

# THE LADIES OF THE COVENANT

## ELIZABETH MELVILL,

### LADY CULROSS.

Elizabeth Melvill, a contemporary of the two ladies previously noticed, was the daughter of Sir James Melvill of Halhill in Fife. Her father, who was one of the most accomplished statesmen and courtiers of his age, was ambassador from Queen Mary to Queen Elizabeth, and a privy counsellor to King James VI. He was also a man of sincere piety, and as Mr. John Livingstone informs us, "professed he had got assurance from the Lord that himself, wife, and all his children should meet in heaven." [*Livingstone's Memorable Characteristics in Select Biographies, printed for the Wodrow Society, vol. i. p. 346.*] After a long and active life he died on the 13th of November, 1617. Her mother was Christian, seventh daughter of David Boswell of Balmuto. [*Douglas's Peerage, vol. ii. pp. 113, 310.*] Her husband, James Colvill, was the eldest son of Alexander Colvill, commendator of Culross. On the death of James, second Lord Colvill of Culross, in 1640, he became of right third Lord Colvill, but did not assume that title.

At what period the subject of this notice experienced the renewing of the Holy Spirit we are ignorant, but few women of her day became more eminent for exemplary piety and religious intelligence, or more extensively known, and more highly esteemed among the ministers and professors of the Church of Scotland. Taking her place among those who resisted the attempts made to wrest from the church her own free and independent jurisdiction, and to bring her in her worship and whole administration under the entire control of the crown, she interested herself greatly in their contendings. The fortitude displayed by the defenders of truth and freedom commanded her admiration: their sufferings excited her sympathy. To these sentiments and feelings she gave expression in the following sonnet of her own composition, which she sent to Mr. John Welsh, when, for holding a General Assembly at Aberdeen in July, 1605, he was imprisoned in the castle of Blackness, and so closely confined as to be secluded from all intercourse with his friends: -

"My dear brother, with courage bear the cross,  
Joy shall be joined with all thy sorrow here,  
High is thy hope, disdain this earthly dross,  
Once shall you see the wished day appear.

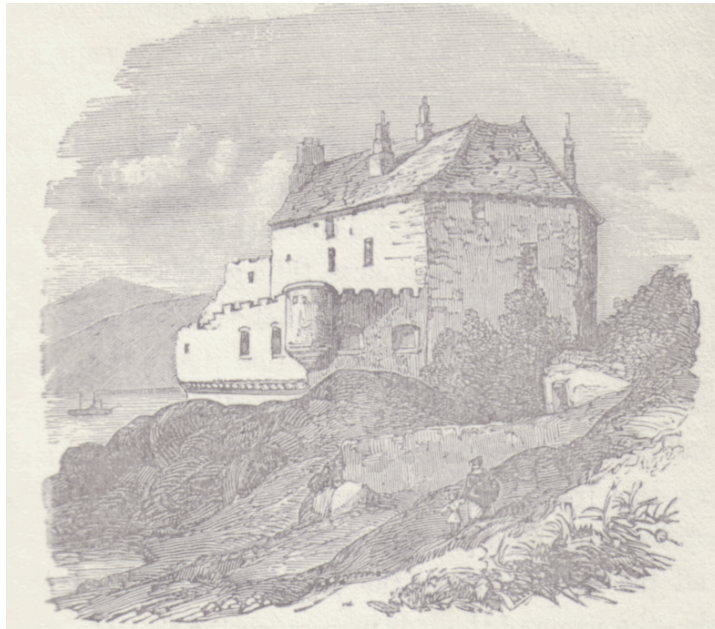
"Now it is dark, the sky cannot be clear,  
After the clouds it shall be calm anon;  
Wait on his will whose blood hath bought thee dear -  
Extol his name, though outward joys be gone.

"Look to the Lord, thou art not left alone,  
Since he is thine, what pleasure canst thou take ?  
He is at hand, and hears thy every groan:  
End out thy fight, and suffer for his sake.

