

Letter 20

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God in the life of a believer, highlighting the importance of prayer, scripture, and the Holy Spirit amidst trials and despair.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 40:4, Zechariah 4:6, Matthew 25:1, John 16:13

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

James Bourne emphasizes the power of God to overcome obstacles and transform lives, urging his cousin to seek God earnestly through prayer and the Word. He acknowledges the struggles of despair and the need for hope and encouragement found in prayer. Bourne reflects on the spiritual journey of facing sin and finding strength and consolation in God's presence. He highlights the importance of being prepared, like the virgins in the parable, through the fear of the Lord and experiencing both trouble because of sin and joy because of mercy as part of the Christian life.

Transcript

[To M. B.] July 25, 1825.

Dear Cousin,

I feel quite sorry for -- , yet when I consider the mighty power of God that must be displayed in the behalf of every sinner that is saved, I know that he can make every mountain a plain, and remove every obstacle. When he will work, NONE SHALL LET. Pray tell her to listen to none and to go to none but God; and let her beg earnestly for a spirit of prayer and supplication. May the Word of God dwell richly in her heart, and be her rule and guide! Let her pray over it, and entreat the Lord to grant her his Holy Spirit, who shall guide her into all truth. I am sure if she be rightly led, she will often feel ready to despair and to give up praying; but hope will revive in prayer, and encouragement spring up. Her time, like mine, appears as if it would not be long on earth; and to have God on our side when we draw near our end, is worth more than all the treasures of earth.

By reason of my sin, I perceive that I must pass through that spiritual baptism which our Saviour speaks of, and in which he cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In every such place of horror, darkness, and fear, I should utterly faint if he did not please to return with some strength, some hope, some consolation, to raise up my sinking spirit. This makes me to stand my; ground.

We all (like the virgins in the parable) sleep by the way, and often the heaviest troubles take us at such a time. We should thus soon come to destruction, were it not for the fear of the Lord, like a sentinel, to rouse us, and make us tremble at the prospect of his judgments, which seem to be coming heavily upon us; and work in us such a falling down before him, that he cannot but look upon us in mercy. Hereupon we find once more the oil in our lamps, and are ready for the marriage supper.

I am sure that there is no other way than that of trouble and anguish because of sin, and joy and gladness because of mercy. These, more or less, are constantly the frames of all such as have divine life.

Yours &c. J. B.

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