

Letter 30

by James Bourne

James Bourne emphasizes the transformative power of affliction and the importance of maintaining a close relationship with God through faith and humility.

Scripture: Psalm 27:5, Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 5:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9, James 4:8, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Spiritual Comfort", "Godly Separation"

Description

James Bourne shares about finding comfort in tokens of God's goodness amidst daily crosses and tribulations, leading to a deeper closeness to God and a separation from the world. He reflects on the reality of walking with God despite being defiled by sin, emphasizing the mystery of such a relationship. Bourne highlights the importance of drawing near to God with a good conscience, seeking grace for steadfastness, and accepting God's righteous ways. He encourages seeking refuge in God to escape the impending storm and shares his heartfelt desire for the salvation of others, acknowledging the challenges and sufferings faced for the sake of Christ.

Transcript

[To M. B.] Batsford, Aug, 12, 1828.

Dear Cousin,

I had some comfortable tokens for good the night before I left home, and found I was at peace with God; nor was I without them on my journey, though oftentimes exceedingly mournful, bowed down under a daily cross. My happiness is that these things do not leave me without hope, but lead me more earnestly to keep close to God, and to see that the way is kept alien. I daily see more and more, that it is through much tribulation I must enter the kingdom, and this shuts my mouth against self-pity or repining. When such a spirit shows itself, then my sins appear and the desert due to them; but godly fear steps in and justifies God, and I am silent. It is good, very good, for me, that I have been afflicted, for it makes me to consider, both in adversity and prosperity; it separates me from the world and the spirit of it. The word of God is precious and faith increases, so as to believe more both the promises and the threatenings. The Lord is pleased to instruct me with a strong hand, and does not suffer me to go far astray; but I am soon fetched back by the noise of a tempest, and often return with bitter weeping and lamentation. I think if he were to turn his back upon me, I should very soon sink into despair.

How much I see of the reality of religion! Far beyond my utmost power to describe. For a creature, defiled with sin in every way, to walk with God in peace and equity, is a mystery the world cannot get hold of.

Here I must transcribe what I read with all my heart, and felt most sweetly this morning, in Romaine's Walk of Faith - "May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience. Yea, Lord, it is my heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. O deny me not the request of my lips! Glory be to thy free love, that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all."

Let the blood of sprinkling be applied effectually and continually; a sense of this will produce steadfastness in our walk, lightening the daily cross, and giving a hearty acceptance of all God's righteous dispensations. I perceive the flesh strives hard for the mastery, but the mighty power is such as to bring down every lofty imagination. May you and I wisely take counsel, that we may escape the storm that threatens the whole world. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust" (that is, be very low) "for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty." For the day of the Lord is at hand, and we shall all find his word to be true [Isa. ii. 10-22].

Pray give my christian love to Mr. and Mrs. Nunn. My heart's desire and prayer is that they may be saved. I perceive the battle to be hard, and am often reminded of these words, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake." I sometimes have much encouragement in believing the first clause and the last, but tremble exceedingly at the whole.

Yours &c. J. B.

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