"A sight most bright thy soul shall shortly see,  
When store of gloir [*viz: glory*] thy rich reward shall be."  
[*Wodrow MSS., Adv. Lib., vol. xxix., 4to., no. 4.*]

The pious and generous feeling breathed in these lines could not fail to gratify and encourage this great and good man under his sufferings. In a similar strain she wrote to Mr. William Rigg of Athernie, bailie of Edinburgh, who

was imprisoned in Blackness castle, in 1624, for refusing to communicate kneeling, after that practice had been introduced into the churches of the city, reminding him, among other things, by a pleasing and ingenious anti-thetic play upon the name and gloom of his prison, “that the darkness of Blackness was not the blackness of darkness.” [*Livingstone's Characteristics in Select Biographies, printed for the Wodrow Society, vol. i. p. 342.*]



Blackness Castle

[*For some account of this castle, see Life of Lady Caldwell.*]

How much her heart went along with the contendings of the Presbyterians against the attempts of James VI, to establish Prelacy and its ceremonies, as well as how highly she was respected, is also evident from the following incidental allusion to her in Kirkton's History. After stating that King James in his old age undertook a journey to Scotland, to establish the English ceremonies, the historian goes on to say, “So in a corrupt Assembly at Perth, he first got his five articles concluded, and thereafter enacted in Parliament at Edinburgh, in the year 1621. This Parliament was always by common consent called ‘The Black Parliament,’ not only because of the grievous acts made therein, but also because of a number of dismal ominous prodigies which attended it, the vote itself which accomplished the design of the meeting being accompanied with a horrible darkness, thunderclaps, fire, and unheard of tempest, to the astonishment of both Parliament and city, as was observed by all. The bishops had procured all the dissatisfied ministers to be discharged the town, so divers of them, upon the last day of the parliament, went out to Sheens, near Edinburgh, where in a friend's house they spent the day in fasting and prayer, expecting the event, of which they were as then uncertain. After the aged ministers had prayed in the morning with great straitening, at length, a messenger from the city, with many tears, assured them all was concluded contrary to their request. This brought them all into a fit of heaviness, till a godly lady there present, desired Mr. David Dickson, being at that time present, might be employed to pray, and though he was at that time but a young man, and not very considerable for his character, yet was he so wonderfully assisted, and enlarged for the space of two hours, that he made bold to prophesy, that from that discouraging day and forward, the work of the gospel should both prosper and flourish in Scotland, notwithstanding all the laws made to the prejudice of it.” [*Kirkton's History, pp. 16, 17, 18.*] Kirkton has not recorded the name of the lady who suggested that Dickson should be employed in prayer; but Livingstone, who narrates the same incident in his Memorable Characteristics, informs us that Lady Culross told him she was the person by whom the suggestion was made. [*Select Biographies printed for the Wodrow Society, vol. i. p. 317.*]

On the preaching of the gospel, Lady Culross attended with exemplary regularity. She was also much in the practice of frequenting sacramental solemnities. In those days the dispensation of the Lord's Supper in the parishes of ministers famed for preaching the gospel, was flocked to by vast multitudes from the surrounding districts, so



Administration of the Lord's Supper in the Fields

that often many thousands were assembled together to partake of, or to witness, this feast of love. These were interesting occasions. They generally took place in the summer season; and the sermons were preached in the open air. The solemnity of the public services powerfully engaged the attention as well as affected the heart; and in the fervent love which pervaded the private christian fellowship of the people with one another, there was exhibited a spectacle on which angels might have looked with delight. The families of the parish, on whom their minister was careful to enforce the duty of entertaining strangers, from the consideration that "thereby some have entertained angels unawares," exemplified an open-hearted and, open-handed hospitality. Many of them accommodated so great a number that their domestic circle had the appearance of a small congregation, and it seemed as if the primitive days of Christianity had returned, when the disciples had all things in common. Thus Christians from different parts of the country became acquainted with one another, fraternal love was cultivated, and by their religious conversation and devotional exercises, they strengthened the ardour of their mutual piety. It is no wonder that such seasons were looked forward to with eager expectation, and that they left behind them a refreshing and an ever-cherished remembrance. Few were more in the habit of waiting upon these observances than Lady Culross; and when circumstances prevented her from being present, she frequently secured the services of a friend to take notes of the sermons for her use. She indeed appears not to have been without fears of exceeding in her attendance on sacraments the bounds of duty, and of thereby neglecting the concerns of her family at home. At one time meeting with Euphan M'Cullen, a poor but pious woman in the parish of Kilconquhar, who was well known among the devout of her day, and who is said to have seldom prayed without getting a positive answer, Lady Culross requested her to pray for her in regard to the outward condition of her family. On being inquired at what answer she had got, the good old woman replied that the answer was, "He that provideth not for his own house, hath denied the faith." At which Lady Culross said, "Now you have killed me; for I go to preachings and communions here and there, neglecting the care of my own family." Euphan replies, "Mistress, if you be guilty in that respect, you have reason to be humbled for it; but it was not said in that sense to me; but the Lord said, 'I that have said, he that provideth not for his own is worse than an infidel,

