

Letter 14

by James Bourne

James Bourne emphasizes the importance of navigating the narrow way of faith through grace, trials, and divine guidance.

Scripture: Psalm 32:8, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 7:13, Hebrews 13:5, James 1:22

Topics: "True Religion", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

James Bourne emphasizes the narrow path to salvation, warning that many who think they are on it may not truly be, urging his cousin to seek grace to avoid this mistake. He highlights the contrast between true religion and mere notion, expressing the value of spiritual experiences often misunderstood by the world. Bourne encourages his cousin to seek divine guidance, reflecting on personal trials and the gradual unfolding of God's providence in his own life, leading to a deeper understanding and trust in God's faithfulness.

Transcript

[To M. B] London, 1810.

Dear Cousin,

I believe the way to be so narrow, that millions that think they are in it will never pass through; and many in our own family are among that number, unless grace prevent the sad mistake. I hope to abide in this narrow spirit with my latest breath. The general profession of the day is no religion; it amounts to very little more than what Hart calls "mere notion." The part I value above every earthly comfort is considered as nonsense, delusion, and conceit; - all those sweet visitations that preserve my spirit from the spirit of the world - all those secret rebukes and reproofs that God sanctifies to my soul to keep me from evil, and that, I may not be condemned with a wicked and sinful world, are considered as fanaticism. Even so; let me be accounted as it deceiver, and yet be true in Christ, and be made willing to pass through evil report as well as good report. I heartily wish you no worse than to join us in these divine things, and not content yourself with anything short of the truth.

In Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress there are two sorts that get into the Slough of Despond, but only one of them gets out on the right side. Ponder this, my dear cousin; it is an important matter. The whole of your happiness turns upon this. I have no doubt you find many trials, and many rebukes; and yet no wisdom to know how to proceed. So it was with me. But God was pleased, by due and slow degrees, to unfold his

providence by little and little, and led me to watch his hand, and earnestly at all times to beg his help, and that he would show me his will concerning me both temporally and spiritually. I really found it sweet living in this way; and everything appeared plainer and plainer as I went along. The Lord gave me an understanding to know how I was to proceed; yet I must confess I brought many afflictions and rods upon myself by my untoward and perverse ways, though not left in them to destruction; but he was pleased to sanctify the cross, and to humble me under it, and to heal my soul; and has never yet left me nor forsaken me.

Now, try him in the same way, and see if you do not find him faithful and true.

Yours &c. J. B

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