

Letter 114

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing God and having a spiritual mind, warning against the dangers of a frivolous and double-minded approach to life.

Scripture: Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 14:2, Matthew 19:26, Hebrews 4:16, James 1:8

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Fear Of God"

Description

James Bourne addresses a dear friend, expressing concern about their light-heartedness and engagement in frivolous talk that may hinder their spiritual walk. He warns against being double-minded, as it leads to instability and an inability to receive from the Lord. Bourne emphasizes the importance of fearing God, maintaining dignity in conduct, and avoiding frivolity in divine matters to prevent inviting God's heavy hand. He encourages the friend to seek spiritual energy from God, reminding them that nothing is impossible for Him.

Transcript

[To M. C. B.] London, 10 October 1836.

Dear Madam,

I have been long absent from home, and have almost lost sight of you. May I declare what I sometimes hear a little of? That my friend is at times very light-hearted, and has business to do for which I hope she is not fully qualified; that is, to entertain carnal and frivolous friends with empty talk. O how will this soften a dying bed! Two parts to act! Two manners of life to walk in! The Lord says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," and "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." Here I fear is the cause of all your darkness, and of the display of want of ballast in your carriage with the world. The fear of God has a peculiar dignity in it; it commands respect, and God stamps authority upon it; but a loose walk is like a city without walls, or a vineyard with the hedge broken down. How the Lord resented this in me, in my early profession! What unheard of, what unforeseen things, most mortifying and crucifying, were suffered to overtake me, till I could learn, like Nebuchadnezzar, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men! How exceedingly insensible to divine things you must be in your evening entertainments! How your friends must laugh in their sleeve (as it is called) at your religion! Nehemiah says, "So did not I, because of the fear of God." Joseph says, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? "

Nothing will bring on or hasten the heavy hand of God more than meddling with divine things with a frivolous mind. For this reason it is written, "Stand in awe, and sin not." For if once the Spirit, as a Teacher, leave us, or in any way depart, we know not how long it may be before we find him helping our infirmities again.

Let me entreat you to lay these things to heart, and also re-member that the Lord loves to deal in impossibilities of all sorts. "All things are possible with God," and nothing is too hard for him to overrule. May he be pleased to give you some lively spiritual energy, and manifest to you something of his sweet power, so as to discover to you that he is more "a very present help" than you are aware.

From your sincere friend, J. B.

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