

Letter. 50

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual discernment and vigilance against the subtle dangers posed by false teachings and influences.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 6:23, Proverbs 7:6, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Spiritual Deception", "Gods Guidance"

Description

James Bourne preaches a warning about the deceitful tactics of Satan, cautioning against being lured by seemingly kind and religious individuals who may lead one astray. He emphasizes the importance of being covered by the Spirit of God rather than the flesh, as God will reveal the true nature of our hearts. Bourne urges the listener to heed God's law as a guiding light to avoid falling into the snares of deception and to seek restitution for past wrongs by cleaving to the truth revealed by God.

Transcript

[To the Rev. Watkin Maddy.] London, Jan. 10, 1833.

Dear Sir,

I begin to fear lest you should prove yourself ignorant of Satan's devices. The worst of snares are usually laid in the most insidious places. I have heard of a Mr. B--, who seemed armed with all the zeal of an Apostle, and feared not the face of any of the great men of Oxford. But where is he? Swallowed up in errors, and has made it fully manifest to all such as fear God, that the root of the matter was never there. I exceedingly tremble at your loitering, and the plausible excuses you make. While you are endeavouring in your own wisdom to make straight all things that God has made crooked, take heed lest the city be in flames, and you find no angel to take you by the hand.

In reading this morning, with my family, the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia (Isaiah xx.), I was awe-struck with the stripping of every fair outside of religion, and how God will discover us to all the world, and make it manifest, even by some little foolish and apparently trifling circumstance, if our covering is not that of the Spirit, but of the flesh; and so we are led away captives.

The enemy goes about "as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." A sheep, separated from the fold, is in danger of every wolf. The worst snares are such as seem kind and religious; for these deceitful workers are set forth as subtle of heart, loud and stubborn, lying in wait at every corner. They will do all

they can in their kindness to kiss you, and, with a presumptuous confidence, tell you "I have peace offerings with me, this day have I payed my vows; therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee;" and it is added "Thus with her much fair speech she caused him to yield, and with the flattering of her lips she forced him." These are some of the things I often fear in myself, and therefore am led to caution others, knowing that this Mr. Fair-speech, or some of his family, resides in every place, and is ready to offer his services on all occasions. I would have you remark that all that listen are described as simple ones, void of -understanding, passing near to the place of danger, and going the way to the house of folly. Alas! alas! None are so wise and so strong as those who know nothing as they ought to know, and feel themselves quite able to stand their ground in every dangerous place. [Prov. vii. 6-23.]

May the Lord direct, and help you to know and understand aright, and make his Law to be a lamp to you, to keep you from the flattery of "the strange woman;" and rest assured that in the reproofs of instruction is the way of life. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" It is said, "Men do not despise a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." You, Sir, have been this thief, but the Lord has found you out, and you must now no longer become vain in your robbery; but as you have been told the truth, and have in part acknowledged it, so must you now make restitution, by showing your ardent desire to cleave to that truth which God has revealed. He that turns away from it lacketh understanding, destroys his own soul, and gets nothing but wounds and dishonour, and his reproach shall never be wiped away. [Prov. vi. 23-33.]

May the Lord give you courage to listen to his voice, and to forgive me, is the prayer of

Your unworthy servant, J. B.

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