will not I provide for her and her house, seeing she is mine?" [Livingstone's Characteristics in Select Biographies, vol. i. p. 339.]

One of the principal places which Lady Culross frequented for enjoying the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, was Lanark, the minister of which parish, at that time, was Mr. William Livingstone, the father of the celebrated Mr. John Livingstone, minister of Ancrum. Residing in the family of the minister of the parish on these solemnities, and also occasionally at other times, she was struck with the promising piety, the love of learning, and the suavity of manners which characterized young Livingstone, and seems to have early anticipated his future eminence as a minister of the gospel, as she did that of Mr. David Dickson, when an obscure young man; for among other gifts which distinguished her, she was an acute judge both of character and talents. Livingstone, on the other hand, formed a high estimate of her christian excellence, as well as of her intellectual endowments; and he records in his Life the benefit he derived from her religious conversation and demeanour, during those occasions on which she was a guest in his father's house. [Life of Mr. John Livingstone in Select Biographies, vol. i. p. 130.] An intimate christian friendship thus came to be formed between her and Livingstone, which lasted till her death; and an epistolary intercourse was maintained between them. After the grave had closed over her, Livingstone continued to retain a lively and grateful recollection of her talents and piety. In his Memorable Characteristics he has given her a place among "the professors of the church of Scotland, of his acquaintance, who were eminent for grace and gifts;" and he thus describes her: "Of all that ever I saw, she was most unwearied in religious exercises; and the more she attained access to God therein, she hungered the more. At the communion in Shotts, in June 1630, the night after the Sabbath was spent in prayer by a great many Christians in a large room, where her bed was; and in the morning all going apart for their private devotion, she went into the bed, and drew the curtains, that she might set herself to prayer. William Rigg of Athernie coming into the room, and hearing her have great motion upon her, although she spoke not out, he desired her to speak out, saying that there was none in the room but him and her woman, as at that time there was no other. She did so, and the door being opened, the room filled full. She continue in prayer, with wonderful assistance, for large three hours' time." [Livingstone's Memorable Characteristics in Select Biographies, vol. i. p. 346.]

The account here given of Lady Culross's ardent devotional feeling, As it appeared at the communion in Shotts, will perhaps excite the ridicule of some, who may be disposed to regard her as actuated more by ostentation and enthusiasm, than by modest, sincere, and enlightened piety. But a slight attention to the simplicity of the times in which she lived, will show how little ground there is for pronouncing so harsh a censure. More primitive in their manners and habits than in the present day, the people of those times are not to be judged of by modern customs, nor condemned for that which, though unfit for imitation in the altered state of society, conveyed to their minds nothing inconsistent with true delicacy, And before we censure her unusual earnestness in prayer, and the uncommon length of time during which the exercise was continued, let us remember that in that age the influences of the Holy Spirit were poured out upon the good in no ordinary measure, imparting to them a high degree of spiritual vitality, and giving a peculiar depth and fervour to their piety. This consideration alone, not to mention other considerations, will serve to explain why public prayers and sermons, as well as social prayer, protracted to an extent to which the patience of few hearers would now be equal, so far from fatiguing, seemed only to refresh and invigorate our hardier and more devout ancestors. Nor is it to be forgotten, should we feel a tendency to find fault with these simple annals of primitive piety, that on the very day on which this lady was engaged in the manner described, there took place such a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit at the kirk of Shotts, as has hardly been equalled since the days of the apostles; and who can tell how far this was vouchsafed in answer to the prayers of this devout woman, as well as in answer to the prayers of those who passed the night between the Sabbath and Monday morning in this exercise, poured forth with great earnestness and importunity to Him, who has promised. the elusion of the Spirit upon the church as the fruit of believing prayer? It is also worthy of notice, that, as has been previously stated, it was at her suggestion that the ministers assisting in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, on that occasion, laid the work of addressing the people on the Monday upon Mr. John Livingstone, whose discourse was the instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, of turning so many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

