

Letter 92

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the comfort and power of God's mercy and love in times of need and struggle.

Scripture: Psalm 34:17, Psalm 46:1, Psalm 103:11, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 7:13, Romans 8:38, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 13:5, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Gods Love", "Persevering Faith"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to M. O. Bushey on August 23, 1835, expresses comfort in hearing of God's tender dealings during a time of extremity. He emphasizes the fear and dismay caused by sin, highlighting the need for a deep conviction of God's love in Christ Jesus to enable true worship. Bourne encourages Bushey not to give in to the lies of the devil, reminding him of God's promise to never leave nor forsake His children. He urges Bushey to persevere through the strait gate, knowing that God's mercies are abundant and sufficient even in the midst of trials and fears.

Transcript

[To M. O.] Bushey, 23 August 1835.

Dear Friend,

I was much comforted to hear that the Lord had dealt so tenderly with you, in this your time of extremity. Sin will always be a source of fear and dismay, and as we approach the border of eternity and perceive our naked souls at the bar of God, no wonder that we should feel that it is of his mercy we are not consumed. Nothing short of a powerful persuasion of the love of God in Christ Jesus will enable us at all to sing of mercy and judgment. It is when we sink into the depths of misery and self-despair, that the Lord condescends to give us some comprehension with all other saints, of the length and breadth and height of the unsearchable love of God. I have often thought, with you, that if it had not been so boundless, I should never have been brought from the dark corners of the earth. I know with you what it is to fear lest his mercies should be clean gone for ever, and he would be favourable no more; but this was my infirmity, for he has returned with double kindness, and told me what I am sure he will in mercy tell you - "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" - "Though thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." You and I must not give up such mercies to the lies of the devil, nor believe every word he may inject. Let not man nor devil take thy crown.

You are indeed now at the strait gate, and few there be that press through; but your fears, when sanctified by the Spirit of God, will add energy to your prayers, so that you will take no denial. He always fills the hungry with good things, yea, every bitter reproof, every anxious fear, will be sweet, while it increases the cry, "Lord, save, or I perish." I hope you will be able to acknowledge more and more the great goodness and kindness of the Lord to you in this distressing hour; think not anything too hard for the Lord to do for you, nor too good to bestow upon a poor trembling sinner. I am truly glad that you manifest the same conflicts and conquests that I have found in all the children of God that I have known; nor must you now consider it strange concerning the fiery trial, as though you alone were in it; but give the Lord no rest night or day, and if possible touch the hem of his garment, and you shall find virtue and efficacy, for love is strong as death.

In your little note I find the whole of my conflicts and difficulties set forth, and I am encouraged by it that God is no respecter of persons, but whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. O how true and sweet is this! and when (as it was with Paul) all hopes of being saved have been taken away, some broken pieces have brought me safe to land; that is, two or three words of a verse, or some sweet look of approbation have so won my best affections, that I am willing to be (as you say) anything or nothing. In this valley of humiliation I pray this letter may find you; and when hope encourages you, remember me.

Your unworthy servant in the Lord, J.B.

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