
Rutherford's *The Power and Prevalency of Prayer* and its Context

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Samuel Rutherford's treatise *The Power and Prevalency of Faith and Prayer evidenced in a Practical Discourse upon Matthew 9.27-31* is one of the lesser-known items that he authored. It was published around fifty years after his death in an incomplete state.¹ These factors, together with its scarcity as a rare book, have contributed to its neglect until being reprinted towards the end of the twentieth century.² Yet two Rutherford scholars of the early twentieth century, J. D. Ogilvie and W. M. Campbell, believed it was one of the best literary productions from his pen.

I. Authenticity

It is indeed a very rare book with perhaps only two known copies.³ It was referenced by Andrew A. Bonar but with an incorrect title, which may indicate its scarcity in the Victorian era also.⁴ It first came to significant attention through the efforts of James Dean Ogilvie, LL.D., of Milngavie (1866–1949), a Glasgow businessman who was also an avid book-collector, historian, and bibliographer. He specialised particularly in pamphlets of the Long Parliament era. His slightly later contemporary, W. M. Campbell, credits Ogilvie with discovering it and

¹ Samuel Rutherford, *The Power and Prevalency of Faith and Prayer evidenced in a Practical Discourse upon Matthew 9.27-31* (Edinburgh?, 1713).

² *The Power of Faith and Prayer* (Stornoway: Reformation Press, 1991; 2nd edition 2023).

³ Huntington, San Marino in California (this is the text that was digitised for Eighteenth Century Collections Online; interestingly it appears to have been owned by the Covenanter Grisell Baillie, née Hume) and Evangelical Library, London (this was the base text for the Reformation Press edition).

⁴ Bonar erroneously lists it as *The Power of Truth and Prayer* in cataloguing Rutherford's works in his edition of Rutherford's *Letters*.

annotating it.⁵ Ogilvie's notes in relation to it cannot now be located, but Campbell gives a useful summary.⁶

While there were published sermons misattributed to Rutherford at this time, there is every reason to accept the authenticity of *The Power and Prevalency of Faith and Prayer*.⁷ It was first published in Edinburgh in February 1713 with a long introduction by Rev. Allan Logan (d. 1733), minister of Torryburn in Fife and later of Culross. Included with the treatise was the first publication of *A Testimony left by Mr Rutherford to the Work of Reformation in Britain and Ireland before his Death, with some of his last words*. As Ogilvie notes, this was first referred to in John Currie's *Essay on Separation* (1738) which asserted that 'The agonised appeal of a dying man, who had been a great Protester, for unity in the Church was a forceful argument against separation'. It appears that, in replying to Currie, the Secession minister William Wilson of Perth tried to label the *Testimony* as spurious. Ogilvie demonstrates that this was 'ill-conceived'. 'The last part of the *Testimony* had already been quoted, practically word for word by McWard in *Joshua Redivivus*. Moreover, the whole *Testimony* is in keeping with the spirit of the later Rutherford. There can be no doubt of its authenticity or of that of the discourse.' It also appears that there was a clear provenance in Rutherford's family.

The two gentlewomen of Edinburgh from whom Allan Logan, Minister of Torryburn received the M.S.S. were Jean and Barbara Chiesly, granddaughters of Samuel Rutherford, daughters of his daughter Agnes Rutherford, and William Chiesly, younger brother of Sir John Chiesly, Secretary to the Scots Commissioners in London.

As we shall explore later, the language and themes are very close to other publications by Rutherford, especially during his London years.

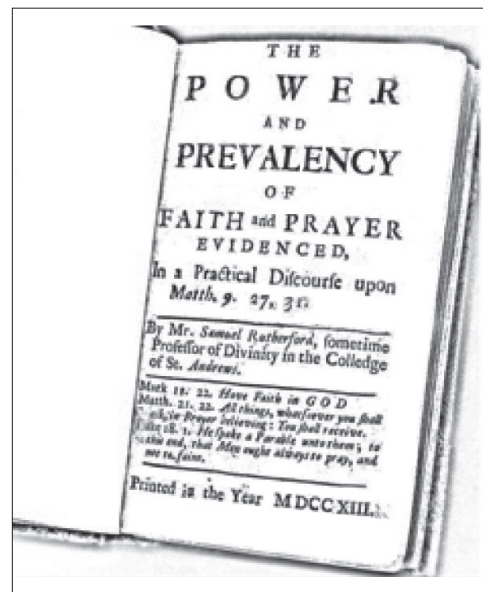
It seems that Allan Logan was partly inclined to publish the treatise due to some of its doctrinal clarity amid a growing climate of heter-

⁵ Neither Ogilvie's copy nor his manuscript notes on it appear to have been included with his archive which is located at the University of Glasgow.

