

Letter 165.

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon reflects on the themes of hope, God's goodness, and the significance of Christ's love amidst trials and opposition to truth.

Scripture: Job 38:11, Psalm 107:9, Psalm 116:7, Isaiah 43:2, Colossians 2:2

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Spiritual Reflection"

Description

James Bourne shares about a visit from Mrs. Oakley, where her husband found peace and hope in the crumbs from the Master's table, leading to a deep reflection on his sins and a desire to discuss spiritual matters. Despite opposition to the truth, God's protection has prevailed, thwarting plans to hinder their work. Bourne reflects on God's goodness in preserving him through past troubles, acknowledging the fear of judgment but finding comfort in God's promise of mercy and love.

Transcript

[To Mrs T.] Stapleton, 1 August 1839.

Dear Cousin,

I cannot help beginning at once with a visit I had from Mrs. Oakley. She was too full to wait till I might go into her room. She had been upstairs to see Mr. Oakley, and found him in a very meek and peaceful spirit. He said, 'Where is it in the Testament about the crumbs that fall from the Master's table, which Mr. Bourne spoke of to me?' She read it to him, and he then said, 'I have such a hope that I shall have some of these crumbs, I have been pondering this ever since I heard it, and am much encouraged. I have been reading the Psalms, and Psalm cxvi. has been very sweet to me, and has made me so comfortable that I want you to stop, and let us talk these things over. I am a great sinner, and have been a devil to you, but these crumbs have made me very peaceful.'

There is a great opposition to the truth in this place; but the Lord has said, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Plans of all sorts have been laid to frustrate our proceeding, but as yet they have not been suffered to do so.

I must acknowledge the goodness of God. He still preserves me in peace and hope, and all that terror and fear I lately suffered he has for the present been pleased to remove, which I never expected in this life. I look back upon the last twelve months trouble with dread, for though the Lord condescended at times to

comfort me greatly with sweet hope, yet the quick returning again to despondency was terrible, and I could not fathom the dispensation. I saw how far I was in trouble, but saw not how much further I might go, and to what extent he might lay his hand upon me. I was afraid of his judgments, for if he had dealt with me according to my sin, I should have been pursued to destruction; but these words were often a stay to me, and once came with great power; "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee."

What you allude to respecting Mr. - 's conflict, I believe is just to let him taste of the bitter cup. I think no evil of him, when I think he will yet have it sharper and longer. I believe with all my heart it will only be to give him brighter and clearer evidences of Christ's love to him. It is true all are not afflicted alike, nor dare I say he has not had many sore throes; yet surely when the Lord comes to show him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in Christ Jesus, this will open his heart and his mouth, and keep them open. For though the riches of Christ are unsearchable, and the height and depth and breadth and length of his love are far beyond our measuring, yet we do, through the fire and through the water, obtain a goodly portion; and the clusters of grapes that grow in this wealthy land refresh the soul so much, that we cannot but speak well of it. So may the Lord in mercy deal with us.

Yours affectionately, J. B.

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