

# Letter 110

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and vigilance in faith to avoid the dangers of despair and spiritual indifference.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 18:2, Proverbs 3:11, 1 Corinthians 3:13, Hebrews 12:1, James 4:7

**Topics:** "Spiritual Complacency", "Humility Before God"

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## Description

James Bourne preaches about the danger of spiritual complacency and the consequences of not fully surrendering to God. He reflects on the despair of someone who seemed to have a strong faith but ultimately fell away, emphasizing the importance of genuine humility, simplicity, and quietness in spirit. Bourne urges his listeners to seek refuge in Jesus Christ, to be vigilant against known sins, and to heed God's warnings in order to avoid spiritual downfall.

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## Transcript

[To M. 13 ] Tunbridge Wells, 12 August 1836.

Dear Cousin,

I thank you for the account you have given us of S. What is the nature of his despair? I cannot but secretly hope, from all that transpires, that even yet there may be a returning; but I feel the worst part to be, that after having been so long a member of a true church, and having given so many accounts of himself, now at the last this melancholy event should overtake him. Had it been at the beginning, we might have looked at it with more hope, but for the winding up of a profession to have this in it, is truly awful.

O Cousin, let not a vain, frivolous, and forgetful spirit, be encouraged by us, for this will not abide the refiner's fire, nor the fuller's soap. Prosperity in any shape is a dangerous pinnacle. What I wrote in a letter a few days ago, I may now repeat. It is hard to be persuaded we are nobody, while every one tells us we are somebody; even a grave look will hide part of this hypocrisy for a season, though we contend with the Lord secretly who is to have most honour. For this cause we are sent into captivity and left there; and the Lord only knows how long, or to what extent, this oppression of our enemies may be allowed. Remember poor young T., and now S. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." If genuine, a little more simplicity is seen, a little more quietness in spirit is felt, a little more humility is manifest; and all these things not only in the church, and before tender-hearted Christians, but before the world, and when no other eye but God's is witness. I am made to cry that I may not be left under the influence of any known

sin, but earnestly seek, like Samuel, to offer up the lamb wholly to the Lord. O what should I do, if such a grievous event as this should overtake me? While I write my heart is drawn and invited to Jesus Christ as a suitable hiding place and strong tower, wherein his tempted souls may enter and find safety.

I observe generally that such as are overthrown in these "strong places" are those who will not be governed. They will not believe "the Lord is a man of war;" but a listless indifference overpowers them, and the devil tells them that all the cautions they hear are but man's words, and that they know better; thus they build, they plant, they marry, they sell, they buy, until the day comes and takes them all away. May the Lord open our ears to discipline, and give us to understand his voice in the present dispensation, and give us grace to take the warning, that all that is lame in us and about us may be healed.

Yours &c. J.B.

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