

Letter 172.

by James Bourne

James Bourne emphasizes the importance of remembrance, humility, and vigilance in the face of spiritual conflict and temptation.

Scripture: Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 6:5, James 1:8, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Humility"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to his daughter H., emphasizes the importance of humility, deep spiritual reflection, and the ongoing spiritual battle believers face. He encourages his daughter to remember past struggles as a means of humbling her soul and to be vigilant against the subtle temptations of pride, self-will, and deceit. Bourne highlights the transformative power of God's grace in bringing sinners to repentance and restoration, ultimately leading to a profound trust in Christ as our Counselor and Friend.

Transcript

[To his daughter H.] London, 23 November 1839.

My dear H.,

I trust you had a safe journey, and doubt not you have had a very kind reception from our friends at Hertford. I miss you in many ways, and you are often in my thoughts; especially in my prayers that the God of all grace may stand by you, and sanctify every change that in his providence he may direct. You have not been absent from me since your last illness; and it being exactly twelve months since I was sent for on that occasion from the place where you now are, brings afresh to my mind the many sorrows I endured at that time, and the way in which the Lord watched over me. As my need, so was the strength he gave me; or I should have utterly despaired. For though he turned me to destruction, yet how tenderly and carefully, and with what assurances of love, did he prop up my sinking spirit, till he did indeed comfort us on every side! How sweetly he brought you up out of the depths, and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings! Before this, you knew but little either of yourself or of the Lord; but you have since found where the wealthy place lies - that is, "through fire and through water."

May the Lord keep you ever in remembrance of the wormwood and the gall, that your soul may be deeply humbled within you. Never forget that the conflict is not over, but only just begun; as Hart says,

"When his pardon is sealed, and his peace is procured,

From that moment his conflict begins."

The temptations of the enemy are too subtle for us to find out before we are caught in the snare. Among these are pride, feigned humility, conceit, self-will, and a long train of the like; sometimes even accompanied with tears, till we think them graces. But the Spirit of God now and then shines on a sudden with such a lustre and piercing power, that we are for a moment quite overwhelmed, and fear we have altogether mistaken the way; and in this fear is light and life, causing a mournful cry - "Woe is me, for I am undone!" That cry is all the Lord calls for; when that comes from a broken heart, presently "a live coal from off the altar" touches the heart; iniquity is forgiven, and sin purged; and then, free as air, we bless and praise the Lord once more for his wonderful love and mercy to the chief of sinners. [Isaiah vi. 5-7.]

In this way I am led, and I doubt not you move in the same. In this way the pride of man is brought low, and the insuperable love of Christ exalted. By these things we gain confidence to put our trust in him, and seek most ardently to make him our Counsellor and Friend.

"Be sober, be vigilant;" for your adversary will never cease nor tire while you have one breath to draw. Beware of a worldly spirit, idle vague conversation, listless frames; these are the engines Satan works with. Seek especially for godly simplicity. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," and can obtain nothing from the Lord.

Your affectionate father, J. B.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-bourne/letter-172/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net