

Letter 175.

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon encourages believers to find comfort and healing in God's word during times of affliction and to remain diligent in their spiritual walk.

Scripture: Malachi 4:2

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Gods Mercy"

Description

James Bourne shares a personal reflection on his recent spiritual journey, emphasizing the comfort and renewal found in God's Word even in times of affliction. He recounts a moment of spiritual healing and hope when confronted with his own shortcomings, highlighting the mercy and kindness of God. Bourne encourages his friends to trust in God's faithfulness amidst trials, reminding them of the promise of divine deliverance and the need for a deeper understanding of sinfulness to appreciate God's salvation.

Transcript

[To M. and J. G.] Bayswater, 29 January 1840.

My dear Friends,

I cannot help sending you a few lines that perhaps would have been written before this, had I not been painfully ill for a fortnight. I entered this valley of humiliation with some feeling sense of my high privileges - "This is my comfort in my affliction, that thy word hath quickened me." In this I found eternal life, and had some sweet tokens and renewals of it as I proceeded. On Sunday morning, while looking and longing for a farther renewal of this quickening power, as I read Malachi iv., the first verse filled me with awe, and I saw and felt much that, like stubble, must be burnt up; yet the Lord makes a reservation, which seemed to look straight at me, saying with inexpressible kindness and mercy, "BUT unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." This I found a spiritual healing, and the sweet rays of this Sun burnt to ashes all my unbelief, and left my spirit softened and comforted with a sweet hope.

I have been two days with my relations, Mr. and Mrs. T. I found a sweet gale from the Lord on my entering their house; a very soft and secret contrition, a deep feeling of humiliation, with a most sweet and honest power of confessing my sins, not with wrath and fear, but with an inexpressible feeling as of a child at the feet of a kind and tender Father.

This is the Friend I want to recommend to you in your present dilemma. He never fails. Listen to what he says - "Be still, and know that I am God." What seest thou in this dispensation? "A seething pot, and the face of it is towards the north" - a cutting, trying dispensation, with many secret dark rebukes and reproofs for the Lord will utter his judgments in a broken law. Here I think the Lord has for some time held you; everything seems to make against you, and every testimony (however false it may be) seems to sink into your hearts; the Lord suffers it to enter your spirits as if it were true, and you find no shelter. This is God's design, that all refuge may fail you without and within. All shall fight against thee, "BUT they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." [Jer. i. 13-19.]

Though it may be a doleful, dark, and long night of affliction, yet I believe that this necessary law-work is to bring you down to know something more than you have done of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And remember, "Unto you that FEAR MY NAME shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," and you shall "go forth and grow up" in the midst of these terrible things. The effect will be a purer language, and a brighter view of Christ's precious salvation; and in the end all shall acknowledge that you are "the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

Read very diligently Deut. iv. "Ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive, every one of you, this day." In that chapter is set before us the great necessity of spiritual attention and diligence; and it shows us we cannot have a better token of God's favour than a secret watchfulness of the Lord's movements within and without, attended with prayer.

Yours &c. J. B.

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