These fruits of Mr. Livingstone's ministry served to increase the high estimation in which Lady Culross held him, as an ambassador of Christ; and upon the death of Mr. Robert Colvill, minister of Culross, in 1630, [*On December 5, 1640 [?1630], this minister's son, Mr. Robert Colvill, in Culross, was retoured heir to his father in the lands of Nether Kynnedder in the regality of Dunfermline. Inquis. Retor. Abbrev. Fife, no. 601.*] she was very desirous of having him settled minister of that parish. This appears from a letter she wrote to him, dated 25th March 1631. "I confess," says she, "it is no time for me to quarrel [*In the preceding part of the letter she had been blaming Livingstone, who had gone to Ireland in the autumn of the year 1630, for his haste in leaving Scotland.*] now, when God is quarrelling with us, and has taken away our dear pastor, who has preached the word of God among us almost forty years, plainly and powerfully: a sore stroke to this congregation, and chiefly to me, to whom he was not only a pastor and a brother, but, under God, a husband and a father to my children. Next his own family I have the greatest loss. Your sudden voyage has troubled me more since than ever, and many of this congregation, who would have preferred you to others, and would have used all means possible if you had been in this land; but now I fear the charm is spilt: yet you cannot go out of my mind, nor out of the mind of some others, who wish you here with our hearts to supply that place, and pray for it, if it be the Lord's will, though by appearance there is no possibility of it, for I think they have agreed with another; yet if God have a work, he can bring it about, and work contrary to all means, for there is nothing too hard for him." [*Letters from Lady Culross to Mr. John Livingstone, in Select Biographies, printed for The Wodrow Society, vol. i. p. 358.*] The wish expressed in this letter was not however gratified. The parish of Culross was supplied with another minister, Mr. John Duncan, [*Records of the Synod of Fife, p. 236.*] and Livingstone remained in Ireland, but was soon after, in consequence of his nonconformity, first suspended from the exercise of his ministry, then deposed, and next excommunicated by the Bishop of Down, and ultimately forced to leave the country.

It has been formerly said that Lady Culross and Livingstone maintained an epistolary correspondence. A number of her letters to him have been lately printed. Written in the homely and quaint phraseology peculiar to that age, they yet contain nothing at variance with genuine good taste or sobriety of feeling. Characterized throughout by the familiar, they occasionally indulge in the facetious, and their prevailing spirit is that of fervent piety, and an ardent attachment to the public cause, for which Presbyterians were then contending, combined with a solid and enlightened judgment. As a specimen of her skill and ability in encouraging the ministers of the gospel under their sufferings for the sake of Christ, a part of her letter to Livingstone on the occasion of his being suspended from the ministry, dated "Halhill, 10th December 1631," may be quoted. It is headed with the following text of Scripture, "Surely the rage of man shall turn to thy praise; the remnant of their rage wilt thou restrain;" and it begins as follows: "My very worthy and dear brother, I received your letter, and have no time to answer you as I would. I thank the Lord who upholds you in all your trials and temptations. It is good for you to be holden in exercise, otherwise I would suspect that all were not well with you. God is faithful, as you find by experience, and will not try you above your strength. Courage, dear brother, all is in love, all works together for the best. You must be hewn and hammered down, and dressed and prepared before you be a living stone fit for his building. And if he be minded to make you meet to help to repair the ruins of his house, you must look for other manner of strokes than you have yet felt. You must feel your own weakness that you may be humbled and cast down before him, that so you may pity poor weak ones that are borne down with infirmities. And when you are laid low and vile in your own eyes, then will he raise you up, and refresh you with some blinks of his favourable countenance, that you may be able to comfort others with those consolations wherewith you have been comforted by Him. This you know by some experience, blessed be God! And as strength and grace increase, look for stronger trials, fightings without, and fears within devil and his instruments against you, and your Lord hiding his face. [You are] deeply, almost overwhelmed with troubles and terrors; and yet out of all this misery, he is working some gracious work of mercy for the glory of his great name, the salvation and sanctification of your own soul, and for the comfort of his distressed children there or here, or both, as pleases him. Up your heart then, and prepare for the battle! Put on the whole armour of God; though you be weak, you have a strong Captain, whose power is made perfect in weakness, and whose grace is sufficient for you. What you want in yourself you have in him, who is given to you of God to be your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, your treasure and treasurer, who keeps all in store . . . Since he has put his work in your weak hands, look not for

