

Letter 40

by James Bourne

James Bourne reflects on personal trials and the transformative power of God's grace and mercy in his life.

Scripture: Psalm 39:9

Topics: "Trusting God", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

James Bourne reflects on the changes and conflicts he faces, finding peace in the midst of difficulties by trusting that God has a purpose for all that happens to him. He shares his determination to cry out to the Lord for help in desperate situations, finding comfort in knowing that God understands our weaknesses and is always ready to help. Bourne describes the wondrous works of God in his life, including patience, resignation, meekness, contrition, and a deep acceptance of God's discipline, leading to a joyful hope in salvation despite surrounding difficulties.

Transcript

[To M. B.] Purfleet, Sept. 12, 1830.

Dear Cousin,

I am the subject of many changes. I do not remember the time when I had such a sweet journey as in coming here. It brings to my mind the pleasant week I spent at Greenhithe, the many tokens of God's favour towards me, and the peace of mind that kept pace with them. I now have many conflicts, and not a few difficulties; my peace is often disturbed; but I am made to believe the Lord has "not done without cause" all that he has done to me; and this brings in deep humiliation. Luther tells us that these changes are often upon us, in order that we may not clash our heads against the heavens, in the day of prosperity, nor our feet against the earth, in adversity.

I have no wish to give way to unbelief, but feel full fraught with a determination that the more desperate my ease looks, the more I will cry to the Lord for help; and I have occasional sweetness in perceiving that he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore not only knows how to succour such as are tempted, but is more ready to help than we to pray. "For that thy Name is near, thy wondrous works declare" [Psalm lxxv. 1]. What (say you) are his wondrous works? I will tell you a few that he has wrought in me. He has made me say, with David, "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it" [Psalm xxxix. 9]. This is one, and it is called by many names - such as patience, long-suffering, resignation, submission; add to this a step further - a meek and quiet spirit, deep humiliation under a sense of a sinful nature,

contrition of spirit, a sore heart under any offence offered to his gracious Majesty; and amongst many more, I must add one step further - a hearty acceptance of the rod upon the old man, a glorious sense of God's mercy in Christ Jesus working a complete dominion over the will and affections, a rejoicing in this sweet salvation, though surrounded with all sorts of difficulties, and a looking to the end of our race with a hope full of immortality.

Blessed be God, I write none other things than such as the Holy Spirit has wrought in my heart, And I have the clearest understanding of; and I cannot wish you a better portion than to be in the full possession of the same.

Yours &c. J. B.

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