

Letter 12

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God in difficult times, recognizing His goodness and kindness, and seeking to bear affliction with patience and thankfulness.

Scripture: Psalm 55:22, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Peter 1:4, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Gods Providence", "Suffering Faith"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to his wife in 1812, expresses his grief over his son's relapse but desires to leave everything in God's hands. Despite facing reproach and his child's sickness, he finds comfort in God's love and providence, feeling drawn to submit passively to God's will. Bourne acknowledges the necessity of tribulations for God's children and expresses a deep desire to bear adversities with patience and thankfulness, knowing that God's love is precious to him. He reflects on the brevity of life and the hope of an eternal inheritance, trusting that God will be better to him than his fears, even in facing the unknowns of the future.

Transcript

[To his Wife.] Southampton, 1812.

My dear Wife,

It is indeed a grief to me to hear of my little boy's relapse. It is my earnest desire to leave the event with God. On opening your letter I felt it sorely, but no contention. It immediately came into my mind how tenderly and kindly the Lord had dealt with me; and I was much softened under a sense of his goodness. I am sensible I have no power to resign my child, or patiently submit to any afflictive dispensation, yet I am much drawn out to beg of God to make me passive in his hands; and at times feel sweetly satisfied that he is doing all things for our good.

O how many mercies and blessings I enjoy! How I am comforted at times with an entire sense of his love to me in Christ Jesus, and so kind is he in all his providences, that, were it not for the reproach I lie under, and the sickness of my child, I could hardly be in the footsteps of the flock; for tribulation is and must be the lot of God's children.

I cannot describe to you how desirous I feel at times to bear every adverse providence, not only with patience but thankfulness. I am very sensible that ballast is necessary; mine neither is nor has been a

common case. Never man so unworthy as I am was dealt with so tenderly. It is true all cry out against me; but God in Christ is very VERY precious to me. I now enjoy the secret reward, and believe one day of other I shall have it openly. Don't misunderstand me; I mean, I have a comfortable testimony of God's love now, and whether I am ever received by God-fearing people or not, this I know, I shall have "an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away."

Matters come to a very narrow point, if we could think so; for how little it signifies whether I go first or my boy; a few years must settle the whole. But everything is on my side. "Chosen of God, elect, precious" - "All things are yours." I feel everything sweet, but the river Jordan. At times that looks deep and broad, and it is injected into my mind that it will be doleful; but all beyond is pleasant; and I live in hopes that God may be better to me than all my fears, even in this matter.

I do most earnestly beg my dearest wife to write by return of post, and let me hear all.

Adieu. J.B.

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