

Letter 118

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon explores the parallels between spiritual struggles and childbirth, emphasizing the promise of resurrection through Christ and the necessity of humility before God.

Scripture: Psalm 147:3, Isaiah 26:16, John 14:6, Romans 6:4, Colossians 3:1

Topics: "Spiritual Struggle", "New Life"

Description

James Bourne addresses the spiritual struggles and pains that believers face, comparing them to the intense labor pains of a woman about to give birth. He emphasizes the importance of not losing spiritual energy in the midst of troubles and challenges, warning against compromising true spiritual life. Bourne encourages believers to embrace a spiritual death to worldly hopes and vain speculations, leading to a resurrection to newness of life through the power of Christ. He reminds his audience of God's faithfulness to revive and restore those who are spiritually dead, enabling them to praise God and cast away entanglements that hinder their relationship with Him.

Transcript

[To Mrs. H(arley).] London, 13 February 1837.

Dear Friend,

It is said "Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;" but does the trouble increase in any degree like that of the woman with child, when she "draweth near to the time of her delivery," and "crieth out in her pangs?" Have the cries been more vehement, or do you lose this spiritual energy in lesser troubles and cares? There is a great clanger lest in this mistake we die not to the world, the flesh, and the devil. True spiritual life will fear a compromise, and such words as these will fill us with great alarm, "How soon is the fig tree withered away!" It had many leaves, but no fruit. But if these spiritual pangs have the right effect, they will bring on death - death to all hopes of salvation by the works of the law - death to chimeras and vain speculations, both as to ourselves and the fancied happiness of those about us.

In this death we mourn sore as doves, and are left alone as a sparrow upon the house-top; too good for this world, too bad for the church of God. Here the Lord in infinite condescension sends a word of encouragement, and tells our hearts that these are His DEAD, and that they shall LIVE. As the Lord Jesus Christ by his eternal power raised himself from the dead, so he will manifest the same power in raising

such dead men to newness of life. This heavenly and spiritual resurrection will produce a new song of praise, and the heavenly dew shall so distil upon the soul, as to enable us to cast forth all ties and entanglements that would otherwise hold us from his sweet presence.

When the pangs of this spiritual birth are upon us, we cannot see how we are to be delivered, but Christ in due time shows us that he is "the way, the truth, and the life." But, as I said before, remember our God is a jealous God, and will be honoured and had in reverence; and in proportion as that heavenly dew drops upon the spirit, so and no more will your affections be attracted by your heavenly wooer, and by little and little you will withdraw from the dangerous snares that you suffer to be laid for your feet.

I find little else in this world but sorrow, my sin being the procuring cause; yet when I am enabled to enter into my chambers, and hide myself in much humiliation before God, I am surprised indignation towards me, before in mercy and compassion he visits my troubled heart, and fits me further for the next trouble, which is sure quickly to take place, as each succeeding wave follows the what a small moment it seems that the Lord Jesus shews his last. [Isa. xxvi. 16-21.]

Yours &c. J. B.

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