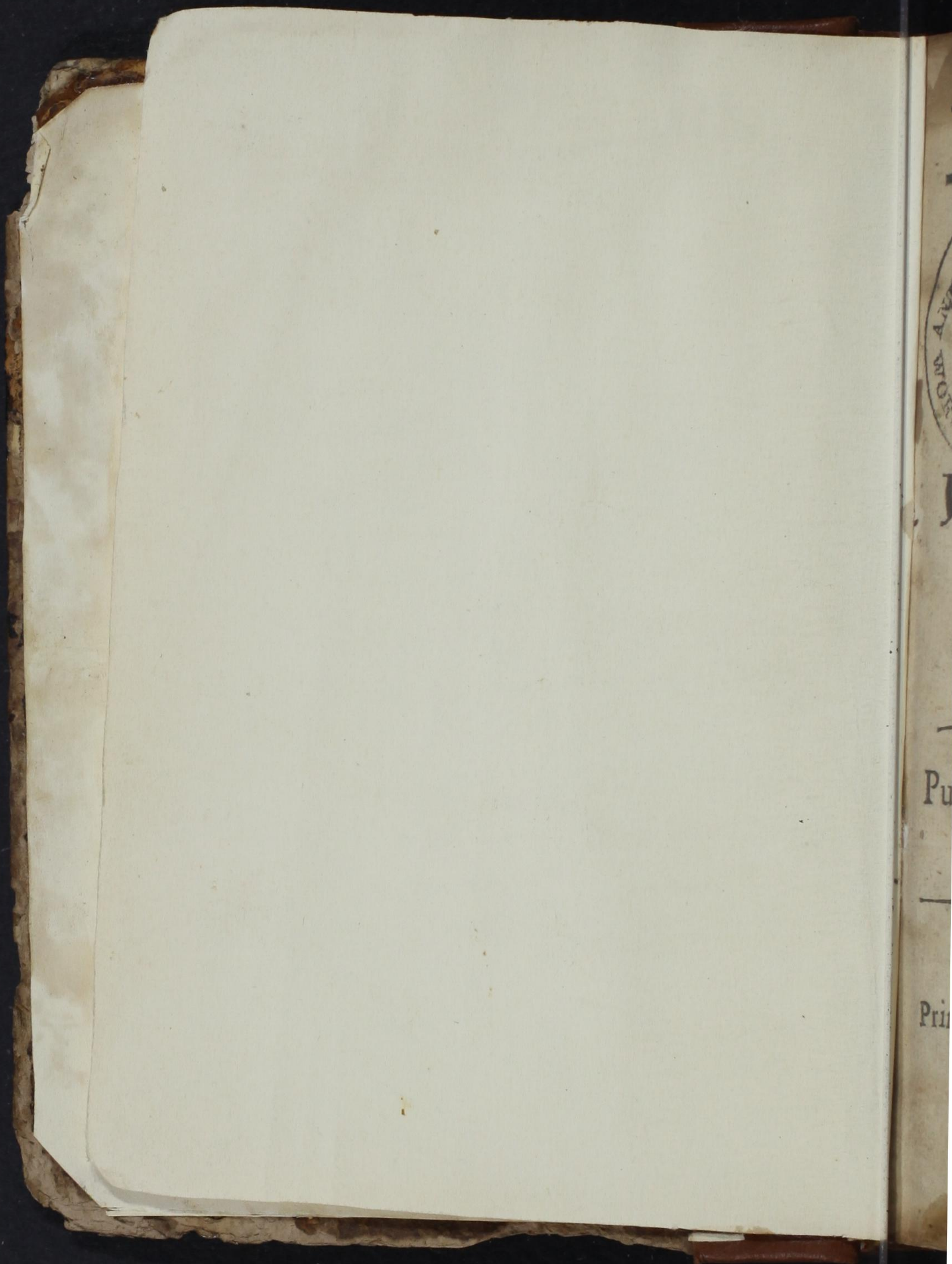




EDXX







# LETTERS

TO

EVERY ALL PERSONS

HONOUR:

WRITTEN BY

## JOHN DONNE

Sometime Deane of

*S<sup>t</sup> Pauls London.*

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Published by JOHN DONNE Dr. of  
the Civill Law.

