

Lxi. to Mr James Wilson

by Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford encourages the listener to trust in Christ's work and to pray for comfort and guidance in times of doubt and hardship.

Scripture: Psalm 42:8, John 12:27, Romans 8:26, 2 Corinthians 13:5

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Faith Assurance"

Description

Samuel Rutherford preaches a message of encouragement and exhortation to a struggling believer, addressing doubts about being in Christ and feeling lost in spiritual exercises. He emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's work in our lives, not slandering His grace, and persevering in prayer even in times of spiritual dryness and confusion. Rutherford reminds the listener to focus on Christ, to borrow joy and comfort from the Holy Spirit, and to trust that God is still at work in their heart despite feelings of hardness and melancholy.

Transcript

DEAR BROTHER, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you. -- I bless our rich and only wise Lord, who careth so for His new creation that He is going over it again, and trying every piece in you, and blowing away the motes of His new work in you. Alas! I am not so fit a physician as your disease requireth. Sweet, sweet, lovely Jesus be your physician, where His under-chirurgeons cannot do anything for putting in order the wheels, paces, and goings of a marred soul. I have little time; but yet the Lord has made me so to concern myself in your condition, that I dare not be altogether silent.

First: ye doubt, from II Cor. 13.5, whether ye be in Christ or not? And so, whether you are a reprobate or not? I answer two things to the doubt. -- I. Ye owe charity to all men, but most of all to lovely and loving Jesus, and some also to your self; especially to your renewed self, because your new self is not yours, but another Lord's, even the work of His own Spirit. Therefore, to slander His work is to wrong Himself. Love thinketh no evil: if ye love grace, think not ill of grace in yourself.

The great Advocate pleadeth hard for you; be upon the Advocate's side, O poor feared client of Christ! He pleadeth for you, whereof your letter (though too, too full of jealousy) is a proof. For, if ye were not His, your thoughts (which, I hope, are but the suggestions of His Spirit, that only bringeth the matter into debate to make it sure to you) would not be such nor so serious as these, 'Am I His?' or 'Whose am I?' 2. Dare ye forswear your Owner and say in cold blood, 'I am not His'?

What nature or corruption saith at starts in you, I regard not. Your thoughts of yourself, when sin and guiltiness round you in the ear, and when you have a sight of your deserving, are Apocrypha and not Scripture, I hope. I charge you by the mercies of God, be not that cruel to grace and the new birth as to cast water on your own coal by misbelief. Secondly: Ye say, that ye know not what to do. Your Head once said the same word, or not far from it. 'Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say?' (John 12.27).

And faith answered Christ's 'What shall I say?' with these words: 'O tempted Savior, askest Thou, "What shall I say?" Say, "Pray, Father, save Me from this hour." What course can ye take but pray and frist Christ His own comforts? 'Oh,' say ye, 'I cannot pray'? Answer -- Honest sighing is faith breathing and whispering him in the ear. The life is not out of faith where there is sighing, looking up with the eyes, and breathing toward God. 'But what shall I do in spiritual exercises?' ye say.

Answer -- I. In my weak judgment, ye should first say, 'I would glorify God in believing David's salvation, and the Bride's marriage with the Lamb, and love the church's slain Husband, although I cannot for the present believe mine own salvation.' 2. Say 'I will not pass from my claim: suppose Christ should pass from His claim to me, I shall not go back upon my side. Howbeit my love to Him be not worth a drink of water, yet Christ shall have it, such as it is.' 3. Say, 'I shall rather spill twenty prayers, than not pray at all.

Let my broken words go up to heaven: when they come up into the Great Angel's golden censer, that compassionate Advocate will put together my broken prayers, and perfume them.' Words are but the accidental of prayer. 'Oh,' say ye, 'I am slain with hardness of heart, and troubled with confused and melancholious thoughts.' Answer -- My dear brother, what would you conclude thence? Down in Christ's hospital, where sick and distempered souls are under cure, it is not worth a straw.

Give Christ time to end His work in your heart. I charge you to make psalms of Christ's praises for His begun work of grace. Make Christ your music and your song; for complaining and feeling of want does often swallow up your praises. Borrow joy and comfort from the Comforter. Bid the Spirit do His office in you; and remember that faith is one thing and the feeling and notice of faith another. But alas! dear brother, it is easy for me to speak words and syllables of peace. There is but one Creator, ye know. Oh that ye may get a letter of peace sent to you from heaven! Pray for me, and for grace to be faithful, and for gifts to be able, with tongue and pen, to glorify God. I forget you not.

ST ANDREWS, Jan. 8, 1640

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