

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN



JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688)

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless noted otherwise.

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Advertisement¹ by the Editor

Recent history

About forty years ago a gentleman in whose company I had commenced my pilgrimage, and who had joined me in communion with a Baptist church about four years previously, came to my house one Monday morning, greatly delighted with the sermon that our pastor had preached on the previous day while I was engaged in superintending the Sunday school. It had caused a very remarkable sensation, which, if properly followed up, bid fair to occasion an extraordinary revival of religion in the neighbourhood. He, with the deacons, had begged of our minister to fill up his outline and prepare the sermon for publication, to which he had consented. He wished to ascertain from me, as a publisher, the expense of printing five thousand copies, being sure that the sale of it would be unprecedented, not only throughout the kingdom, but as far as the English language was spoken.

In about a week, the copy fairly written was left with me. The text was Hebrews 12:1, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." After the introduction that all men desire heaven, but all do not run for it—the word *run* was explained as a flying, pressing, persevering. Then seven reasons and nine directions were followed by nine motives and nine uses. This, and the striking ideas and language of the sermon, brought Bunyan to my recollection, and, on comparison, it proved to be *The Heavenly Footman*, with very slight alterations. Having then very recently purchased a neat edition of the book, at a very low price, my inquiry was whether they would not prefer having the book in its genuine state, especially as it was ready for delivery. I need not add that all thoughts of circulating the sermon were at once abandoned.

In conversation with my excellent pastor, who afterwards for many years bore the honour of a Doctor of Divinity, he acknowledged his obligation to me for detecting the plagiarism before the sermon was published, and explained to me 1) that, when very young, he had read Bunyan's *Heavenly Footman* with intense interest, and made a full analysis of it in the shape of notes, which, having committed to memory, he preached to a very delighted and deeply impressed congregation; 2) that after a lapse of many years, looking over the outlines of his early sermons, he was struck with it, and believing it to be his own composition, had again used it with such extraordinary success, as led his deacons and members to request him to print it.

Doubtless Bunyan being dead has often similarly spoken—may his voice never be lost in silence or be forgotten.

¹ **advertisement** – public announcement or notice with interesting information.

Theme of the work

The title of *The Heavenly Footman* was probably suggested by the words of the prophet Jeremiah, “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And in the land of peace thou trustedst, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” (Jer 12:5), and, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1). The word *footman* does not refer to that class of servants who are badged and dressed in livery² to gratify the pride of their masters, nor to that description of foot-soldiers or infantry whose business is designated by the blood-stained colour of their clothes. But it refers to those who are travelling on foot to a distant country, engaged on a pilgrimage from earth to heaven. It is worthy of remark that the whole of the children of God—of every age and clime, class and kindred, the richest and the poorest—all are upon terms of perfect equality in running the race set before them. No wealth nor grade can procure a horse to carry them or a carriage to ride in; all must run on foot. The only carriage for the foot-sore, weary pilgrim is the bosom of Christ; He carries the lambs in His bosom, and there is room enough for all. The poorest labourer and the noblest aristocrat meet there upon a level with each other; there is no first class for the rich and parliamentary train for the poor. It is all first class.

In the varied adventures of Christian³ and his associates, and of Christiana, her children, and her lovely friend Mercy, they never ride. The little one is led by the hand up the steep and rough hill Difficulty, but his own feet carry him throughout the wearisome road. The only carriage was the fiery chariot that carried the soul of the martyred Faithful to the Celestial City. There is no riding to heaven while in the body. Wealth may procure many pleasures to clog the soul in its journey. It may purchase indulgencies; it may incline some disciples to look at sinful imperfections through the wrong end of the telescope; it may purchase prayers—but devotional exercises, bought by gold, will freeze the soul. It is the *poor* disciple that receives the faithful admonitions⁴ of his equally poor fellow-saints. The rich have more ceremony; while the labourer enjoys more richly, more free from restraint, the warm outpourings of a devotional spirit. Still, there is nothing to prevent the greatest nobleman or monarch from running to heaven in company with the disciples of our lowly Master. If he refuses this road and this company, he must pursue his downward course to destruction.

Its writing

The order in which the allegorical works of Bunyan were written, very naturally suggest itself from his own narratives and from the dates of their publication. It was thus, while suffering his tedious and dangerous imprisonment for Christ’s sake, he was led to

² **livery** – a distinctive uniform worn by the servants of a household.

³ **Christian** – the main character in Bunyan’s masterwork, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, who ventures on a journey from this world to the next, meeting many typical and difficult situations on the way. The following places and characters mentioned are all from *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, parts One and Two. Part One is available in print in North America from CHAPEL LIBRARY. All Bunyan’s works are available for reading and download at www.ChapelLibrary.org/literature/bunyan.

⁴ **admonitions** – cautionary advice or warnings.

write an account of the dealings of God with his soul, which work he published in 1666 under the title of *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. While engaged in writing this remarkable narrative, the almost unbounded allegorical powers of his mind were brought into exercise—

*“And thus it was: I writing of the way
And race of saints, in this our gospel-day,
Fell suddenly into an allegory
About their journey, and the way to glory.”*

Having finished his *Grace Abounding*, he allowed his fertile imagination its full scope, and again wrote the result of his experience in the form of an allegorical narrative, called *The Pilgrim’s Progress – From this World to that which is to Come*. At first the thoughts pressed upon him as fast as he could write them, yet he says—

*“I did not think
To show to all the world
my pen and ink
In such a mode.”*

It was several years before he ventured to publish his beautiful allegory. He was released from prison in 1672, having been chosen in the previous year to be the pastor, or ministering elder, of the church at Bedford.⁵ His time was then much occupied in reorganizing the church, after years of tempest and fiery persecution. At length, having overcome his own and his friends’ reluctance to publish so solemn a work on the conversion of a sinner and his way to heaven, in the form of an allegory, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was printed in 1678. The wonderful popularity of this book, and the great good it produced, led him again to turn his *Grace Abounding* into a different form of narrative, in the more profound allegory of *The Holy War*; this was published in 1682, and in two years afterwards he completed the *Pilgrim* by a delightful second part.

His long incarceration, followed by sudden and great activity, probably brought down his robust constitution; and as the end of his course drew nigh, he was doubly diligent, for in 1688, before his death-day, which was in August, he published six important treatises, and had prepared fourteen or fifteen others for the press. Among these were his final and almost dying instructions to the pilgrim, under the title of *The Heavenly Footman*, the man whom he describes in the poetical apology to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as he that

*“Runs and runs,
Till he unto the gate of glory comes.”*

⁵ **Bedford** – at the time of Bunyan, provincial center and small town 57 miles north of London, about half way between Cambridge and Oxford.

Its message

This treatise sheds a lustre over the latter days of our immortal allegorist. It is evidently the production of a mind expanded and chastened with the rich experience of sanctified age. In it we are reminded of those important directions to heavenly footmen contained in his most admired books. Is there a Slough of Despond to be passed, and a hill Difficulty to be overcome? Here the footman is reminded of “many a dirty step, many a high hill, a long and tedious journey through a vast howling wilderness”; but he is encouraged, “the land of promise is at the end of the way.” Must the man that would win eternal glory draw his sword, put on his helmet, and fight his way into the temple—the heavenly footman must press, crowd, and thrust through all that stand between heaven and his soul. Did Ignorance, who perished from the way, say to the pilgrims, “You go so fast, I must stay awhile behind?” He who runs to heaven is told that the heavy-heeled, lazy, wanton, and foolish professor⁶ will not attain the prize. The wicket-gate, at the head of the way, is all-important; none can get to heaven unless they enter by Christ, the Door and Way—so the footman is reminded that it matters not how fast he runs, he can never attain the prize if he is in the wrong road. Did the pilgrims so severely suffer from entering upon By-path-meadow, and even after that bitter experience were they again misled into a by-path by a black man clothed in white raiment? Our footman is warned: “Beware then of bye and crooked paths that lead to death and damnation; the way to heaven is one, still there are many well-beaten by-paths that butt or shoot down upon it, and which lead to destruction. To prevent vain and foolish company from calling you out of the path, or from loitering in it, say, ‘I am in haste, I am running for a prize; if I win I am made, I win all; if I lose I lose all, and am undone.’”

So it was with Faithful when even Christian, who saw him before, cried “Ho ho, so ho.”⁷ Faithful answered, “No, I am upon my life; the avenger of blood is behind me.” In the same way, the pilgrims refused the invitations of Demas with his silver mine (2Ti 4:10). “No,” says the heavenly footman, “I am running for heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ; from hell and everlasting damnation!” “Did the poor pilgrims go grunting, puffing, and sighing, one tumbleth over a bush, another sticks fast in the dirt, one cries out, ‘I am down,’ and another, ‘Ho! where are you?’” (*The Pilgrim’s Progress*). So the footman is told that he will “meet with cross, pain, and wearisomeness to the flesh, with briars and quagmires, and other encumbrances,” through all which he must persevere. Did Formalist and Hypocrite turn off into by-ways at the foot of the hill Difficulty, and miserably perish? Did Mistrust and Timorous run back for fear of the persecuting lions, Church and State? So the man that runs for heaven is cautioned: “Some when they come at the cross can go no further, but back again to their sins they go, stumble and break their necks, or turn aside to the left or to the right, and perish.” Be not ready to halt, nor run hobbling and halting, but, like my Lord Will-be-will in *The Holy War*, when fighting against Diabolus, “get thy will tipt with heavenly grace, and go full speed for heaven.” These quotations tend to prove that this invaluable treatise is a summary of

⁶ **professors** – those who profess belief in the Christian faith.

⁷ **Ho ho, so ho** – a form of greeting a stranger, as in our day: “Hello there.”

the guide books that Bunyan had before written. It was doubtless one of the last productions of his prolific pen.

Two passages in *The Heavenly Footman* appear to favour the idea that a period in life is, in some cases, fixed—beyond which there is no repentance. Thus in a solemn warning against procrastination, he says, “Dost thou know whether the day of grace will last a week longer or no? For the day of grace is past with *some* before their life is ended”; and “sometimes sinners have not heaven gates open to them so long as they suppose; and if they be once shut against a man, they are so heavy that all the men in the world, nor all the angels in heaven, can open them. Francis Spiera⁸ can tell thee what it is to stay till the gate of mercy be quite shut.”

