

Letter 21

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of heartfelt prayer and the transformative experience of God's presence in overcoming spiritual struggles.

Scripture: Exodus 33:14

Topics: "Personal Revival", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

James Bourne shares a personal account of experiencing unhappiness, deadness, and barrenness, but finding renewal through prayer, meekness, and godly sorrow. He reflects on the importance of seeking God's presence, acknowledging sin, and forsaking it in the heart. Bourne emphasizes the transformative power of secret prayer and meditation in bringing life to the soul and impacting those around us, urging others to wholeheartedly pursue intimacy with God.

Transcript

[To Mr. Nunn.] Middleton Park, 1827.

Dear Friend,

I feel much disposed to give you some account of myself; but when I was most willing, time and power were both wanting. I never leave home on such an occasion without much anxiety, knowing the manifold snares and difficulties which are sure to befall me. I was very unhappy on Wednesday after-noon with a great mixture of deadness and barrenness; and though I was led to cry to the Lord, unbelief seemed to say that there was no use in it - a backslider in heart can only be filled with his own ways. I fretted against the Lord, but did not quite give up hoping; and when I heard the text that evening, "Who is on the Lord's side," the very words seemed to vibrate in my heart, and I thought I could say, I am. Then something replied, Keep praying; and in a little time I found a spirit of meekness and godly sorrow, and my mind greatly refreshed, and my heart turned to be quite in earnest. I went home and read the chapter from which the text was taken [Exod. xxxii.] and the following one; and my heart sweetly kindled as I went on to these words, "Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight;" and the following words took me greatly by surprise - "And he said, My presence shall go with thee." Out of the abundance of my heart, feeling such ineffable sweetness in the sense of his lovingkindness and care over me, I cried, "My Lord and my God!" Sin was acknowledged and in heart forsaken, and many petitions put up that he would remember me when I forget myself! O, my dear sir, where is there such a friend? These are not cunningly-devised fables, but solid

realities. How it prepares my heart against disappointments, and makes me still under many crosses! This God is our God, and will be our guide unto death.

Tell Mrs. N. to try this way. Perhaps she will reply that she does try; but not with all the heart. A savour in what she says is wanting. Secret prayer and meditation not only bring life into the soul, but their effect is sure to be felt by those about you. Moses' face shone so much after his secret converse with God, that the children of Israel could not well look at him; and if I meet a friend that has prevalency with God, and hear him tell the tale, I feel the glory with such inexpressible shame and guilt, that I cannot look my friend in the face; and why? because something says, "God is no respecter of persons," and that my backsliding, giddy, and foolish heart has kept back these blessings from me.

Yours &c. J. B.

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