

Xxxvi. to John Gordon of Cardoness, the Elder

by Samuel Rutherford

The speaker urges the congregation to prioritize spiritual growth, make an honest account with God, and love and live for Christ to avoid eternal punishment.

Scripture: Matthew 16:26, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Hebrews 9:27, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Repentance", "Salvation"

Description

Samuel Rutherford passionately expresses his deep concern for the souls of his parishioners, longing to see evidence of Christ's work in their lives. He urges them to seek the Lord, warning of the consequences of not embracing the Gospel and the importance of securing their salvation. Rutherford vividly describes the horrors of hell to emphasize the seriousness of sin and the need for repentance. He encourages them to stand firm in Christ, contend for their faith, and prioritize their relationship with God above all else.

Transcript

MUCH HONORED AND DEAREST IN MY LORD, Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. My soul longeth exceedingly to hear how matters go betwixt you and Christ; and whether or not there be any work of Christ in that parish, that will bide the trial of fire and water. Let me be weighed of my Lord in a just balance, if your souls lie not weighty upon me. Ye go to bed and ye rise with me: thoughts of your soul, my dearest in our Lord, depart not from me in my sleep. Ye have a great part of my tears, sighs, supplications, and prayers.

Oh, if I could buy your soul's salvation with any suffering whatsoever, and that ye and I might meet with joy up in the rainbow, when we shall stand before our Judge! Sir, show the people this; for when I write to you, I think I write to you all, old and young. Fulfill my joy and seek the Lord. Sure I am, that once I discovered my lovely, royal princely Lord Jesus to you all. Woe, woe shall be your part of it for evermore, if the Gospel be not the savor of life to you. Believe me, I find heaven a city hard to be won.

I know your accounts are many, and will take telling and laying, and reckoning betwixt you and your Lord. Fit your accounts, and order them. Lose not the last play, whatever ye do, for in that play with death your precious soul is the prize: for the Lord's sake spill not the play, and lose not such a treasure. Ye know that, out of love which I had to your soul, and out of desire which I had to make an honest account of you, I testified my displeasure and disliking of your ways very often, both in private and public.

I am not now a witness of your doings, but your Judge is always your witness. I beseech you by the mercies of God, by the salvation of your soul, after the sight of this letter to take a new course with your ways and now, in the end of your day, make sure of heaven. I never knew so well what sin was as since I came to Aberdeen, howbeit I was preaching of it to you. To feel the smoke of hell's fire in the throat for half an hour; to stand beside a river of fire and brimstone broader than the earth; and to think to be bound hand and foot, and casten into the midst of it quick, and then to have God locking the prison door, never to be opened to all eternity!

O how it will shake a conscience that has any life in it! Look up to Him and love Him. O, love and live! It were life to me if you would read this letter to the people and if they did profit by it. My dearest in the Lord, stand fast in Christ, keep the faith, contend for Christ. Wrestle for Him and take men's feud for God's favor; there is no comparison betwixt them. O that the Lord would fulfill my joy and keep the young bride that is at Anwoth to Christ! Now, worthy Sir, now my dear people, my joy and my crown in the Lord, let Him be your fear.

Seek the Lord, and His face: save your souls. Doves! flee to Christ's windows. Pray for me, and praise for me. The blessing of my God, the prayers and blessing of a poor prisoner, and your lawful pastor, be upon you. Your lawful and loving pastor.

ABERDEEN, June 16, 1637

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