

Letter 174.

by James Bourne

In 'Letter 174', James Bourne encourages believers to find strength and assurance in God's grace during trials, emphasizing the promise of victory through faith and prayer.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:29, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:13, 2 Timothy 2:3

Topics: "Perseverance In Trials", "Gods Grace"

Description

James Bourne encourages M.G. during a time of affliction, reminding them of the promise that those who seek God will not do so in vain. He emphasizes that through Christ, believers are more than conquerors, even in the midst of trials and persecutions. Bourne highlights the importance of relying on God's grace in times of impossibilities, as it is in our weaknesses that God's power is made perfect. He urges M.G. to find strength in Christ, to endure hardships as a good soldier, and to trust that the Lord will provide the necessary strength for each day.

Transcript

[To M. G.] Stoke Newington, 9 December 1839.

My dear Friend,

Your present affliction has entered deeply into my mind, and I can truly feel for you, and find much encouragement in my prayers in your behalf. It never was said to the seed of Jacob "Seek ye me in vain;" nor can I be persuaded that the conflict you have described can end in anything but a conquest. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The intercession of Christ is never more needed, nor given, than when we are surrounded with perplexities; "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." We which have this spiritual life "are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh," and that in all the deliverances which he works for us. [2 Cor. iv. 8-10.]

Where would be the glory of God's grace, if we were always in very easy places and very slight difficulties? He magnifies the riches of his power and the efficacy of his grace by working impossibilities; and when all our strength, wisdom, and natural hope is gone, then comes in the beauty, suitableness, and sweetness of his almighty power, which saves to the uttermost. Remember the mercy of the Lord in these words, "Pursue, for thou shalt SURELY overtake, and WITHOUT FAIL recover all." "They that sow in tears

shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

"Poor pilgrims shall not stray,
Who, frightened, flee from wrath,
A bleeding Jesus is the way,
And blood tracks all the path."

You see the conflict must be sharp, but the conquest shall be sure. May the Lord continue to give you that prudence, discretion, and silence, with which he has hitherto armed you, and you will find your safety in turning this battle "to the gate" [Isaiah xxviii. 6], for it thus becomes not yours but the Lord's; and woe be to them who are found fighting against the Lord. I never felt that word more true than now, and I believe it will be seen in your case - "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" [Zech. ii. 8]. The judgment of God lingereth not. The quarrel is his, and woe be to him that contendeth with his Maker. "Surely in the fire of my jealousy I have spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession, with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey." Therefore the Lord says, "They shall bear their shame," but "I will do better unto you than at your beginnings, and ye shall know that I am the Lord" [Ezek. xxxvi. 5-11]. So that you may perceive that the wisdom of God is such, that out of the darkest dispensations he often gives to his people their brightest evidences, and the sweetest tokens of his lovingkindness towards them.

Tell your sister not to be disheartened if she fears she has scarcely bodily strength or spirits to go through these dark valleys; tell her, if she seeks the Lord and watches the effects of her petitions, she will soon perceive that the Lord has not said in vain, "As thy days so shall thy strength be." Do not give way to carnal reason. "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

"Your Captain is stronger
Than all that oppose."

Make but a free use of him, and watch if he forbids it. On the contrary, I am sure you will gain courage this way. I know your often infirmities; you are soon cast down, because you too often look at the danger, and not at the strength that is in Christ Jesus.

You are now in the midst of the fiery furnace; you will soon tell me how you came out; that the Lord was with you in it, and that the smell of fire did not touch you. These are the ways and means the Lord takes to fit you to instruct your poor neighbours; his instruction is better than head-knowledge. I have been long inured to these conflicts, and cannot manage better with them than you; only I know you will gain the victory some way or other, because the Lord never yet failed his people once.

Yours &c. J. B.

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