

Letter 183.

by James Bourne

The Lord's judgment and mercy are real, and we can have hope in His power and efficacy in salvation, guided by His Word.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalm 99:8, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 5:20, Galatians 6:7, 1 Timothy 6:6

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

James Bourne writes a heartfelt letter to a daughter of Mr. Oakley, expressing sympathy for the recent passing of her father. He reflects on the trials and mercies of God, emphasizing the importance of recognizing God's judgments and mercy in the midst of suffering. Bourne encourages the daughter to heed the secret workings of God's grace in her life, to cherish hope in salvation, and to not let worldly comforts distract her from spiritual matters. He commends her kindness towards her parents and urges her to seek guidance from the Word of God, remaining sensitive to divine impressions to avoid falling into spiritual errors.

Transcript

[To a daughter of Mr. Oakley.] London, 30 April 1840.

Dear Madam,

I cannot help sending you a few lines, but how to say it is in sympathy with you I scarcely know; because the very long and fearful trial that you have witnessed in your late father, has terminated so exceedingly sweetly as much rather to create thankfulness than the sorrow of the world. The whole of the circumstances had in them the deep and unfathomable judgments of God, so as to make us all to tremble, and as the Lord declares [Psa. xcix. 8], so we perceive he really acts, namely, though he forgives the sin of his people, yet he takes vengeance of their inventions, that all men may see and hear, and fear and depart from evil. O how true the word of God is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." How much have we seen of this in your poor father's case, and yet how wonderfully in the midst of judgment has the Lord shown mercy!

This case seems set before his family especially to encourage them to hope, if any of them are led to lay it to heart. I know that you have had many secret workings in your own mind respecting the safety of your soul, and these have been attended with many fears. I hope the Lord will not suffer you to brow-beat these secret intimations of his mercy; but do by all means cherish them. See and call to mind what the power

and efficacy of God's grace has effected in your dear mother; how she has been carried through all her trouble for full four and twenty years, and though often cast down and hopeless as to the issue, yet how sweetly it has appeared that the everlasting arms of the Lord (though underneath and often out of sight) were nevertheless round about her to sustain her. Look well at the wonders that the Lord has wrought for your parents; and, if you can, venture to hope that he is both able and willing to save you.

It has pleased God to give you the accommodations of this life, and it is with pleasure I have both seen and heard much of your kindness to your God-fearing parents. May the blessing of God be found in this! I trust it will be so. But let not worldly comforts entangle your affections, nor suffer yourself to consider that gain is godliness.

I have been often surprised how the Lord has kept your dear mother from the various errors of the day, and how he has put his especial fear in her heart upon this subject, so that she cannot communicate with all who offer the right hand of fellowship. I sincerely hope you will be able to see with her the necessity of this; that the Word of God may be your guide; and that your heart may be kept tender, and susceptible of those very secret divine impressions that show us the way we should go. Nothing will prove so hardening and darkening as to stifle these; it will cause continual stumbling, and end in your calling good evil, and evil good; bitter errors sweet, and sweet truths bitter.

May the Lord direct and comfort your hearts, so that you may finish your course with the same sweet peace which your father enjoyed in his last hours.

Yours most respectfully, J. B.

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