

Letter 119

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of entering into a true relationship with Jesus Christ for salvation amidst distractions and complacency.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:29, Proverbs 13:4, Proverbs 24:33, Ezekiel 18:20, John 10:9

Topics: "Salvation", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

James Bourne emphasizes the importance of seeking a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ rather than just following a system of morality and opinion. He warns against the distractions and hindrances that the enemy uses to keep us from truly entering into a relationship with Christ. Bourne urges believers to diligently pray for God to reveal any love for worldly things or compromising spirits that may be keeping them from fully entering through the door of salvation.

Transcript

[To Mrs. H(arley).] London, 3 March 1837.

My dear Friend,

I am exceedingly anxious to see that the profession we enter into is not merely a system of morality and opinion, but that we attain to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. If we are troubled in our minds about the salvation of our souls, we may be sure the enemy will raise no end of diversions in all directions to keep us from the point in hand. We ought to know that finding opposition from all quarters, is not CHRIST; and making all manner of sacrifices of our pleasures and comforts, is not CHRIST. We may take the veil, and miss Christ. All these things, show the deep necessity of entering narrowly into our ways, and considering well what it is we are seeking after. Christ compares himself to a door, and tells us if we ENTER IN we shall be saved. We may stay as long as we please on the outside, and as near as we please, but we are told that the entering in is the salvation. This we ought especially to lay to heart. We read of one who was thirty-eight years without the power of entering. [John v. 5.] Let us be diligent in secret prayer to the Lord to show us all the hindrances. Perhaps the love of many things, more than the difficulties attending the entrance at this Door, keeps us on the outside; perhaps the love of the world, which appears in many shapes, pride, ambition, comfortable accommodations, fear of reproach or evil reports, or possibly that most dangerous of all snares, a compromising spirit, seeking to make friends with both parties.

Perhaps you will say, I have neither wisdom nor strength to help myself. In that case, if the heart is made honest, I can assure you there will be no end of ways and means by which the Lord will appear, and often give the most sweet and pressing invitations to enter this Door; and though he bring us into a wilderness of difficulties for the humbling of our pride, yet there he asks, "Did ever people" (except the people of God) "hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" and further tells us, "Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee" [Deut. iv. 33-36]. When this voice, comes in terrible majesty, and we hear these words pronounced upon our hearts, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" [Ezek: xviii. 20], it turns all our lightness and comeliness into corruption, and makes us to inquire in good earnest where the door is, and how it is to be entered. But while the conscience is whole and quiet, or only a little disturbed, the various occupations of a slight and easy profession, will more than half satisfy the soul in such a sluggish posture inquiring for this Door. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing." "Yet a little sleep" (he says), "a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." "So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." [Prov. xiii. 4, and xxiv. 33, 34.] Then there will be a sudden discovery how we have slighted the means, and trifled our lives away on the outside of the Door, and too late we shall begin to knock, "Lord, Lord, open unto us!"

I have had a heavy heart of late, surrounded with many fears and difficulties known only to God; but I found the sweetest encouragement this day in Deut. iv. I may say with David, "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters; he delivered me from my strong enemy" (unbelief), and gave me a sweet entrance into the Door of life. That this may be your happy lot, is the prayer of

Yours most faithfully in the Lord, J. B.

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