It becomes an interesting inquiry as to who Bunyan means by the “some” of whom he says, “that the day of grace is past...before their life is ended.” This cannot refer to those who, neglecting the Saviour, are in a perishing condition. No minister felt a more ardent desire to rouse them to a sense of their danger and to guard them against despair than John Bunyan. In his *Jerusalem Sinner Saved*, he thus argues: “Why despair? thou art yet in the land of the living.” “It is a sin to begin to despair before one sets his foot over the threshold of hell gates.” “What, despair of bread in a land that is full of corn? Despair of mercy when our God is full of mercy, thou scrupulous fool? Despair when we have a redeeming Christ alive?! Let them despair that dwell where there is no God, and that are confined to those chambers of death which can be reached by no redemption.”

In Bunyan’s *Come and Welcome*, he proves that it would be “high blasphemy and damnable wickedness” to imagine that Christ would cast out any that come to God by Him. He cannot mean the backslider, for Bunyan was such. David also, to an awful extent, and Peter to the denial of his Lord. No, he may mean those who, while neglecting the Saviour, are overtaken by madness, or more probably to such as Judas, Spiera, and others—who sell their Master or renounce Him. If a man abandons the Saviour, there is no other name under heaven whereby he can be saved (Act 4:12); “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb 10:26)—he is a despiser of God’s way of salvation and tramples underfoot the Son of God. While such a career continues, fiery indignation must be his wretched destiny. They who contemn⁹ the heavenly gift—the Holy Ghost, the Word of God, the powers of the world to come—if they persevere unto death in such sentiments, the day of grace is past. There have been some who, like Esau, having sold their birthright, sought repentance even with tears, but found it not—they sought it not in

⁸ **Francesco Spiera** (1502-1548) – Protestant Italian jurist; born at Cittadella, then part of the Republic of Venice. Protestants of the early modern period used his case as an example of the dreadful consequences of the sin against the Holy Ghost: he discerned evangelical truth, but denied it for external reasons. Spiera had a respected position in his native town, a fine house, and ten children—all seemed to ensure his happiness. The Scriptures fell into his hands as well as various evangelical writings; these instilled doubts about Roman Catholic teachings. With others he was arraigned before the Inquisition at Venice; and Spiera solemnly confessed his “errors.” He came into a state of despair that grew more and more hopeless, affecting his health physically and leading to a sudden and premature death.

⁹ **contemn** – treat with contempt.

God's appointed way. All hope depends upon such sinners coming unto Christ, humbled and broken-hearted. He is willing, He is able to save even then to the uttermost, but they will not (Heb 7:25; Joh 5:40). He has promised and will perform His word, "him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out" (Joh 6:37). The volume of inspiration is crowned at its close with the same cheering encouragement, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come...And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17). I cannot imagine that any man would have sung with greater pleasure than Bunyan that hymn of Dr. Watts¹⁰—

*"Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward;
And while the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return."*

They only who reject the counsel and mercy of God, shut heaven's gates against their own souls, and rush upon Jehovah's buckler like Judas or Spiera—or like one of Bunyan's early friends, John Childs, who apostatized for fear of persecution and perished by his own hand. To such only, the day of grace is past; they have set themselves in the scorner's seat, from which they will be hurled into unutterable wretchedness.

Bunyan well knew that idleness engenders poverty and crime, and is the parent of every evil; and he exhorts his runner to the greatest diligence, not to "fool away his soul" in slothfulness, which induces carelessness, until the sinner is remediless. Our first care is to get into the right way, and then so to run that "the devil, who is light of foot," may not overtake and trip us up.

Running to heaven does not prevent the true, the real enjoyment of earthly blessings, but sanctifies and heightens them. The great impetus¹¹ in our course is love to the prize—to Christ, to heaven; having our affections set upon things above (Col 3:2), "looking unto Jesus" (Heb 12:2). His righteousness—imputed¹² unto us by the shedding of His blood—marks all the road, and while we keep that in sight we cannot err. In all earthly things we anticipate too much; but in the glories of heaven, our anticipations are feeble indeed compared with eternal realities. Could the saints in glory impart to us a sense of their indescribable happiness, with what activity and perseverance we should run! The case of Lot, when flying from destruction, is put by Bunyan with peculiar force: he dared not to look back even to see what had become of his wife, lest death should overtake his own soul. O, my reader, may we be stimulated so to run as to obtain that crown of glory which is imperishable, immortal, and eternal.

Its background

Charles Doe, one of Bunyan's personal friends, having purchased the copyright of this work, kept it for some years in hope of publishing it with other treatises, as a second

¹⁰ **Isaac Watts** (1674-1748) – English Nonconformist pastor, essayist, and hymnwriter. Born in Southampton, England.

¹¹ **impetus** – force that moves something along.

¹² **imputed** – given by God apart from men's works.

folio volume¹³ to complete his works. But failing in this object, he printed it separately in 1698, and appended an interesting list of Bunyan's works with thirty cogent reasons why these invaluable labours should be preserved and handed down to bless succeeding ages. An earnest desire to preserve, in their perfect integrity, all the treatises as they were originally published, will induce me, at the end of the works, to reprint those interesting additions.

—*George Offor, Editor, 1864*

¹³ **folio volume** – book having pages of the largest size.

An Epistle to All the Slothful and Careless People

Friends, Solomon saith that “The desire of the slothful killeth him” (Pro 21:25); and if so, what will slothfulness itself do to those that entertain it? The proverb is, “He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame” (Pro 10:5). And this I dare be bold to say: no greater shame can befall a man, than to see that he hath fooled away his soul and sinned away eternal life. And I am sure this is the next way to do it; namely, to be slothful—slothful, I say, in the work of salvation. The vineyard of the slothful man, in reference to the things of this life, is not fuller of briars, nettles, and stinking weeds, than he that is slothful for heaven, [having] his heart full of heart-choking and soul-damning sin.

The evils of slothfulness

Slothfulness hath these two evils: first, to neglect the time in which it should be getting of heaven; and by that means doth, in the second place, bring in untimely repentance. I will warrant you, that he who shall lose his soul in this world through slothfulness, will have no cause to be glad thereat when he comes to hell.

Slothfulness is usually accompanied with carelessness, and carelessness is for the most part begotten by senselessness; and senselessness doth again put fresh strength into slothfulness—and by this means the soul is left remediless.

Slothfulness shutteth out Christ; slothfulness shameth the soul (Song 5:2-4; Pro 13:4).

Slothfulness, it is condemned even by the feeblest of all the creatures. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise...The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold” (Pro 6:6; 20:4); that is, he will not break up the fallow ground¹⁴ of his heart, because there must be some pains taken by him that will do it; “therefore shall he beg in harvest”—that is, when the saints of God shall have their glorious heaven and happiness given to them, but the sluggard shall “have nothing,” that is, [he shall] be never the better for his crying for mercy (according to that in Matthew 25:10-12).

How to know a slothful man

If you would know a sluggard in the things of heaven, compare him with one that is slothful in the things of this world. As,

1) He that is slothful is loth¹⁵ to set about the work he should follow: so is he that is slothful for heaven.

¹⁴ **fallow ground** – land left unplowed and unseeded during growing season; uncultivated.

¹⁵ **loth** – or loath: reluctant; averse; unwilling.

2) He that is slothful is one that is willing to make delays: so is he that is slothful for heaven.

3) He that is a sluggard, any small matter that cometh in between, he will make it a sufficient excuse to keep him off from plying his work: so it is also with him that is slothful for heaven.

4) He that is slothful doth his work by the halves: and so it is with him that is slothful for heaven. He may almost, but he shall never altogether, obtain perfection of deliverance from hell. [So] he may almost, but he shall never, without he mend,¹⁶ be altogether a saint.

5) They that are slothful do usually lose the season in which things are to be done: and thus it is also with them that are slothful for heaven, they miss the season of grace. And therefore,

6) They that are slothful have seldom or never good fruit: so also it will be with the soul-sluggard.

7) They that are slothful, they are chid¹⁷ for the same: so also will Christ deal with those that are not active for Him. “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou” saidst I was thus and thus, “Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank...?” (Luk 19:22-23). “Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat 25:30).

Warnings about slothfulness

What shall I say? Time runs, and will you be slothful? Much of your lives are past, and will you be slothful? Your souls are worth a thousand worlds, and will you be slothful? The day of death and judgment is at the door, and will you be slothful? The curse of God hangs over your heads, and will you be slothful? Besides, the devils are earnest, laborious, and seek by all means every day, by every sin, to keep you out of heaven and hinder you of salvation—and will you be slothful? Also, your neighbours are diligent for things that will perish, and will you be slothful for things that will endure forever? Would you be willing to be damned for slothfulness? Would you be willing the angels of God should neglect to fetch your souls away to heaven when you lie a-dying, and the devils stand by ready to scramble for them?¹⁸ Was Christ slothful in the work of your redemption? Are His ministers slothful in tendering this unto you? And, lastly, if all this will not move, I tell you God will not be slothful or negligent to damn you, whose dam-

¹⁶ **without he mend** – unless he changes.

¹⁷ **chid** – disapproved; spoken against with displeasure; found fault with.

¹⁸ It was the commonly received opinion that, at the moment of death, the angels and devils strove to carry away the soul. If the dying man had received the consecrated wafer, the devils were scared at it, and lost their victim. Hence the prayer, “From lightning, battle, murder, and *sudden* death, good Lord, deliver us”; a curious contrast to, “Thy will be done” (Mat 26:42)! Were they sinners above all men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them (Luk 13:4)? O that men would rely upon the righteousness of Christ stimulating them to run for glory, as heavenly footmen, and not upon the nostrums [pet schemes] of Antichrist!—Ed.

nation now of a long time slumbereth not—nor the devils will not neglect to fetch thee, nor hell neglect to shut its mouth upon thee.

