

# LETTER

Charles I (1600–1649), King of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1625–1649)

to Henrietta Maria (1609–1669), Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1625–1649)

Oxford, 11 January 1645/6

I had no time before Friday last to decipher yours of 25 November, which I must answer how late soever (for kindness is never out of date), every line in it being but a several way of expressing your love to me, even there where we differ in judgment, which I know we should not do if you were not mistaken in the state of the question; I mean concerning episcopacy, for I am of your opinion to a tittle in everything else. For the difference between me and the rebels concerning the Church is not bare matter of form or ceremony which are alterable according to occasion, but so real that if I should give way as is desired, here would be no Church and by no human probability ever to be recovered, so that, besides the obligation of my oath, I know nothing to be an higher point of conscience.

This being granted, I am sure your persuasions will be turned into praises of my constancy. And for the truth of my affection, the doubt of which is the only argument against me, I can make it as clear to any not willful person as two and three makes five. But this I am sure of, which none can deny, that my yielding this is a sin of the highest nature, if I believe constant as I have said, which really I do. And, dear heart, you cannot but be confident that there is no danger which I will not hazard, or pains that I will not undergo, to enjoy the happiness of your company, there being nothing which really conduces thereunto which I will not do which may not make me less worthy of you.

And to this end I prosecute the Scotch treaty with all the industry and dexterity which God has given me, not differing in opinion concerning it. My intended journey to London is likewise for this. Than which, believe me, no undertaking can be less hazardous (the greatest fear being of my doing some lache<sup>1</sup> action which your love will hinder you to apprehend and mine to give the occasion), nor of so great probability of good success. One of my securities I forgot in my last to mention to you, which is that this Parliament without doubt determines with my life if I give it not some new additional strength, which I protest never to do, but, for the contrary, to follow precisely your advice therein.

Upon my word, your information concerning Lord Culpeper<sup>2</sup> is much mistaken, if not malicious. For Prince Charles' treaty was begun with Fairfax before I knew of it, merely to eschew a mutiny which otherwise could not be prevented. But there was no time lost in acquainting me with all the circumstances, the sum of it being only the demand of a pass for sending to me to have my advice concerning a treaty, the barbarous refusal of which I am confident did much settle men's minds in those parts.

Lord Digby<sup>3</sup> writes from Ireland somewhat hopefully of assistance from thence, and to that end desires you to try if 100 busses may be obtained from the Prince of Orange, to be in Ireland by the end of next month. And though I will not bid you be confident of great matters from thence, knowing my author to be most sanguine, yet if his hopes should prove true, it were pity the effects should fail for want of shipping. This is all for this time from him who is eternally yours.

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<sup>1</sup> *lache* — cowardly

<sup>2</sup> John (c. 1600–1660), Baron Colepeper of Thoresway, served as an intermediary in the Prince of Wales' attempts to negotiate a peace with Parliamentary forces.

<sup>3</sup> George Digby (1612–1677), Baron Digby, eldest son of the Earl of Bristol

John Bruce, ed. *Charles I in 1646: Letters of King Charles the First to Queen Henrietta Maria* (London: Camden Society, 1856):6–9.