint Paul's; from this date until the end his fame both as preacher and as saint, continued in the ascendent.

Archbishop Abbot's "accident" was his unfortunate killing of a game-keeper in Lord Zouch's park. No one doubted that the killing was accidental, but it was questioned whether the homicide, even though involuntary, did not render him incapable of holding the see of Canterbury. A commission appointed to inquire into the ecclesiastical status of the Archbishop at length reported that his title was without flaw. "Lady Nethersoles" is Goodyer's daughter Lucy, the wife of Sir Francis Nethersole.

LII

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written in 1609. Mr. Gosse thinks the book here discussed is the Bishop of Lincoln's Answer to a Catholic Englishman, but Donne's

criticism is equally applicable to a score of volumes which appeared in connection with the doctrinal controversy springing from the vexed questions arising in the King's relations with his Catholic subjects.

During this year Donne completed his Pseudo-Martyr, Wherein out of certaine Propositions and Gradations, This Conclusion is evicted, That those which are of the Romane Religion in this Kingdome, may and ought to take the Oath of Allegeance.

LIII

As to the identity of "Sir T. H." I have no conjecture to offer. Lord Cranfield "received his staffe" as Lord High Treasurer in September, 1621. For "my L. of Canterburies irregularity" see note to LI, above.

LIV

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written in 1614 but a few months later than the letter to Sir Robert Drury already printed. (L.) The "Book of the Nullity" is apparently either the record of the legal proceedings looking to the annulment of the marriage of the Earl of Essex and Lady Frances Howard or a brief, covering the arguments in favour of the nullity, drawn up by Donne in the hope of reward in the shape of patronage from Somerset.

LV

To Sir Henry Goodyer and written five months later than the preceding letter. Donne is still seeking court employment. The Lord Chancellor is Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, whom Donne had served as Secretary fifteen years before.

LVI

Written in 1619, on the eve of Donne's departure for the Palatinate. (See VII, note.) "My Lord" is, of course, Lord Hay. "M. Gher" is George Gerrard. "M. Martin" is presumably Donne's friend, Richard Martin, mentioned in XIX and XLI. He died a few months before the date of this letter, and Sir Henry Goodyer has evidently been

urging Donne to write a poem in his memory.

The Queen died on March 2d. “That noble Countess” is Lady Bedford.

LVII

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written three months after Donne became Dean of St. Paul’s. Lady Ruthyn was the sister-in-law of the Earl of Kent, who had promised to Donne the living of Blunham in Bedfordshire.

LVIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. The allusions to the birth of Donne’s son Nicholas (baptized in August, 1613) and to the (erroneous) report of the death of Tobie Matthew, who was dangerously ill at Rome, give the date of this letter.

LIX

As Somerset and Lady Frances Howard were married in December, 1613, following the declaration of “the nullity” which is here in question, this letter must be assigned to January of the same year. (See notes to L and LIV, above.) I am unable to identify G. K. Lady Bartlet seems to have acted as housekeeper for Sir Robert Drury at Drury House, where the Donnes were living when this letter was written. “That noble lady at Ashworth” was the third wife of Donne’s old friend and employer, Sir Thomas Egerton.

LX

Of this letter, and of LXVII, apparently sent to the same person, I can give no satisfactory account. An unpublished letter from Donne to Sir G. Brydges is said to be in existence, and the present letter may be addressed to him.

LXI

Evidently to Sir Henry Goodyer. “Your son Sir Francis” is Sir Francis Nethersole, who had married Goodyer’s daughter Lucy, and who had apparently been imprisoned for debt.

Poor Constance Donne, a year after “her losse” here described, was married to Edward Alleyn, the actor-manager and founder of Dulwich College, a man who was considerably older than her father, and who seems to have made her thoroughly unhappy.

LXII

Evidently misdated for 1612, and written a few weeks after the date of XXXI. (See note to XVI.)

LXIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written in 1614, but a few days after XLVIII.

LXIV

To Sir Henry Goodyer. The references to “the good Countess” of Bedford and to Mitcham fix the date of this letter as later than August, 1608, and earlier than the spring of 1610, when Donne moved his family to Drury House. Sir Henry Goodyer was now in the service of the Earl of Bedford.

LXV

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and written two days later than LXIII. Apparently Tobie Matthew had deposited a part of his fortune in Goodyer’s keeping to avoid the possibility of confiscation. (See note to XLV, above.) By 1614 Sir Henry’s affairs were in hopeless confusion. (See note to XI, above.)

