

I. to Lady Kenmure, at a Time of Illness and Spiritual Depression

by Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford encourages Lady Kenmure to trust in the Lord's sovereignty and promises, even in the face of sickness and death, and to stand firm in her faith and stewardship.

Scripture: Joshua 24:15, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 31:15, Romans 8:38, 1 Corinthians 15:55, 2 Corinthians 5:8, 1 Timothy 6:12, Hebrews 13:8, 1 John 3:9, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Suffering And Faith", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

Samuel Rutherford addresses Lady Jane Campbell, a woman of remarkable ability and Christian devotion, who faced many personal tragedies, including the loss of children and her husband. Rutherford encourages her to trust in God's sovereignty amidst her sickness and impending death, reminding her that as a child of God, she is secure in Christ. He urges her to find comfort in the promise of Christ's presence through sickness and death, assuring her that only a small part of her will experience death, as her soul is above the law of death. Rutherford also calls on Lady Jane to be vigilant in upholding the cause of the Church and to encourage her family to stand for the Lord.

Transcript

Lady Jane Campbell, Viscountess of Kenmure, was the third daughter of Archibald Campbell, seventh Earl of Argyle, and sister to the Marquis of Argyle who was beheaded in 1661. She was remarkable for ability and Christian devotion, and for her generous help to those who suffered for conscience' sake. She had many troubles of her own, which are reflected in these letters. She lost two daughters in infancy and her husband died in 1634. Her son, who succeeded to the title, also died before attaining his majority, in 1649. The last of Rutherford's letters to her is dated in 1661, just after the execution of her brother. She

herself lived to a great age, though suffering all her life from bad health. Forty-seven letters to her from Rutherford have been preserved, and sixteen of them are quoted in this selection. See below, numbers II, IV, V, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XIX, XX, XLVIII, LX, LXX.

MADAM, -- All dutiful obedience in the Lord remembered. I have heard of your Ladyship's infirmity and sickness with grief; yet I trust ye have learned to say, 'It is the Lord, let Him do whatsoever seemeth good in His eyes.' For there be many Christians most like unto young sailors, who think the shore and the whole land doth move, when the ship and they themselves are moved; just so, not a few do imagine that God moveth and saileth and changeth places, because their giddy souls are under sail, and subject to alteration, to ebbing and flowing. But 'the foundation of the Lord abideth sure'.

God knoweth that ye are His own.

Wrestle, fight, go forward, watch, fear, believe, pray; and then ye have the infallible symptoms of one of the elect of Christ within you.

Ye have now, Madam, a sickness before you; and also after that a death. Gather then now food for the journey. God give you eyes to see through sickness and death, and to see something beyond death. Now, I believe ye have only these two shallow brooks, sickness and death, to pass through; and ye have also a promise that Christ shall do more than meet you, even that He shall come Himself, and go with you foot for foot, yea and bear you in His arms. O then!

O then! for the joy that is

set before you; for the love of the Man (who is also 'God over all, blessed forever') that is standing on the shore to welcome you, run your race with patience. The Lord go with you. Your Lord will not have

you, nor any of His servants, to exchange for the worse. Death in itself includeth both the death of the soul and the death of the body; but to God's children the bounds and the limits of death are abridged and drawn into a more narrow compass.

So that when ye die, a piece of death shall only seize upon you, or the least part of you shall die, and that is the dissolution of the body; for in Christ ye are delivered from the second death; and, therefore, as one born of God, commit not sin (although ye cannot live and not sin), and that serpent shall but eat your earthly part. As for your soul, it is above the law of death. But it is fearful and dangerous to be a debtor and servant to sin; for the count of sin ye will not be able to make good before God, except Christ both count and pay for you.

I trust also, Madam, that ye will be careful to present to the Lord the present estate of this decaying kirk.

For what shall be concluded in Parliament anent her, the Lord knoweth.

Stir up your husband, your brother, and all with whom you are in favour and credit, to stand upon the Lord's side against Baal. I have good hope your husband loveth the peace and prosperity of Zion: the peace of God be upon him. Thus, not willing to weary your Ladyship farther, I commend you, now and always, to the grace and mercy of that God who is able to keep you, that you fall not. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

ANWOTH, July 27, 1628

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