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LONDON,

Printed by J. Fleisher, for Richard Marriot, and are  
to be sold at his shop in S<sup>t</sup> Dunstons Church-yard  
under the Dyall. 1651.



LETTERS

TO  
SEVERAL PERSONS  
OF HONOUR:

JOHN DOWNE

Sometime Dean of  
St Pauls London.

Published by John Downe B. of  
the Civil Law.

LONDON,

Printed by J. Elmer, for Richard Marriot, and are  
to be sold at his shop in St Dunstons Church-yard  
under the Diall. 1671.





To the most virtuous  
and excellent Lady M<sup>ris</sup>.  
BRIDGET DUNCH.

MADAM,



*T* is an argument  
of the Immorta-  
lity of the Soul,  
that it can appre-  
hend, and imbrace  
such a Concepti-  
on ; and, it may be some kinde of  
Prophecy, of the continuance, and  
A 3                      lasting



## The Epistle

*lasting of these Letters, that having been scattered, more then Sibyls leaves, I cannot say into parts, but corners of the World, they have re-collected 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*



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## Dedicatory.

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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



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The Epistle &c.

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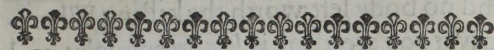
Dead, is a Sacrifice to pure **Virtue** ;  
an ungifted Deity, tis true, without  
Oblation, Altar, or Temple, if  
she were not enshrined in your noble  
breſt, but, I muſt, forever, become  
her votary, if it be, but for giving  
me this Inclination, and deſire of be-  
ing

Madam

Your moſt humble ſervant

*Jo. Donne.*





A  
**COLLECTION**  
 of Letters written to severall  
 Persons of Honour.

*To the worthiest Lady M<sup>rs</sup>. Bridget White.*

MADAME,



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 Tearn, 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 slackened, is, because the place is dead already,

B

and



and no body left worth the killing. Where-  
 soever 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.

*Strand S. Peters*  
*day at nine.*

*Your humblest, and affectionate*

*servant J. D.*

*To*



*To the worthiest Lady M<sup>rs</sup>. 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 S<sup>t</sup> *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 tastes 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 weaknes 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 sowe and sad interruption quicken our stomach; for then we live by Physick. I wish therefore all your happineffes such as this intire, and without flaw, or spot of discontentment; and such is the love and service of

*Strand S. Peters  
day at 4.*

*Your humblest and affectionatest  
servant J. D.*

*To the same.*

MADAME,

**T**His 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



served 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.

Novemb. 8.

*Your very affectionate  
servant J. D.*

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*To the Honourable Lady M<sup>rs</sup>. 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

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aske



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 beleieve 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, 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.

To



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

MADAME,

**T**Hose 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 incapable of being reunited to those whom we loved here,  
as



as murmuring, or not advancing the good-  
ness 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 Mansi-  
ons, 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 de-  
parted, 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



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 testify 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 Apocryphall 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 expresse 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,

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in



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.*

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

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

*To*



*To my honoured friend S<sup>r</sup> 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, w<sup>ch</sup> doth then communicate it self 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 it self, and considers and meditates it, Into which consideration when I walke after my slow and unperfect pace, I begin to think that as litigious men tyred 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.



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 rages and consumes infinitely 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,



ties of the Elements, and that therefore they were driven often to that miserable refuge of specifick 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 received 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 opposi-

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 are 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  
who-



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 doctrine 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

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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 Philosophy, nor Divinity, so well established as constrains us to beleieve, 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 beleieve, I am ashamed that we do not also know it by searching farther: But as sometimes we had rather beleieve 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 beleieve that law of *Moses* hath in it some mysterie



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 watchfull 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.

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

Your very affectionate friend  
and ſervant and lover

I. Donne.

D 2

To

*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 wholsomeraire 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.



yet they, most of any sort of men in the world, have practised it.

*Your very true and earnest friend  
and servant and lover*

J. Donne.

---

*To S<sup>r</sup> Robert Carre now Earle of Ankertm, 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. 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.

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*To the Countesse of Bedford.*

MADAM,

**A**Mongst many other dignities which this letter hath by being received and seen by you, it is not the least, that it was  
pro-



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 bears 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. Be- cauſe therefore it is the office of this Letter, to convey my beſt wiſhes, and all the effects  
of

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 affectionate friend and servant*  
J. D.

