

Letter 43

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon 'Letter 43' explores the transformative power of God's grace in the midst of suffering and trials.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3, Luke 12:32, Romans 5:3, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 12:11

Topics: "Suffering And Faith", "Gods Presence"

Description

James Bourne writes a heartfelt letter to his daughters, expressing his struggles and moments of comfort in the midst of trials, finding solace in identifying with the sufferings of Jesus Christ. He acknowledges the importance of spiritual exercises in maintaining faith and drawing closer to God, emphasizing the sweetness of God's presence in times of difficulty. Bourne reflects on the blessings that have come through faithful ministry and the perseverance needed to follow Christ despite challenges, urging prayers for their minister and the government. He marvels at the grace of God that sustains and enriches believers in all circumstances, desiring that his children experience the abundant blessings of God even in their troubles.

Transcript

[To his Daughters H. P. and H. &c.] Brighton, 31 October 1831.

My dear Children,

I write this to you, and to Mrs. J. and cousin M. I am under various exercises here; often so cast down as to wonder whereto it will grow, and now and then so comforted and supported as to believe the Lord is doing nothing with me or for me but good. But to say this from the heart, when his heavy hand is upon me, I find to be very hard; yet all things are possible with God. I was sweetly melted in rending Isaiah liii., especially the words "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." It reconciled me to all my troubles; I perceived I was treading in the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially by that spiritual patience and tender watchfulness, in which I perceive he creates in me. The chapter begins in a low key, but how beautifully everything brightens up! "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;" and under "the travail of his soul" we who are by nature poor barren souls, are to "break forth into singing;" to fear none of those afflictions which come upon us, for we shall never be ashamed nor confounded.

The exercises which cousin Mary is under are not strange to me; for I perceive that by means of them, spiritual life is kept up; and every succeeding wave brings us nearer to the heavenly Canaan. Nothing can

equal the sweet light and clear perception of God's tenderness and care which I find in those visits which he pays me in the furnace; whenever I touch upon this subject, I know not where to end in speaking his praises; and I can add (with) "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. "His good pleasure overtops all our mountains of difficulties.

The Lord has brought forth these sweet things out of much bitterness, through the means of a faithful ministry. Our sores have been deeply probed; and we have found a sound healing in that very point, at which many have been offended, and have left. We too have been asked, "Will ye also go away?" The unseen and unknown hand of God has prevented this, and we are now reaping the rich fruit of following the Lamb, though through much tribulation, yet through much light and comfort, with a good hope of a better inheritance. Therefore we ought to be continually praying for the prosperity of our minister; also that the government may prosper, and that we may have our privileges continued.

I must say I am a wonder to myself, that while I thus feel my heart supported and defended and abounding in hope, yet all my troubles are still upon me and about me. What is there like the true grace of God? It is health in sickness; life in death; true riches in poverty; patience in tribulation. May the Lord cause all these things to abound in you all; may he have a kind remembrance of you in your troubles, and so sanctify them that they shall yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. This will be the way he will get all the glory.

Your affectionate father, J. B.

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