

Lxvii. to Barbara Hamilton

by Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford's sermon reflects on the faith and courage of Barbara Hamilton while addressing God's providence in times of loss and the importance of service in His kingdom.

Scripture: Psalm 27:14, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 55:8, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 2:9

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Providence"

Description

Samuel Rutherford preaches about the unwavering faith and boldness of Barbara Hamilton, who fearlessly stood up for the ministers deposed by the bishops, demonstrating her strong belief in God's providence and the power of prayer. Rutherford emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's decrees, even when we cannot see the full picture of His plans, and encourages believers to have patience and faith in God's ultimate purpose. He reminds the congregation that God's ways are higher than our ways, and that even in times of sorrow and loss, we can find comfort in knowing that God is in control and working all things for our good.

Transcript

Barbara Hamilton was the wife of a merchant in Edinburgh. Her spirit may be judged from the following incident. When the Rev. Robert Blair and other ministers were deposed by the bishops in Ireland (see Letter XVI), they came to Scotland in 1637. But the Scottish bishops then threatened them with even more severe treatment. Barbara Hamilton suggested that they should present a petition to the Privy Council for permission to preach and undertook to get it into the hands of the Treasurer. Mr Blair accordingly drew up the petition. Barbara Hamilton gathered a number of like-minded Edinburgh matrons and ranged them in a line from the street to the door of the Council House, putting the

petition into the hands of the oldest of the women. The treasurer, suspecting that any petition would be troublesome, pushed past her. But Barbara Hamilton then took the paper and gripped the Treasurer's arm firmly, saying, 'Stand, my lord, in Christ's name I charge you, until I speak with you.' The Treasurer halted. 'Here,' she said, 'is a supplication of Mr Blair asking for liberty to preach the Gospel. I charge you to befriend the matter, as you would expect God to befriend you in your distress.' The Treasurer promised to do his best, and as a result Blair's petition was granted. This letter was written on the occasion of the death of her son-in-law.

WORTHY FRIEND, -- Grace be to you. I do unwillingly write unto you of that which God has done concerning your son-in-law; only, I believe ye look not below Christ, and the highest and most supreme act of Providence, which moveth all wheels. And certainly, what came down enacted and concluded in the great book below the throne, and signed and subscribed with the hand which never did wrong, should be kissed and adored by us.

We see God's decrees when they bring forth their fruits, all actions, good and ill, sweet and sour, in their time; but we see not presently the after-birth of God's decree, namely, His blessed end, and the good that He bringeth out of the womb of His holy and spotless counsel. We see His working, and we sorrow; the end of His counsel lieth hidden, and underneath the ground, and therefore we cannot believe. Even amongst men, we see hewn stones, timber, and an hundred scattered parcels and pieces of an house, all under-tools, hammers, and axes, and saws; yet the house, the beauty and use of so many lodgings and ease rooms, we neither see nor understand for the present; these are but in

the mind and head of the builder, as yet. We see red earth, unbroken clods, furrows, and stones; but we see not summer, lilies, roses, the beauty of a garden.

If ye give the Lord time to work ye shall see it was your good, that your son has changed dwelling-places, but not his Master. Christ thought good to have no more of his service here; yet, 'His servants shall serve Him' (Rev. 22.3). He needeth not us nor our service, either on earth or in heaven. But ye are to look to Him who giveth the hireling both his leave and his wages, for his naked aim and purpose to serve Christ, as well as for his labours. It is put up in Christ's account, that such a laborer did sweat forty years in Christ's vineyard; howbeit he got not leave to labour so long, because He who accepteth of the will for the deed counteth so. None can teach the Lord to lay an account.

He numbereth the drops of rain, and knoweth the stars by their names; it would take us much studying to give a name to every star in the firmament, great or small.

If the sufferings of some other with you in that loss could ease you, ye want them not. But He can do no wrong. He cannot halt; His goings are equal who has done it. I know our Lord aimeth at more mortification; let Him not come in vain to your house and lose the pains of a merciful visit. God, the Founder, never melteth in vain; howbeit to us He seemeth often to lose both fire and metal. But I know ye are more in this work than I can be. There is no cause to faint or be weary.

Grace be with you; and the rich consolations of Jesus Christ sweeten your cross and support you under it.

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