

# Letter 52

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, self-judgment, and affliction in deepening our intimacy with God and attaining a good degree in spiritual growth.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 43:2, 2 Corinthians 1:4, 1 Peter 5:6

**Topics:** "Gods Judgment", "Spiritual Humility"

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## Description

James Bourne reflects on the humbling journey of experiencing God's judgments and severe dispensations, leading to the destruction of self and the acknowledgment of God's mercy. Through much tribulation and crucifixions, he finds that God causes sorrow to pass away and reveals sweet blessings in the valley of humiliation. Bourne encourages seeking Christ's deliverance in every trouble, allowing difficulties to deepen the relationship with the Friend of sinners, who is a tried stone and a sure foundation.

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## Transcript

[To Mr. Yeomans,] London, Sept. 28, 1833.

Dear Friend,

It is a matter of deep humiliation to me when I hear that one so sapless and dry has been profitable to any. It makes me look with shame on many foolish, vain, and unprofitable hours that I have spent, even since I have known the Lord. Herein I learn to justify God in all the severe dispensations I have passed through, and believe that all God's judgments are right. I have had a painful path, but my proud heart called for heavy strokes, and for the destruction to which God speaks of bringing all his people [Deut. xxxii.] He did not spare my flesh for my much crying, but having purposes of mercy towards me, prepared the furnace accordingly. In this way great SELF was brought down gladly to take the lowest room, and think none so mean and base as himself; and the repetition of the same afflictions were necessary to keep him there. I must now acknowledge, however painful this labour has been, it has not been in vain; for "in all these things is the life of my spirit."

If you are desirous of attaining a good degree, it is only through much tribulation. In the many mortifications and crucifixions I have suffered, I have never yet found but that God has caused my sorrow to pass away like the sorrow of a woman in travail. The birth has been made clear, and the Lord has often told me the sweetest things that a man on earth can know. He once said to me, "Satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord;" and this, with many other things that seem too great to speak of, I have

found in the valley of humiliation. It is in the sea of troubles he makes a WAY for his ransomed to PASS OVER; they are not left to stick fast in the mire, but made to pass over. Take my advice, never let your troubles, whatever they are, pass away without a token of Christ's deliverance; let not a fleshly arm put them aside, nor wear them out by time. Every trouble and difficulty, all shyness and distance between the Lord Jesus Christ and you, if rightly ended, must issue in the shedding abroad of his love in your heart. So will you come to a better acquaintance with the Friend of sinners, and find no grief too heavy for him to bear, no difficulty too great for him to bring you through. He is, and will be found to be, "a tried stone, a sure foundation." Venture on him. He has "the keys of hell and of death;" and neither shall touch you, if you make him your Friend. If he shows the least sign of displeasure upon your conscience, bow, and stoop, and confess, and pray, and fall at his feet; if you understand not what it means, do not contend, but FALL. This is our place; let us learn steadily to judge ourselves in all cases, that we be not judged of the Lord [1 Cor xi. 31]. Fret not when disappointed; God's voice is in all his dispensations, and he never speaks but some-thing is to be attended to; and, remember, he goes from words to blows. We cannot fall too soon. A broken spirit is a rare thing, and is only found as the effect of much affliction.

I do hereby again declare, that the sweetest path I have been in has been in the valley of humiliation. The surest tokens of the love of God have been found in the sharpest exercises. I can, therefore, well recommend to you this "Friend that loveth at all times," and who will not turn his back upon you when all things seem to come to an end, and all other friends fail.

I can truly lament your want of the means which God has provided for us; but it seems indeed, and of a truth, that he has been "a little Sanctuary" to you for many years. May he enable you to double your diligence as the day approaches, and remember me when it goes well with you. With kind regards to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, in truth and sincerity, in your little circle, believe me to remain

Your affectionate friend in the Lord, J. B.

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