

Letter 6

by James Bourne

The speaker shares their personal experience of spiritual affliction, learning the importance of humility and submission to God's will.

Scripture: Job 23:10, Psalm 119:71, Proverbs 3:5, Philippians 2:3, James 4:10

Topics: "Spiritual Struggle", "Humility"

Description

James Bourne shares a personal testimony of experiencing God's presence followed by a season of intense affliction and spiritual struggle. He describes feeling overwhelmed, battling with rebellion, self-will, and secret anger towards God, and the realization of his need for meekness and submission. Through this trial, he learns the importance of humility and surrendering to God's will, acknowledging his own pride and need for God's refining fire to humble him.

Transcript

[To Mr H. B.] - London, 1808.

Dear Sir,

For three weeks after I wrote to you last, I enjoyed much of God's presence - "the candle of the Lord" shone bright upon my head and "his visitation preserved my spirit;" and I often thought this was fitting me for some serious affliction, and that I should soon be fast "bound in affliction and iron." And surely the thing that I greatly feared came upon me, so that my spirit was overwhelmed within me. The enemy tried hard to turn me out of the chapel, telling me I was not fit to walk about; he has made me to skulk and hide myself where I could, like a thief that is detected. He followed me as close in my business, so that I was obliged to resign much of my employment. These things made me cry infinitely to God for help, for I knew not where it would all end. I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep; everybody perceived something was the matter, but none could find out the cause, for I told nobody the real state of my case. O what a hornet's nest appeared within? What rebellion, self-will, what tender compassion for self, and what secret anger sometimes against God, for not appearing immediately to deliver me! I have often lain on the floor weeping and calling upon God for a long time together, and it seemed as if the more I cried and groaned, the less help I found. I thought I went in faith; but alas! there was no resignation, and conscience has often secretly told me that from my heart I could not add these words - if consistent with thy righteous will. O no! I would fain be delivered at all events; no patiently waiting, nor quietly hoping. Here I lay for six weeks, like a fool brayed in a mortar. God has at length given me light and understanding to see that it was his hand upon me, and

that for good. He has given me a measure of meekness and submission, and enabled me feelingly to say "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." But then I am more brutish and proud than any man, and therefore the furnace must be heated sevenfold. I would be something, and God is showing me that I am less than nothing. I was taking the highest room; but God has said, Go down to the lowest, and give every man place.

Yours faithfully, J. B.

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