

Letter 32

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God and maintaining communion with Him, highlighting the consequences of not knowing Him and the sweetness of knowing Him through Christ Jesus.

Scripture: Psalm 73:26, Jonah 1:6, Zechariah 7:13, Hebrews 12:29, 2 Peter 3:11

Topics: "Spiritual Guidance", "Godly Living"

Description

James Bourne reflects on the importance of living a life dedicated to God, emphasizing the need to be vigilant in following the Spirit's guidance and maintaining communion with God. He highlights the contrast between the destruction away from God's presence and the everlasting life promised to those who walk in friendship with God. Bourne urges believers to be tender and obedient, recognizing God as a consuming fire that refines and purifies those who belong to Him. He concludes with a reflection on mortality, expressing a readiness to spend his last hours in communion with God and repentance.

Transcript

[To M. B.] Sezincot, 1828.

Dear Cousin,

In my visit here I see something of that awful place of danger out of which God took me when living in the spirit of this world. God is not in all their thoughts; another world is never hinted at, nor hoped for. I cannot express to you how I feel, first, the everlasting destruction from the presence of God; then the being plucked as a brand from the burning; then the walking with God friendship here; and then the everlasting life, when this scene of trial and tribulation is over. Seeing these things are so, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" If God has been pleased to give us a principle of divine life, how we should continually watch its motions, and be on the alert to follow whatever the Spirit dictates! "God speaks once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not." Even in deep sleep - there is an awful voice in that - "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, and call upon thy God, that he may think upon us that we perish not" [Jonah i. 6]. And let the voice be what it may, whether in judgment or mercy, by giving a listening ear we shall find that communion with God is kept up. It is said of some, that as they did not regard his voice, so when they cry he will not hear [Zech. vii. 13]. May the Lord keep us ever tender and obedient, "for our God is a consuming fire" to us all. If we belong to him, he will by his fire consume our dross, and this is exceedingly painful to flesh and blood; and if we belong not to him, he will consume us altogether. How people can go on long, without knowing in some measure on whose side they are, I know

not; I think their sensations are not very keen, nor can sin have been made "exceeding sinful" to them, nor can they know anything of the justice and holiness of our God. O how sweetly do all these attributes harmonize in Christ Jesus, and in the sinner's conscience when purified! His justice, righteousness and holiness, his sovereignty and power, seemed all combined in the behalf of a poor repenting sinner; so far from dreading these tremendous attributes, I see them as so many sweet causes and the safe ground of my hope, and I am then lost in the admiration of such a Friend, who loveth at all times, and will make all things work for my good, and bring about my everlasting salvation.

Surrounded with the tokens of mortality in my body, and fifty-five years old, I cannot be long here. I daily ponder how I shall spend my last hours. I have sometimes a sweet view of God's helping hand, and that though pain and sickness may make both heart and flesh to fail, yet our God, reconciled in Christ Jesus, will be our portion, and the strength of our heart. Our happiness is in keeping up communion now, and leaving no sin unrepented of, that whenever he is pleased to knock, we may be ready to open.

Yours &c. J. B.

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