No copy of Donne’s Poems in an earlier edition than that of 1633 has been discovered, and it is unlikely that he carried out the intention, here expressed, of printing them during his lifetime.

LXVI

For “my L. of Canterburies businesse” see note to LI, above. “My little book of Cases” is presumably the Paradoxes and Problems.

LXVIII

Donne was presented to the living of Keyston, in Huntingdonshire, by the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn in 1616. Wrest was the home of the Earl of Kent. (See note to LVII, above.) "My Lady Spencer," the daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe, and third wife of Sir Thomas Egerton, is "that noble lady at Ashworth" of LIX.

LXIX

To Sir Henry Goodyer. This letter appears to belong to the period of Sir Henry's prosperity, and was written, I think, either from Mitcham, or from Donne's lodgings in the Strand; in either case, not earlier than 1605 nor later than 1610. Parson's Green was in the parish of Fulham, Middlesex. Ben Jonson has an Epigram (LXXXV) anent Sir Henry Goodyer's hawks:

"Goodyere, I'm glad, and grateful to report, Myself a witness of thy few days sport; Where I both learn'd, why wise men hawking follow, And why that bird was sacred to Apollo: She doth instruct men by her gallant flight, That they to knowledge so should tower upright, And never stoop, but to strike ignorance; Which if they miss, yet they should re-advance To former height, and there in circle tarry, Till they be sure to make the fool their quarry. Now, in whose pleasures I have this discerned, What would his serious actions me have learned?"

And in the verses enclosed in his letter (XXX) to Goodyer, Donne writes:

"Our soule, whose country is heaven, & God her father, Into this world, corruptions sinke, is sent, Yet, so much in her travaile she doth gather, That she returnes home, wiser than she went; It pays you well, if it teach you to spare And make you asham'd, to make your hawks praise, yours, Which when herselfe she lessens in the aire, You then first say, that high enough she toures."

LXX

To Sir Thomas Roe. Until 1752, when by Act of Parliament the first day of January became the first day of the year, the year began on March 25th and ended on the following March 24th. What to Donne was "the last (day) of 1607" would be to us

March 24th, 1608. Since 1752 therefore it has been a common practice in referring to dates falling between January 1st and March 24th inclusive of all years previous to the year 1752 to give both years. So we would give the date of the execution of Charles I as January 30th, 1648/49.

"The Mask" is possibly Ben Jonson's The Hue and Cry after Cupid, "celebrating the happy marriage of John Lord Ramsey, Viscount Hadington, with the Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe," of which Rowland White wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury, "The great Maske intended for my L. Haddington's marriage is now the only thing thought upon at Court."

LXXI

I have not succeeded in finding a clue to the "accident" of which Donne writes. It would seem that some friend or relation of Sir Henry Goodyer's had met with sudden, and perhaps violent, death.

LXXII

In point of date of composition, this is probably the earliest of the published letters of Donne, who in December, 1600, had been for more than three years chief secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper, from whose friendly custody the Earl of Essex was set free in July, 1600.

The identity of "G. H." is unknown and conjecture is needless. Perhaps he was one of those followers of Essex who had been imprisoned at the time of the first trial of their unhappy leader, but who had not shared in his release.

Within the three months following the date of this letter Essex had again offended, this time beyond the possibility of pardon. He was beheaded on February 25th, 1601.

In such times, one may suppose that the Lord Keeper's young secretary had matters in hand more pressing than the payment of that debt of "a continual tribute of letters" which he acknowledges with a gravity in which one imagines a touch of

irony. Yet Donne could hardly help feeling a special interest in one whose attachment to Essex had brought him on evil days. He himself had served under Essex in the Cadiz expedition of 1596 and in the Islands Voyage of 1597, “waiting upon his Lordship,” says Walton, “and being an eye-witnesse of those happy and unhappy employments,” a privilege which in the latter enterprise he shared with young Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper’s son.

LXXIII

This, like the other letters addressed “To Yourself” may not improbably be addressed to George Gerrard, who is known to have been a friendly critic of Donne’s poems. The translation sent with this letter is almost certainly the lines “Translated out of Gazaeus, ‘Vota Amico Facta,’ Fol. 160:”

“God grant thee thine owne wish, and grant thee mine, Thou who dost, best friend, in best things outshine; May thy soule, ever cheerful, ne’er know cares, Nor thy life, ever lively, know grey haires, Nor thy hand, ever open, know base holds, Nor thy purse, ever plump, know pleates, or folds, Nor thy tongue, ever true, know a false thing, Nor thy word, ever mild, know quarrelling, Nor thy works, ever equal, know disguise, Nor thy fame, ever pure, know contumelies, Nor thy prayers know low objects, still divine; God grant thee thine owne wish, and grant thee mine.”