⁶ W. M. Campbell, 'Samuel Rutherford, propagandist and exponent of Scottish Presbyterianism: an exposition of his position and influence in the doctrine and politics of the Scottish Church' (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1937), pp. 441-443.

⁷ An example of a spurious publication is *The door of salvation opened, or, A loud and shrill voice from Heaven, to unregenerate sinners on Earth: plainly shewing the necessity of opening your hearts, that the King of Glory may enter in, or else he will open Hell's mouth to devour you by Mr Samuel Rutherford, minister of the Gospel at St. Andrews* (Edinburgh, 1725). This was printed many times but first published in London under the author Thomas Passenger in 1650.

odoxy. In The 'Epistle to the Reader' (arguably as long as the treatise itself) he emphasises 'the Oneness of CHRIST's Person' (i.e., divine and human natures), justification by faith alone, and faith as an instrumental but not meritorious condition of the covenant of grace. He also notes that Rutherford was against separation from the Church without justification. As a contemporary of later Covenanters like James Fraser of Brea, Logan alludes to the Cameronian dissenters from the Revolution Church settlement in this regard.



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II. Brief description

The Power and Prevalency of Faith and Prayer is a continued expository discourse on Matthew 9:27-31 which records the healing of two blind men who followed Christ, calling upon him. Presumably it derived from a series of sermons but the divisions between sermons are not explicitly marked.⁸ The incident is like the 'woman of Canaan' passages in the way that Christ is addressed as 'Son of David' and in the cry made. It is no surprise therefore that Rutherford alludes to this account in the exposition on Matthew 9.⁹ He also refers to Christ's stilling the storm, the theme of his sermon to the House of Lords in 1645.¹⁰ There are some numbered uses or sections for application. In this respect it resembles *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself* (1647) which had its basis in a series of sermons on John 12:27-33.¹¹ Some of the main themes are the two natures of Christ, the nature of faith and prayer, as well as assurance. In these themes it resembles the collection of sermons entitled *The Tryal and Triumph of Faith* (1645). These cognate themes will be given more detailed

⁸ Campbell believed that it was one of two sermons on this passage, p. 60.

⁹ 'When the woman of Canaan prayeth for her possessed daughter *Matth. 15.22*, she bottometh all on this: *Have Mercy on me, O LORD, thou Son of David*', *Power and Prevalency*, p. 26. 'And the woman of Canaan saw no means, but much Anger, Wrath, sad Refusals and heavy Reproaches, yet she still believeth and prescribeth nothing to Christ', *ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹¹ Campbell, p. 60.

consideration below. *The Power and Prevalency of Faith and Prayer* is, however, incomplete. One can only speculate that this is because it was being edited or copied from other notes. The manuscript has not survived, and it is not possible therefore to be clear whether the notes available to Allan Logan were from Rutherford's own pen or otherwise but given the provenance it seems likely that it was a holograph.

III. Themes from London publications

In common with *The Tryal and Triumph of Faith* and *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself* there are various polemical references against Arminians,¹² Antinomians,¹³ and the Familists.¹⁴ There are also references to the war of the three kingdoms and to the Thirty Years war in the London publications which will be explored further below. Beyond this, however, there are certain themes and expressions that are shared by these works.

(a) Prayer

Prayer is a prominent theme common to these publications. In particular, the power of prayer is emphasised. 'Prayer is a Prince, and a mighty wrestling prevailing King, that hath strong bones, and strong armes to be victorious with God.'¹⁵ In relation to the disciples crying to Christ during the storm, Rutherford asserts, 'Prayer awaketh a seeming sleeping God, and puts him to it.'¹⁶ 'Prayer is Heaven, and Hell cannot subdue Heaven.'¹⁷ In *The Tryal and Triumph* he seeks to measure the extent of this power:

Prayer, Prayer can put a reeling and tottering on King and Court, Pope, Prelate, and *Babylon*; we are to pray the King of the bottomlesse pit, the man of sin, the graven Images of Apostate *Rome* out of the world: Prayer can yoke all the swords in *Europe* against the Whore: every one who hath the Spirit of Adoption, though poor and rejected of men, by prayer have powerfull influence on all the Nations of the earth, on all *Europe*, on the ends of the

¹² 'It is not left to a may be, or may not be, as *Arminians* say, he may be Peremptorly and Compleitly chosen too Glory, if so be, he continueth to the end, and yet notwithstanding he may come short of continuing to the end, then the whole bargain is casten', *Power and Prevalency*, p. 48.

