

Letter 53

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon reflects on personal struggles with faith, emphasizing the importance of prayer and God's promises in overcoming despair.

Scripture: Isaiah 42:3

Topics: "Spiritual Struggle", "Divine Comfort"

Description

James Bourne shares a personal testimony of feeling cast down and trembling in spirit, but finding comfort and hope in God's Word. Through Psalms and the story of Hezekiah, he experiences moments of enlightenment, encouragement, and divine assurance, alternating between hope and despondency. Despite the changes and struggles, he clings to the promise that God will not break a bruised reed, finding solace in the Lord's kind favor and the certainty of better days ahead.

Transcript

[To a Friend.] London, November 18, 1833.

Dear Friend,

I have been for a long time exceedingly cast down and trembling in spirit lest the judgments of God, as recorded in his word, should overtake me and mine. Everything seemed to appear against me, and I became "like the sparrow alone upon the house-top." Yet I found under all this heavy cloud a very sensible and close cleaving and crying to the Lord. I overheard some one mention Psalm cii., and when I returned home I desired it to be read in my family. I saw some things in it very suitable, but not yet attainable by me. I therefore retired, and in secret read it over again with many longing desires. The first words which warmed my heart were these, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory;" and the next verse, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer," quite melted my heart in contrition, and gave me a sweet and comfortable hope that he was doing me good, and not wreaking his fury upon me; that he was really dealing gently and kindly with me, and as a father chasteneth his son, so the Lord was chastening me; and that he would look down from the height of his Sanctuary to hear the groaning of me his prisoner, "to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem."

This greatly comforted me, and gave me such light and under-standing in my path as at present I forbear to describe; but this gradually closed, and darkness returned with all my despondency. In reading the whole history of Hezekiah, as given by Isaiah, I was again enlightened and encouraged; and then again

confused and covered with fears; but this evening these words revived and filled my soul with hope and much contrition - "A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK." Thus hoping and desponding, crying and groaning, I have had many changes, even in this one day; sometimes fearing lest my religion should come to nothing, and sometimes looking out of obscurity, and seeing my eternal safety in Christ Jesus, and that better and brighter days yet await me.

A friend, sitting by, read Habakkuk ii. The first three verses were so sweetly applied with divine power upon my heart, as to assure me of the Lord's kind favour, and that he would do me good and not evil all the days of my life. [" I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower; and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; for it will surely come, it will not tarry."]

Yours &c. J. B.

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