An edition of Enée de Gaza’s Theophrastus was published at Zurich in 1560.

LXXIV

Evidently addressed, not to Sir Thomas Lucy, but to Sir Henry Goodyer as the allusions to Polesworth, Sir Henry’s home, and to Bedford House sufficiently indicate. The date also must be incorrectly given as Donne’s “service at Lincoln’s Inne” did not begin until 1616, by which date, however, he had ceased to reside at Drury House, from which this letter, as printed, is dated. One is inclined to concur for the moment in Mr. Gosse’s opinion that the Letters of 1651 is “the worst edited book in the English language.”

LXXV

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and, as the record of the closing incidents of the Elector Palatine's long struggle shows, written in 1622.

LXXVI

To Sir Henry Goodyer on the death of his wife in 1604.

LXXVII

To Sir Henry Goodyer. The quarrel between Hertford and Monteagle and the last illness of Cecil Boulstrod, here recorded, give the date of this letter as 1609. Cecil Boulstrod was a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Anne. Ben Jonson read to Drummond his "Verses on the Pucelle of the Court, Mistress Boulstred, whose Epitaph Donne made." They are little to the credit of either the lady or the poet. Drummond records in his Conversations that "that piece of the Pucelle of the Court was stolen out of his (Jonson's) pocket by a gentleman who drank him drousie, and given Mistress Boulstraid; which brought him great displeasure," as well it might. Donne wrote two elegies in her honour, one of which, at least, seems to be inspired by genuine emotion.

LXXVIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer and written in 1615. (See note to XXXIV, above.) "This Lady" is apparently the Countess of Huntingdon, and "the Lady where you are" the Countess of Bedford.

LXXIX

This letter, written on the eve of the German tour, on which Donne attended the Earl of Doncaster (See note to VII, above), was, I feel very sure, addressed, not to Sir Thomas Lucy, but to Sir Henry Goodyer. The allusions to Tuesday as a day of writing, the reference to "an establishment in your estate," the acknowledgment of his correspondent's favours in "keeping me alive in the memory of the noblest

Countess" (of Bedford), all point to Goodyer.

LXXX

For the date see XXIV, and note.

LXXXI

To Sir Henry Goodyer, and evidently written just prior to Donne's appointment as Dean of Saint Paul's (November 19th, 1621). "My Cases of Conscience" is, I suppose, the Paradoxes and Problems to which we have had frequent allusions.

LXXXII

The identity of Donne's "worthy friend F. H." is unknown to me. The letter evidently belongs to the closing years of Donne's life. In printing this letter, Mr. Gosse (Life and Letters of John Donne, II, 254) quotes from Walton:

"The latter part of his life may be said to be a continued study; for as he usually preached once a week, if not oftener, so after his Sermon he never gave his eyes rest till he had chosen out a new Text, and that night cast his Sermon into a forme, and his Text into divisions; and the next day betook himself to consult the Fathers, and so commit his meditations to his memory, which was excellent. But upon Saturday he usually gave himself and his mind a rest from the weary burthen of his week's meditations, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends and other diversions of his thoughts; and would say that he gave both his body and mind that refreshment, that he might be enabled to do the work of the day following, not faintly, but with courage and cheerfulness."

LXXXIII

To Sir Henry Goodyer, but a few weeks earlier than the date of LXI, and at about the same time as LXXV. "Mr. Selden" is the great John Selden.

LXXXIV

Written from Sir John Danvers' house in Chelsea where Donne had gone to stay at

the height of the plague which raged in London during the summer of 1625. Lady Danvers was Donne's old friend, Mrs. Magdalen Herbert. (See note to XLIV, above.) Sir Edward Sackville became Earl of Dorset on the 28th of March, 1624, on the death of his brother, the third Earl. King James died on the 27th of March, 1625. "The Queen" is Henrietta Maria, whom Charles married a few weeks after his accession.

LXXXV

To George Gerrard. "The 14th of April, here (i.e., at Paris) 1612" would in England be April 4th, 1612. For the criticisms of his poems in honour of Elizabeth Drury to which Donne here makes reply, see note to XXVI above.

LXXXVI

To George Gerrard, and apparently written within a few weeks of the date of the next letter, addressed to the same friend and dated January 7th 1630[1] in the 1719 edition of Donne's Poems to which it is appended.

