

# Letter 37

by James Bourne

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*James Bourne reflects on personal struggles and the importance of faith and God's mercy in guiding one's life towards eternal salvation.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:13, Psalm 42:5, Proverbs 3:5, John 14:6, Hebrews 11:5

**Topics:** "Faith And Doubt", "Eternal Salvation"

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## Description

James Bourne, in a letter to his cousin, reflects on his struggles and doubts, feeling confined in Doubting Castle and distant from God. Despite his ingratitude, he acknowledges God's marvellous helps and deliverances, leading to a sweeter sense of mercy from the Lord Jesus. Bourne emphasizes the importance of walking in faith, even when feeling forgotten, and encourages his cousin and children to follow the steps that lead to eternal life, contrasting the worldly ways with the safe path to salvation.

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## Transcript

[To M. B.] Alderwasley, Sept. 13, 1829.

Dear Cousin,

I hope your next account will be better, your health mended, and your mind more settled. I have had hard work, and sometimes have thought I should never more see a friend in this world. I would not willingly go so far from home again, but I must not choose; it was by faith Enoch walked with God, and I must walk in the same steps, if I walk safely or wisely. But alas! I seem to have got into Bye-path meadow, and there is no way out; to be fast confined in Doubting Castle, and unable to move hand or foot. I look back on many marvellous helps and deliverances, but they seem to add to my sorrow. I can only think of my ingratitude, which has caused the Lord to hide himself behind such an impenetrable cloud. I am not indifferent, but my labour seems only in the flesh.

When I left Derby I had no small difficulty, but was very anxious not to leave without some token of God's goodness and gracious care, and he was pleased greatly to comfort me; but when I came here, all was gone, and there seemed no possibility of finding him whom my soul loveth. I seemed quite forgotten; but since I wrote the above, while making my lamentations known unto him, and condemning myself every way, the Lord Jesus was pleased to appear, and break my heart with a sweeter sense of his mercy, than I had found this summer before.

How wisely does he all things! How low his goodness and mercy makes us! How we feel ourselves nothing, like a moth, and yet saved in Christ Jesus with an everlasting salvation! May this be an encouragement to you, and as a counsel to my children to walk in those steps that lead to eternal life. My day is over - theirs will soon be so too. The giddy multitude, old and young, are now passing my window (though Sunday) to a neighbouring wakes; discriminating grace has changed my heart, and makes me see death and destruction the end of their ways; and the way in which he leads me, the safe way to eternal life. O Lord, be pleased to teach my children this way, and show them thy salvation.

With kindest love to all,

Yours &c. J. B.

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