*To the right honourable the Countess of Montgomery.*

MADAM,

**O**F my ability to doe your Ladiship service, any thing may be an embleme good enough; for as a word vanissheth, so doth any power in me to serve you; things that are written are fitter testimonies, because they remain and are permanent :



manent: 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 the memory, or in the Cabinet: and yet, since I am going out of the Kingdom, and perchance out of the world, (when God shall have given my soule a place in heaven) it shall the lesse diminish your Ladiship, if my poor name be found about you. I know what dead carcasses things written are, in respect of things spoken. But in things of this kinde, that soul that inanimates them, receives debts 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 glasse) in the eies 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

E

and

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 in all places  
of the world, which shall either sustain or  
bury

*Your Ladiships humble servant  
in Christ Iesus*

J. D.

*To Sir H. R.*

**I**F a whole year be but *Annus ab Annulo*,  
because it returnes into it self, what *Annulus*  
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



or purpose, the same offices. But as the lower spheres, subject to the violence of that, and yet naturally encouraged to a reluctance 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 naturall 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 marrying; 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 wildome; 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 in Religion. In persevering in it, it concerns as much what our companions be, but very much what our friends. In which I know I speak not dangerously nor misappliably to you, as though I averted you from any of those friends.



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 remission and negligence by giving scandall: for

our condition and state in this, is as infirm as in our bodies; where physicians 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 honesty, 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;



of; but with the last and the next weeks heart and affection.

*Yours very truly and affectionately*  
J. Donne.

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*To Sir H. G.*

SIR,

**T**His 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 pretty library) and now I finde that that room hath a wholesome emblematicque use: for having under it a vault, I makethat 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

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



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

F                      which

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 *S<sup>r</sup> 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 warin 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



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 M<sup>r</sup> *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. *S<sup>r</sup>* 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



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 tastes it, and most needs it, my soul. I profess 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.

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*To my worthy and honoured friend M<sup>r</sup> 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 requiting, 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 *S<sup>r</sup>*, 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

*I pray let my service be  
presented by you to  
M<sup>r</sup> Roope.*

*Your very affectionate servant,  
J. Donne.*

*To M<sup>r</sup> George Garet.*

*SIR,*  
**I** Have not received that Letter, which by this, I perceive you sent to *London*; if there were any thing in that, by which I might have taken occasion to have done you service



vice 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 your 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.

To

To M<sup>rs</sup> Martha Garet.

MADAME,

**T**Hough 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



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; 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.

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*To Sir Thomas Roe.*

*SIR,*

**I**T 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  
G place

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.

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*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 dis-temper 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.



pany. I can allow my self to be *Animal sociale*, applicable to my company, but not *gregale*, to herd my self in every troupe. It is not perfectly true which a very subtil, yet very deep wit *Averroes* says, that all mankind 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 w<sup>ch</sup> 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 mankind 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 mankind hath very strong bounds to cohabit and concur in other then mountains and hills during his life. First, com-

mon, 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 vita*. 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 *Vae soli*.

But



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 resolute 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



to have laughed, yet his continuance<sup>countenance</sup> is said  
ever to be smiling. And that even moderate  
mirth of heart, and face, and all I wish to  
my self; and perswade you to keep. This  
alacrity is not had by a general charity and e-  
quanimity to all mankind, for that is, to  
seek fruit in a wildernesse: nor from a sin-  
gular friend, for that is to fetch 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 affecti-  
ons and passions. For it is not true that they  
are not natural, but stormes and tempests of  
our bloud and humours: for they are na-  
turall, but sickly. And as the Indian priests  
expressed an excellent charity, by building  
Hospitals and providing chirurgery for  
birds and beasts lamed by mischance, or  
age, or labour: so must we, not cut off,  
but

but cure these affections, which are the bestiall part.

*To Sir H. Goodere.*

*SIR,*

**E**Very 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



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 concur 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

H

some

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 error 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 meerly 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 fullen 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



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 moales for ornament, except they be so incorporated into the body of the world, that they contribute something to the sustenation of the whole. This I made account that I begun early, when I understood the study of our laws : but was diverted by the world's 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 imployed 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 rooe, 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 death, perchance it is no news to you, but it was to me; without doubt want*  
*broke*



broke him; for when M. Hollands company by reason of the plague broke, the Captain sought to be at M<sup>rs</sup>. Jones house, who in her husbands absence declining it, he went in the night, his boy carrying his cloakbag, on foot to the Lord of Suffex, 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 enjoyes 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 inlightens us, warms us, heats us, ravishes us, at once. Such a medicin, I fear, his consideration 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. Left your Polesworth carrier should couse 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.