Sluggard, art thou asleep still? art thou resolved to sleep the sleep of death? Wilt neither tidings from heaven or hell awake thee? Wilt thou say still, “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,” and “a little folding of the hands to sleep” (Pro 6:10)? Wilt thou yet turn thyself in thy sloth, as the door is turned upon the hinges (Pro 26:14)? O that I was one that was skillful in lamentation, and had but a yearning heart towards thee, how would I pity thee! How would I bemoan thee! O that I could with Jeremiah let my eyes run down with rivers of water for thee! Poor soul, lost soul, dying soul, what a hard heart have I that I cannot mourn for thee! If thou shouldst lose but a limb, a child, or a friend, it would not be so much. But, poor man, it is thy soul! If it was to lie in hell but for a day, but for a year, nay, ten thousand years, it would (in comparison) be nothing. But O, it is forever! O, this cutting *ever*! What a soul-amazing word will that be, which saith, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire...” (Mat 25:41)!¹⁹

Objections and answers

Objection: But if I should set in and run as you would have me, then I must run from all my friends; for none of them are running that way.

Answer: And if thou dost, thou wilt run into the bosom of Christ and of God, and then what harm will that do thee?

Objection: But if I run this way, then I must run from all my sins.

Answer: That is true indeed; yet if thou dost not, thou wilt run into hell-fire.

Objection: But if I run this way, then I shall be hated and lose the love of my friends and relations, and of those that I expect benefit from or have reliance on, and I shall be mocked of all my neighbours.

Answer: And if thou dost not, thou art sure to lose the love and favour of God and Christ, the benefit of heaven and glory, and be mocked of God for thy folly: “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh” (Pro 1:26). And if thou wouldst not be hated and mocked, then take heed thou by thy folly dost not procure the displeasure and mockings of the great God—for His mocks and hatred will be terrible because they will fall upon thee in terrible times, even when tribulation and anguish taketh hold on thee; which will be when death and judgment comes, when all the men in the earth and all the angels in heaven cannot help thee (Pro 1:27-28).

Objection: But surely I may begin this time enough, a year or two hence, may I not?

¹⁹ In a very beautifully ornamented Liturgy of the Church of England, prior to the Reformation, after the Salisbury use, printed in 1526 (in the Editor’s library), is this direction: “These iii. prayers be wrytten in the chapel of the holy crosse in Rome, who that deuoutly say them they shall obteyne ten hundred thousand years of pardon for deadly sins graunted of oure holy father Jhon xxii pope of Rome.” The three prayers only occupy twenty-six short lines, and may be gravely repeated in two minutes. Such was and is Popery! But at the end of all this promised pardon for a million of years—what then? Will eternal torments commence?—Ed.

Answer: 1) Hast thou any lease of thy life? Did ever God tell thee thou shalt live half a year, or two months, longer? nay, it may be thou mayst not live so long. And therefore,

2) Wilt thou be so sottish and unwise, as to venture thy soul upon a little uncertain time?

3) Dost thou know whether the day of grace will last a week longer or no? For the day of grace is past with some before their life is ended. And if it should be so with thee, wouldst thou not say, “O that I had begun to run before the day of grace had been past, and the gates of heaven shut against me.” But,

4) If thou shouldst see any of thy neighbours neglect the making sure of either house or land to themselves, if they had it proffered²⁰ to them, saying, “Time enough hereafter,” when the time is uncertain; and besides, they do not know whether ever it will be proffered to them again, or no. I say: Wouldst thou not then call them fools? And if so, then dost thou think that thou art a wise man to let thy immortal soul hang over hell by a thread of uncertain time, which may soon be cut asunder by death?

Concluding exhortation

But to speak plainly, all these are the words of a slothful spirit. Arise, man, be slothful no longer; set foot, heart, and all into the way of God, and run—the crown is at the end of the race. There also standeth the loving fore-runner, even Jesus, Who hath prepared heavenly provision to make thy soul welcome. And He will give it thee with a more willing heart than ever thou canst desire it of Him. O therefore do not delay the time any longer, but put into practice the words of the men of Dan to their brethren, after they had seen the goodness of the land of Canaan: “Arise,” say they, “...for we have seen the land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still [or, do you forbear running]? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land” (Jdg 18:9). Farewell.

I wish our souls may meet with comfort at the journey’s end.

—*John Bunyan*

²⁰ **proffered** – to offer for acceptance.

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN

Or, a description of the man that gets to heaven:
together with the way he runs in, the marks he goes
by; also, some directions how to run so as to obtain.

*“And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth
abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind
thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the
mountain, lest thou be consumed.”—Genesis 19:17*

“So run, that ye may obtain.”

—1 Corinthians 9:24

HEAVEN and happiness is that which every one desireth, insomuch that wicked Balaam could say, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his” (Num 23:10). Yet for all this, there are but very few that do obtain that ever-to-be-desired glory, insomuch that many eminent professors drop short of a welcome from God into His pleasant place.

The apostle, therefore—because he did desire the salvation of the souls of the Corinthians, to whom he writes this epistle—layeth them down in these words such counsel that, if taken, would be for their help and advantage. *First*, Not to be wicked, sit still, and wish for heaven; but to *run* for it. *Second*, Not to content themselves with every kind of running; but, saith he, “So run, *that ye may obtain.*” As if he should say, Some, because they would not lose their souls, they begin to run betimes²¹ (Ecc 12:1), they run apace, they run with patience (Heb 12:1), they run the right way (Mat 14:26). Do you so run? Some run from both father and mother, friends and companions, and thus that they may have the crown. Do you so run? Some run through temptations, afflictions, good report, evil report, that they may win the pearl (1Co 4:13; 2Co 6). Do you so run? “So run that ye may obtain.”

These words, they are taken from men’s running for a wager: a very apt similitude to set before the eyes of the saints of the Lord. “Know ye not that they which run in a race

²¹ **betimes** – early; while there is yet time.

run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain”—that is, do not only run, but be sure you *win* as well as run. “*So run*, that ye may obtain.”

I shall not need to make any great ado in opening the words at this time, but shall rather lay down one doctrine that I do find in them; and in prosecuting that, I shall show you, in some measure, the scope of the words.

I. The Doctrine of the Text

The doctrine is this:

They that will have heaven, must run for it.

I say, they that will have heaven, they must run for it. I beseech you to heed it well. “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1Co 9:24). The prize is heaven; and if you will have it, you must *run* for it. You have another Scripture for this in Hebrews 12:1-3: “Wherefore seeing we also,” saith the apostle, “are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” “And let us run,” saith he. Again, saith Paul, “I therefore *so run*, not as uncertainly, so fight I” (1Co 9:26).

II. The Word *Run* Opened

But before I go any further, observe,

A. Flying

This running is not an ordinary, or any sort of, running, but it is to be understood of the swiftest sort of running; and therefore in Hebrews 6 it is called a *fleeing*; that “we might have a strong consolation, who have *fled* for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Mark *who have fled*. It is taken from Joshua 20, concerning the man that was to flee to the city of refuge, when the avenger of blood was hard at his heels to take vengeance on him for the offence he had committed; therefore it is a *running* or *flying* for one’s life—a running with all might and main, as we use to say. *So run!*

B. Pressing

This running in another place is called a *pressing*. “I press toward the mark” (Phi 3:14). [This] signifieth that they that will have heaven, they must not stick at any difficulties they meet with; but press, crowd, and thrust through all that may stand between heaven and their souls. *So run!*

C. Continuing

This running is called in another place, a “continuing” in the way of life: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel” of Christ (Col 1:23). Not to run a little now and then, by fits and starts, or half-way, or almost thither; but to run for my life, to run through all difficulties, and to continue therein to the end of the race, which must be to the end of my life. “*So run*, that ye may obtain.”

III. Several Reasons for Clearing This Doctrine

And the reasons for this point are these,

A. The crown missed

Because all or every one that runneth doth not obtain the prize; there be many that do run—yea, and run far too—who yet miss of the crown that standeth at the end of the race. You know that all that run in a race do not obtain the victory; they *all* run, but *one* wins. And so it is here; it is not every one that runneth, nor every one that seeketh, nor every one that striveth for the mastery, that hath it (Luk 13). Though a man do strive for the mastery, saith Paul, “yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully”; that is, unless he so run and strive as to have God’s approbation²² (2Ti 2:5). What! do you think that every heavy-heeled professor will have heaven? What! every lazy one, every wanton and foolish professor—who will be stopped by anything, kept back by anything, that scarce runneth so fast heavenward as a snail creepeth on the ground? Nay, there are some professors [who] do not go on so fast in the way of God as a snail doth go on the wall; and yet these think that heaven and happiness is for them. But stay, there are many more that run than there be that obtain; therefore he that will have heaven must *run* for it.

B. The race lost

Because you know that though a man does run, yet if he does not overcome, or win, as well as run, what will he be the better for his running? He will get nothing. You know the man that runneth, he doth do it that he may win the prize; but if he doth not obtain, he doth lose his labour, spend his pains and time, and that to no purpose. I say, he getteth nothing! And ah! how many such runners will there be found at the Day of Judgment! Even multitudes, multitudes that have run, yea, run so far as to come to heaven’s gates, and not able to get any further, but there stand knocking when it is too late—crying, “Lord, Lord,” when they have nothing but rebukes for their pains. “Depart

²² **approbation** – official approval.

from me, you come not here, you come too late, you run too lazily; the door is shut.”²³ “When once the master of the house is risen up,” saith Christ, “and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, I will say, I know ye not, Depart...” (Luk 13:25). O, sad will the estate of those be that run and miss. Therefore, if you will have heaven, you must run for it; and “*so run* that ye may obtain.”

C. Work incomplete

Because the way is long (I speak metaphorically), and there is many a dirty step, many a high hill, much work to do—a wicked heart, world, and devil to overcome. I say, there are many steps to be taken by those that intend to be saved, by running or walking in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham. Out of Egypt, thou must go through the Red Sea; thou must run a long and tedious journey through the vast howling wilderness, before thou come to the land of promise.

D. Time uncertain

They that will go to heaven, they must run for it because, as the way is long, so the time in which they are to get to the end of it is very uncertain. The time present is the only time; thou hast no more time allotted thee than that thou now enjoyest. “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pro 27:1). Do not say, “I have time enough to get to heaven seven years hence”; for I tell thee, the bell may toll for thee before seven days more be ended.²⁴ When death comes, away thou must go, whether thou art provided or not! Therefore, look to it; make no delays—it is not good dallying with things of so great concernment as the salvation or damnation of thy soul. You know he that hath a great way to go in a little time, and less by half than he thinks of, he had need *run* for it.

