

# Letter 179.

by James Bourne

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*The sermon explores the contrast between worldly distractions and the profound comfort found in communion with God during times of despair.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:18, John 16:33, Romans 8:37, Romans 15:13, 2 Corinthians 4:17

**Topics:** "Triumph Over Sorrow", "Gods Salvation"

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## Description

James Bourne shares a powerful testimony of a woman who experienced deep despair and sorrow, but found sweet communion and holy triumph in the midst of her affliction, realizing the vanity of worldly things and the desirableness of heavenly things. He encourages his dear friend to patiently wait for God's salvation, acknowledging the universal struggles faced by God's elect, but reminding them of the promise to be 'more than conquerors through Him that loved us.'

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## Transcript

Hertford, 13 March 1840.

My dear H.

I am just returned from Hitchin. Last night a Mrs. P. desired to meet us at a friend's house where several were collected. After some conversation they desired me to expound; and I took Psalm xxxiv., but felt fear and some suspicion because there appeared (as I thought) too much gaiety in the whole party. I checked it more than once, but at length began; and, amongst other subjects, spoke of the exceeding vanity of all created things, which is seen in the deep furnace. There, if God sanctify the affliction, we see the true colour of all things; the death that reigns in the world, and the judgment of God which follows, as well as the sweetness, beauty, and desirableness of heavenly things, and of communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. All else at such a time is but dung and dross. But through the power of temptation this vision seems to withdraw; and as we are gradually restored to the occupations of this life, an importance begins again to be put upon those things which in the furnace seemed so light.

This moved our new friend to speak, and she began to tell us of the deep despair and sorrow she fell into, and the furious fever that raged, so that her friends supposed she lost her senses, and often thought she would never be restored. "But here," she said, "the Lord took sweet advantage of my misery, and so abundantly comforted me that I knew not how to speak of it - such sweet communion, such holy triumph, that all created things seemed less than nothing. But now, as you say, I mourn and lament; my heart gets

entangled, my spirit worldly; created objects will intrude themselves as very important, and I am greatly cast down, and alarmed at my treacherous dealing. I never thought I should be brought to this again; but sometimes those words revive and encourage me, 'The Lord, the God of Israel, saith, he hated putting away.' I grieve to feel this gradual withdrawing; I am ashamed after such mercies received; but I feel a little comforted tonight."

All this occurred about eight months ago; and though in the telling of it I am not able to describe half, yet I felt so comforted, so sensible of the power of God in her behalf, and so led to see how the Lord had dealt with you, that she quite won my heart; and I secretly wept to hear so much of the goodness of the Lord. I told her I wished you had been there, to compare notes with her; for I thought you both together would be like iron sharpening iron.

May the Lord comfort you, and prop up your heart still to wait patiently, and quietly hope for his salvation. These conflicts are the universal exercises of God's elect. But truly, what the Lord says shall be fulfilled - "more than conquerors through him that loved us," and who in times past hath manifested his love and mercy to us. Therefore, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Your affectionate father, J. B.

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