*To Sir H. Goodere.*

*S I R,*

**I**F 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 de-vest 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 my self the coffers have yet touched none, nor have the Commissioners for suits  
any



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 begiven 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. Hakerill enough to please himself, for his *Aurum Regina*. And if M. Gberard have  
no

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



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 sickness examines us, and we confesse 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.

I

To



*To the same.*

SIR,

**I**T 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, 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



have brought to *Micham*. S<sup>r</sup>, 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

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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 *Sater-day* by your man, and this which he brought me this morning. Sir, I dare sit no longer in my waistcoat, 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.



*To S<sup>r</sup> H. G.*

SIR,

**I**T should be no interruption to your pleasures, to hear me often say that I love you, and that you are as much my meditations 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 me thinks 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 ravelled 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 develt 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,  
wa-



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 employments, 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 whole-

wholesome affection as your other friends send Melons and Quelque-chofes 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 La<sup>p</sup> 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.

SIR,



*SIR,*

**T**Hough 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 ranks, yet I adde something, since I which am of none, would faine 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 humbleness, yet it is a work of as much almightiness, 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

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low 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.

*First Saturday in  
March. 1607.*

*Your affectionate friend  
J. Donne.*

*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.*

*To*



*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 speake so well of so ill: I humbly beg them of your Ladiship, with two such promises, as to any other of your compositions were threatnings: that I will not shew them, and that I will not beleave them; and nothing should be so used that comes from your brain or breast. If I should confesse a fault in the boldnesse of asking them, or make a fault 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.

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*To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere.*

**B**Ecause 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 frowardnesse: 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



with that incommmodity 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.

*From your house at  
Micham friday morning.*

*Yours very affectionately  
J. Donne.*

*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.*

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To

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

I Hope you are now welcome 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 Physician, and that the subject and matter be



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 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, chooseth 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 mean to write a Letter, and I am fallen into a discourse, and I do not only  
take



take you from some businesse, but I make you a new businesse by drawing you into these meditations. In which let my openesse be an argument of such love as I would fain expresse in some worthier fashion.

*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 freight, 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,

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yet

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 paquet 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 criticisimes, 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,



book, of M<sup>rs</sup>. *Druy*; 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 de-

terminated 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 the 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, 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



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 ungratefull 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. Mon-  
sieur 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. Sally, and for breeding in the wars  
and estate, the most remarkable 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 Maïor 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 recei-  
ving 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.

To Sir H. G.

SIR,

**B**Ecause 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



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 Over-setting, 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 aerie, 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 *Centrum 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



ruption and want of those fundamentall parts whereof we consist, is Vice: and that *Collectio stercoreum*, 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.

To



*To the Honourable K<sup>c</sup> S<sup>r</sup> H. Goodere one of the  
Gent. of his Majesties privy Chamber.*

SIR,

YOU may remember that long since you delivered M<sup>r</sup> 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 M<sup>r</sup> Powell who serves her Ma<sup>ty</sup> as Clerk of her counsell, hath told me that M<sup>r</sup> 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

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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.

*From my lodging in the Strand,  
whither I shall return on Mun-  
day, 13 June 1607.*

*Your very affectionate  
servant and lover  
Jo. Donne.*

*To S<sup>r</sup> H. G.*

SIR,  
**Y**OU 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



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 thought 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 addes 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

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there

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, *Brumswikes* 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 forbore 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.

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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*

*losam* to encline 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 Portugueses. The memory of friends, (I mean onely 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 won out of your pleasure and recreation, you were as excusable to me if you writ



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

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 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.*

To



*To your selfe.*

SIR,

**I**F this Letter finde you in a progresse, or at *Bath*, or at any place of equall leasure to our *Spá*, 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 libells made

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which

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 suppressethem, as to divulge some course, 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 every body is soon weary, then other pieces, which entertain us long with a delight, and love to the things themselves. I doubt not but he smothered some libels against him in his life time. But I would all these (or better) had been made then, for they might then have wrought upon him; and they might have testified that the Author 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



gainst 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 Sovereign 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 packet 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 account 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

Spå, 26 July here  
1612.

