

# Letter 2

by James Bourne

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*James Bourne's sermon reflects on personal struggles with faith and emphasizes the enduring love of God amidst trials.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 49:4, Psalm 27:9, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 34:18, Psalm 139:23, Isaiah 41:10, Lamentations 3:22, Romans 8:38, James 1:6, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Divine Love", "Spiritual Struggle"

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## Description

James Bourne expresses his struggles with doubt, unbelief, and feeling separated from God, yet finds comfort in the unchangeable love of Jesus Christ. He reflects on the moments of refreshment and the fear of losing God's mercy, but ultimately experiences a breakthrough in understanding God's goodness and everlasting love. Bourne acknowledges his inability to revive his own soul and recognizes that only God can open doors and bring joy after weeping. Despite feeling unstable and blind at times, he holds onto the hope of God's faithfulness and mercy.

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## Transcript

[To Mr. Gadsby, Minister of the Gospel, Manchester.] London, 1807.

Dear Sir,

I fear you will begin to think, and that not without cause, that I have entirely forgotten you; but I have only been at home one week, and I found much to be done after so long an absence. I feel a great backwardness to write even now - I am so dark and shut up that I cannot come forth; yet there is a secret something tells me I am under the leading of God - yea, according to that word, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not" - and blind indeed I am, for I am groping for the wall at noonday. I have been very sharply tried in various ways since I saw you, and have been many times ready to give all up; but thanks be to God, he will not give me up; and at other times I have had the sweetest refreshings, which I cannot describe. Indeed, it may be said of me, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" [Gen. xlix. 4].

This one thing is at all times a source of consolation to me - I cannot help looking back at the miserable condition I was in when the Lord Jesus Christ first espoused me to himself, made me one with him, and put a ring upon my finger, an emblem of his eternal and unchangeable love. And though in my gloomy moments I call all this into question, yet the devil has not yet made me believe it entirely a delusion. I know God hears prayer, even put up in the dark seasons, for he often gives me the desire of my heart. But the

happy moments are so transient that I scarcely know what to make of it. Unbelief seems to be the only thing that prevails in my heart. O how I hate myself for it! For I would fain take my Jesus at his word, and feed thereon and grow; but instead of this, I am always getting on the sand.

I feel I have no power to quicken my own soul. He shutteth and no man openeth; he hideth his face, and we are troubled. It is sin, and nothing else, that separates God from us. O how I loathe myself on this account! But blessed be God, though "weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." I had such a sight and sense of what I am, that it made me greatly to fear, and say, Will the Lord be gracious? Are not his mercies clean gone for ever? I began to look for some fearful thing to happen to me; but under Mr. Huntington's preaching last night the Lord broke my heart with his goodness, and I was filled with the keenest sense of my own nothingness, and of his unchangeable and everlasting love to me.

Yours affectionately, J. B.

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