

Letter 141.

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of spiritual awakening and diligence in seeking God's presence and mercy.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Holy Spirit"

Description

James Bourne preaches about the awakening of spiritual life and the importance of trusting in the Redeemer to bear fruit. He emphasizes the need to acknowledge God's judgments as righteous, even in the midst of trials and struggles with our sinful nature. Bourne encourages not to dwell in darkness and confusion but to seek the light of God's presence diligently. He reminds that the labor of seeking God is empowered by Him working within us through the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

London, 13 April 1838.

Dear Mrs. K.,

I am truly glad to find the Lord has been pleased to rouse you out of your lethargy, and has not suffered you "to sleep the sleep of death." The arbour of this world is an enchanted place, and if you sleep there you will lose your evidences for your better inheritance. Hence it is said in the Psalm you speak of, He "redeemeth thy life from destruction." Spiritual life is included in this. But the means which the Lord uses are not always welcome to us. The fear of death and desponding thoughts are suffered to come upon us, to excite a cry from the heart; and in these sharp exercises we perceive "He will not always chide, neither doth he keep his anger for ever." Instead of chiding, he renews our spiritual strength, so that we "mount up with wings as eagles;" and in this strength of the Lord we most gladly and with all our hearts acknowledge his judgments to be infinitely righteous, and always executed in behalf of that poor soul which is harassed with the various corruptions of his nature. The blow which he gives is at the old man of sin within, who is always crying, Spare. It is a mercy that he pays no regard to such cries, remembering that "we are dust," and can naturally feed upon nothing else.

That Psalm [ciii.] shows that they who trust in the Redeemer shall not be fruitless. The Lord puts his fear into our hearts, which always acts as a check to our carnal and worldly spirits; or we should soon go beyond bounds, and he would have only the very fag end of our hearts and affections, and of those times and seasons which rightly belong to him, and which to give to him is our high privilege, and profitable for

this life as well as for that which is to come. And then he says his mercy is "from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." This will enable you to bless the Lord, and not forget his saving benefits; and to say with David, "I will render praises unto thee, for thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" - not in a dead profession. [Psalm lvi. 12, 13.]

Look back, my dear friend, upon those times when you had no access to God, no spiritual energy; a sort of empty, vague, aching, restless spirit, and no heart to pray yourself out of it. I say, look back at this (and at no great distance too) and call to mind the fruits of such a mode of living. Was it not all darkness and confusion, and you could scarcely tell whether you knew anything aright or not, or whether you should ever know what the light of God's countenance meant? Is that the way you are to spend your days, and die in darkness? O no! Now that The Lord has most graciously opened the door, and invited you into the presence chamber, take heed, and sleep not, nor give slumber to your eye-lids, until you enter there, and "find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." [Psa. cxxxii. 4, 5.]

Though this labour is said to be wrought by you, you must never forget that "it is God that worketh in you." This is a mystery you will soon understand, if God the Spirit lead you into all truth. God bless you. Farewell.

Yours &c. J. B.

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