long ease here; you must feel the weight of that worthy calling, and be holden under with the sense of your own weakness, that he may kythe [*i.e. show*] his strength in due time; a weak man and a strong God, who will not fail nor forsake you, but will furnish strength and gifts, and grace, according to that employment that he puts in your hands. The pain is but for a moment, the pleasure everlasting. The battle is but short, your Captain fights for you, therefore the victory is certain, and the reward glorious. A crown and a kingdom are worth the fighting for. Blessed be his name who fights all our battles, and works all our works for us! Since all is in Christ, and he ours, what would we have more but thankful hearts, and grace to honour him in life and death, who is our advantage in life and death, who guides with his counsel, and will bring us to his glory. To him be all honour, power, and praise, now and for ever. Amen.”

Lady Culross was also the friend and correspondent of Mr. Samuel Rutherford, some of whose letters to her in 1636 and 1637 are preserved in the published collection of his letters. She was then considerably advanced in years, but had seen no reason for changing the sentiments on ecclesiastical questions which she had embraced in early life; nor had her zeal in adhering to them abated. When Rutherford was summoned to appear before the Court of High Commission at Edinburgh in 1636, more than thirty years had passed over her head since she addressed Mr. John Welsh in the prison of Blackness; but the sufferings of good men in the cause of religious freedom still made her heart swell with emotions of sympathy; and hearing of the unjust proceedings instituted against the minister of Anwoth, she addressed to him a letter giving expression to her sentiments and feelings. Rutherford lost no time in replying, and his answer is written with all the confidence of christian friendship. [*Rutherford's Letters, pp. 108, 109.*] The best of God's people have sometimes been unequally yoked, and their children, instead of proving a comfort to them, have been the source of their most poignant grief. In these respects Lady Culross was severely tried. Writing to Livingstone from Halhill, 10th December 1631, she says, “Guiltiness in me and mine is my greatest cross. . . . My great temptation now is, that I fear my prayers are turned into sin. I find and see the clean contrary in me and mine, at least some of them. [*She had a daughter as to whom this complaint did not apply. In a letter to her from Aberdeen in 1637, Rutherford writes, “Your son-in-law, W. G., is now truly honoured for his Lord and Master's cause. . . He is strong in the Lord, as he hath written to me, and his wife is his encourager, which should make you rejoice.” - Rutherford's Letters, pp. 437.*] Samuel is going to the college in St. Andrews to a worthy master there, but I fear him deadly. I depend not on creatures. Pray earnestly for a blessing. He whom you know is like to overturn all, and has broken all bands. Lord, pity him! There was some beginning of order, but all is wrong again for the death of his brother makes him take liberty, so I have a double loss.” [*Select Biographies, vol. i. pp. 362, 363.*] It has been said that she “here most probably refers to her son James, whose conduct often occasioned great anxiety to his mother.” [*Select Biographies, vol. i. pp. 362, 363.*] We are rather inclined to think that the reference is to her husband. Five or six years after this she complains in a letter to Rutherford, of the heavy trial she met with from the misconduct of one of her sons, who, so far from proving “a restorer of her life and a nourisher of her old age,” was to her a source of the bitterest sorrow. Rutherford, writing from Aberdeen 1637, says in reply, “As for your son who is your grief, your Lord waited on you and me till we were ripe and brought us in. It is your part to pray, and wait upon him. When he is ripe, he will be spoken for. Who can command our Lord's wind to blow? I know that it shall be your good in the latter end. That is one of your waters to heaven, ye could not go about - there are fewer behind. I remember you and him, and yours as I am able.” [*Rutherford's Letters, p. 437.*]