¹³ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 68. See below for a discussion.

¹⁴ 'Familists teach, that to take delight in the holy service of God is to go a whoring from God!', *Power and Prevalency*, p. 70.

¹⁵ *Tryal and Triumph*, p. 309.

¹⁶ A sermon preached before the Right Honorable House of Lords, in the Abbey Church at Westminster, Wednesday the 25 day of Iune, 1645. Being the day appointed for a solemne and publique humiliation (London, 1645), p. 37.

¹⁷ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 14.

earth, on the hearts of the Jews, on Turkes and Indians: Prayer can reach as far as Omnipotency, accompanied by the wise decree of our Lord: And the poorest Girle or Maid that can pray, doth lend a strong lift to heighten the footstool of Christs Royall Throne; children and poor Maids by Prayer, may put the Crown on Christs head, and hold up his Throne, and may store and increase heaven by praying, *Thy Kingdome come*, and inlarge Hell, and fill the pits with the dead bodies of Christs enemies, and may by prayer binde Kings in Fetters, chaine up and confine Devils, subdue Kingdoms.¹⁸

The very titles of *The Tryal and Triumph of Faith* and *The Power and Prevalency of Faith and Prayer* indicate an emphasis on believing prayer. It is brought out especially in the latter treatise. They have a mutual relationship; prayer produces faith and vice versa. 'Faith is often with Child of Prayer, and Prayer with Child of Faith.'¹⁹ It is 'a circular Generation' 'as when Water pursueth Ice, and again Ice produceth Water; and Vapours gender Clouds and Rain, and Clouds and Rain gender Vapours.'²⁰ We cannot 'separate Praying and Believing: Praying without Faith is Breathing of Wind, and Sounds without Life.'²¹ 'Prayer without Faith, is but Pagan-service, and the Voice of Dogs houlng for Hunger and Faith that cannot vent it self in Prayer, is Presumption possessed with a dumb Devil. The country Language of Faith, and the proper Grammar of it, is Prayer.'²² Prayer prevails by faith, 'Wrestling addeth strength to armes and body, praying and praying again strengthneth Faith'.²³

(b) Faith

Rutherford gives a high commendation to faith in these publications. 'Faith is ελεγχος Heb: 11. i. An over arguing Discourse, to evidence invisible Beauty in CHRIST.' 'There is not more Gospel grace in any Condition, performable by Men, than in Faith because it towreth up the Glory of Christ, above the Heaven of Heavens, and preacheth free Righteousness, and plenteous Redemption in CHRIST, and layeth flesh and Blood in the Dust, and as low as Hell, the Bondage of the Spirit of Fear, and Condemnation'.²⁴ He distinguishes saving faith from a natural faith and a faith of miracles. There are also differing degrees and quantities of faith.

¹⁸ *Tryal and Triumph*, pp. 311-12.

¹⁹ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²³ *Tryal and Triumph*, p. 112.

²⁴ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 102.

Though the LORD bestow out of free Grace, yet ordinarily, he never giveth below the Wideness, and Capacity of Faith. A wide Faith receiveth a rich Alms; where there is much, the LORD giveth much.²⁵

He also distinguishes faith in activity from faith in principle. ‘Those who have a great faith in habit, many have a little faith in act, and the Disciples who had forsaken all and followed Christ, must have a great measure of faith of fiduciall adherence; it is a great faith to renounce all our bosome-lovers for Christ ... faith is one thing, and the use of faith another thing.’²⁶

(c) Assurance

Rutherford rejects the Antinomian ‘*Libertines*, who talke of a broad seale, of perfect assurance, and say, *There is no assurance true and right, unlesse it be without feare and doubting.*’ ‘This refuteth also the Antinomian, who will have the Broad Seal of the Spirit’s Testimony, so clear; and evident, that the Saints are never to doubt again; never to be sad again, but to feast on Joy actually, and on feeling of the Rays and Beams of the warm Sun of Righteousness, ever while [i.e. until] they be in Heaven.’²⁷ Clearly there is a context of resisting the Antinomian teaching that was spreading in England: this is one of the main concerns of Rutherford’s London publications.