E. Enemies pursue

They that will have heaven must run for it, because the devil, the Law, sin, death, and hell, follow them. There is never a poor soul that is going to heaven, but the devil, the Law, sin, death, and hell, make after that soul. “Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1Pe 5:8). And I will assure you, the devil is nimble, he can run apace, he is light of foot, he hath overtaken many, he hath turned up their heels, and hath given them an everlasting fall. Also the Law, which can shoot a great way: have a care thou keep out of the reach of those great guns, the Ten

²³ How awfully is this pictured to the soul in that solemn account of the day of death and judgment in Matthew 25; and how strikingly applied in *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the character of Ignorance.—Ed.

²⁴ “When the bell begins to toll, Lord have mercy on the soul.” The Papists imagine that there is an extraordinary power in the bell hallowed by baptism to drive away the spirits of darkness, so that the departing soul may take its journey without molestation!! It was also intended to rouse the faithful to pray for the dead person's soul. This, and other superstitious practices, were suspended during the Protectorate in some parishes, if not generally, but were revived at the Restoration, because the omission injured the revenues of the church.—See Brand's *Popular Antiquities*.—Ed.

Commandments. Hell also hath a wide mouth; it can stretch itself further than you are aware of. And as the angel said to Lot, Take heed, “look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain,” that is, anywhere between this and heaven, “lest thou be consumed” (Gen 19:17).²⁵ So say I to thee, Take heed, tarry not; lest either the devil, hell, death, or the fearful curses of the Law of God, do overtake thee and throw thee down in the midst of thy sins, so as never to rise and recover again. If this were well considered, then thou, as well as I, wouldst say, They that will have heaven must *run* for it.

F. Heaven’s gates shut

They that will go to heaven must run for it, because perchance the gates of heaven may be shut shortly. Sometimes sinners have not heaven-gates open to them so long as they suppose; and if they be once shut against a man, they are so heavy that all the men in the world, nor all the angels in heaven, are not able to open them. I shut, “and no man openeth,” saith Christ. And how if thou shouldst come but one quarter of an hour too late? I tell thee, it will cost thee an eternity to bewail thy misery in. Francis Spiera can tell thee what it is to stay till the gate of mercy be quite shut; or to run so lazily, that they be shut before thou get within them.²⁶ What, to be shut out! what, out of heaven! Sinner, rather than lose it, run for it; yea, and “so run that thou mayst obtain.”

G. All lost

Lastly, because if thou lose, thou lovest all! Thou lovest soul, God, Christ, heaven, ease, peace, etc. Besides, thou layest thyself open to all the shame, contempt, and reproach that either God, Christ, saints, the world, sin, the devil, and all, can lay upon thee. As Christ saith of the foolish builder, so will I say of thee, if thou be such a one who

²⁵ This quotation, probably made from memory, is a mixture of the Genevan and the present version [King James Version].—Ed.

²⁶ Francis Spiera, in 1548, being a lawyer in great repute in Italy, professed gospel principles, but afterwards relapsed into Popery, and became a victim of black despair. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the man in the iron cage, at the Interpreter’s house, probably referred to Spiera. The narrative of his fearful state is preceded by a poem:

“Here see a soul that’s all despair, a man
All hell, a spirit all wounds. Who can
A wounded spirit bear?
Reader, wouldst see what you may never feel,
Despair, racks, torments, whips of burning steel?
Behold this man, this furnace, in whose heart
Sin hath created hell. O! in each part
What flames appear?
His thoughts all stings; words, swords;
Brimstone his breath;
His eyes, flames; wishes, curses; life, a death,
A thousand deaths live in him, he not dead—
A breathing corpse in living scalding lead.”—Ed.

runs and missest, I say, even all that go by will begin to mock at thee, saying, This man began to run well, but was not able to finish (Luk 14:28-30). But more of this anon.²⁷

Question: But how should a poor soul do to run? For this very thing is that which afflicteth me sore, as you say, to think that I may run, and yet fall short. Methinks to fall short at last, O, it fears me greatly. Pray tell me, therefore, how I should run.

Answer: That thou mightest indeed be satisfied in this particular, consider these following things.

IV. Nine Directions How to Run

A. Get into the right way

If thou wouldst so run as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, then be sure that thou get into the way that leadeth thither. For it is a vain thing to think that ever thou shalt have the prize, though thou runnest never so fast, unless thou art in the way that leads to it. Set the case that there should be a man in London that was to run to York for a wager; now, though he run never so swiftly, yet if he run full south, he might run himself quickly out of breath—and be never the nearer the prize, but rather the further off. Just so is it here; it is not simply the runner, nor yet the hasty runner, that winneth the crown, unless he be in the way that leadeth thereto.²⁸ I have observed, [in] that little time which I have been a professor, that there is a great running to and fro, some this way and some that way, yet it is to be feared most of them are out of the way. And then, though they run as swift as the eagle can fly, they are benefitted nothing at all.

Here is one [who] runs a-quaking, another a-ranting; one again runs after the Baptism, and another after the Independency. Here is one for free-will, and another for Presbytery. Yet, possibly, most of all these sects run quite the wrong way; and yet every one is for his life, his soul, either for heaven or hell.²⁹

If thou now say, “Which is the way?,” I tell thee it is Christ, the son of Mary, the Son of God. Jesus saith, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (Joh 14:6). So then thy business is, if thou wouldst have salvation, to see if Christ be thine, with all His benefits: whether He hath covered thee with His right-

²⁷ **anon** – soon.

²⁸ How plain and important is this direction. Saul the persecutor ran fast, but the faster he ran in his murderous zeal the further he ran from the prize. Let every staunch sectarian examine prayerfully his way, especially if the sect he belongs to is patronized by princes, popes, or potentates, and endowed with worldly honours. He may be running *from* and not *to* heaven.—Ed.

²⁹ He that trusts in the sect to which he belongs is assuredly in the wrong way, whether it be the Church of Rome or England, Quaking, Ranting, Baptists, or Independents. Trust in Christ must be all in all. First be *in* Christ, then run for heaven looking *unto* Christ. Keep fellowship with those who are the purest and run fastest in the ordinances of the gospel, which are revealed in the Word. Follow no human authority nor craft; seek the influence of the Holy Spirit for yourself, that you may be led into all truth—then you will so run as to obtain.—Ed.

eousness, whether He hath showed thee that thy sins are washed away with His heart-blood, whether thou art planted into Him, and whether thou have faith in Him—so as to make a life out of Him, and to conform thee to Him—that is, such faith as to conclude that thou art righteous because Christ is thy righteousness; and so constrained to walk with Him as the joy of thy heart because He saveth thy soul. And for the Lord's sake, take heed and do not deceive thyself and think thou art in the way upon too slight grounds; for if thou miss of the way, thou wilt miss of the prize; and if thou miss of that, I am sure thou wilt lose thy soul, even that soul which is worth more than the whole world.

But I have treated more largely on this in my book of the two covenants, and therefore shall pass it now. Only I beseech thee to have a care of thy soul. And that thou mayest so do, take this counsel: Mistrust thy own strength and throw it away; [go] down on thy knees in prayer to the Lord for the Spirit of truth; search His Word for direction; fly³⁰ seducers' company; keep company with the soundest Christians that have most experience of Christ; and be sure thou have a care³¹ of Quakers, Ranters, Freewillers;³² also do not have too much company with some Anabaptists,³³ though I go under that name myself. I tell thee this is such a serious matter, and I fear thou wilt so little regard it, that the thoughts of the worth of the thing, and of thy too light regarding of it, doth even make my heart ache whilst I am writing to thee. The Lord teach thee the way by His Spirit, and then I am sure thou wilt know it. *So run.*

Only by the way, let me bid thee have a care of two things, and so I shall pass to the next thing.

1) Have a care of relying on the outward obedience to any of God's commands, or thinking thyself ever the better in the sight of God for that.

³⁰ **fly** – flee.

³¹ **have a care** – take heed.

³² **Quakers, Ranters, Freewillers** – The *Quakers* were founded by George Fox in 1668. Their primary feature is a belief in Inner Light, direct illumination from God, which they elevate to a place of spiritual authority, superior even to Scripture—a grievous error.

The *Ranters* were a heretical nonconformist dissenting group that emerged around the time of the English Commonwealth (1649-1660). They were largely common people, and the movement was widespread throughout England, though they were not organised and had no leader. They denied the authority of churches and of Scripture, instead calling on men to listen subjectively to “the divine within them.”

Freewillers are followers of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian, born in Oudewater, the Netherlands. He rejected the Reformers' understanding of predestination and God's sovereignty in salvation, teaching instead that men could accept or reject Christ by their own free will.

³³ **Anabaptists** – Christians of the Reformation in 16th century Europe who believed that water baptism was only for believers who could confess their faith. The Amish, Hutterites, Mennonites, and Brethren are direct descendants of the movement. The name Anabaptist, meaning “one who baptizes again,” was given them by their persecutors in reference to the practice of re-baptizing converts who already had been baptized as infants. The early members of this movement did not accept the name “Anabaptist,” claiming that since infant baptism was unscriptural and null and void, the baptizing of believers was not a re-baptism but in fact their first real baptism. Some parts of the movement held orthodox evangelical beliefs; others strayed into error.

2) Take heed of fetching peace for thy soul from any inherent righteousness. But if thou canst believe that as thou art a sinner, so thou art justified freely by the love of God through the redemption that is in Christ; and that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven thee, not because He saw anything done, or to be done, in or by thee, to move Him thereunto to do it—for *that is the right way*. The Lord put thee into it, and keep thee in it.

B. Study on the way

As thou shouldst get *into* the way, so thou shouldst also be much in studying and musing *on* the way. You know men that would be expert in anything; they are usually much in studying of that thing—and so likewise is it with those that quickly grow expert in any way. This therefore thou shouldst do: let thy study be much exercised about Christ, Who is *the way*—what He is, what He hath done, and why He is what He is, and why He hath done what is done; as, why He “took upon him the form of a servant,” why He “was made in the likeness of men” (Phi 2:7). Why He cried, why He died; why He bore the sin of the world; why He was made sin, and why He was made righteousness; why He is in heaven in the nature of man, and what He doth there (2Co 5:21)? Be much in musing and considering of these things.

Be thinking also enough of those places that thou must not come near, but leave some on this hand and some on that hand—as it is with those that travel into other countries, they must leave such a gate on this hand, and such a bush on that hand, and go by such a place where standeth such a thing. Thus, therefore, thou must do: Avoid such things that are expressly forbidden in the Word of God. “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house”; “Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell” (Pro 5:8, 5). And so of everything that is not in the way, have a care of it that thou go not by it; come not near it, have nothing to do with it. *So run*.

