

Letter 143.

by James Bourne

The sermon encourages believers to seek God's presence diligently and embrace the struggles of faith for spiritual growth and comfort.

Scripture: Psalm 27:4, Psalm 119:10, Luke 8:43, Romans 8:37, James 4:8

Topics: "Spiritual Intimacy", "Faith Journey"

Description

James Bourne emphasizes the importance of diligently seeking the Lord's presence and cherishing spiritual intimacy with Him to avoid stumbling in one's faith journey. He highlights the necessity of spiritual diligence, humility, brokenness, and self-loathing as essential components of a vibrant spiritual life. Bourne shares his personal experiences of encountering the sweet presence of the Lord, likening it to a heavenly experience, and encourages continual pursuit of intimacy with God for spiritual growth and victory over life's challenges.

Transcript

[To Mrs. T., formerly M. B.] Pulverbach, 8 July 1838.

My dear Cousin,

I had a pleasant refreshing journey, and found all things very comfortable. I have seen Sukey Harley, and hope to spend this day at her cottage in expounding the word, and have been seeking the Lord that he would be with us and bless the meeting.

I have had many changes, and have at times been greatly encouraged and comforted. I am sure the Lord is with me. The enemy is very watchful, and especially seeks to betray me into something or other that would stop the intercourse between God and my soul, when I want his peculiar presence to help me; for nothing else gives savour to our proceedings, or light upon our steps. Go without his company long, and you will be sure to stumble. A religion without talking with the Lord by the way is sure to be attended with blunders sooner or later. He is the only true light of the world, therefore I say it becomes us, if we know or have any acquaintance with this light, to cherish it by manifesting a spirit of diligence. "What woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" How you and I often want this spiritual diligence, in consequence of which we walk in confusion, and are not aware of the dust we have contracted by reason of the darkness that Christ's absence has brought on.

A listless life of religion, without conflicts and conquests, is the life of a snail. No features of heavenly divinity stamped upon the soul; no grace of humility alive and in exercise; no sweet holy anointing, bringing us sensibly near to the Lord; no brokenness of heart under a sense of our inexpressible vileness, and the greatness of God's mercy to us in Christ Jesus; no understanding what it is spiritually to put our mouths in the dust; no self-loathing. Spiritual life, or the Spirit of God dwelling in us, will teach us humbly to cherish his presence, and to revere and honour him; and will lead us into the exercise of all these things, and to value them more than life itself.

My soul was filled with the sweet presence of the Lord last night; it was a heaven upon earth. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee" [Song. i. 3]. What the Saviour did to the poor woman in the Gospel was of this nature, when he said, in the midst of the crowd, "Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me " [Luke viii. 43-48]. May the Lord grant you and Mr. T. power daily thus to touch him, and not to have to count the days and weeks and months since this virtue was last received from the Saviour. What need you have of this touch in your new capacity! Stale showbread will not do. An easy chimney corner is not conducive to those conflicts that end in conquests. My spirit at times argues in all manner of ways with the Lord to prove that ease in any way and cessation of war is lawful; but the cutting convictions of the Spirit in the dead of the night bring me to the bar of God, and then my iniquitous purposes are exposed in their true colours, and I utterly despair of self, and have nothing left but just a little power to cry and confess my ignorance, misery, and sin. Here comes an end of all hopes of ease in the flesh, and I am taught in a measure to endure hardness as a good soldier, and never to give up the contest until, by a touch of the Saviour, I am made more than conqueror.

My difficulties in this place appear to me many, but the Lord is my stay. I only desire so to walk as to keep him in my company. I dread my foolishness grieving him and causing him to depart. I dare not walk long in the dark, especially under my present circumstances.

Yours affectionately, J. B.

P.S. I have been much pleased with my Sabbath at Sukey's. The Lord was with us; a sweet sense of his approbation comforted my heart; and many home, truths were spoken through his grace.

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