Whether this letter refers to her third son Samuel, or to another of her sons, we are unable to determine. It is however certain that Samuel was far from embracing the principles or following the example of his mother. He was the author of the piece of Scottish Hudibras, entitled, “Mock Poem, or Whigs' Supplication, in two parts,” printed at London in 1681; a production which could not have been written by a man of strong sympathies. Its evident object is to provoke the mirth of the reader, by setting forth, in a ludicrous light, the sufferings endured by the Presbyterians under Charles II and their endeavours to obtain the redress of their grievances. This betrays both bad taste and want of feeling. If for men to make themselves merry, in any case, over scenes of oppression and wretchedness, is inconsistent with generous and humane feeling, it is evident, that to make the barbarities exercised towards our Presbyterian ancestors the means of ministering to our gaiety, abstracting altogether from the consideration of their principles, can on no ground be vindicated. It is in fact nothing better than would be

the spectacle of a man, who, while looking on a fellow-creature under the rack, amused himself by mimicking or by describing, in ludicrous phrase, the writhings and convulsions of the sufferer. Samuel Colvill was also the author of a work entitled, "The Grand Impostor discovered: Or, An Historical Dispute of the Papacy and Popish Religion; 1. Demonstrating the newness of both; 2. By what artifices they are maintained; 3. The contradictions of the Roman Doctors in Defending them." It was printed at Edinburgh in 1673, and is dedicated to the Duke of Lauderdale. In the Dedication the author states, that he had the honour to be the Duke's con-disciple, adding, "at which time it did not obscurely appear what your Grace would prove afterwards. Also having presented several trifles to your Grace, at your two times being in Scotland, you seemed to accept of them with a favourable countenance, which encouraged me to trouble your Grace afresh."

As we have already seen, Lady Culross cultivated a taste for poetry. One of her poetical effusions in particular, attracted the admiration of her friends, and was published at their request so early as 1603. It is a thin quarto, consisting of sixteen pages, and is printed in black letters, with the following title: "Ane Godlie Dreame, compylit in Scottish Meter, be M. M. Gentlewoman in Culros, at the requeist of her Freindes. Introite per angustam portam, nam lata est via quae ducit ad interitum. [i.e. "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for broad is the way that leadeth to destruction."] Edinburgh: printed be Robert Charteris, 1603." In this poem, as in Bunyan's immortal work, "The Pilgrim's Progress," the progress and conclusion of the Christian's life is described under the similitude of a journey. Written with much liveliness of fancy and description, and with a fluency of versification superior to most of the poetical compositions of that age, it gained her at the time considerable reputation; and in the opinion of competent judges it establishes her claims to poetical powers of no mean order. As it is now rarely to be met with, a brief view of its subject matter may be given, and a few passages may be quoted as a specimen of the poetry of that period. It is introduced with a description of the heaviness of heart which the writer felt, from her solitary musings on the depraved state of the world in her day, which she calls "this false and iron age," and on the bias of her own heart to sin. Troubled with a train of reflections on these and similar topics, she endeavoured to pray; but utterance failed her, and she could only sigh, until relieved by the effusion of tears when she poured forth her lamentations. Thus tranquillized she retired to bed, and falling asleep dreamed that her grief and lamentations were renewed, and that with tears she besought God for succour:-

"Lord Jesus come (said I) and end my grief,  
My sp'rit is vexed, the captive would be free:  
All vice abounds, O send us some relief!  
I loath to live, I wish dissolved to be."

While with sighs and sobs she was pouring forth her complaint, she thought there appeared to her an angel of a shining countenance and loving looks, who entreated her to tell him the cause of her grief. Her reply is couched in these lines:-

"I sighed again, and said, Alas! for me,  
My grief is great, I can it not declare:  
Into this earth I wander to and fro,  
A pilgrim poor, consumed with sighing sair,  
My sin, alas! increases mair and mair,  
I loathe my life, I irk to wander here:  
I long for heaven, my heritage is there,  
I long to live with my Redeemer here."

The angel, pleased with this account of her grief, bade her rise up immediately and follow him, promising to be her guide, and commanding her to refrain from her tears and to trust in his word and strength. By his endearing accents, and at the sight of his fair countenance, her weary spirit revived, and she humbly desired him to tell her his name. To which he answered - for he was no other person than the Angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ - that he was her God, adding, in amplification of the gracious relation in which he stood to her, that he was "the way, the truth and life," her "spouse," her "joy, rest, and peace;" and then exhorting her thus: -

“Rise up anon, and follow after me,  
I shall thee lead into thy dwelling place,  
The land of rest thou long’st so sore to see;  
I am thy Lord that soon shall end thy race.”

