

# Liii. to James Bautie, Theological Student

by Samuel Rutherford

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*Samuel Rutherford emphasizes the nature of the New Covenant, the importance of sincere love for God, and the assurance of His grace amidst our imperfections.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:5, Isaiah 42:3, John 3:8, 2 Corinthians 9:7, 1 John 4:19

**Topics:** "New Covenant", "Christian Comfort"

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## Description

Samuel Rutherford preaches about the New Covenant, emphasizing that Christ accepts sincere offerings according to one's means, not demanding perfection but valuing authenticity and sincerity. He encourages believers not to be discouraged by their imperfections, as Christ is patient and understanding, gradually working in their hearts. Rutherford reminds that true love for God can coexist with gratitude for His blessings, urging believers to seek comfort in prayer even in the presence of known idols, as genuine comfort and conviction can align in the Christian journey.

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## Transcript

LOVING BROTHER, -- I received your letter and render you thanks for the same; but I have not time to answer all the heads of it, as the bearer can inform you. It is a sweet law of the New Covenant and a privilege of the new burgh that citizens pay according to their means. For the New Covenant saith not, 'So much obedience by ounce weights and no less, under the pain of damnation.' Christ taketh as poor men may give. Where there is a mean portion He is content with the less, if there be sincerity; broken sums, and little, feckless obedience will be pardoned, and hold the foot with Him.

Know ye not that our kindly Lord retaineth His good old heart yet? He breaketh not a bruised reed, nor quencheth the smoking flax; if the wind but blow, He holdeth His hand about it till it rise to a flame. The law cometh on with three O-yeses, 'with all the heart; with all the soul, and with all the strength'; and where would poor folks, like you and me, furnish all these sums? It feareth me (nay, it is most certain) that, if the payment were to come out of our purse, when we should put our hand into our bag, we should bring out the wind, or worse.

But the New Covenant seeketh not heapmete, nor stented obedience, as the condition of it, because forgiveness has always place. Hence I draw this conclusion: that to think matters betwixt Christ and us go back for want of heaped measure, is a piece of old Adam's pride, who would either be at legal payment, or nothing. We would still have God in our common, and buy His kindness with our merits. No marvel, then, of whisperings, Whether you be in the covenant or not? For pride maketh loose work of the covenant of

grace, and will not let Christ be full bargain maker.

To speak to you particularly and shortly: All the truly regenerated cannot determinately tell you the measure of their dejections; because Christ beginneth young with many, and stealth into their heart, see they wit of themselves, and becometh homely with them, with little din or noise. I grant that many are blinded, in rejoicing in a good-cheap conversion, that never cost them a sick night. But for that; I would say, if other marks be found that Christ is indeed come in, never make plea with him because he will not answer, 'Lord Jesus, how camest Thou in?

Whether in at door or window?' Make Him welcome, since He is come. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth'; all the world's wisdom cannot perfectly render a reason why the wind should be a month in the east, six weeks possibly in the west, and the space only of an afternoon in the south or north. You will not find out all the steps of Christ's way with a soul, do what ye can. You object, the truly regenerate should love God for Himself; and ye fear that you love Him more for His benefits (as incitements and motives to love Him) than for Himself.

I answer, To love God for Himself, as the last end; and also for His benefits, as incitements and motives to love Him, may very well stand together; as a son loveth his mother, because she is his mother, howbeit she be poor: and he loveth her for an apple also. You will not say, I hope, that benefits are the only reason and ground of your love: it seems there is a better foundation for it. Comparing the state of one truly regenerate, whose heart is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and yours, which is full of uncleanness and corruption, ye stand dumb and discouraged, and dare not sometimes call Christ heartsomely your own.

I answer: 1. The best regenerate have their defilements that will clog behind them all their days; and, wash as they will, there will be filth in their bosom. But let not this put you from the well. I answer: 2. Albeit there may be some squint look to an idol, yet love in its own measure may be found. For glory must purify and perfect our love, it never will till then be absolutely pure. Yet if the idol reign, and have the whole of the heart, and the keys of the house, and Christ only be made an underling to run errands, all is not right; therefore, examine well.

The assurance of Jesus' love, ye say, would be the most comfortable news that ever ye heard. Oh, that ye knew and felt it, as I have done! I wish you a share of my feast; sweet, sweet has it been to me. If my Lord had not given me this love, I should have fallen through the causeway of Aberdeen ere now! But for you, hang on, your feast is not far off; ye shall be filled ere ye go. There is as much in our Lord's pantry as will satisfy all His bairns, and as much wine in His cellar as will quench all their thirst.

Hunger on, for there is meat in hunger for Christ. Never go from Him, but fash Him (who yet is pleased with the importunity of hungry souls) with a dish-full of hungry desire till He fill you. Ye crave my mind, whether sound comfort may be found in prayer, when conviction of a known idol is present. I answer: An idol, as an idol, cannot stand with sound comforts; for that comfort that is gotten at Dagon's feet is a cheat or blafume. Yet sound comfort, and conviction of an eye to an idol, may as well dwell together as tears and joy.

But let this do you no ill; I speak it for your encouragement, that ye may make the best of our joys as ye can, albeit you find them mixed with motes. Brother, excuse my brevity, for time straiteneth me, that I get not my mind said in these things, but must refer that to a new occasion, if God offer it. Brother, pray for me. Grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

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