

# Letter 111

by James Bourne

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*The Lord leads us through both painful and joyful experiences to humble us, bring us closer to Himself, and preserve us unto eternal life.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 23:6, Psalm 23:1, Psalm 23:4-5, John 10:27

**Topics:** "Faith And Perseverance", "Following God"

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## Description

James Bourne, in a letter to J. G., emphasizes the importance of waiting on the Lord and recognizing His voice amidst the noise of the world. He finds comfort in the unity and spirit shared among believers, highlighting the tender care and patience shown by those who follow Christ. Bourne encourages perseverance through trials, reminding that the Shepherd leads His sheep through both sorrow and joy, ultimately preserving them unto eternal life. He urges to remain courageous in following God's word, cleaving unto Him amidst challenges, and expressing gratitude for God's faithfulness and mercy.

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## Transcript

[To J. G.] Tunbridge Wells, 23 August 1836.

My dear Friend,

I have your letter to your sister C. before me now, and must say it has been a sweet savour of life unto life to my soul to see and feel the simplicity that is there manifest. I am truly happy to find you proceed so tenderly, for such caution is of the Lord. This is the very place that manifests between them that fear God and them that fear him not. How many say, "Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

I was also much comforted in the account of Mrs. Oakley, and think she must be a true yoke-fellow. The tenderness and patience she manifests is evidently of the Lord. I cannot but admire how the Lord is bringing to light a little lot of his sheep in your dark corner; and how you find out one another's spirit, and what unity is felt. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;" - "a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." The plain English is this; - the talk of the professors of the present day is the voice of the stranger; the sheep of Christ cannot understand it, nor feed upon such husks, nor bear it; but a few broken-hearted, cast down afflicted ones, can understand one another. They know the voice of the Spirit that speaks in them; and thus they fold together, and Christ their Shepherd leads them. But poor Mrs. Oakley will say, I wish I could find he leads me; I have nothing but sorrow and trouble, and little hope of its being otherwise. I still say this good

Shepherd leads us, and appoints many a painful and wearisome way; and what makes it more so, is our thinking he never does anything but comfort; in which we are deceived. He leads us by the waters of affliction first, to humble our pride and bring us to the Publican's state; also to make us like little children without strength; and then come in the waters of life, most refreshing and reviving. Then, as new wine in new bottles, we are preserved unto eternal life. The one, namely the sorrow, is equally the leadings of our good Shepherd with the other, namely the joy and peace. Therefore be not disheartened; "There is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." Gideon's army grew faint, yet they still pursued. David likewise pursued and re-covered all.

It is said in Joshua xxiii., "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses" (the word of God), " that ye come not among these nations that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods . . . . but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day; for the Lord hath driven out from among you great nations and strong, but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day." While I write this, my heart warms with love and gratitude to the Lord for his mercy to us. His faithfulness has never failed surely goodness and mercy have followed us, and it is of his mercy that we have not totally and finally fallen. The Lord our God has fought for us; as he promised, so he has performed, far beyond our utmost expectation.

Pray read that sweet chapter of Joshua; it is full of caution and admonition. My heart is much softened in warm desires to be kept very tender, and not to offend the Lord by turning aside at every "Lo here" or "Lo there!" but still to keep close to this good Shepherd; now and then sweetly believing "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

Yours in the Lord, J. B.

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