Thanking him for his encouraging words, she declared her readiness to follow him, and expressed an earnest desire speedily to see “the land of rest,” which he promised her. He answered that the way to it was strait, that she had yet far to go, and that before reaching it she behoved to pass through great and numerous dangers, which would try her “feeble flesh.” She admitted that her flesh was weak, but hoped that her spirit was willing, and besought him to be her guide; in which case she would not be discouraged. She next gives the history of her journey under his conduct: -

“Then up I rose and made no more delay,  
My feeble arm about his arm I cast:  
He went before and still did guide the way,  
Though I was weak my sp’rit did follow fast,  
Through moss and mires, through ditches deep we passed,  
Through pricking thorns, through water and through fire:  
Through dreadful dens, which made my heart aghast,  
He bore me up when I began to tire.”

After farther describing herself and her guide as climbing high mountains, passing through vast deserts, wading through great waters, and wending their way through wild woods, in which, through the obstruction of briars, it would have been impossible for her, without his assistance, to have proceeded, she says,

“Forward we passed on narrow brigs of tree,  
O’er waters great that hideously did roar;  
There lay below that fearful was to see,  
Most ugly beasts that gaped to devour.  
My head grew light and troubled wondrous sore,  
My heart did fear, my feet began to slide;  
But when I cried, he heard me ever more,  
And held me up, O blessed be my guide!”

Escaping these dangers, and exhausted through fatigue, she at length thought of sitting down to rest; but he told her that she must proceed on her journey; and accordingly, though weak, she rose up at his command. For her encouragement, he pointed to that delightful place after which she aspired, apparently at hand; and looking up she beheld the celestial mansion glistening like burnished gold and the brightest silver, with its stately towers rising full in her view. As she gazed, the splendour of the sight dazzled her eyes; and in an ecstasy of joy she besought her guide to conduct her thence at once, and by a direct course. But he told her that though it was at no great distance, yet the way to it was extremely difficult, and encouraging her not to faint, he bade her cleave fast to him. Having described the difficulties and dangers she subsequently met with in the course of her journey, she concludes the poem with an explanation of the spiritual meaning of the dream. The following is one of the concluding stanzas: -

“Rejoice in God, let not your courage fail,  
Ye chosen saints that are afflicted here:  
Though Satan rage, he never shall prevail,  
Fight to the end and stoutly persevere.  
Your God is true, your blood is to him dear,  
Fear not the way since Christ is your convoy:  
When clouds are past, the weather will grow clear,  
Ye sow in tears, but ye shall reap in joy.”



To the "Godly Dream," there is added a short poem entitled, "A Comfortable Song, to the Tune of 'Shall I let her go;'" which we here subjoin:-

"Away! vain world, bewitcher of my heart!  
My sorrow shows my sins make me to smart:  
Yet will I not despair, but to my God repair,  
He has mercy aye, therefore will I pray;  
He has mercy aye, and loves me,  
Though by his troubling hand he proves me.

"Away! away! too long thou hast me snared:  
I will not tyme more time; I am prepared,  
Thy subtle slight to flee; thou hast deceived me,  
Though they sweetly smile, smoothly they beguile,  
Though they sweetly smile, suspect them,  
The simple sort they syle, [*viz: blindfold*] reject them.

"Once more away! shows loath the world to leave,  
Bids oft away with her that holds me slave:  
Loath I am to forego that sweet alluring foe,  
Since thy ways are vain, shall I them retain,  
Since thy ways are vain, I quit thee,  
Thy pleasure shall no more delight me.

"A thousand times away! ah! stay no more;  
Sweet Christ, me save, lest subtle sin devour:  
Without thy helping hand, I have no strength to stand,  
Lest I turn aside, let thy grace me guide:  
Lest I turn aside, draw near me:  
And when I call for help, Lord! hear me.

"What shall I do? are all my pleasures past?  
Shall worldly lusts now take their leave at last?  
Yea, Christ these earthly toys shall turn in heavenly joys,  
Let the world be gone, I will love Christ alone,  
Let the world be gone, I care not:  
Christ is my love alone, I fear not."