

# Letter 69

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Spirit of God in our lives, and how He helps us to overcome our sinful nature and find abiding sweetness and tenderness in Christ.*

**Scripture:** Daniel 5:27, Hebrews 12:2-4, Hebrews 12:24

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Perseverance In Faith"

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## Description

James Bourne preaches about the spiritual battle against sin and the importance of enduring hardships as a good soldier of Christ. He emphasizes the need to cling to God in the midst of trials, acknowledging that the struggles we face are meant to draw us closer to Him. Bourne encourages his cousin to find strength in looking to Jesus, who endured the cross for our sins, and to trust in the promise of God's constant presence and faithfulness.

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## Transcript

[To M. B] Woodham Mortimer, Oct. 1884

Dear Cousin,

I was exceedingly glad to perceive that the spirit of your letter throughout was the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan. That which appears to us to be the destruction of our souls is the Spirit of God enlightening us to see the danger we are in, which rouses our fears - "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting." But having the Spirit of life, a cry is brought forth, and we perceive in God's light a remedy provided; and though we cannot at once obtain relief, yet there is an unaccountable cleaving, like that of a man who is drowning; and with Jacob we say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

You will say, But why all this casting down? You have fully set forth the reason in your letter; it is because of the many things we are found walking in, which would harden our consciences so that we should soon forget how hateful sin is in the sight of God, and rest in talk, unless the Lord put a thorn into our nest. If he discover his love, it will be by chastening us sore, and not giving us over unto death. The rebukes we have for a treacherous back-sliding heart are not because God is departed from us and will hear us no more, but the scourge is used to preserve us from the very evils we fear.

You say you cannot find abiding sweetness, tenderness, and godly fear. Who can? You will find it in glory, but not here below. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for

your feet;" so that that which is lame may be healed. This is the sweetest abiding place you will find on earth, and here the greatest tenderness and godly fear will be manifest, and all the spreading branches of the corrupt principle within will be carried to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and there will wither and die. This is the effect of a divine and spiritual "looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." We must consider him who ENDURED THE CROSS, lest We be faint and weary in our minds. Do we feel a contradiction of that sin within us, or a compliance with it? No doubt both; hence come our sorrow and conflict. Christ willingly laid down his life for our sin; do not you and I, at times, willingly suffer with him? Are we not made willing to endure all contradiction, and to put off the works of the flesh, called the old man? This is to resist, "striving against sin," and it is the Spirit of God in us that does it; and though the conflict be sharp and long, it is the way by which we are led eventually "to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." [Heb. xii. 2-24.]

I have many mercies to acknowledge, and wonder at the goodness of God in fulfilling his promise, "I will be with thee." Constantly, night and day, I plead it, and it never fails. I have quite a new scene here, but all things are possible with God; for though writing in the midst of noise and singing and drunkenness, I have been surprised, that for a long time together, I have not heard the tumult, my mind has been so sweetly abstracted. Yet I look forward to the time when this labour will be over; my employment from home becomes a great burden; but as I have written to you, so I desire to exercise myself, and to endure hardness as a good soldier.

Yours &c. J. B.

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