

# Xlvi. to John Gordon of Cardoness, the Younger

by Samuel Rutherford

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God now, while it is still possible, and living a life of repentance and reform to avoid eternal separation from God.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:8, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 16:26, Colossians 3:2, Hebrews 3:13

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Eternal Consequences"

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## Description

Samuel Rutherford passionately urges the congregation to seek the Lord while He may be found, emphasizing the eternal consequences of their choices. He warns against sinning against light, which dulls the conscience and leads to spiritual destruction. Rutherford encourages a life of prayer, reading, and holy fellowship to experience the sweetness of Christ and the joy of spiritual love. He challenges the listeners to stand in awe of God, live righteously, and prioritize their eternal souls over worldly pleasures.

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## Transcript

DEARLY-BELOVED IN THE LORD, -- I long exceedingly to hear of the case of your soul, which has a large share both of my prayers and careful thoughts. Sir, remember that a precious treasure and prize is upon this short play that ye are now upon. Even the eternity of well or wo to your soul standeth upon the little point of your well or ill-employed short and swift-posting sand glass. Seek the Lord while He may be found; the Lord waiteth upon you. And sinning against light will put out your candle, and stupefy your conscience, and bring upon it more coverings and skin, and less feeling and sense of guiltiness; and when that is done, the devil is like a mad horse that has broken his bridle and runneth away with his rider whither he listeth.

Learn to know that which the apostle knew, the deceitfulness of sin. Strive to make prayer and reading and holy company and holy conference your delight; and when delight cometh in, ye shall by little and little smell the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ's sweetness. Then shall ye be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the ravishments of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt, and embraced Christ: and then ye shall not be able to loose yourself off Christ, and to bind your soul to old lovers.

Then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, balkings, and wheels of your soul in a right tune, and in a spiritual temper. But if this world and its lusts be your delight, I know not what Christ can make of you;

ye cannot be metal to be a vessel of glory and mercy. As the Lord liveth, thousand thousands are beguiled with security, because God and wrath and judgment are not terrible to them. Stand in awe of God and of the warnings of a checking and rebuking conscience.

Make others to see Christ in you, moving, doing, speaking and thinking. Your actions will smell of Him if He be in you. There is an instinct in the new-born babes of Christ, like the instinct of nature that leads birds to build their nests, and bring forth their young, and love such and such places, as woods, forests, and wildernesses, better than other places. The instinct of nature maketh a man love his mother-country above all countries; the instinct of renewed nature, and supernatural grace, will lead you to such and such works, as to love your country above, to sigh to be clothed with your house not made with hands, and to call your borrowed prison here below a borrowed prison, and to look upon it servant-like and pilgrim-like.

And the pilgrim's eye and look is a disdainfullike, discontented cast of his eye, his heart crying after his eye, 'Fy, fy, this is not like my country.' I recommend to you the mending of a hole, and reforming of a failing, one or other, every week; and put off a sin, or a piece of it, as anger, wrath, lust, intemperance, every day, that ye may more easily master the remnant of your corruption. God has given you a wife; love her, and let her breasts satisfy you; and, for the Lord's sake, drink no waters but out of your own cistern.

Strange wells are poison. Strive to learn some new way against your corruption from the man of God, Mr W. D. [William Dalgleish], or other servants of God. Sleep not sound, till ye find yourself in that case that ye dare look death in the face, and durst hazard your soul upon eternity. I am sure that many ells and inches of the short thread of your life are by-hand since I saw you; and that thread has an end; and ye have no hands to cast a knot, and add one day, or a finger-breadth, to the end of it.

When hearing, and seeing, and the outer walls of the clay house shall fall down, and life shall render the besieged castle of clay to death and judgment, and ye find your time worn ebb, and run out, what thoughts will you then have of idol-pleasures, that possibly are now sweet? What bud or hide would you then give for the Lord's favor? And what a price would you then give for pardon? It were not amiss to think, 'What if I were to receive a doom, and to enter into a furnace of fire and brimstone?

What if it come to this, that I shall have no portion but utter darkness? And what if I be brought to this, to be banished from the presence of God, and to be given over to God's sergeants, the devil and the power of the second death?' Put your soul, by supposition, in such a case, and consider what horror would take hold of you, and what ye would then esteem of pleasing yourself in the course of sin. Oh, dear Sir, for the Lord's sake awake to live righteously, and love your poor soul!

And after ye have seen this my letter, say with yourself, 'The Lord will seek an account of this warning which I have received.' Lodge Christ in your family. Receive no stranger hireling as your pastor. I bless your children. Grace be with you.

ABERDEEN, 1637

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