C. Remove hindrances

Not only thus, but, in the next place, thou must strip thyself of those things that may hang upon thee to the hindering of thee in the way to the kingdom of heaven—as covetousness, pride, lust, or whatever else thy heart may be inclining unto that may hinder thee in this heavenly race. Men that run for a wager, if they intend to win as well as run, they do not encumber themselves, or carry those things about them that may be a hindrance to them in their running. “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” (1Co 9:25), that is, he layeth aside everything that would be any ways a disadvantage to him; as saith the apostle, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1).

It is but a vain thing to talk of going to heaven if thou let thy heart be encumbered with those things that would hinder. Would you not say that such a man would be in danger of losing, though he run, if he fill his pockets with stones, hang heavy garments

on his shoulders, and great lumpish shoes on his feet?³⁴ So it is here; thou talkest of going to heaven, and yet fillest thy pocket with stones, i.e., fillest thy heart with this world, lettest that hang on thy shoulders with its profits and pleasures. Alas, alas, thou art widely mistaken! If thou intendest to win, thou must strip, thou must lay aside every weight, thou must be temperate in all things. Thou must *so run*.

D. Beware of by-paths

Beware of by-paths; take heed thou dost not turn into those lanes which lead out of the way. There are crooked paths, paths in which men go astray, paths that lead to death and damnation, but take heed of all those (Isa 59:8). Some of them are dangerous because of practice (Pro 7:25), some because of opinion—but mind them not. Mind the path before thee, look right before thee, turn neither to the right hand nor to the left (Pro 4:27); but let thine eyes look right on, even right before thee (Pro 4:25). “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. Remove thy foot *far* from evil” (Pro 4:26-27). This counsel being not so seriously taken as given, is the reason of that starting³⁵ from opinion to opinion—reeling this way and that way, out of this lane into that lane—and so missing the way to the kingdom.

Though the way to heaven be but one, yet there are many crooked lanes and by-paths [that] shoot down upon it, as I may say. And again, notwithstanding the kingdom of heaven be the biggest city, yet usually those by-paths are most beaten, [so that] most travelers go those ways. Therefore, the way to heaven is hard to be found, and as hard to be kept in, by reason of these. Yet, nevertheless, it is in this case as it was with the harlot of Jericho: she had one scarlet thread tied in her window by which her house was known (Joh 2:18). So it is here, the scarlet streams of Christ’s blood run throughout the way to the kingdom of heaven;³⁶ therefore, mind that—see if thou do find the besprinkling of the blood of Christ in the way. If thou do, be of good cheer, thou art in the right way

But have a care thou beguile not thyself with a fancy,³⁷ for then thou mayst light into any lane or way. But that thou mayst not be mistaken, consider: though it seem never so pleasant, yet if thou do not find that in the very middle of the road there is writing with the heart-blood of Christ—that He came into the world to save sinners, and that we are

³⁴ How plain is this direction, and how does it commend itself to our common-sense; lumpish shoes and pockets filled with stones, how absurd for a man who is running a race!! Stop, my dear reader: have you cast away all useless encumbrances, and all easily besetting sins? Is your heart full of mammon, pride, or debauchery? If so, you have no particle of strength to run for heaven, but are running upon swift perdition.—Ed.

³⁵ **starting** – sudden and abrupt movements.

³⁶ This is one of those beautiful ideas that so abound in all Bunyan’s works. Our way to the kingdom is consecrated by the cross of Christ, and may be known throughout by the sprinkling of His blood, His groans, His agonies. All the doctrines that put us in the way are sanctified by the atonement; all the spurs to a diligent running in that way are powerful as motives, by our being bought with that precious price, the death of Emmanuel. O my soul, be thou found looking unto Jesus, He is *the way*, the only way to heaven.—Ed

³⁷ **fancy** – fantasy; delusion of the mind.

justified, though we are ungodly—shun that way! For this it is which the apostle meaneth when he saith, we have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Heb 10:19-20).

How easy a matter is it in this our day, for the devil to be too cunning for poor souls, by calling his by-paths the way to the kingdom! If such an opinion or fancy be but cried up by one or more—this inscription being set upon it by the devil, “This is the way of God”—how speedily, greedily, and by heaps do poor simple souls throw away themselves upon it; especially if it be daubed over with a few external acts of morality, if so good.³⁸ But this is because men do not know painted by-paths from the plain way to the kingdom of heaven. They have not yet learned the true Christ and what His righteousness is, neither have they a sense of their own insufficiency; but are bold, proud, presumptuous, self-conceited. And therefore.

E. Look not too high

Do not thou be too much in looking too high in thy journey heavenwards. You know men that run in a race do not use to stare and gaze this way and that, neither do they use to cast up their eyes too high, lest happily,³⁹ through their too much gazing with their eyes after other things, they in the meantime stumble and catch a fall. The very same case is this: if thou gaze and stare after every opinion and way that comes into the world—also if thou be prying overmuch into God’s secret decrees, or let thy heart too much entertain questions about some nice foolish curiosities—thou mayst stumble and fall, as many hundreds in England have done, both in Ranting and Quakery, to their own eternal overthrow; without the marvelous operation of God’s grace be suddenly stretched forth to bring them back again. Take heed therefore, follow not that proud and lofty spirit that, devil-like, cannot be content with his own station. David was of an excellent spirit where he saith, “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child” (Psa 131:1-2). Do thou *so run*?

F. Open not the ear

Take heed that you have not an ear open to everyone that calleth after you as you are in your journey. Men that run—you know, if any do call after them, saying, I would speak with you, or go not too fast, and you shall have my company with you—if they run for some great matter, they use to say, “Alas, I cannot stay, I am in haste, pray talk not to me now; neither can I stay for you, I am running for a wager: if I win I am made, if I lose

³⁸ Strange infatuation, desperate pride, that man should reject the humbling simplicity of divine truth, and run so anxiously, greedily, and in hosts, in the road to ruin, because priestcraft calls it “the way of God”; preferring the miserable sophistry of Satan and his emissaries to the plain directions of Holy Writ. O! reader, put not your trust in man, but, while God is ready to direct you, rely solely on his Holy Word.—Ed.

³⁹ “Happily,” or haply, were formerly used to express the same meaning.—Ed.

I am undone, and therefore hinder me not.” Thus wise are men when they run for corruptible things, and thus should thou do. And thou hast more cause to do so than they, forasmuch as they run but for things that last not, but thou for an incorruptible glory.

I give thee notice of this betimes, knowing that thou shalt have enough call after thee, even the devil, sin, this world, vain company, pleasures, profits, esteem among men, ease, pomp, pride, together with an innumerable company of such companions—one crying, “Stay for me”; the other saying, “Do not leave me behind”; a third saying, “And take me along with you.” “What! will you go,” saith the devil, “without your sins, pleasures, and profits? Are you so hasty? Can you not stay and take these along with you? Will you leave your friends and companions behind you? Can you not do as your neighbours do [and] carry the world, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, esteem among men, along with you?” Have a care thou do not let thine ear now be open to the tempting, enticing, alluring, and soul-entangling flatteries of such sink-souls⁴⁰ as these are. “My son,” saith Solomon, “if sinners entice thee, consent thou not” (Pro 1:10).

You know what it cost the young man that Solomon speaks of in Proverbs 7:21-27, who was enticed by a harlot. “With her much fair speech,” she won him and “caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him,” till he went after her “as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;” even so far “till the dart struck through his liver...and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore,” saith he, “O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her [that is, kept out of heaven by her]. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”

Soul, take this counsel and say, “Satan, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, pride, friends, companions, and everything else, let me alone, stand off, come not nigh me, for I am running for heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ, from hell and everlasting damnation. If I win, I win all, and if I lose, I lose all; let me alone, for I will not hear.” *So run!*

G. Be not discouraged

In the next place, be not daunted though thou meetest with never so many discouragements in thy journey thither. That man who is resolved for heaven, if Satan cannot win him by flatteries, he will endeavour to weaken him by discouragements; saying, “thou art a sinner, thou hast broken God’s Law, thou art not elected, thou comest too late, the day of grace is past, God doth not care for thee, thy heart is naught, thou art lazy,” with a hundred other discouraging suggestions. And thus it was with David, where he said, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living” (Psa 27:13-14). As if he should say, “the devil did so rage and my heart was so base, that had I judged according to my own sense and feeling, I had been absolutely distracted; but I trusted to Christ in the promise, and looked that God would be as good

⁴⁰ “Sink-souls” is one of Bunyan’s strong Saxonisms, full of meaning, “Sink” is that in which filth or foulness is deposited. “She poured forth out of her hellish sink, Her fruitful cursed spawn.”—Spencer.—Ed.

as His promise in having mercy upon me, an unworthy sinner; and this is that which encouraged me and kept me from fainting.”

And thus must thou do when Satan, the Law, or thy own conscience do go about to dishearten thee—either by the greatness of thy sins, the wickedness of thy heart, the tediousness of the way, the loss of outward enjoyments, the hatred that thou wilt procure from the world, or the like. Then thou must encourage thyself with the freeness of the promises, the tender-heartedness of Christ, the merits of His blood, the freeness of His invitations to come in, the greatness of the sin of others that have been pardoned; and that the same God, through the same Christ, holdeth forth the same grace free as ever. If these be not thy meditations, thou wilt draw very heavily in the way to heaven, if thou do not give up all for lost, and so knock off from following any farther! Therefore I say, take heart in thy journey, and say to them that seek thy destruction, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord *shall* be a light unto me” (Mic 7:8). *So run!*

H. Endure tribulation

1. Tribulation is your cross

Take heed of being offended at the cross that thou must go by before thou come to heaven. You must understand, as I have already touched, that there is no man that goeth to heaven but he must go by the cross. The cross is the standing way-mark by which all they that go to glory must pass by. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Act 14:22). “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2Ti 3:12). If thou art in the way to the kingdom, my life for thine⁴¹ thou wilt come at the cross shortly; the Lord grant thou dost not shrink at it so as to turn thee back again. “If any man will come after me,” saith Christ, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luk 9:23).