Your very true friend and servant  
J. Donne.

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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 recom-

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penfes.

penſes 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 implied 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 Exe-  
cutorſhip 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



ment, 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 Bedford's 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 indeavours in that kinde. I shall be  
bold

bold to deliver my poor Letters to her Ladies 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.

*To Sir H. G.*

*S I R,*  
**N**ature 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 in one Letter, because not so much an excellency of any, nor every one, as an evennesse and proportion, and respect to one  
another



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 Sovereignty, as vertue doth society. The later Physitians say, that when our

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naturall

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 excellling 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 bonam esse*: which rule being given for positive Laws, severe mistakers apply even to Gods Law, and (perchance against his Commandment) binde themselves to his Counsaills, 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



ged 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 businesse: 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, lend me truely your counsaills, and love God and me, whilst I love him and you.

On 20y 515 to you To

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

SIR,

**A**T 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 incommodioussly or intempestively sometimes uttered by you; or else your having friends equally  
near



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 Religions. 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 *Copernicifine* 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,



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 all; 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,

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 friendship, 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



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 remembred 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.

*To S<sup>r</sup> G.M.*

**I**F 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?

P

ters?

ters? 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 endeavoured 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. Saviour to King *Agabarus*. The Italians, which are most discursive, and think the world owes them all wisdom, abound so much in this kinde of expressing, that *Michel Montaigne* 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,



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 beleieve, 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 problem 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 cleanness. *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.



*To S<sup>r</sup> 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 justify 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, 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 Countreiman, 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



gave us, is groundd upon Gods assu-  
ming 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 seposd  
a seventh of our time for his exterior wor-  
ship, 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 mo-  
rall Sabbaths every day; I am farre from  
dehorting those fixed devotions: But I  
had rather it were bestowed upon thank-  
giving then petition, upon praise then pray-  
er; not that God is indeared by that, or  
wearied by this; all is one in the receiver,  
but not in the sencer: and thanks doth  
both offices; for, nothing doth so inno-  
cently provoke new graces, as gratitude. I  
would also rather make short prayers then  
extend them, though God can neither be  
sur-

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

*To your selfe.*

SIR,

**S**Ir *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



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 wraistles 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; endeavour it, that is effect it.

*Tuesday.**Your very true friend and lover**J. Donne.**Q. To*

*To Sir H. G.**SIR,*

**I**N 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 dishonesty, 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.



self. They shall therefore ever keep the sincerity and intemperatenesse 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. Thus 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.

*To my most worthy friend Sir Henry Goodere.*

SIR,

**B**Ecause 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 sepole 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



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 receipt 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.

Micham the  
14 August.

*Your very affectionate lover and servant*  
J. Donne.

Q 3

To

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 sownenesse, and after  
the sweetnesse of fruits acceptable and gra-  
cious. 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 affecti-  
on, 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 quar-  
ries it is no wonder to see faire houses,  
but in *Holland* which wants both, it is.  
So



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*.

6 Aug. 1608.

Your very true friend

J. Donne.

To

*To Sir H. Wootton.*

*SIR,*

**T**Hat 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 lease 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



so when Letters have a convenient hand-  
some 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 Let-  
ters? 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

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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 perpetuall 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 *Natan* was beheaded, ( who dying in the profession of the Religion, had made his peace with God in the prison, and so said 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



others, in dying. *Cotton* the great Court Jesuite hath so importuned the *Q.* to give some modifications to the late interlocutory arrest against the Jesuits, that in his presence, the *C. 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 satisfied, that it was fit by all means to provide against the teaching of the like doctrine in *France*. The *D. 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 waite 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 denied, 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



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 *Verueil*, the K. 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 repu-

ration here, I could not forbear to aske her leave to send them: I writ to you by M<sup>r</sup>. Pory the 17 of Jan. here, and he carried that Letter to *Paris*, to gather news, like a snow-ball. 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. *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 addrest 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*  
Jo. Donne.

