

Letter 115

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon 'Letter 115' calls for humility and spiritual awareness in the face of personal hypocrisy and sin.

Scripture: Genesis 42:27, Job 40:4, Matthew 7:14, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 15:58

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Humility Before God"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to M. C. B., discusses the narrow path to life and the rarity of finding it, especially in higher social circles. He acknowledges the presence of hypocrisy as a sign of spiritual life and urges a deeper self-awareness and humility before God. Bourne emphasizes the importance of being convicted by the Spirit, confessing sins, and relying on God's judgment rather than our own. He encourages cherishing the whispers of the Spirit, seeking spiritual growth even if it leads to crucifying the flesh, and ultimately finding salvation through unwavering dedication to God.

Transcript

[To M. C. B.] London, 25 October 1836.

My dear Friend,

Your letter demands my earliest attention and acknowledgment. I wonder at your forbearance, and must claim a little more of it. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it" - and very few of that few in your rank of life.

Two especial things I notice in your letter; the first is a conviction of great hypocrisy. This would shock the dead professing world, but gives me hope that spiritual life is manifest thereby; since hypocrisy lies quiet and undisturbed in the breast of professors in general. And if words can convey the real feelings of the heart, I must confess your words upon this subject show me that you have no small portion of spiritual light. For in all directions I feel myself thus convicted in a way I never suspected before I became a partaker of the Spirit.

There is another thing I wish you could manifest by the same Spirit, as a further evidence of the work being of God - and that is, that when you are charged with anything which you perhaps may think yourself fully clear of, you may be enabled to fall, being a sinner in every sense. No sin can be laid to your charge which you can stand clear of in the sight of God. When the conscience is made tender, and the heart has

a warm side towards God, it will always fall. As I often say, if I am charged with robbing the mail, though I know nothing about it, I sink in spirit, knowing God's judgments are past finding out. I cry, Woe is me!

" Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance?" and by thus confessing and making the battle the Lord's instead of my own, I perceive I come off more than conqueror, and in no other way. The Lord often suffers men to charge us with many things that pride may be humbled, and that other things, which we carefully put aside may be brought to light. His ways are inexplicable, but tend all to one purpose - the glory of God.

The second thing I notice is this passage - "and this I am convinced of the instant I enter my room, and find myself alone in the Lord's presence." Surely this is not the way of death, but must be spiritual life; this is not insensibility, but conviction by the Spirit. And O, my dear friend, cherish this more than life itself, and whatever this says to you, be sure you pray and beg and entreat that it may be accomplished, yea, even if it be to the crucifixion of the flesh, that you may be saved in the day of the Lord. I say again, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for your own salvation's sake, cherish, reverence, and stand in awe of the sacred and secret whispers of the Spirit, the Guide of your spiritual youth. Whatever loss you bear beside, O never give up this! This will teach you to lay your hand upon your mouth, and say with Job, "Behold, I am vile," whatever you are charged with; and I am sure you will never find a readier way to Christ than this.

May the Lord instruct you with his strong hand, and never let you go, till he clearly discovers to you HIMSELF, the only Way, the Truth, and the Life. I hope I shall find you "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" for I am sure if it be so, "your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Yours &c. J. B.

P.S. When the sack's mouth was opened before Joseph's brethren, did they not look like thieves? They had not a word to say. Remember how quickly they were made conscious of their designs against their brother. Thus you see a thing of which they were not guilty was suffered to come upon them, to bring to their minds their guilty conduct to their brother.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-bourne/letter-115/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net