

Letter 28

by James Bourne

The speaker shares his personal struggles with despair, murmuring, and contention, and how he found comfort and strength in prayer and the word of God.

Scripture: Psalm 130:1, Isaiah 28:16, Matthew 26:39, John 16:33, Hebrews 4:15

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Salvation In Christ"

Description

James Bourne shares about his deep struggles, conflicts, and sorrows, expressing his journey of pouring out his heart to the Lord and experiencing a profound revelation of God's tenderness and care. Through moments of despair and fear, he finds comfort in the words of Scripture, learning to surrender his will to God's and accept His loving-kindness in all circumstances. Bourne encourages others to come to Christ, the Friend of sinners, who is able to save to the uttermost, and testifies to the safety and preciousness of salvation found in Him.

Transcript

[To Mr. Nunn] Wiston Park, July 1828.

My dear Friend,

The various exercises I have been under render it very difficult for me to send you an especial account, yet I cannot help endeavouring for your encouragement to tell you something of them.

I have laboured under many grievous and sore conflicts; and between despair, murmuring, contention, and all such like feelings, and the fixedness of my heart in fighting against them, it has proved no small work. I have been groaning deeply under manifold sorrows, and have as it were lived in the word of God and prayer. As I was entering my employer's garden, I seated myself privately under a large oak tree, and prayed most earnestly that the Lord would hear my cry and appear for me. I was enabled to pour out my sorrow before him; and I think I shall never forget the tender sound of these words, "TOUCHED with the feeling of our infirmities; IN ALL POINTS tempted like as we are;" and as if it further said, I am no stranger to your fears and dismay, but am with you in it all. I cannot tell you the revolution this caused in my soul; my sins appeared like mountains, and unspeakably offensive to me, and yet broken to pieces with the sense of my standing completely justified in Christ's righteousness. On my return I could not but stop in the same corner and bless his holy Name for revealing himself so kindly and tenderly to me, and he again repeated his assurances of tenderness and care, and laid great emphasis on the word touched, as if he

said, I feel and am troubled for you in all your troubles, but you shall understand my loving-kindness in all these dispensations.

All that day and all night, I had a sweet view of Christ's being near to help, and a kind friend at hand; but again I sank at once into much gloom and many fears; yet the word of God was still my meat and drink. It does indeed talk to me by the way, and look at me in every direction. I said, O Lord, what shall I do? Be pleased to show mercy, and let not murmuring once come into my heart. O Lord, stand my friend. In this case I stood by the road side, trembling from head to foot, and these words sounded with the same tenderness as the above, "O MY FATHER." I said, May I use these words? Yes, doubtless, my Father, my faithful Friend in time of need. "O my Father, IF IT BE POSSIBLE let this cup pass from me." Here I was shown the lawfulness of praying to be delivered from every burden. But the next word "NEVERTHELESS" I prayed earnestly might never be forgotten by me - "Nevertheless, NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU WILT" [Matt. xxvi. 39].

How shall I describe my sensations here? This I can say, that I slid with all my heart, soul, and strength, accept the punishment of my sins, and lay meekened at the footstool of Christ, crying, Do unto me what seemeth good in thy sight, for I perceive that truly as thou hast said in thy word, so thou art well acquainted with all our sorrows, and art very near to help, if haply we feel after thee.

I was sweetly instructed again in reading the following words, and cannot describe to you the compassion and tenderness with which the Lord was pleased to bring them, as if he really felt every trial I was under just as I did. "These things have I told you, that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them" [John xvi. 4]. That is, that when you are in your trouble, you may not be taken by surprise, but remember that I told you before that it would come. Yes, Lord, I said, by thy grace I do remember thou didst once tell me that "Bonds and afflictions abide me in every place;" but I did not know that I should meet with such heart-breaking compassion, and that the consolations should so certainly abound, as the tribulation increased.

Can I praise the Lord enough for all his goodness to me? I want an eternity to show forth all his praise, and words to declare my gratitude. How I wish with one of old, to tell all delayers that they are "unwise sons," and ask them why they "stay so long in the place of the breaking forth of children" [Hos, xiii. 13]. If they did but know even what I do, of the preciousness of this salvation, they could not "tarry in all the plain" of this world, but must come to this Friend of sinners, this present help in every time of need. O how I long to persuade such as feel their need of help to come as I came (most wretched); then they will find as I have found, that "He is able to save to the UTTERMOST."

Tell Mrs. N. I can well recommend this way; it is a safe way - "A tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." When I lie awake in the night, the thoughts of his goodness and care break my heart, and keep my spirit as a weaned child. The watchfulness which he is pleased to create, makes me not to lose many opportunities of prayer and reading his word. I am made to go on from day to day trembling exceedingly, and when I get into these gloomy fears, they seem doubled by a sense of my ingratitude and unbelief; yet out of the depths I Cry, and the Lord heareth me.

Remember me most kindly to the church, and believe me to remain,

Yours faithfully, J. B.

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