LXXXVII

To George Gerrard. Walton quotes this letter in full in his Life of Donne, and in spite of their length his comments cannot be omitted here:

"We left the Author sick in Essex, where he was forced to spend much of that winter, by reason of his disability to remove from thence: And having never for almost twenty yeares omitted his personall Attendance on his Majesty in that moneth in which he was to attend and preach to him; nor having ever been left out of the Roll and number of Lent-Preachers; and there being then (in January 1630[1]) a report brought to London, or raised there, that Dr. Donne was dead: That report gave him occasion to write this following letter to a friend....

"Before that moneth ended, he was designed to preach upon his old constant day, the first Friday in Lent; he had notice of it, and had in his sicknesse so prepared for that imployment, that as he had long thirsted for it, so he resolved his weaknesse should

not hinder his journey; he came therefore to London, some few dayes before his day appointed. At his being there many of his friends (who with sorrow saw his sicknesse had left him onely so much flesh as did cover his bones) doubted his strength to performe that task; and therefore disswaded him from undertaking it, assuring him however, it was like to shorten his daies; but he passionately denyed their requests, saying, he would not doubt that God who in many weaknesses had assisted him with an unexpected strength, would not now withdraw it in his last employment; professing an holy ambition to performe that sacred work. And when to the amazement of some beholders he appeared in the Pulpit, many thought he presented himself not to preach mortification by a living voice, but mortality by a decayed body and dying face. And doubtlesse many did secretly ask that question in Ezekiel, Do these bones live? or can that soul Organize that tongue, to speak so long time as the sand in that glasse will move towards its Centre, and measure out an hour of this dying mans unspent life? Doubtlesse it cannot; yet after some faint pauses in his zealous prayer, his strong desires enabled his weake body to discharge his memory of his preconceived meditations; which were of dying, the Text being, To God the Lord belong the issues from Death. Many that then saw his teares, and heard his hollow voice, professing they thought the Text prophetically chosen, and that Dr. Donne had preach't his own funerall sermon.

"Being full of joy that God had enabled him to performe this desired duty, he hastened to his house, out of which he never moved, till like St. Stephen, he was carryed by devout men to his Grave."

LXXXVIII

This letter, addressed, I suppose, to Donne's sister Jane, the wife of Sir Thomas Grymes, is printed in the 1719 edition of the Poems, and is there dated "Amyens, the 7th of Febr. here, 1611," i.e., January 28th, 1612.

LXXXIX

To George Gerrard, and written from Paris not long after the date of the preceding letter.

XC

Written in 1624, during Donne's recovery from a dangerous illness. Here, as elsewhere, Walton is our best commentator:

"Within a few dayes his distempers abated; and as his strength increased, so did his thankfulnesse to Almighty God, testified in his book of Devotions, which he published at his recovery. In which the reader may see, the most secret thoughts that then possest his soul, Paraphrased and made publick; a book that may not unfitly be called a Sacred picture of spiritual extasies, occasioned and applyable to the emergencies of that sicknesse, which being a composition of Meditations, disquisitions and prayers, he writ on his sick-bed; herein imitating the holy Patriarchs, who were wont to build their Altars in that place, where they had received their blessings."

Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions and Several Steps in my Sickness was published in 1624, and dedicated "To the most excellent prince, Prince Charles."

XCI

To George Gerrard, and written from the Low Countries, where Donne was travelling with Sir Robert Drury in the late summer of 1612.

XCII

To George Gerrard, and evidently an amplified version of LXXXV.

XCIII

Apparently written on Donne's return to London at the beginning of the winter of 1612-13. I imagine that George Gerrard and his sister had come up to London to meet Donne, but had, by some mischance, failed to find him.

XCIV

Written, I think, early in the summer of 1612, and, if so, from Paris, whither Donne had gone with his "noble neighbour," Sir Robert Drury. "That Noble Lady" is presumably the Countess of Bedford.

XCV

To George Gerrard, and like the next letter written from Amiens in the winter of 1611-12.

XCVII

To George Gerrard's sister, and written from Spa in the summer of 1612.

