

Letter 44

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and seeking God in order to find true greatness and peace in times of trial.

Scripture: Matthew 23:12, John 6:35, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:7, James 4:10

Topics: "True Greatness", "Spiritual Humility"

Description

James Bourne addresses a Lady of rank, expressing gratitude for her kindness and sharing insights on true greatness in the eyes of God. He emphasizes the importance of humility, spiritual depth, and the continual crucifixion of worldly desires in the journey of true religion. Bourne recounts personal experiences of seeking God's grace in times of illness and trials, highlighting the sustaining peace found in Christ amidst worldly tumults and confusion.

Transcript

[To a Lady of rank.] London, 20 May 1832.

Madam,

I am quite at a loss to express my feelings for your repeated kindness to my family. I am happy to say my eldest daughter is much more satisfied in her mind, and shows the safety of a slow progressive work, whilst I have often seen that Scripture verified which compares a quick falling into religious notions to the grass on the housetops, or seed sown by the wayside.

I hope your Ladyship will forgive me, but I am sure that there are some amongst your family that have an ear to listen to these things. You all know what it is to be great in this world; but if by the true grace of God you should become little in your own eyes, but highly prized by the Lord Jesus Christ, this would be a higher sort of greatness, and you would possess a better and more enduring inheritance. Greatness in this world may procure a down pillow for a sick bed, but to be partakers of the true riches will procure peace in the soul, even in the most abject poverty; and I conceive there cannot be a greater difficulty than for such as are of your Ladyship's rank to feel that they are nothing and vanity, and as such to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and receive as a free bounty all that he has to bestow.

I perceive this kingdom is filled with a profession that is for the most part held with pride and independence of God. True religion is a much more deep and spiritual thing than it is at first sight judged to be. I have

found it to be one continued crucifixion of all the wants, desires, prospects, and vanities of this natural heart of mine. I have found this crucifixion to be a very lingering death, and often when I have thought myself brought down in much humility, fresh light has discovered manifold hidden corruptions that cannot live, nor be suffered to dwell in the renewed heart. God and Mammon cannot live in the same house.

Seven years ago and upwards, when I was at your Ladyship's house, I was, and had been, very ill, and often under the greatest alarm lest I should not find the Lord to be gracious to me in the time of death; and many places can bear witness to the secret and trembling petitions I put up to the Lord to help me; and I assure you I had many sweet spiritual answers of peace and hope, that he would never leave me nor forsake me. Since then I have been restored to health, and thank God he has not suffered me to forget the happiness of considering my latter end. I have been, and am surrounded with many trials, but having such a Friend to go to I am sustained, and can truly say, that while the world, and this nation in particular, is filled with tumults and confusion of all sorts, I am preserved in Christ Jesus under the most heavenly calm you can conceive.

Something seems to say, How dare you write in such a manner? I can but reply, Because I cannot help thinking there are some amongst your party that understand what the Bread of heaven means, and are often hungry for want of a morsel of it. To such I write, and would fain exhort them to be much in earnest; for let not a wavering mind expect to find anything from the Lord.

I am, &c. J. B.

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