

Letter 41

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of love in identifying true disciples and the need to examine one's own spiritual condition.

Scripture: Matthew 24:30

Topics: "True Repentance", "Genuine Love"

Description

James Bourne preaches about the importance of genuine love among believers, emphasizing that outward appearances and professions can hide secret enmity and independence in the heart, similar to Judas' betrayal of Jesus. He highlights the need for true repentance and laying aside anything displeasing to God, as those who mourn their sins will eventually understand the glory of Jesus. Bourne shares his personal experience of finding reassurance in God's salvation and hope for his children through prayer and reading the Scriptures.

Transcript

[To a Friend.] London, May 1831.

My dear Friend,

Mr. Burrell, in consequence of the conduct of ___, took his text as follows - "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" [John xiii. 35]. He began by saying that it was in consequence of one in the church whom he feared had made a breach in spirit. I never heard him more powerful and solid. He told us that Judas had his feet washed, as well as the beloved disciple John, but that it was only an outward washing. None of them seemed to know what Judas was about, not even when Jesus said to him, "What thou doest, do quickly." Men may carry on a profession many years with their feet washed, yet with secret enmity, conceit and independence lurking in the heart, as Ahithophel long possessed the confidence of David, though in heart set against him; but at last it is brought to light and made manifest, and sometimes by a very slight circumstance.

I rose this morning with much heaviness, and was very dark in prayer, and greatly feared I should have nothing to say to my family. In reading Matthew xxiv., I had so soon begun than I found the Spirit helping my infirmity. The mourners in verse 30 ["Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn"] I could not help describing as those who should "see the Son of man come with power and great glory." The power is his judgment, and the sensible anger which poor sinners feel; and those that feel it shall certainly, sooner or

later, understand his glory. The angels with the trumpets are the servants of God, preaching the word of life. The branch that "is tender and putteth forth leaves" sets forth the extreme tenderness of those that are in soul trouble, anxious to lay aside everything that they conceive to be displeasing to God. Such may know, or be assured, that summer is nigh, that Jesus Christ is near at hand to heal. I cannot tell you the power and sweetness I felt, and the assurance of God's Spirit that he had chosen me, and made we to rejoice in his salvation, and greatly to hope that he would be with my children.

Yours &c. J. B.

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