

# Letter 33

by James Bourne

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*James Bourne's sermon emphasizes the importance of faith, repentance, and the need for sincere self-examination in our walk with God.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 3:17, Psalm 90:12, Jeremiah 17:9, Hebrews 13:14, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Suffering And Faith", "Spiritual Humility"

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## Description

James Bourne reflects on his recent affliction, finding sobriety and steadfastness in the midst of troubles, with a constant awareness of his mortality and the temporary nature of earthly things. Drawing inspiration from Joshua's account of passing through Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant, he envisions his own dying hour and the assurance of Christ leading him through. Bourne encourages his wife to diligently seek God in every opportunity, emphasizing the need for genuine confession, humility, and surrender, rather than justifying or excusing shortcomings.

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## Transcript

[To Mrs. Bourne.] Sezincot, Nov. 2, 1828.

My dear Wife,

. . . Of late I have much meditated on my summer's affliction, and I think I find much sober-mindedness and steadiness in the reflection. I am not in the same piercing trouble as then, and therefore have not the same conspicuous deliverances. My latter end is not often out of sight; many infirmities bring it to me; nor can any earthly thing whatever beguile me to think of being here for ever, like the foolish world.

I have been sweetly entertained with Joshua's account of the passing through Jordan. The Ark of the Covenant was to be there. I pictured to myself my dying hour; and faith seemed to spring up unawares, and make the personal application as I read on. When we come to the brink, Christ our ark shall pass before us. As soon as we touch the brim - that is, I thought, as soon as our fears and dismay should seize us - the waters shall divide hither and thither, and our standing shall be firm as there described. What repentance and heavenly joy, what praises and acknowledgments, what wonder and amazement we feel! What looking within and without there is, to search out anything and everything that may be a hindrance!

Let me entreat you to let slip no opportunity that God is pleased to put into your hands, but as it offers, so be diligent in seeking. I mean, if you find the least drawing, at once run after him; if any meekness of spirit,

beg for all shyness to be removed, and all quarrels to be made up. Do not begin to say - I said a word too much here - I was wrong there - This thought was unbecoming, and that inclination ungodly. O no! but come altogether as a guilty sinner, and confess your utter folly and sinfulness, and beg power to fall before him. Confess that you are always wrong, and that you were always wrong. Pray don't pick out things, and say you were right here or there, though to be sure you were wrong in something else. This is our calamity - "holding back a part of the price" - not made honest to the bottom; and in these things deceiving ourselves, not knowing that "the heart is deceitful above all things." Therefore I entreat you to take every advantage of the least opening or budding hope, and stay not till you can come a little better; for I am sure you will never come, but as being worse and worse.

Yours &c. J. B.

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