

Letter 144.

by James Bourne

We must give the Lord no rest and recognize our need for Christ in the midst of trials and afflictions.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:7

Topics: "Trials And Tribulations", "Spiritual Armor"

Description

James Bourne encourages Mrs. Jones to see the purpose behind her trials and confinement, revealing the deceitful nature of her heart and the need to find fullness and rest in Christ Jesus alone. He emphasizes the importance of not laying down our spiritual armor and the necessity of affliction to humble us and draw us closer to God. Bourne shares his wonder and astonishment at the promise of everlasting joy for those who endure shame and confusion, pointing to the hope and peace found in Christ amidst trials and tribulations.

Transcript

[To Mrs. Jones.] Pulverbach, 14 July 1838.

My dear Friend,

The Lord does nothing in vain, nor does he ever make any mistakes. You once told me there was a "need be" for these trials [1 Peter i. 6], but did you find out that need as it respects your long confinement? Have you not seen some-thing of it in your continual proneness to backslide in heart, and the desolation you feel within, withering presently from the sweetest communications of the Lord's love and presence? This is suffered to show you more of your deceitful heart than you have heretofore known; and that you may still see more and more that there is no fullness, satisfaction, or rest for you, but inasmuch as you are able to draw it from Christ Jesus. However kind he may have been, we sometimes forget, and lay down our arms, looking for a little respite from this war; it is then the enemy comes and entertains our minds with ten thousand baubles; but by and by our never failing Friend asks our consciences this question, When did you last talk or walk with me? This question fills us with fear and shame, and we begin to ponder our way and to see how treacherously we have departed from him; and now we perceive the need for the rod of affliction; for God is holy and jealous, and will have no rival in our affections. This work, under the mighty and wise management of our best Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, turns to our good, and humbles us in the dust, and we become like Joseph's brethren; the cup is found in the sack's mouth, and we are greatly ashamed.

Now I come to what I can never account: for, but have often wondered at with great astonishment, and covered my face in silence, while I have thus lain at his feet like a lost criminal, when he has pronounced such words as these - "For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: EVERLASTING JOY SHALL BE UNTO THEM" [Isaiah lxi. 7].

May the Lord grant that this may be your portion, as I believe it will. You and I must give the Lord no rest. I am in the midst of trials and difficulties, but the Lord is with me and gives me peace in him. In the world, you and I have been made to know there is nothing but tribulation; but the Saviour kindly tell us, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" and he also tells us we shall be more than conquerors through him that has washed us in his own blood. This is my stay; for every day brings along with it something or other to show me that this fountain of evil within would drown me in perdition and destruction, were it not for the arm of the Lord made bare, in all directions, for my help against my pride and conceit and independence of God, and for the support and maintenance of that new man which the Holy Spirit has planted in my heart; and this blessed indwelling of the Spirit shows itself by that especial grace called godly fear, which starts at the slightest alarm given, and knows no other refuge than Christ Jesus. This is the way the vulture's eye, however keen, can never see, but it is more or less discovered to poor broken-hearted sinners that feel their lost estate.

May the Lord comfort you, and give you his sweet presence. Sukey Harley sends her love to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. I remain with great affection,

Your friend in the Lord, J. B.

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