

Letter 39

by James Bourne

The speaker reflects on their experiences with trials and patience, and emphasizes the importance of humility, trust in God's will, and being willing to be nothing.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 4:23, Philippians 2:3, James 1:4, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Humility"

Description

James Bourne reflects on his spiritual journey, acknowledging his struggles with comparing himself to others in the church and the preciousness of God's Word in times of trouble and deliverance. He shares about the importance of patience, watchfulness, and godly fear in navigating difficulties, and the need to guard the heart against indiscretion and imprudence. Bourne emphasizes the significance of meekness, humility, and a willingness to surrender to God's will, highlighting the dangers of party spirit and the constant battle against self-will. He concludes with a prayer for a spirit that is willing to be nothing, recognizing that true humility prepares one to face any challenge through God's Spirit.

Transcript

[To Mr. Nunn.] Godalming, July 1830.

My dear Friend,

I am often meditating on the various cases in our church, and sometimes foolishly measuring myself by them - ready to conclude, that because I have not those bright and solid evidences which our friend Mr. Draper picks up in the furnace of affliction, I have not yet found the real thing; or that because I am not so low and despairing as some, in this also I am not in the footsteps of the flock. Yet the word of God is very precious to me, and I cannot but call to mind the sore troubles that have befallen me, and the wonderful deliverances God has wrought for me.

In coming here I met with many difficulties for the trial of patience, but the Lord made me watch; so that instead of haste, there was watchfulness, and instead of disappointment, nothing but the good hand of God appeared. You will be ready to say, What then? I was afraid it was too smooth; here also the Lord fore-armed me with much suspicion and godly fear, and many petitions that he would guard my heart and spirit. For you and I well know that indiscretion and imprudence cause the Lord to hide his face. We have been so often burnt in this fire, that we have, by the grace of God, a spiritual dread of it. By these means my present path has been sweetly cleared.

I had a good day on Sunday, though I was not so abundantly comforted, nor had any word powerfully spoken; yet I had much godly fear and humble confidence in the mercy of God in Christ, and could feel that he had done all things well, and would give me "an expected end." As it respects the church affairs, my spirit was so meekened, that I have not a will in the flesh about it, but it seems quite left with God to do as seems good to him. I shall be happy to put my name, in the fear of' God, to any whom the church appoints [to be Deacon]; and I trust if I am nominated, the Lord will more fully show me his will concerning it. Bonds and afflictions abide us in every place, and in every situation.

I fear party spirit greatly, and am sorry to say that it requires no small affliction to drive it out. I think one of the greatest mercies God bestows is a spirit that is quickly meekened, and falls quickly into contrition and repentance. But alas! Mr. Will-be-will is always at my elbow, ready to give his advice gratis, and something within me is ready to take it.

A place where we are nothing is hard to find; I dread beforehand, on every occasion, I shall fail in this. May the good Lord make you, and me willing to be nothing, and then we shall be, through his Spirit, fit for anything that may meet us.

Yours &c. J. B.

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