The cross stands, and hath stood from the beginning, as a way-mark to the kingdom of heaven.⁴² You know if one ask you the way to such and such a place, you, for the better direction, do not only say, this is the way, but then also say, you must go by such a gate, by such a stile, such a bush, tree, bridge, or such like. Why, so it is here! Art thou inquiring the way to heaven? Why, I tell thee, Christ is the way; into Him thou must get, into His righteousness, to be justified. And if thou art in Him, thou wilt presently see the cross, thou must go close by it, thou must touch it; nay, thou must take it up—or else thou wilt quickly go out of the way that leads to heaven, and turn up some of those crooked lanes that lead down to the chambers of death.

⁴¹ **my life for thine** – Bunyan is here assuring the reader of his confidence that what he says is the truth.

⁴² This is one of Bunyan’s most deeply expressive directions to the heaven-ward pilgrim; may it sink into our hearts. Christ is the way, the cross is the standing way-mark throughout the road, never out of sight. In embracing the humbling doctrines of grace, in sorrow for sin, in crucifying self, in bearing each other’s burdens, in passing through the river that will absorb our mortality—from the new birth to our inheritance—the cross is the *way-mark*.—Ed.

2. *Knowing the cross*

Thou mayest know the cross by these six things. It is known a) in the doctrine of justification, b) in the doctrine of mortification, c) in the doctrine of perseverance, d) in self-denial, e) in patience, and f) in communion with poor saints.

a. In the *doctrine of justification*, there is a great deal of the cross in that: a man is forced to suffer the destruction of his own righteousness for the righteousness of another. This is no easy matter for a man to do; I assure you it stretcheth every vein in his heart before he will be brought to yield to it. What! for a man to deny, reject, abhor, and throw away all his prayers, tears, alms, keeping of sabbaths, hearing, reading, with the rest, in the point of justification, and to count them accursed⁴³—and to be willing, in the very midst of the sense of his sins, to throw himself wholly upon the righteousness and obedience of another Man—abhorring his own, counting it as deadly sin, as the open breach of the Law. I say, to do this in deed and in truth, is the biggest piece of the cross. Therefore Paul calleth this very thing a suffering, where he saith, “And I have *suffered* the loss of all things,” which principally was his righteousness, “that I might win Christ, and be found in him, not having,” but rejecting, “mine own righteousness” (Phi 3:8-9). That is the first.

b. In the *doctrine of mortification* is also much of the cross. Is it nothing for a man to lay hands on his vile opinions, on his vile sins; on his bosom sins, on his beloved, pleasant, darling sins that stick as close to him as the flesh sticketh to the bones? “What! to lose all these brave things that my eyes behold, for that which I never saw with my eyes? What! to lose my pride, my covetousness, my vain company, sports, and pleasures, and the rest?” I tell you this is no easy matter; if it were, what need all those prayers, sighs, watchings? What need we be so backward⁴⁴ to it? Nay, do you not see that some men, before they will set about this work, they will even venture the loss of their souls, heaven, God, Christ, and all? What means else all those delays and put-offs, saying, “Stay a little longer, I am loth to leave my sins while I am so young and in health”? Again, what is the reason else that others do it so by the halves, coldly, and seldom, notwithstanding they are convinced over and over, nay, and also promise to amend—and yet, all is in vain? I will assure you, to cut off right hands, and to pluck out right eyes, is no pleasure to the flesh (Mat 5:29:30)!

c. The *doctrine of perseverance* is also cross to the flesh; which is not only to begin, but for to hold out; not only to bid fair, and to say, “Would I had heaven,” but so to know Christ, to put on Christ, and walk with Christ as to *come to* heaven. Indeed, it is no great matter to begin to look for heaven, to begin to seek the Lord, to begin to shun sin. O, but it is a very great matter to continue with God’s approbation! “My servant Caleb,” saith God, is a man of “another spirit,” he “hath followed me fully” [i.e., followed me always,

⁴³ Our holiest, happiest duties, IF they interfere with a simple and exclusive reliance upon Christ for justification, must be accursed in our esteem; while, if they are fulfilled in a proper spirit of love to Him, they become our most blessed privileges. Reader, be jealous of [i.e., intolerant of unfaithfulness in] your motives.—Ed.

⁴⁴ **backward** – unwilling; reluctant; hesitant.

he hath continually followed Me], he “shall possess” the land (Num 14:24). Almost all the many thousands of the children of Israel in their generation, fell short of perseverance when they walked from Egypt towards the land of Canaan. Indeed, they went to the work at first pretty willingly, but they were very short-winded, they were quickly out of breath, and in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt.

It is an easy matter for a man to run hard for a spurt, for a furlong, for a mile or two. O, but to hold out for a hundred, for a thousand, for ten thousand miles; that man that doth this, he must look to meet with cross, pain, and wearisomeness to the flesh—if as he goeth he meeteth with briars, quagmires, and other encumbrances that make his journey so much the more painful.

Nay, do you not see with your eyes daily, that perseverance is a very great part of the cross? Why else do men so soon grow weary? I could point out a many that, after they have followed the ways of God about a twelvemonth—others it may be two, three, or four; some more and some less years—they have been beat out of wind, have taken up their lodging and rest before they have got half-way to heaven; some in this, and some in that sin; and have secretly, nay, sometimes openly said, “the way is too strait,⁴⁵ the race too long, the religion too holy; and I cannot hold out, I can go no farther!”

d-f. And so likewise of the other three, to wit, *patience, self-denial, communion* and communication with and to the poor saints. How hard are these things? It is an easy matter to deny another man, but it is not so easy a matter to deny one’s self—to deny myself out of love to God, to His gospel, to His saints; [to deny myself] this advantage and that gain; nay, that which otherwise I might lawfully do, were it not for offending them. That scripture is but seldom read, and seldomer put in practice, which saith, “I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1Co 8:13). Again, “We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Rom 15:1). But how froward, how hasty, how peevish and self-resolved are the generality of professors at this day! Also, how little considering the poor, unless it be to say, “Be ye warmed and filled” (Jam 2:16)! But to give is a seldom work, especially to give to any poor (Gal 6:10). I tell you, all things are cross to flesh and blood; and that man that hath but a watchful eye over the flesh, and also some considerable measure of strength against it, he shall find his heart in these things like unto a starting horse that is rid without a curbing bridle, ready to start at everything that is offensive to him—yea, and ready to run away too, do what the rider can.

It is the cross that keepeth those that are kept from heaven. I am persuaded, were it not for the cross, where we have one professor, we should have twenty—but this cross, that is it which spoileth all.⁴⁶

Some men, as I said before, when they come at the cross, they can go no farther, but back again to their sins they must go. Others, they stumble at it and break their necks; others again, when they see the cross is approaching, they turn aside to the left hand or

⁴⁵ **strait** – narrow; constricted; tight; distressful.

⁴⁶ **spoil** **all** – reveals all false professors to have no heart to persevere in trials.

to the right hand, and so think to get to heaven another way—but they will be deceived. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall,” mark, *shall* be sure to “suffer persecution” (2Ti 3:12). There are but few, when they come at the cross, cry, “Welcome cross,” as some of the martyrs did to the stake they were burned at.⁴⁷ Therefore, if thou meet with the cross in thy journey, in what manner soever it be, be not daunted and say, “Alas, what shall I do now!”; but rather take courage, knowing that by the cross is the way to the kingdom. Can a man believe in Christ and not be hated by the devil? Can he make a profession of this Christ, and that sweetly and convincingly, and the children of Satan hold their tongue? Can darkness agree with light? or the devil endure that Christ Jesus should be honoured both by faith and a heavenly conversation, and let that soul alone at quiet? Did you never read that the dragon persecuteth the woman (Rev 12:13); and that Christ saith, “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (Joh 16:33)?

I. Increase understanding and will

Beg of God that he would do these two things for thee: first, enlighten thine *understanding*, And second, inflame thy *will*. If these two be but effectually done, there is no fear but thou wilt go safe to heaven.

1. Enlighten thine understanding

One of the great reasons why men and women do so little regard the other world is because they see so little of it.⁴⁸ And the reason why they see so little of it is because they have their understandings darkened. And therefore, saith Paul, do not you believers walk “as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance [i.e., foolishness] that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph 4:17-18)—walk not as those, run not with them. Alas, poor souls, they have their understandings darkened, their hearts blinded, and that is the reason they have such undervaluing thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation of their souls. For when men do come to see the things of another world, what a God, what a Christ, what a heaven, and what an eternal glory there is to be enjoyed.

Also, when they see that it is possible for them to have a share in it, I tell you it will make them run through thick and thin to enjoy it. Moses, having a sight of this, because his understanding was enlightened, he feared not the wrath of the king, but chose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb 11:25). He refused to be called the son of the king’s daughter, accounting it

⁴⁷ Possible reference Hugh Latimer (c. 1487-1555) and Nicholas Ridley, bishops in the Church of England who, in 1555 under Queen Mary, were burned at the stake. Latimer is quoted as having said to Ridley, “Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out!”

⁴⁸ This is very solemn warning. But is it asked *how* are we to see that which is invisible, or to imagine bliss that is past our understanding? The reply is, treasure up in your heart those glimpses of glory contained in the Word. Be daily in communion with the world of spirits, and it may be your lot, with Paul, to have so soul-ravishing a sense of eternal realities, as scarcely to know whether you are in the body or not.—Ed.

wonderful riches to be counted worthy of so much as to suffer for Christ with the poor despised saints—and that was because he saw Him Who was invisible, and “had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Heb 11:26). And this is that which the apostle usually prayeth for in his epistles for the saints, namely, “That they might know what is the hope of God’s calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18). And that they might “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Eph 3:18-19).

Pray therefore that God would enlighten thy understanding; that will be very great help unto thee. It will make thee endure many a hard brunt for Christ. As Paul saith, “After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions...[You] took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance” (Heb 10:32-34). If there be never such a rare jewel lie just in a man’s way, yet if he sees it not, he will rather trample upon it than stoop for it, and it is because he sees it not. Why, so it is here; though heaven be worth never so much, and thou hast never so much need of it, yet if thou see it not, that is, have not thy understanding opened or enlightened to see it, thou wilt not regard at all. Therefore, cry to the Lord for enlightening grace, and say, “Lord, open my blind eyes. Lord, take the veil off my dark heart, show me the things of the other world, and let me see the sweetness, glory, and excellency of them for Christ’s sake.” This is the first.

