

Letter 77

by James Bourne

James Bourne emphasizes the importance of genuine faith, the dangers of false security, and the necessity of fully committing to Christ amidst trials.

Scripture: Proverbs 1:7, Matthew 7:21, Luke 9:23, Philippians 3:7, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "True Repentance", "Complete Surrender"

Description

James Bourne addresses M., J., and C. G. in London on March 21, 1835, urging them to tremble at God's word as a sign of the Spirit's work and to not find joy in human acknowledgment but in true repentance. He emphasizes the seriousness of concealing convictions for the sake of comfort and warns against false professions and erroneous teachings. Bourne stresses the importance of forsaking all for Christ, even if it means going through trials and tribulations, as true salvation requires complete surrender and obedience.

Transcript

[To M., J., and C. G.] London, 21 March 1835.

My dear Friends,

You excite me to write a second time to explain some things in which you have a little misunderstood me. Trembling at God's word is set forth as a good token of the Spirit's work, but your rejoicing must not be in man's acknowledging your testimony, but in manifesting at what you trembled.

I think there can be no sin so great as to be convicted deeply, even to trembling, of an evil profession, and then against light, for the sake of a quiet house, to conceal that conviction, and to continue in those things which God has discovered to be unfruitful to you and hateful to him. He would not have led you to tremble at those things, if he had meant to teach you by them.

Salvation from first to last is close work, and there are few that be saved, though many make a profession. O take heed! You know not on what a brink you stand. If God has in any measure enlightened you, do nothing to extinguish that light. Give no right hand of fellowship to errors, or erroneous teachers. One of you has had some sharp work, and I would not have you suffer in vain, "if it be yet in vain." The true light must have life and power and efficacy so as to keep you from all things that are and have been discovered to be false. If the Lord is leading you "in paths that you have not known," and making "crooked things straight" before you, it is, as you truly say, unspeakable love; but love has many aspects. Plucking out

right eyes, cutting off right hands, and many more such painful things, are set forth in God's word as his dealings in love to his people, to take them from their idols. If this work be of God, he will put you into a thousand furnaces, but he will make you come to your first avowal, and FORSAKE ALL FOR CHRIST. Yes, and you will think yourselves gloriously repaid for all your trouble.

I believe, with you, my last letter was a message to your souls, but am grieved that the most important point should be in a measure overlooked. You quote my words about attending to the sacred teaching; I was here still pressing and warning you to remember what you trembled at, and the discovery of your former errors. I fear you have not a sense of your danger, nor of the poisonous effect of evil communications, but are disposed to pad the cross, and make it soft to your shoulders. If you belong to God, you will see how he will oppose you in all such attempts, and make matters far worse for you than if you "turn the battle to the gate," and make Christ the Captain of your salvation. Do not be afraid of making too much use of Christ; he will not desert you in extremity. I know your cases are peculiar, and so are all the eases of God's people; this brings more honour and renown to him as a strong Deliverer.

Again I repeat, "YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN." Why should you embrace the bosom of a stranger to God's covenant, and become the members of a harlot? Such as are instructed as you lately have been, must sit "as a sparrow alone upon the house-top," and "not be reckoned among the nations" [Ps. cii. 7; Num. xxiii. 9]. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for HE IS THY LORD, AND WORSHIP THOU HIM" [Psalm xlv. 10, 11]. The Lord declares he will take all the mountains of difficulties away. Confer not with flesh and blood. "Remember Lot's wife."

Yours in the Lord, J. B.

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