

Letter 85

by James Bourne

The sermon encourages believers to focus on their spiritual state and reliance on God through prayer and authenticity in community.

Scripture: Luke 22:42

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

James Bourne delivers a heartfelt message to C. G. in London on June 28, 1835, urging him to be vigilant against the enemy's schemes and to prioritize seeking God's will above all else. Bourne emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's plans, finding peace in His sovereignty, and focusing on the state of one's soul rather than external matters. He encourages C. G. to seek God's kingdom first, trusting that all other things will fall into place. Bourne shares his own struggles with sin and the need for constant repentance and reliance on God's grace for spiritual growth.

Transcript

[To C. G.] London, 28 June 1835.

My dear Friend,

I would remind you of a dangerous point which our insidious enemy will gain, if the Lord prevent not by watchfulness and prayer - that is, "As thy servant was busy here and there," the essential point was neglected [1 Kings xx. 40]. What with the anxious fear of offending friends, the difficulty of tracing the footsteps of the Lord, and misunderstanding his present design, you get confused and unsettled in every sense. I think the whole of this is to teach you "to turn the battle to the gate," and most earnestly to watch and see if the Lord will not give you some measure of composure to leave human events for him to settle and unfold as he sees fit. I never felt a happier moment in my life than when by the power of God's Spirit I once spoke these words from my heart, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." This would leave room and time to seek to clear another point; Whether your name be written in the Lamb's book of life.

You will in your present walk find nothing but hurry of spirit and legal bondage; no heart for reading the word of God; no relish for half an hour's secret prayer; no room for meditation; no calmness for judging yourself; no sensibility to confess your sins. This is the very cause why you are reduced now to such a state of darkness as not to feel or to suppose you are in the right way inwardly or outwardly. I have no doubt if you could find power with God in prayer, the very discovery of his coming and going, would bring

along with it light upon your path. This is called walking in the fear of God, and would prove "a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

The condemnation that you say you feel for all you do, is the effect of legal bondage, and has in it an expectation that by doing or forbearing you will excite the Lord's compassion. This drives you farther from the mark, and has a tendency to entangle you in a worse hurry of spirit, the bane of all spiritual seeking. I would therefore entreat you to turn your mind wholly to the state of your soul, and leave your outward matters in God's hand, and seek his kingdom, believing that, according to his word, all things else will be added, and all enemies be made at peace with you.

Will it be any encouragement to you if I tell you that I find the way as difficult as you do, and this powerful body of sin a perpetual hindrance to my happiness? Some foolishness or other in me causes the Lord to depart, and it is often a sore and long absence, and brings much shame, and many bitter reflections at the thoughts of my folly, and many confessions, before my heart is moved by his returning kindness.

May the Lord keep you all transparent, and not like "whited sepulchres;" and when you come before our spiritual Joseph, may you be able to say, "We be, true men."

Yours &c. J. B.

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