

Letter 48

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and the role of God's pruning in producing fruitfulness in believers' lives.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 4:18, John 15:2, 1 Corinthians 4:7, Philippians 1:9, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

Description

James Bourne writes a heartfelt letter to Mrs. J., commending her for her growth in faith and fruitfulness in the midst of afflictions. He encourages her not to compare her spiritual journey with others but to acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in her life. Bourne emphasizes the importance of ascribing all glory to God and the Lamb, reminding Mrs. J. to seek continual renewal and intimacy with God. He urges her daughter E. to persist in seeking God's light and guidance, highlighting the need to walk in the light to avoid stumbling in darkness.

Transcript

[To Mrs. J.] Tunbridge, September 1832.

Dear Friend,

I cannot help sending you a few lines, nor must you be alarmed if I begin by bearing testimony against the whole tenor of your letter. I think I have full proof; I have known you for some years, and when first you were among us, you, like the rest, wanted a good deal of priming; and the Lord has done it, as he always does, as a Sovereign. He prunes one one way, and another another way, but all to make us fruitful; and to remain unfruitful under such circumstances is a sad omen. If in natural things such were to be the ease, no doubt you would find fault with the gardener; but who is to be found fault with in spiritual matters? I say we do well not to suffer one member to set aside another, nor to compare our fruitfulness with another's, but rather acknowledge that measure of growth which has been evidently displayed under the kind management of the Holy Spirit. As it respects yourself, I for one must acknowledge you have been useful to me. I have seen and, heard of your manifold afflictions, and have heard you declare the goodness of God to you in them. I have been greatly refreshed by it so as to be encouraged, foreseeing myself on the bed of languishing, hoping as the Lord has appeared for you, so he would also be with me; and thus I have gone away with much godly fear on my spirit. I call this your fruitfulness abounding towards others. Your mercy lies in this - Not thinking yourself anything, but highly prizing the rich treasure that the Lord has put into your earthen vessel; be careful not to take the glory, but ascribe the whole of it to God and the

Lamb, who has washed us in his blood.

Pray remember me to your daughter E., and tell her to call to mind those seasons of darkness and fears that led her so to cry to God as to prevail, and not to be satisfied with the testimony of man, but seek for perpetual renewals of his tokens, that there may be intercourse between God and her soul; and let her remember that in every visit there is a discovery of light upon her path spiritually and temporally. "Light is sown for the righteous," as well as "gladness for the upright in heart." Stumbling comes in consequence of walking in darkness. Sin is what we stumble over, and nothing removes this but the precious blood of Christ. He is the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings: "in his light we see light;" and let us mind while we have the light to walk in it, for we shall not stumble in this light. Take heed that darkness do not abide upon your spirit, for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Comfort my heart, my dear friend E., in showing your earnest desire after these things, your fervency of spirit, and increase of understanding, so that your profiting may appear.

It is my sincere desire to see the prosperity of our Zion, and that you may increase more and more,

Yours &c. J. B.

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