

Lxvi. to Mr. Taylor, on Her Son's Death

by Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford offers comfort to a grieving mother by emphasizing Christ's empathy, the hope of eternal life, and the sovereignty of God in the face of loss.

Scripture: Psalm 30:5, John 11:35, Romans 8:18, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Philippians 4:7, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 1:3, Revelation 22:3

Topics: "Grief Comfort", "Sovereign Grace"

Description

Samuel Rutherford delivers a heartfelt message of comfort and encouragement to a grieving mother, assuring her that her son, who has passed away, is now in the presence of the Lord. He emphasizes that even though the mother's sorrow is allowed, it is important to remember that her son's death was part of God's sovereign plan and that he is now serving the same Master in a higher house. Rutherford reminds the mother that her son's early departure to heaven was a merciful act by the Creator, and that she should find solace in the fact that her son is now in a place of everlasting joy. He encourages her to wait on God's timing for the living child and to trust in the free grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

MISTRESS, -- Grace, mercy, and peace be to you -- Though I have no relation worldly or acquaintance with you, yet (upon the testimony and importunity of your elder son now at London, where I am, but chiefly because I esteem Jesus Christ in you to be in place of all relations) I make bold, in Christ, to speak my poor thoughts to you concerning your son lately fallen asleep in the Lord. I know that grace rooteth not out the affections of a mother, but putteth them on His wheel who maketh all things new, that they may be refined: therefore, sorrow for a dead child is allowed to you, though by measure and ounce-weights.

The redeemed of the Lord have not a dominion, or lordship, over their sorrow and other affections, to lavish out Christ's goods at their pleasure. 'For ye are not your own, but bought with a price'; and your sorrow is not your own. Nor has He redeemed you by halves; and therefore, ye are not to make Christ's cross no cross. He commandeth you to weep: and that princely One, who took up to heaven with Him a man's heart to be a compassionate High Priest, became your fellow and companion on earth by weeping for the dead (John 11.35).

And, therefore, ye are to love that cross, because it was once at Christ's shoulders before you: so that by His own practice He has over-gilded and covered your cross with the Mediator's lustre. The cup ye drink was at the lip of sweet Jesus, and He drank of it. The kind and compassionate Jesus, at every sigh you

give for the loss of your now glorified child (so I believe, as is meet), with a man's heart crieth, 'Half Mine'. I was not a witness to his death, being called out of the kingdom; but, if you will credit those whom I do credit (and I dare not lie), he died comfortably.

It is true, he died before he did so much service to Christ on earth, as I hope and heartily desire that your son Mr Hugh (very dear to me in Jesus Christ) will do. But that were a real matter of sorrow if this were not to counterbalance it, that he has changed service-houses, but has not changed services or Master. 'And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him' (Rev. 22.3). What he could have done in this lower house, he is now upon that same service in the higher house; and it is all one: it is the same service and same Master, only there is a change of conditions.

And ye are not to think it a bad bargain for your beloved son, where he has gold for copper and brass, eternity for time. I believe that Christ has taught you (for I give credit to such a witness of you as your son Mr Hugh) not to sorrow because he died. All the knot must be, 'He died too soon, he died too young, he died in the morning of his life.' This is all; but sovereignty must silence your thoughts. I was in your condition: I had but two children, and both are dead since I came hither.

The supreme and absolute Former of all things giveth not an account of any of His matters. The good Husbandman may pluck His roses, and gather in His lilies at mid-summer, and, for aught I dare say, in the beginning of the first summer month, and He may transplant young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun, and a more free air, at any season of the year. What is that to you or me? The goods are His own. The Creator of time and winds did a merciful injury, if I dare borrow the word, to nature, in landing the passenger so early.

They love the sea too well, who complain of a fair wind and a desirable tide, and a speedy coming ashore, especially a coming ashore in that land where all the inhabitants have everlasting joy upon their heads. He cannot be too early in heaven; his twelve hours were not short hours. And withal, if you consider this, had you been at his bed-side, and should have seen Christ coming to him, you could not have adjourned Christ's free love, who would wants him no longer. And dying in another land, where his mother could not close his eyes, is not much.

The whole earth is his Father's; any corner of his Father's house is good enough to die in. It may be, the living child (I speak not of Mr Hugh) is more grief to you than the dead. Ye are to wait on, if at any time God shall give him repentance. Christ waited as long possibly on you and me, certainly longer on me: and if He should deny repentance to him, I could say something to that: but I hope better things of him. And think this a favor, that He has bestowed upon you fine, free grace, that is, mercy without hire; ye paid nothing for it: and who can put a price upon any thing of royal and princely Jesus Christ?

And God has given to you to suffer for Him the spoiling of your goods. Esteem it as an act of free grace also. Ye are no loser, having Himself; and I persuade myself, if you could prize Christ, nothing could be bitter to you. Grace, grace be with you. Your brother and well-wisher.

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