XCVIII

Certainly not addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer, but probably to Somerset, during the negotiations of which Walton, though with some inaccuracy, reports the happy ending:

"His Majesty had promised him a favour, and many persons of worth mediated with his Majesty for some secular employment for him, to which his education had apted him, and particularly the Earle of Somerset, when in his height of favour, being then at Theobalds with the King, where one of the Clerks of the Council died that night, the Earle having sent immediately for Mr. Donne to come to him, said, Mr. Donne, To testifie the reality of my affection, and my purpose to prefer you, stay in this garden till I go up to the King, and bring you word that you are Clerk of the Council. The King gave a positive denial to all requests; and having a discerning spirit, replied, I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned Divine, and will prove a powerfull Preacher, and my desire is to prefer him that way. After that, as he professeth, the King descended almost to a solicitation of him to enter into sacred Orders: which, though he then denied not, yet he deferred it for three years."

XCIX

Written in 1613. (See note on L, above.)

C

Donne's fifth daughter, Margaret, was christened April 20th, 1615, three days after the date of this letter.

CI

Mary, Donne's fourth daughter, died in May, 1614, in her fourth year.

CII

This letter, and CXIII, below, seem to belong to the same period, probably to the closing years of Donne's residence at Mitcham, when Donne may have begun to hope that through his acquaintance with the Earl of Bedford (who is, I think, here intended by "My Lord") he might obtain public employment of some kind.

CIII

This and the two following letters belong to July and August, 1622, and seem to relate to a single incident. Sir Robert Ker had apparently asked Donne for his opinion of one of his fellow-travellers in attendance on Lord Doncaster during the German tour. Donne's evident anxiety to be fair to both parties results in a somewhat indefinite answer.

CVI

Donne's eyes gave him a good deal of trouble in the winter of 1613-14; this letter, as well as LXVII, above, may belong to this period.

CVII

"In August, 1630," says Walton, "being with his eldest daughter, Mrs. Harvy, at Abury Hatch in Essex, he there fell into a fever, which, with the help of his constant infirmity (vapours from the spleen,) hastened him into so visible a consumption, that his beholders might say, as St. Paul said of himself, 'He dies daily.'" This letter was written from Abury (or Aldeburgh) Hatch. "Mrs. Harvy" is Donne's daughter

Constance, the widow of Edward Alleyn, and now the wife of Samuel Harvey. Donne's son George, the soldier, was taking part in the campaign in Spain. Lord Carlisle was the old friend whom, as Lord Doncaster, Donne had attended in his German embassy. Lord Percy was Algernon Percy, soon to become fourth Earl of Northumberland.

CVIII

Written apparently before Donne had entered the church, and probably in 1614, while Donne was still living in Drury House. George Gerrard was at court. His "hopeful designs upon worthy widows" seem to have been the cause of much pleasantry. (See XIX.)

CIX

There is no certain indication of the date of this letter. Mr. Gosse assigns it conjecturally to 1622. It seems to me more likely that it belongs to the period of Donne's residence at Mitcham, and is of 1609, or earlier date. "My house" would then be Donne's lodgings in the Strand.

CX

Written not long after the date of CVII, above, and presumably from Aldeburgh Hatch. "The Lady of the Jewel" (obviously "the Diamond Lady" of CVII) remains a mystery. Apparently she had placed her jewels in Donne's keeping, thus charging him with a responsibility which he seems to have found exceedingly irksome.

CXI

Donne was ordained in January, 1615, a "very few days" before the date of this letter.

CXII

This letter may safely be assigned to 1613. Rochester was made Earl of Somerset in December of this year, a few days before his marriage to Lady Frances Howard.

Surely none of the letters to Somerset for which Sir Francis Bacon has been so severely condemned expresses a more complete submission than is here offered.

CXIV

To George Gerrard. Probably written from France, and, if so, presumably to be assigned to 1612, when Donne was in Paris with Sir Robert Drury. “This book of French Satyrs” Mr. Gosse takes to be the first authoritative edition of Regnier’s Satyres et autres œuvres folastres, 1612.

CXV

The allusion to Pierre du Moulin, the French theologian, who preached before the Court in June, 1615, gives the approximate date of this letter. Sir Thomas Grymes, the husband of Donne’s sister Jane, we have already met. Donne says father-in-law where we should say step-father.

CXVI

Sir Dudley Carleton remained as Ambassador to Venice until 1616, when he was succeeded by Sir Henry Wotton, but this letter must have been written before Donne’s ordination in January, 1615. “My Lord” is, of course, the Earl of Somerset.

CXVII

This, and the next letter, may belong to the same period as the preceding letter to Sir Robert Ker. “Monte Magor” is George de Montemayor, whose “Shepherdess Felismena,” in the Spanish pastoral romance of “Diana,” tells the same story as “The Two Gentlemen of Verona.” A translation into English by Bartholomew Yonge was published in 1598, but Donne may have read it in the original.

