

Letter 154.

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon highlights the necessity of humility and reliance on God's strength amidst life's trials and tribulations.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:13, 2 Timothy 1:8

Topics: "Humility", "Holy Spirit"

Description

James Bourne writes a letter to Mrs. T. expressing his struggles with self-abasement and the fear of feigned humility and dissembled love. He shares about the spiritual experiences of Mrs. G. and others, emphasizing the importance of discovering God's love in Christ Jesus. Bourne finds comfort in the words from 2 Timothy, encouraging believers not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord but to partake in the afflictions of the Gospel, relying on God's power and strength through the Holy Spirit to endure all things.

Transcript

[To Mrs. T.] Hertford, 16 September 1838.

Dear Cousin,

My visit here is attended with continued self-abasement. I am kept in a very low place, but dare not say the Lord forgets me. He is a very present help, and my morning readings are comforting to me, and attended by many who are not expected.

Mrs. G. has had a sweet discovery of God's love to her in Christ Jesus, and her tender fears are evidence that spiritual life is abundantly in her. It would do you good to hear her account from herself, and to see her spirit. Another friend also has had a sweet refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and I think some others are looking out of obscurity. I have scarcely seen __ , I fear she is gradually getting into a place where she will be hard set to clear the work. O how I fear feigned humility and dissembled love! I know God will discover this wherever it is.

I have hard work to show my face here, because of the fearful sight I often have of my sinful nature, and the importance that is put upon what I say here. Yet I have been comforted this morning with these and the following words - "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord . . . but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel," for therein will be found and understood "the power of God." The mystery of salvation is hid in Christ Jesus, but is made manifest when he brings life and immortality into

the soul. This makes me a willing partaker of the sufferings, because I am persuaded he is able to keep me unto eternal life. [2 Tim. i. 8-12.] His strength, communicated to my soul by the Holy Spirit, is all my stay and support; I am not able to abide one moment without it, but with it I can bear all things.

This is what I recommend to you and Mr. T. It will bear you both up under the various changes that continually overtake you. We know not what a day may bring forth; and if we have not the spiritual habit of making the Lord our refuge, some sudden storm may upset us; but if Christ is our Ark, we shall certainly weather it.

I droop in spirit more than I can express, and would often run away from God, from myself, and from the eyes of all living; but the Lord will not have it so. I must stand the brunt, and face it out, to make manifest the power and efficacy of God's regenerating grace; and instead of finally sinking, I perceive, by every fresh humbling dispensation, he raises me higher in hope and humble confidence in him, and sets me lower in my own estimation. This is my path of tribulation; not all sorrow; not all casting down; but now and then exalted to a place far enough out of the reach of the enemy that puffeth at me.

Yours affectionately, J. B.

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