2. Inflame thy will

Cry to God that he would inflame thy will also with the things of the other world. For when a man’s will is fully set to do such or such a thing, then it must be a very hard matter that shall hinder that man from bringing about his end. When Paul’s will was set resolvedly to go up to Jerusalem, though it was signified to him before what he should there suffer, he was not daunted at all. “Nay,” saith he, “I am ready [i.e., willing] not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Act 21:13). His will was inflamed with love to Christ, and therefore all the persuasions that could be used wrought nothing at all. Your self-willed people, nobody knows what to do with them; we used to say, “he will have his own will, do all what you can.”

Indeed, to have such a will for heaven is an admirable advantage to a man that undertaketh the race thither. A man that is resolved, and hath his will fixed, saith he, “I will do my best to advantage myself; I will do my worst to hinder my enemies; I will not give out as long as I can stand; I will have it or I will lose my life”; “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15); “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” (Gen 32:26). “I will, I will, I will”—O this blessed inflamed will for heaven! What is like it? If a man be willing, then any argument shall be matter of encouragement; but if unwilling, then any argument shall give discouragement. This is seen both in saints and sinners; in them that are the children of God and also those that are the children of the devil. As,

a. The saints of old, they being willing and resolved for heaven, what could stop them? Could fire or faggot,⁴⁹ sword or halter, stinking dungeons, whips, bears, bulls, lions, cruel rackings, stoning, starving, nakedness, etc. (Heb 11). Nay, in all these things they were more than conquerors through Him that loved them (Rom 8:37), Who had also made them “willing in the day of [His] power” (Psa 110:3).

b. See again, on the other side, the children of the devil. Because they are not willing [to run to heaven], how many shifts and starting-holes they will have: “I have married a wife, I have a farm, I shall offend my landlord, I shall offend my master, I shall lose my trading, I shall lose my pride, my pleasures, I shall be mocked and scoffed—therefore I dare not come.” “I,” saith another, “will stay till I am older, till my children are out of sight, till I am got a little aforehand in the world, till I have done this and that and the other business.” But alas, the thing is, they are not willing! For were they but soundly willing, these, and a thousand such as these, would hold them no faster than the cords held Samson when he broke them like burned flax (Jdg 15:14). I tell you the will is all; that is one of the chief things which turns the wheel either backwards or forwards. God knoweth that full well, and so likewise doth the devil. Therefore they both endeavour very much to strengthen the will of their servants. God, He is for making of His a willing people to serve Him; and the devil, he doth what he can to possess the will and affection of those that are his, with love to sin—and therefore, when Christ comes close to the matter, indeed, saith He, “Ye will not come to me” (Joh 5:40). “How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens, and ye would not” (Luk 13:34). The devil had possessed their wills, and so long he was sure enough of them.

O therefore cry hard to God to inflame thy will for heaven and Christ. Thy *will*, I say; if that be rightly set for heaven, thou wilt not be beat off with discouragements. This was the reason that, when Jacob wrestled with the angel—though he lost a limb, as it were, and the hollow of his thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him—yet, saith he, “I will not,” mark, “I *will not* let thee go, except thou bless me” (Gen 32:24-26). Get thy will tipt with the heavenly grace and resolution against all discouragements, and then thou goest full speed for heaven. But if thou falter in thy will, and be not found there, thou wilt run hobbling and halting all the way thou runnest—and also, to be sure, thou wilt fall short at the last. The Lord give thee a will and courage!

Thus have I done with directing thee how to run to the kingdom. Be sure thou keep in memory what I have said unto thee, lest thou lose thy way. But because I would have thee think of them, take all in short in this little bit of paper: 1. Get into the way. 2. Then study on it. 3. Then strip and lay aside everything that would hinder. 4. Beware of by-paths. 5. Do not gaze and stare too much about thee, and be sure to ponder the path of thy feet. 6. Do not stop for any that call after thee, whether it be the world, the flesh, or the devil; for all these will hinder thy journey, if possible. 7. Be not daunted with any discouragements thou meetest with as thou goest. 8. Take heed of stumbling at the cross.

⁴⁹ **faggot** – bundle of small tree branches used for fuel.

9. Cry hard to God for an enlightened heart, and a willing mind—and God give thee a prosperous journey.

Yet before I do quite take my leave of thee, let me give thee a few motives along with thee. It may be they will be as good as a pair of spurs to prick on thy lumpish heart in this rich voyage⁵⁰

V. Nine Motives to Urge Us On in the Way

A. *It is win or lose*

Consider there is no way but this: thou must either win or lose. If thou winnest, then heaven, God, Christ, glory, ease, peace, life—yea, life eternal, is thine. Thou must be made equal to the angels in heaven. Thou shalt sorrow no more, sigh no more, feel no more pain. Thou shalt be out of the reach of sin, hell, death, the devil, the grave, and whatever else may endeavour thy hurt. But contrariwise, if thou lose, then thy loss is heaven, glory, God, Christ, ease, peace, and whatever else that tendeth to make eternity comfortable to the saints. Besides, thou procurest eternal death, sorrow, pain, blackness, and darkness, fellowship with devils—together with the everlasting damnation of thy own soul!

B. *Enemies follow hard*

Consider that this devil, this hell, death and damnation, followeth after thee as hard as they can drive, and have their commission so to do by the Law, against which thou hast sinned. Therefore, for the Lord's sake, make haste!

C. *It is all or nothing*

If they seize upon thee before thou get to the City of Refuge, they will put an everlasting stop to thy journey. This also cries, "*Run* for it!"

D. *Christ is ready to receive*

Know also that now heaven gates [and] the heart of Christ, with His arms, are wide open to receive thee. O methinks that this consideration, that the devil followeth after to destroy and that Christ standeth open-armed to receive, should make thee reach out and fly with all haste and speed! And therefore,

E. *Look to the prize*

Keep thine eye upon the prize; be sure that thy eyes be continually upon the profit thou art like to get. The reason why men are so apt to faint in their race for heaven, it lieth chiefly in either of these two things:

⁵⁰ How characteristic of Bunyan is this sentence, "the rich voyage." God environing us about with His presence in time, and eternal felicity in the desired haven: "the lumpish heart" at times apparently indifferent to the glorious harvest: "a pair of spurs" to prick us on in the course. The word voyage (from *via*, a way) was in Bunyan's time equally used for a journey by sea or land, it is now limited to travelling by sea.—Ed.

1. They do not seriously consider the worth of the prize; or else if they do, they are afraid it is too good for them; but most lose heaven for want⁵¹ of considering the prize and the worth of it. And therefore, that thou mayst not do the like, keep thine eye much upon the excellency, the sweetness, the beauty, the comfort, the peace, that is to be had there by those that win the prize. This was that which made the apostle run through anything: good report, evil report, persecution, affliction, hunger, nakedness, peril by sea and peril by land, bonds and imprisonments. Also, it made others endure to be stoned, sawn asunder, to have their eyes bored out with augurs, their bodies broiled on gridirons, their tongues cut out of their mouths, boiled in cauldrons, thrown to the wild beasts, burned at the stakes, whipped at posts, and a thousand other fearful torments. “While we look not at the things which are seen [i.e., the things of this world], but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2Co 4:18). O this word *eternal*, that was it that made them—when they might have had deliverance, they would not accept of it, for they knew in the world to come they should have a better resurrection (Heb 11:35).

2. And do not let the thoughts of the rareness of the place make thee say in thy heart, “This is too good for me”; for I tell thee, heaven is prepared for whosoever will accept of it, and they shall be entertained with hearty good welcome. Consider, therefore, that as bad as thou have got thither; thither went scrubbed,⁵² beggarly Lazarus, etc. Nay, it is *prepared* for the poor: “Hearken, my beloved brethren [i.e., take notice of it],” saith James, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?” (Jam 2:5). Therefore take heart and *run*, man! And,

F. Think of those before

Think much of them that are gone before. First, how really they got into the kingdom. Secondly, how safe they are in the arms of Jesus. Would they be here again for a thousand worlds? Or if they were, would they be afraid that God would not make them welcome? Thirdly, what would they judge of thee if they knew thy heart began to fail thee in thy journey, or thy sins began to allure thee and to persuade thee to stop thy race; would they not call thee a thousand fools, and say, “O, that he did but see what we see, feel what we feel, and taste of the dainties that we taste of? O, if he were here [in heaven] one quarter of an hour, to behold, to see, to feel, to taste and enjoy but the thousandth part of what we enjoy, what would he do? What would he suffer? What would he leave undone? Would he favour sin? Would he love this world below? Would he be afraid of friends, or shrink at the most fearful threatenings that the greatest tyrants could invent to give him?” Nay, those who have had but a sight of these things by faith, when they have been as far off from them as heaven from earth, yet they have been able to say with a comfortable and merry heart, as the bird that sings in the spring, that this and more shall not keep them from running to heaven.

⁵¹ **want** – lack.

⁵² “Scrubbed”: worthless, vile, insignificant in the sight of man, who judges from the outward, temporal condition; but, in the case of Lazarus, precious in the sight of God.—Ed.

Sometimes, when my base heart hath been inclining to this world and to loiter in my journey towards heaven, the very consideration of the glorious saints and angels in heaven—what they enjoy and what low thoughts they have of the things of this world together, how they would befool me if they did but know that my heart was drawing back—[this] hath caused me to rush forward, to disdain these poor, low, empty, beggarly things, and to say to my soul, “Come, soul, let us not be weary; let us see what this heaven is; let us even venture all for it, and try if that will quit the cost. Surely Abraham, David, Paul, and the rest of the saints of God were as wise as any are now, and yet they lost all for this glorious kingdom.” O! therefore, throw away stinking lusts, follow after righteousness, love the Lord Jesus, devote thyself unto His fear. I’ll warrant thee He will give thee a goodly recompense. Reader, what sayst thou to this? Art [thou] resolved to follow me?—nay, resolve if thou canst to get before me! “*So run*, that ye may obtain.”

