

Letter 19

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of meekness and humility before God, the power of God's word, and the sweet union between Christ and the soul, encouraging listeners to seek a full reward from the Lord.

Scripture: Psalm 51:17, Micah 4:6, Galatians 6:9, 2 Peter 1:10

Topics: "Repentance", "Eternal Life"

Description

James Bourne writes a heartfelt letter to his wife, expressing his deep humility and sorrow for sin, inspired by the writings of Elisha Coles. He reflects on the consequences of unwise words like Moses speaking unadvisedly and the importance of seeking God's forgiveness. Bourne finds comfort in the idea that mortal sufferings lead to peaceable fruits of righteousness and that those who sow in tears will reap with joy in eternal life. He encourages diligence in making one's calling and election sure, looking forward to an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

[To his Wife] 19 August, 1824.

My dear Wife,

I was exceedingly happy on Sunday morning in reading and meditation. I do not know when I found so much meekness and humility before God, and such godly sorrow and real grief of heart on account of sin. I was first much struck in reading Elisha Coles, where he says - "Moses for once speaking unadvisedly was shut out of Canaan, though he would fain have gone into that good land, and solicited the Lord much about it as if he would have no denial. Yet the Lord would not hear him - 'Speak no more to me of this matter.' " I felt great fear and trembling here, and could bring many things to mind, if God had been pleased to enter into judgment; but I was led to confess my folly, acknowledge my sin and its deserts, and found the Lord heard my prayer, and broke my heart with his goodness. As I went on with Elisha Coles I read - " It shall be no grief of heart to thee to remember thy mortal sufferings when thou seest such peaceable fruits of righteousness brought forth thereby." O no! But I cannot paint my feeling in what follows; - " He will never repent who sows in tears, when he brings home his sheaves with joy, to eternal life," What sweet and powerful words! Can so poor and wretched a creature as I be brought to receive such an inexpressible feeling in his heart? Yes, by the mighty power of God. What purity and love it works! How sweet and undefiled! Dare I say so? Yes, I must say so; but it is all in Christ Jesus, and what he works in us. How odious it makes sin, and how ashamed we are when we bow before him in adoration!

Nothing can describe my humiliation at such a time, nor the grief I feel for my sinful nature; and the more because of his pardoning love. It is wonderful to say it, but it seems almost too much. But, O what a sweet union exists between Christ and the soul under such influences! I give a very lame account of it, very short of what I wish to describe.

I afterwards found much sweetness and encouragement in reading 2 Peter i. 10, 11, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the ever-lasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." O do seek for this! Slack not, nor tarry in all the plain. I also saw much in Micah iv. 6-12 - Not to take heed to any that may be watching for our halting, but rather to watch what the Lord will do for us, and see that we obtain a FULL REWARD. I hope the Lord will appear for you, and do you good, and make you much in earnest.

Yours &c. J. B.

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