

Letter 55

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, repentance, and spiritual communion in maintaining spiritual growth and avoiding spiritual death.

Scripture: Psalm 51:3, Psalm 139:23, Hebrews 4:12, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 1:10

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

James Bourne reflects on the various changes and trials he has faced, acknowledging the importance of these experiences in shaping his spiritual life. He shares how God humbled him, leading him to accept the consequences of his sins with a repentant heart. Bourne emphasizes the significance of recognizing our sins, seeking God's forgiveness, and allowing His mercy to transform our hearts. He encourages his friend to remain steadfast in prayer, to address any lingering sins, and to continually seek God's guidance through His Word, even in times of spiritual isolation.

Transcript

[To M. A. H.] London, May 30, 1834.

Dear Friend,

I, with you, am subject to many changes, and I must confess that in the exercises which these changes bring, is the life of my spirit. About a year ago I was under many apprehensions that the Lord would return no more. I was in that "horror of great darkness" out of which I thought the Lord never intended to deliver me. He showed me the "smoking furnace" that I was about to be put into, to humble my pride and make me less independent; and I think he made me in some measure to accept with all my heart the punishment of my sins; for I dared not murmur. I have often since wondered how the Lord kept me patiently waiting for him; nothing is so likely to bring us to this as a sense of our sin, under which we have nothing to say but Guilty; and nothing to do but to put our fingers upon our lips and cry. "Unclean, unclean." And when the Lord comes to us in such a place as this we are indeed surprized, and his goodness and mercy quite break our hearts.

By these various exercises the soul gains much increase of understanding, and a further insight into the work of God, both in ourselves and in others. Past experiences are always more or less like waymarks in future difficulties, and cause a greater readiness to run to our Stronghold.

No doubt you have been in many perplexities since you left us, and for want of public and private communion, with the saints there have been many painful seasons of spiritual death, and some cross or other has been laid upon you to add energy to your prayers.

Be sure you never "let that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Nothing will establish darkness and despondency in the soul sooner than an old sin passed over, forgotten, and unrepented of. May you and I be able to pray with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting." Make the word of God your constant companion in your present banishment, and may you, like John, be found" in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

Yours &c. J. B.

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