

Conscientious Acting in the World

by Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford emphasizes the importance of prioritizing heaven and living a life of sanctification, warning against the dangers of security and worldliness.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19, Luke 12:33, 1 Timothy 6:7, Hebrews 12:1, James 4:4

Topics: "Eternal Glory", "Sanctification"

Description

Samuel Rutherford preaches about the necessity of prioritizing heaven above all earthly possessions, emphasizing the importance of salvation and the steep journey to eternal glory. He encourages believers to examine their hearts, make conscience of their ways, and not be deceived by the temporary pleasures of the world. Rutherford urges perseverance in faith, even in times of trial and when God seems distant, reminding them to wait patiently for His return and to seek sanctification.

Transcript

My Dearly Beloved, and Longed-For in the Lord,--

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.-- I long to hear how your soul prospers, and how the kingdom of Christ thrives in you. I exhort you and beseech you in the bowels of Christ, faint not, weary not. There is a great necessity of heaven; you must have it. All other things, as houses, lands, children, husband, friends, country, credit, health, wealth, honour, may be let go; but heaven is your one thing necessary, the good part that shall not be taken from you. See that you buy the field where the pearl is. Sell all, and make a purchase of salvation. Think it not easy; for it is a steep ascent to eternal glory; many are lying dead by the way, that were slain with security.

I have now been led by my Lord Jesus to such an extremity in Christianity, as I think little of former things. Oh, what I lack! I lack so many things, that I am almost asking if I have anything at all. Every man thinks he is rich enough in grace, till he takes out his purse, and counts his money, and then he finds his pack but empty and light in the day of a heavy trial. I found that I did not have enough to bear my expenses, and I should have fainted, if poverty and penury had not chased me to the storehouse of all.

I beseech you to make conscience of your ways. Deal kindly, and with conscience, with your tenants.** To fill a breach or a hole, make not a greater breach in the conscience. I wish plenty of love to your soul. Let the world be the portion of bastards; make it not yours. After the last trumpet is blown, the world and all its glory will be like an old house that is burnt to ashes, and like an old fallen castle, without a roof. Fy, fy

upon us, fools! who think ourselves debtors to the world! My Lord has brought me to this, that I would not give a drink of cold water for this world's kindness. I wonder that men long after, love, or care for these feathers. It is almost an insane world to me. To think that men are so mad as to transact with dead earth! To give out conscience, and get in clay again, is a strange bargain!

I have written my mind at length to your husband. Write to me again about his case. I cannot forget him in my prayers; I am looking up (Ps. 5:3)**. Christ has some claim to him. My counsel is, that you bear with him when passion overtakes him: "A soft answer putteth away wrath."** Answer him in what he speaks, and apply yourself in the fear of God to him; and then you will remove a pound weight of your heavy cross, that way, and so it shall become light.

When Christ hides Himself, wait on Him, and busy yourself till He returns; it is not a time to be careless. It is a good thing to be grieved when He hides His smiles. Yet believe His love in a patient waiting and believing in the dark. You must learn to swim and hold up your head above the water, even when the awareness of His presence is not with you to hold up your chin. I trust in God that He will bring your ship safe to land. I counsel you to study sanctification, and to be dead to this world. Urge kindness on Knockbren**². Labour to benefit by his company; the man is acquainted with Christ.

I beg the help of your prayers, for I forget not you. Counsel your husband to fulfil my joy, and to seek the Lord's face. Show him, from me, that my joy and desire is to hear that he is in the Lord. God casts him often in my mind, I cannot forget him. I hope Christ and he have something to do together. Bless John from me. I write blessings to him, and to your husband, and to the rest of your children. Let it not be said, "I am not in your house," through neglect of the Sabbath exercise.

Your lawful and loving pastor in his only, only Lord,

S.R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 20, 1637

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