

Letter 128.

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of faith in Christ and the mystery of reconciliation for believers.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:14, Psalm 71:3, 1 Corinthians 13:12, Colossians 1:26, Colossians 2:2, Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Persevering Faith", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

James Bourne writes a heartfelt letter to Mrs. Tims, encouraging her to persevere in her faith despite challenges and doubts. He emphasizes the importance of seeking Christ's love and the mystery of being part of His kingdom. Bourne urges Mrs. Tims to hold onto wisdom and not be swayed by worldly concerns, reminding her of the treasures found in Christ. He also extends his prayers and well wishes to Mrs. H. and Mrs. G., expressing his hope for their spiritual growth and strength in the face of adversity.

Transcript

London, 4 June 1837.

Dear Mrs. Tims,

I am sorry I have so greatly neglected you, but a variety of exercises have drawn my mind another way. I perceive the gospel net has enclosed you, and though flesh and blood would rend you from it, yet the Saviour gave the command to cast the net on the right side, that it might enclose you.

Though these early intimations of his goodwill and purpose are but seen "through a glass darkly," yet they are seen and this excites the cry you set forth in your letter. Fear will many times drive you to cry to Jesus Christ, and he will often appear to turn a deaf ear, and seem as if, instead of attending to you, he would be writing on the ground. Thus he proves the faithfulness of the heart, whether the work be of the right sort. The Syrophenician woman was greatly rebuffed, but it only made her the more earnest, till the Saviour said, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Who knows but this may be your happy case? Do you feel a spiritual determination to try? If it be, most assuredly you will find all your darkness and confusion, your fears and anxieties, will be lost in the revelation of Christ's pardoning love to your soul; which will make the new birth clear, and enable you "to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length, the depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

O what a secret and incomprehensible thing it is to be translated into the kingdom of Christ! "You that were sometime alienated" now reconciled! The Apostle calls it "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." I scarcely know how to write these heavenly things. You and I, we now living, are made partakers of "the riches of the glory of this mystery," even Christ in us, the hope of glory. This sweet chapter (Col i.) also tells us of the necessity of warning, that we should not let slip the teaching of wisdom, for it is written in another place, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?"

The Apostle seems to think that the Colossians scarcely suspected the conflict he had for their spiritual welfare, and how earnestly he desired "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." I also feel for many of you at Hertford; I long after you in Christ Jesus, that you may come to the experimental knowledge of the mystery of God the Spirit, of the Father, and of Christ. Surely here "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." I am again overpowered with the sweet sense and power of these things, and feel the sweetest personal interest in them, beyond what I can express. O my dear friend, thus receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and thus walk in him; and beware lest you be beguiled through the vanity of your worldly cares to rest short of him, the only help of helpless sinners.

Remember me very kindly to Mrs. H.; I often think of her, and often pray for her. I cannot but believe the Lord will take her part against all her enemies; and I hope and pray that he will give her what David had when pursued of Saul. It is first said "David behaved himself wisely;" but as circumstances grew more desperate, it is added "he behaved himself VERY wisely" [1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14, 15]. I am much in earnest that our friend may abundantly make manifest this wisdom of God in her.

Remember me also to Mrs. G. I hope this letter may be as well for her as for you, and that she will, in her present affliction, get some of the same fire which the Lord has kindled in my heart in the writing of it. May the Lord increase your spiritual energy, so that you may never let him rest until he make you "a praise in the earth"

Yours faithfully in the Lord, J.B.

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