CXIX

On November 4, 1616, Charles, the Duke of York, was created Prince of Wales.

CXX

This letter, like CXVI, seems to belong to the period immediately preceding

Donne's entrance into the church, when Sir Robert Ker's advice as to the best way of retaining Somerset's interest was constantly in request.

CXXI

To George Gerrard, and belonging to the winter of 1612-13. Cf. XCI, which also carried an enclosure. The letter enclosed with the present letter may have been addressed to Lord Clifford (Cf. CVI) or, more probably, to Rochester.

CXXII

This and the next two letters were written in April, 1627, and relate to the same incident. This letter is the first, and the next the last of the series.

Dr. Richard Montagu, who had been chaplain to James I, was the highest of high-churchmen, and a believer in the doctrine of the divine right of kings in its extreme form. He is said to have looked upon reunion with the Roman church as quite possible. In the ecclesiastical politics of the time he was an ardent supporter of Laud, then Bishop of Bath and Wells. In the early part of 1627 Montagu published his Apello Cæsarem, in spite of the opposition of Archbishop Abbot, who had refused to license it. Abbot thereupon instigated an attack on Montagu in the House of Commons. Montagu was committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, and the House petitioned the King for his punishment. Charles not only refused his consent, but marked his resentment of the attitude of Archbishop Abbot and the Commons by making Montagu Bishop of Chichester. Abbot returned to the charge in a sermon which gave the King great offense. At this juncture Donne was appointed to preach before the court. Laud was present and seems to have thought, and to have persuaded the King, that Donne's sermon indicated sympathy with Abbot, whose break with the King was now open. At any rate Laud directed Donne to send a copy of his sermon to the King.

The letters tell the rest of the story so far as Donne is concerned. Abbot, on his refusal to license Dr. Sibthorpe's sermon, Apostolical Obedience, was deprived of

his archiepiscopal authority, which was given to a commission of five bishops.

CXXIII

As Donne was born and bred in the Roman church, this reference to the religion he was born in, is explicable only if we understand Donne to be thinking of the Anglican and Roman communions as branches of one Catholic Church, divided in government, but spiritually one.

CXXIV

There is in the British Museum a copy of Donne's Poems, 1633, which belonged to Charles I, and which contains MS. notes in his hand. "The Bishop" here is Laud; "My Lord Duke" is Buckingham.

CXXV

This letter, and CXXVII, below, which should precede it, relate to the occasion of the delivery of the first of the Two Sermons Preached before King Charles, upon the xxvi verse of the first Chapter of Genesis, which stand at the head of Donne's published Sermons. James I died on March 27th, 1625. One week later, Donne, at the command of the new King, preached at the Court. His extreme nervousness and almost painful diffidence are clearly implied in these two letters to Sir Robert Ker.

CXXVI

I am unable to give any satisfactory account of this letter. The form of the address indicates that it was written not earlier than 1625 when Ker became Master of the Privy Purse. "My great neighbour" may possibly be "the B" of CXXVIII.

CXXVIII

"The B" to whom allusion is here made, is George Montaigne, Bishop of London since 1621, and a prominent member of the party of which Laud, now Bishop of Bath and Wells, was already the leader. In 1628 Montaigne's witty suggestion that the King had power to throw "this mountain" into the see of York was rewarded by

his appointment as Archbishop of York, Laud succeeding him as Bishop of London. Montaigne warmly defended Montagu against the attacks of Archbishop Abbot. (See note to CXXII, above.)

CXXIX

This letter, written less than two weeks before his death, is addressed to one of the most intimate of the friends of Donne's later life. Mrs. Thomas Cokain, or Cokayne, had been abandoned by her husband, who left her with a houseful of children, at Ashbourne, the Derbyshire estate of the Cokaynes, and went to London where the rest of his life was spent in the compilation of an English-Greek lexicon, which was finally published in 1658, twenty years after his death.

Donne lived long enough to perform the Lenten service of which he writes. On February 12th, 1631, he preached at Court the last and most famous of his sermons, Deaths Duell, or, A Consolation to the Soule, against the Dying Life, and living Death of the Body, Delivered in a Sermon at White-Hall, before the KINGS MAIESTIE, in the beginning of Lent, 1630[1], By that late Learned and Reverend Divine, John Donne, Dr. in Divinity, and Deane of S. Pauls, London.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LETTERS TO SEVERALL PERSONS OF HONOUR ***

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