In all these publications Rutherford emphasises reflex acts of faith and knowledge that cultivate assurance. ‘Faith is a bottome to our assurance of our being in *Christ*; but that it breedeth assurance, in a reflect knowledge, alwaies that a beleever is in *Christ*, is not true: for, 1. I may beleieve, and be justified, and not know; yea positively doubt, that I beleieve and am justified; ... the reflect act of my knowing and feeling, that I beleieve and am in *Christ*, which proceedeth sometime from Faith, and the immediate Testimony of the Spirit; sometime from our walking in *Christ*, 1 *John* 2.3, 4. 1 *Joh.* 3.14. is a supernaturall work, above the compasse and reach of our Free-will.’²⁸

Rutherford observes that ‘reflex Knowledge seemeth somewhat higher and subtiler than direct Knowledge; it is above sense: Beasts live but they have no reflex Knowledge that they live.’²⁹ There is a complexity here in that ‘reflect acts are more rare and difficill, because more spirituall then direct acts ... as a sleeping man knoweth not that hee is in health,

²⁵ Ibid., p. 92.

²⁶ *A sermon preached before the Right Honorable House of Lords*, p. 57.

²⁷ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 68.

²⁸ *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himselfe* (London, 1647), p. 86.

²⁹ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 66.

nor can hee have any sense of his health while hee sleepeth, and yet a sleeping man may know and feele the paine of sicknesse, and of an aking bone, and thereby bee wakened to feele it more sensibly, though I know there bee a necessitie.³⁰

(d) Person of Christ

As those familiar with Rutherford's writing might expect there is much rapturous adoration in asserting and defending the divinity of Christ's Person. In the sermon to the House of Lords he exclaims, 'Here is a wonder, if there be a wonder in the world, *Christ God and man* in one person is more then a miracle. The *mightie God* giving infinite subsistence to a finite nature, *Isa. 9.6.*' Elsewhere he remarks that '*Christs* laying aside of his glory, and his emptying of himself for us, was the glory of rich mercy.'³¹ This theme is given even more consideration in *Power and Prevalency*.

If Christ had kept both, his own Personality, and also assumed ours. Christ should have been two Persons, two Sons, two Saviours: Now there is but one Son of GOD, one Mediator, one Saviour, and he hath not a marrow nor Equal besides. ...This is the greatest Wonder in Heaven, that Man is made the same, I and person with God, not formally, but in Union; There is but one single I, one personship between both the God-head. and the Man hood, but that is a strong one. The Man-hood liveth, loveth, knoweth, breatheth, speaketh in the bosom, in the Sea, in the great Ocean of the infinite Personality of GOD, and is not swallowed up of it, but remaineth in that Heaven with all the intire Nature, and natural Properties of Man, perfect Man as we are, sin excepted; as if out of the Root and Body of the faire Cedar, the LORD should cause a Thorn Tree to grow and blossom, having Life and Subsistence in the Root and Body of the Cedar.³²

(e) Presence and Absence

When believers are thus taken up with Christ there may be much of the fulness and enjoyment of his presence. In the preface to *Christ Dying*, he rises to such a high pitch.

O! how, high, how capacious how full, how beautifull, how greene; could we smell him who feeds among Lillies, till the day breake, and the shaddowes flee away, and dive into the gold veines of the unsearchable

³⁰ 'No man on earth in a sleep hath a reflect act to know that he sleepeth, no dead corps knoweth it self to be dead', *Tryal and Triumph*, p. 380.

³¹ *A sermon preached before the Right Honorable House of Lords*, p.18.

³² *Power and Prevalency*, pp. 17-18.

Riches of Christ, and be drunken with his wine; we should say, Its good to be here; and to gather up the fragments that fall from Christ. His Crowne shines with Diamonds and Pearles.

This passage bears close similarity with expressions in *Power and Prevalency* on this theme.

Other-times the flowings of Christ are so high, that we are Drowned and Over-sensed, that we speak we know not what as *Luke. 9. Peter* is half in Heaven when Christ is transfigured. He is so drunken and over-filled with the joy of the Vision of Glory, that he would never be out of that State. But *verse 33*. He spoke he knew not what.³³

Yet in contrast to Antinomian claims to be filled with the fulness of God and to have nothing but joy and peace in believing, Rutherford emphasises the highs and lows of Christian experience. Sometimes there is much of Christ's presence and other times there is a felt sense of absence.

