

Samuel Rutherford (1607-61), a pectoral theologian to use Scander's phrase if ever there was one, was born at Nisbet, near Jedburgh, and passed M.A. at Edinburgh in 1621. In 1623 he was appointed Professor of Humanity; the scandal created by his falling into disgrace with the girl he afterwards married caused his resignation in 1626, but next year he received Episcopal ordination and was settled as minister of Anwoth. Here from the first he was a zealous student and devoted and beloved pastor; and here, within a year after his disgrace, he began that correspondence with his godly friends which has been called 'the most seraphic book in our literature.' He seems never to have fully conformed to the Perth articles, which were utterly obnoxious to all Presbyterians. *Excitatio eius prodigiosa contra* 1630 was written against the Arminians, and brought him an invitation to a Divinity chair in Holland and a summons before the High Commission Court in July 1630, when he was forbidden to preach and banished to Aberdeen; and there he wrote many of his most spiritual letters to his parishioners and friends in the south. There he was also free to debate with the Episcopalian Arminian 'Aberdeen doctors.' The national uprising and the Covenant gave him the welcome opportunity of returning to his parish; but under the Covenant he was appointed Professor of Divinity at St Andrews in 1639, and in 1647 Principal of the New College; in 1643 he was sent to the Westminster Assembly. He wrote many works of controversial divinity and devotional theology, combining high Presbyterian divine right, Calvinistic orthodoxy, and fervid religion. His *Due Right of Presbyteries* 1644, *Let Kie* 1644, *Life and Triumph of Faith* 1645, *Christ Preach and Praying Sinners to Himself* 1647, belong to this period. His *Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* was pronounced by Bishop Heber as 'perhaps the most elaborate defence of persecution which has ever appeared in a Protestant country.' Milton included him amongst the 'new forcers of conscience' named in his sonnet. After the Restoration his *Let Kie* was burned by the hangman in Edinburgh in 1661, and its author deposed and summoned for high treason; but he received the citation on his death-bed. Livingstone said 'he had most sharp piercing wit and fruitful invention and solid judgment. But it is by the infectious fervour of his *Letters* that he remained for nearly two centuries a power among his countrymen; the work was eminently popular in all ranks of Scotsmen, and cherished in Scotland the less conspicuous graces of Presbyterian faith and love. To many the succession of highly-sensuous images under which Rutherford expresses the ecstatic mood of an exalted sense of communion with Christ and God is non-natural, extravagant, and repellent. The letters are largely a catena of scriptural fragments and phrases, a mass of mixed metaphors, Hebrew and Scottish. Yet the command of apt words is as remarkable

as the fertility in imagery. Though the letters are conceived in sound English, Rutherford makes frequent, skilful, and very effective use of peculiarly Scottish words and phrases, and does not always avoid homely and even grotesque figures. Thus he adjoins an afflicted friend 'to be faithful to Him that can ride through hell and death on a windlesnae and His horse never stumble' - a windlesnae being a stalk of grass. He not merely conceives the relation of Christ to the Church according to the old allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon, but uses the same language of Christ and the individual believer. 'There is, accordingly, perpetual iteration of Christ's kisses, wooings, love-embracements,' of marriage with Him, even of being dandled on His knee, of the smell of His breath and of His garments; too great love of one's children is thus adultery, and the Catholic Church is 'Rome's brothel house.' It is characteristic that in a long letter to the Countess of Kenmore, daughter of the Earl of Argyll and wife of the patron who presented him to Anwoth, Rutherford mentions as it were casually in the very last short paragraph 'My wife now after long disease and torment for the space of a year and a month is departed this life. The Lord hath done it; blessed be His name.' The following are extracts from letters to the same Countess, of date 1628, 1630, and 1631.

Ye have lost a child, nay, she is not lost to you who is bound to Christ. She is not sent away, but only sent before, like into a strait, which going out of our sight doth not die and excommunic, but shineth in another hemisphere. Ye see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short horn, what she wanteth of time that she hath gotten of eternity; and ye have to rejoice that ye have now some plenshing up in heaven. Build you nest upon no tree here; for ye see God hath sold the forest to death; and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down; to the end we may fly and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock.

For this is the house of wine, where ye meet with your Well Beloved. Here it is where He kisseth you with the kisses of His mouth, and where ye feel the smell of His garments; and they have indeed a most fragrant and glorious smell. Ye must, I say, wait upon Him, and be often communing with Him, whose lips are as lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh, and by the moving thereof He will assuage your grief; for the Christ that saveth you is a speaking Christ; the Church knoweth Him by His voice, and I can discern His tongue amongst a thousand.

It is God's mercy to you, madam, that He giveth you your fill, even to yawning, of this bitter word, that ye may willingly leave it, and like a full and satisfied banquet, long for the drawing of the table. And at last, having trampled under your feet all the rotten pleasures that are under sun and moon, and having returned as though ye returned not, and having bought as though ye possessed not, ye may, like an old crazy ship, arrive at our Lord's harbor, and be made welcome, as one of those who have ever had one foot loose from the earth, as a peg for that place where your soul shall feast and banquet for ever and ever upon a glorious sight of