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*To the Honorable Knight Sir H. Goodere.*

SIR,

I F 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 pub-

publication of the marriages, was no otherwise publique then that the Spa. 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 remembred 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 no 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 cometo you so many French men. But lest you should beleieve too much, I present you these 2 precautions, that for their  
Geu-



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 D<sup>r</sup> and Syndique of the Sorbonists, which Book hath now been censured by an assembly of the Clergie of this Archbishoprick, promoted with so much diligence by the Cardinall *Peroun*, 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

S Chur-

Churches, there is this iniquitie, that being to be published by commandement 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. 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



rupt 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 Provinciaall 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. 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 falsehood, or by your diligence in seeking a worthier messenger, I know not; but I am sure I never lost any thing with more sorrow,



row, because I am thereby left still in uncertainties, and irresolutions, of that which I desire much to know in womens busineses. If you write this way any more, chuse no other means, then by M<sup>r</sup> *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 M<sup>r</sup> *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

Paris the 9 Apr.  
1612. here.

Your very affectionate servant and  
lover J. Donne.

*To Sir H. Wotton.*

Octob. the 4<sup>th</sup> 1612. almost ad midnight.

S I R,

**A**LL 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



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. 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 400<sup>l</sup> lower then when I entered 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 murmur 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



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.

A. V. *Merced.*

S I R,

I Write not to you out of my poor Libra-  
ry, 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 for-  
ges 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

T

time

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 the 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.



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, M<sup>rs</sup> Meaully 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 *Twickenham*, 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 M<sup>rs</sup> *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 indeavour to be so, shall not interrupt me now from being

*Your servant and lover* J. Donne.

T 2

To

To the best Knight Sir H. Wootton.

SIR,

VVhen 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 perplex-  
ed 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 per-  
formes 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 for the warres in the  
*Holy Land*, and so in all Pilgrimages enter-  
prised in devotion, he which dies in the  
way, enjoyes all the benefit and indulgences  
which



which the end did afford. Howsoever, all that can encrease the danger of your Letter, encrease my merit; for, as where they immolate men, it is a 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 beleieve (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 omisions of the other. As when abjurations 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 re-

sifted, 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 synonymous, & 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 beleieve that I abhor businesse, if I inlarge this Letter, nor that I would afford you that ease which I affect, Therefore returne to your pleasures.

March 14. 1607.

Your unprofitablest friend  
Jo. Donne.

I



*It is my third Letter: which I tell you, because I found not M<sup>r</sup>. Rogers, but left the Letter which I sent last, with a stranger at Cliffords Inne.*

*To Sir H. G.*

SIR,

**T**HIS 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 gofsip, 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* is gone hence, and one *Carraw* 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*, returning from *Rome*, where *M. Mole* who went with the *L. Rosse*, is taken into the Inquisition, and I see small hope of his recovery (for he had in some translations of *Plessis* books talked



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 my self, 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.*

*S I R,*

**T**Hough 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



this paper opposed to those, with which you trusted me. It is (I cannot say the waigh-tyest, but truly) the saddest lucubration and nights passage that ever I had. For it exercised those hours, which, with extreme danger of 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 dispatch. Thus much more then needed I have told you, whilest my fire was lighting at Tricombs 10 a clock.

*Yours ever intirely*

J. Donne.

V z ill To Te

*To the Honourable Knight H. G.*

S I R,

**Y**Our 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,



not, as soon as she 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 im-

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portunity of the houre excuses me, and delivers you from further trouble from

13 Decemb.

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

*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, whatever 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



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 myself. I will come soon enough to deliver my thanks to Sir J. Harr. for your ease, whom I know I have pained with an illfavoured Letter, but my heart hath one style, and character; and is yours in wishing, and in thankfulness.

J. Donne.

Peckham Monday afternoon.

*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 sadness, which (according to the proportion of ills that fall upon me)

is.

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 burialls, I know not well how to performe even that. I flatter my self in this,  
that



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. since the Epithalamion, for I heard nothing.*

X To

*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 then twenty days, I have been travelled 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 fullennesse nor laziness, 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,



vice, 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 M<sup>ris</sup> *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 M<sup>ris</sup> *Dadley*, referring me to M<sup>ris</sup> *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.* meanes 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. *Mansfeld* hath been said to have given to the D. of *Bavyer*: 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. *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 1200<sup>m</sup>l. 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,