

# Letter 31

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's strength and tenderness in the midst of conflict and pain, and finding eternal life through communion with Christ.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:18, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:7

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Tribulation Blessings"

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## Description

James Bourne shares about his recent struggles and conflicts, finding assurance in God's tenderness and care amidst severe pain and rheumatic attack. He reflects on the peace of God ruling in his heart and the privilege of communion with Christ through reading and prayer. Bourne encourages seeking God's Spirit to bear fruits for His glory and the good of the church, emphasizing the blessings that come through tribulations and the transformation God works in broken and contrite spirits.

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## Transcript

[To M. B.] Worthing, Aug. 31, 1828.

Dear Cousin,

I have finished my fortnight's employment at \_\_ , with the severest conflict I have known for many years, and the sweetest assurance of God's tenderness and care. It has been exceedingly painful to flesh and blood, but very establishing to my soul. On my arrival here I was taken suddenly with a very severe rheumatic attack, and have scarcely been able to move; yet, under all the pain, I find the peace of God ruling in my heart and conscience; living under a sweet sense of the tender care of a reconciled God in Christ Jesus. The evil of my nature, and the sin of my life, appear to raise insurmountable mountains against hope and faith. Were my salvation to be wrought out by myself, I should have fainted long since; but in the Lord I find righteousness and strength. Communion with him in reading and prayer is an inconceivable privilege, and this he graciously permits me to enjoy. I began this Sabbath with such a rest as is an earnest of that heavenly and uninterrupted rest which we shall have with Christ to all eternity.

I think of you all as you are now assembling for worship. May the good Spirit be with you all, as he is with me. May we be filled with holy fear while we ponder these words, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." May we earnestly seek to God, that the fruits of the Spirit may be in us and abound to his glory, our comfort, and the good of his church at large. How I desire that some of our weak ones may take courage from the dispensations which I have been under, and am, which are both dark and

severe; yet, by labouring in the Spirit I have found by the blessing of God, eternal light and life spring up more abundantly than ever I knew before. And so I must be put among the number of those who are represented saying, "Amen Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." And when it was asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" it was said (and here also am I), "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." O happy, happy lot! I have lately rejoiced at tribulation, and under every load could not help crying out, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Yes; God can soften the hardest heart, and make the proudest spirit bow. He has done it in a measure to me, and then tells me that a broken and contrite spirit he does not despise.

I write in great bodily pain, but my heart is set upon these things; and if I should hold my peace, the very stones would cry out against me.

What you complain of, that the body of sin and death is still mighty in you, does not appear as an evidence against you, if the conflict is sharp against it; because whatsoever maketh manifest is light. God shows you the evil of your heart, and your privilege is to beg for the powerful quickening influence of his Spirit to come to Christ, the fountain of life; and when this life is imparted to the soul, and brings in the love of God, all your bondage breaks; and though you see yourself still worse, yet having Christ for your surety, righteousness, and strength, you will find in the application nothing but friendship and peace.

I do hope that Mrs. B. may be profited by the affliction I have lately been in, and that there is that earnestness which will never wholly wear off, till she finds rest in Christ Jesus. Pray remember me to Mr. and Mrs. N. I am often with them in the spirit, as also with the rest of the church.

Yours &c. J. B.

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