The beleever hath flowings of strong acts of faith, joy, love; supernaturall passions of Grace arising to an high spring-tide, above the banks and ordinary coasts; and again, a low-ground ebbe. The condition in ebbings and flowings, in full manifestations and divine raptures of another world, when the wind bloweth right from heaven, and the breath of *Jesus Christs* mouth, and of sad absence, runneth through the *Song of Solomon*, the book of the *Psalmes*, the book of *Job*, as threeds through a web of silke, and veines that are the strings and spouts carrying bloud through all the body, lesse or more.³⁴

Power and Prevalency has an identical emphasis. The Antinomians 'are not acquaint with the Variations, the Ebbings and flowings of GOD: this you may read in *Solomon's Song*, especially *Chap. 3* and *Chap. 5*. There is a Time when Christ is *behind the Wall* and *looketh through the Grates* and there is a time when he *cometh to his Garden to feast*.'³⁵ Referring to this verse (Song 2:9) in *Christ Dying*, he says:

Yet this is not a perfect vision of God attainable in this life, as the *Author of the Bright Star* dreameth, I see a man more distinctly in the field and before the Sun, then when he looks out at the grates or lattesse of a window, and a window behind a wall, for so we but see Christ in this life.³⁶

³³ Ibid., p. 62.

³⁴ *Christ Dying*, pp. 27-8.

³⁵ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 69.

³⁶ *Christ Dying*, p. 341.

The sermon to the House of Lords picks up a very similar theme:

the *Song of Solomon* sheweth the inward and spirituall ups and downes, and changes of the Church; as sometime Chap. 2. it is full noone-day with the Church; shee being taken *into the banqueting house*, and Vers. 4. *his banner over her was love*; and shee is in great Court, Vers. 16. *My well beloved is mine, and I am his, hee feedeth among the Lillies*, 17. *till the day breake, and the shaddowes flee away*; but there is a change of Court, and a great revolution, Chap. 3.1. *By night, on my bed I sought him whom my soule loveth, I sought him, but I found him not*. Againe, Chap. 4. there is a revolution, Christ breaketh out in a high commendation and praise of his Church.³⁷

Power and Prevalency has fewer long digressions against Antinomians and other heterodox opinions. Yet it still captures in a more concise way the rapturous strain of *Christ Dying*. Perhaps it was for these reasons that J. D. Ogilvie was ready to say, 'I believe this Discourse to be the finest thing which Rutherford ever wrote and one of the gems of Scottish devotional literature.'³⁸

IV. Possible Date

It seems clear from what has been covered thus far that the discourse originated from the time when Rutherford was in London and more specifically the time when these companion treatises were published (1645–7). More specifically, J. D. Ogilvie concluded that the discourse was originally commenced in 1645 as follows. 'In June 1645 he preached to the English House of Lords and again chose for his matter a Gospel narrative, the Stilling of the Tempest. About this time, he began a new series of sermons, the story of the two blind men in the ninth of Matthew: the date can be approximated by the reference to the pestilence in Scotland which raged that summer in Edinburgh and elsewhere, a reference which is repeated in the Preface to the *Divine Right of Church Government* published March 5, 1646.'

The plague lasted in Scotland from October 1644 to October 1649. Having reached Edinburgh from the Borders in April of 1645, it was indeed at its height in the late summer of 1645. While Rutherford does not mention Edinburgh by name, it was the most populated town in Scotland at the time and perhaps worst affected as well as being the capital. This

³⁷ *A sermon preached before the Right Honorable House of Lords*, pp. 14–15.

³⁸ Quoted Campbell, p. 442.

coincided with an invasion of Irish soldiers under the leadership of Alasdair MacColla and a sequence of Royalist victories and sweeping advances led by Montrose. The plague raging in Edinburgh ironically saved the city from being taken. Rutherford mentions these matters in the context of other international events.

What! do we not in our Thoughts accuse the LORD of Cruelty, that he layeth *Germany* wast, hath made a Garden of GOD, a Den of Dragons? Turned *Ireland* into a Wilderness, and a Land of Drought; and hewn down; so many with the Pestilence, and the Sword of a Stranger; and the civil Sword in *Scotland*, that the Land is unpeopled, the living being unable to dig Graves for the dead?³⁹

This sounds, however, as though the plague and civil war were at their very worst; this would be more likely therefore to be the autumn of 1645 (although the plague did not disappear until 1649). Indeed, it is interesting that as Ogilvie notes that the wording is almost exactly as in the preface ‘To the Ingenuous and Equitable Reader’ in *The Divine Right of Church Government*.

the *Lord our God* in his acting on *Kingdoms* and *Churches*, maketh *Darknesse his Pavilion*, to finde out ... the Demonstrative Causes and true Principles of such bloody conclusions and horrible vastations, the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth hath made in *Germany*, *Bohemiah*, and the *Palatinate*, as if they were greater sinners then we are; and why the windows of Divine Justice have been opened to send down such a deluge of blood on *Ireland*; and why in *Scotland* the Pestilence hath *destroyed in the City*, and *the Sword of the Lord*, not a few in the fields.⁴⁰

There are also similar passages in *Christ Dying*, which was published in 1647, although presumably the sermons were preached during 1646; certainly the following passage evidently looks back from that year (although the plague was still persisting in many parts).

