

Windows of Witness (Acts 4:20) (Samuel Rutherford)

Reference, Quotes from - *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford (Christian Classic Series)*

As JC Ryle states in *The Christian Leaders*, “The instruments that God employs to do his work in the world deserve a close inspection.” It is my prayer that our Sovereign God may be pleased to raise up individuals in this day that would serve for the glory of God.

Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) was born in Nisbet, Roxburghshire (Scotland). Saved as a young man, Rutherford began attending Edinburgh in 1625, where he studied theology under Andrew Ramsay. Two years later, he was asked to pastor the church in Anwoth by the Solway in Kirkcudbrightshire—the church and congregation with which his name is inseparably bound.

Samuel Rutherford was a man consecrated to God. He rose at 3 a.m. each day, devoting many hours to prayer and meditation. Thomas M’Crie wrote of Rutherford in *The Story of the Scottish Church*, (p. 48): “I have known many great and good ministers in this church, but for such a piece of clay as Mr. Rutherford was, I never knew one in Scotland like him, to whom so many great gifts were given; for he seemed to be altogether taken up with everything good, and excellent, and useful. He seemed to be always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick...always writing and studying.”

Samuel Rutherford is probably most well known, however, for letters (*The Letters of Samuel Rutherford*) written mostly to his congregation, while he was imprisoned and exiled, for the gospel. While his opponents intended to silence him, they instead propelled his ministry through the coming centuries. Out of this time of imprisonment in Aberdeen (separated from his pastorate), he penned his most famous letters. Many stalwart preachers have gleaned from these Letters of Rutherford. It is said of Robert Murray McCheyne that “the Letters of Samuel Rutherford were often in his hand.” Charles Spurgeon said of the Rutherford Letters that they were “the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men.”

In 1637, Rutherford wrote from Aberdeen to Robert Blair who was facing a great trial, “Good is the will of the Lord, let it be done. I believe that the Lord tacketh His ship often to fetch the wind, and that He purposeth to bring mercy out of your sufferings and silence which (I know from mine own experience) is grievous to you.”

In June of 1637, Rutherford wrote again from Aberdeen to Alexander Colville [of Blair], “I am pained with His love, because I want real possession. When Christ cometh, He stayeth not long. But certainly the blowing of His breath upon a poor soul is heaven upon earth; and when the wind turned into the north, and He goeth away, I die, till the wind change into the west, and He visit His prisoner...O if all Scotland were as I am, except my bonds!”

Although Rutherford did not write these letters for publication, they are his most read work. They have been reprinted more than eighty times in English, fifteen times in Dutch, and many times in German, French and Gaelic. What a joy to read from the pen of a man as He magnifies our Sovereign God from a place of imprisonment. Samuel Rutherford testifies time and time again that although his adversity was great...our God is Greater!

~ Pastor Tim Hodge