Antichrist is yet on his throne; the *Churches* over Sea oppressed, the people of *God* led to the Shambles, as slaughter-sheep, and destroyed, and killed. Hundreds of Thousands killed in *Ireland*, many thousands in *England*, and very many thousands about the space of one year taken away in *Scotland*, with the Sword and the Pestilence. And the *Lords*

³⁹ *Power and Prevalency*, p. 84.

⁴⁰ *The divine right of church-government and excommunication: or a peacable dispute for the perfection of the holy scripture in point of ceremonies and church government* (London, 1646), B1.

justice is not yet glorified, nor his mercy in avenging the enemies, the cry of the soules under the Altar is not heard, the *Church* not delivered. We would here yeeld patience to Divine providence; *God* hath more care of his owne glory, then we can have.⁴¹

Clearly, however, the impact of these events was still felt keenly. 'We have need of this now. When *Scotland* is so low, they cannot fall that are on the dust, and more thousands under the dust, with the Pestilence, and the Sword, and the heartbroke of forsaking and cruell friends.'⁴²

The high fatalities in Scotland have been estimated at 'one urban dweller in five dying from the disease. Leith lost well over half its residents, Edinburgh at least a quarter and Brechin as much as two thirds.'⁴³ It seems therefore that *Power and Prevalency* was more likely to have been preached towards the close of 1645 or the early part of 1646, rather than the early summer of 1645. Ogilvie develops a further theory that *Power and Prevalency* was worked over in the last months of Rutherford's life. He says, 'The whole Discourse shows the fruit of an even deeper spiritual experience than the years up to 1645 had brought, and I venture to think not only was the Discourse revised, but in part re-written by him.' This is a deduction from the degree to which controversial matters are less evident – the assumption is that Rutherford was now weary of controversy – and perhaps the thought that it was being revised for publication yet not completed.

That is why we do not find much that is new in Rutherford's imagery now, but the old scene with new eyes because of an open heart; what he had beforetime thought and taught he beholds now transfigured. It was not so long before that he had written 'as to my spirit, much out of court, because out of Communion with the Lord, and far from what sometime hath been, deadness, security, unbelief, and distance from God in the use of means prevail more than ever;' for the burden of the sin of Scotland so lay on Rutherford that he felt it to be his own. The oppression of it broke his health; 'though I was lately knocking at death's gate yet could I not get in; but was sent back for a time.' So he wrote to his old friend Lady Kenmure

⁴¹ *Christ Dying*, p. 168. Other passages evidently look back on it also: 'You think long to have *Britaines* houre, or the ten dayes of Pestilence and Sword on *Scotland*, or the vastations of *Ireland*, the warres, divisions, and new blasphemies of *England*, gone, and over', p. 130.

⁴² *Christ Dying*, p. 193.

⁴³ K. Jillings, 'Aberdeen's Plague Epidemic of 1647–48', *Scottish Medical Journal*, Vol. 55:3 (August 2010), pp. 43–45 (p. 44). Jillings is citing M. Flinn, *Scottish Population History from the Seventeenth Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 138–147.

in the autumn of 1659; 'Ah, we pray not but wonder that Christ cometh not the higher way, by might, by power, by garments rolled in blood. What if He come the lower way?' And in the Lower Way the miracle happened, and his eyes were opened and 'made to see.' I venture to suggest that the Discourse is a record of things seen in the Lower Way.⁴⁴

V. Conclusion

In this brief study it has been possible to situate this treatise within the Westminster period of Rutherford's life and ministry. It shares key spiritual themes with his published writings of these years which were being emphasised against a backdrop of intense social turmoil caused by war and disease. This is mirrored by a turbulent spiritual situation where heterodoxy seemed to be prevailing in Rutherford's view. Ogilvie's speculation as to the period of its revision and preparation for publication is intriguing but difficult to verify. One can, however, agree with his assessment of the significance of this treatise despite the fact that it has been comparatively neglected.

⁴⁴ Campbell, pp. 441-3.