G. Christ is ready to carry

To encourage thee a little farther, set to the work, and when thou hast run thyself down weary, then the Lord Jesus will take thee up and carry thee. Is not this enough to make any poor soul begin his race? Thou, perhaps, criest, “O, but I am feeble, I am lame, etc.”—well, but Christ hath a bosom; consider, therefore, when thou hast run thyself down weary, He will put thee in His bosom. “He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isa 40:11). This is the way that fathers take to encourage their children, saying, “Run, sweet babe, while thou art weary, and then I will take thee up and carry thee.” “He shall gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom”—when they are weary, they shall ride.⁵³

H. Receive new strength

Or else He will convey new strength from heaven into thy soul, which will be as well. “The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isa 40:30-31). What shall I say besides what hath already been said? Thou shalt have good and easy lodging, good and wholesome diet, the bosom of Christ to lie in, the joys of heaven to feed on. Shall I speak of the satiety and of the duration of all these? Verily, to describe them to the height, it is a work too hard for me to do.⁵⁴

I. Enemies are tireless

Again, methinks the very industry of the devil and the industry of his servants, etc., should make you that have a desire to heaven and happiness to run apace. Why, the devil, he will lose no time, spare no pains; also neither will his servants, both to seek the de-

⁵³ What an inexhaustible source of comfort is contained in this passage. Blessed carriage, in which the poorest, weakest of Christ’s flock shall ride. Millions of gold could not purchase the privilege thus to ride in ease and safety, supported and guarded by Omnipotence, and guided by Omniscience.—Ed.

⁵⁴ Summed up by the psalmist, ‘Happy is that people that is in such a case. Happy is that people whose God is the Lord’ (Psa 144:15).—Ed.

struction of themselves and others—and shall not we be as industrious for our own salvation? Shall the world venture the damnation of their souls for a poor corruptible crown, and shall not we venture the loss of a few trifles for an eternal crown? Shall they venture the loss of eternal friends, as God to love, Christ to redeem, the Holy Spirit to comfort, heaven for habitation, saints and angels for company, and all this to get and hold communion with sin, this world, and a few base, drunken, swearing, lying, covetous wretches like themselves? And shall not we labour as hard, run as fast, seek as diligently, nay, a hundred times more diligently, for the company of these glorious eternal friends, though with the loss of such as these, nay, with the loss of ten thousand times better than these poor, low, base, contemptible things? Shall it be said at the last day that wicked men made more haste to hell than you did make to heaven?⁵⁵ That they spent more hours, days, and that early and late, for hell, than you spent for that which is ten thousand thousand of thousands times better? O let it not be so, but *run* with all might and main!

Thus, you see, I have here spoken something, though but little. Now I shall come to make some use and application of what hath been said, and so conclude.

VI. Nine Uses of This Subject

A. Do you so run?

You see here that he who will go to heaven, he must run for it; yea, and not only run, but *so* run—that is, as I have said, to run earnestly, to run continually, to strip off everything that would hinder in his race with the rest. Well then, do you so run? And now let us examine a little.

1. Art thou got into the right way? Art thou in Christ's righteousness? Do not say yes in thy heart, when in truth there is no such matter. It is a dangerous thing, you know, for a man to think he is in the right way when he is in the wrong. It is the next way for him to lose his way, and not only so, but if he run for heaven, as thou sayst thou dost, even to lose that too. O, this is the misery of most men, to persuade themselves that they run right when they never had one foot in the way! The Lord give thee understanding here, or else thou art undone forever. Prithee, soul, search when was it thou turned out of thy sins and righteousness into the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I say, dost thou see thyself in Him? and is He more precious to thee than the whole world? Is thy mind always musing on Him? Dost thou love to be talking of Him—and also to be walking with Him? Dost thou count His company more precious than the whole world? Dost thou count all things but poor, lifeless, empty, vain things, without communion with Him?

⁵⁵ How severe and cutting, but how just, is this reflection upon many, that wicked men, for the gratification of destructive propensities, should evince greater zeal and perseverance to light up the fire of hell in their consciences, than some professing Christians do in following after peace and holiness, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise" (Pro 6:6).—Ed.

Doth His company sweeten all things—and His absence embitter all things? Soul, I beseech thee, be serious, and lay it to heart, and do not take things of such weighty concernment as the salvation or damnation of thy soul, without good ground.

2. Art thou unladen of the things of this world, as pride, pleasures, profits, lusts, vanities? What! dost thou think to run fast enough with the world, [with] thy sins and lusts in thy heart? I tell thee, soul, they that have laid all aside—every weight, every sin—and are got into the nimblest posture, they find work enough to run; so to run as to hold out. To run through all that opposition, all these jostles, all these rubs, over all these stumbling-blocks, over all the snares from all these entanglements, that the devil, sin, the world, and their own hearts lay before them—I tell thee, if thou art agoing heavenward, thou wilt find it no small or easy matter. Art thou therefore discharged and unladen of these things? Never talk of going to heaven if thou art not. It is to be feared thou wilt be found among the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luk 13:24).

B. Remember “but almost”

If so, then, in the next place, what will become of them that are grown weary before they are got half way thither? Why, man, it is he that holdeth out to the end that must be saved; it is he that overcometh that shall inherit all things—it is not every one that begins. Agrippa gave a fair step for a sudden, he steps almost into the bosom of Christ in less than half an hour. “Thou,” saith he to Paul, hast “almost persuaded me to be a Christian” (Act 26:26). Ah! but it was *but almost*; and so he had as good have been never a whit; he stept fair indeed, but yet he stept short; he was hot while he was at it, but he was quickly out of wind. O this “but almost”! I tell you, this “but almost,” it lost his soul! Methinks I have seen sometimes how these poor wretches that get *but almost* to heaven, how fearfully their almost, and their “but almost,” will torment them in hell—when they shall cry out in the bitterness of their souls, saying, I was *almost* a Christian. I was *almost* got into the kingdom, *almost* out of the hands of the devil, *almost* out of my sins, *almost* from under the curse of God—*almost*, and that was all; *almost*, but not altogether. O that I should be *almost* at heaven, and should not go quite through! Friend, it is a sad thing to sit down before we are in heaven, and to grow weary before we come to the place of rest; and if it should be thy case, I am sure thou dost *not* so run as to obtain. But again,

C. Don’t run back

In the next place, what then will become of them that some time since were running post-haste to heaven, insomuch that they seemed to outstrip many, but now are running as fast back again? Do you think those will ever come thither? What! to run back again, back again to sin, to the world, to the devil, back again to the lusts of the flesh? O! “It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn,” to turn back again “from the holy commandment” (2Pe 2:22). Those men shall not only be damned for sin, but for professing to all the world that sin is

better than Christ. For the man that runs back again, he doth as good as say, “I have tried Christ, and I have tried sin, and I do not find so much profit in Christ as in sin.”⁵⁶

I say, this man declareth this, even by his running back again. O sad! what a doom they will have who were almost at heaven-gates, and then run back again. “If *any* draw back,” saith Christ [by His apostle], “my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb 10:38). Again, “No man having put his hand to the plough,” that is, set forward in the ways of God, “and looking back,” turning back again, “is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luk 9:62). And if not fit for the kingdom of heaven, then for certain he must needs be fit for the fire of hell. And therefore, saith the apostle, those that “bring forth” these apostatizing fruits, as “briars and thorns,” are rejected—and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned (Heb 6:8).

O, there is never another Christ to save them by bleeding and dying for them! And if they shall not escape that neglect, then how shall they escape that reject and turn their back upon “so great a salvation?” (Heb 2:3). And if the righteous—that is, they that run for it—will find work enough to get to heaven, then “where will the ungodly,” backsliding “sinner appear?” (1Pe 4:8). If Judas the traitor or Francis Spiera the backslider were but now alive in the world to whisper these men in the ear a little, and tell them what it hath cost their souls for backsliding, surely it would stick by them and make them afraid of running back again, so long as they had one day to live in this world.

D. Backsliding and sitting still

So again, how unlike to these men’s passions⁵⁷ will those be that have all this while sat still, and have not so much as set one foot forward to the kingdom of heaven. Surely he that backslideth and he that sitteth still in sin, they are both of one mind: the one he will not stir, because he loveth his sins and the things of this world; the other he runs back again, because he loveth his sins and the things of this world. Is it not one and the same thing? They are all one here, and shall not one and the same hell hold them hereafter! He is an ungodly one that never looked after Christ, and he is an ungodly one that did once look after Him and then ran quite back again. Therefore that word must certainly drop out of the mouth of Christ against them both: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat 25:41).

E. Don’t delay

Again, here you may see—in the next place, that is—they that will have heaven must run for it: then this calls aloud to those who began but a while since to run, I say, for

⁵⁶ How awful a warning is this to the backslider. A wicked professor is a practical atheist and a contemptible hypocrite. But the backslider is worse, he proclaims, in his downward course, the awful blasphemy that “sin is better than Christ”; “hell is preferable to heaven.” O! that some poor bewildered backslider may, by a divine blessing upon the voice of Bunyan, be arrested in his mad career.—Ed.

⁵⁷ “Passions”; the old English term for sufferings. It is used in Acts 1 emphatically to express the last sufferings of the Saviour, as also in what is called “passion week.”—Ed.

them to mend their pace if they intend to win. You know that they which come hindmost, had need run fastest. Friend, I tell thee, there be those that have run ten years to thy one, nay, twenty to thy five, and yet if thou talk with them, sometimes they will say they doubt they shall come late enough. How then will it be with thee? Look to it, therefore, that thou delay no time, not an hour's time, but speedily part with all, with everything that is an hindrance to thee in thy journey, and run—yea, and *so run* that thou mayest obtain.

F. Strive to stay ahead

Again, sixthly, you that are old professors, take you heed that the young striplings⁵⁸ of Jesus—who began to strip⁵⁹ but the other day—do not outrun you, so as to have that scripture fulfilled on you, “Many that are first shall be last; and the last first” (Mar 10:31); which will be a shame to you and a credit for them. What! for a young soldier to be more courageous than he that hath been used to wars! To you that are hindmost, I say, strive to outrun them that are before you; and you that are foremost, I say, hold your ground, and keep before them in faith and love, if possible. For indeed that is the right running, for one to strive to outrun another: even for the hindmost to endeavour to overtake the foremost, and he that is before should be sure to lay out himself to keep his ground, even to the very utmost. But then,

G. Avoid mere professors

Again, how basely do they behave themselves, how unlike are they to win, that think it enough to keep company with the hindmost? There are some men that profess themselves such as run for heaven as well as any; yet if there be but any lazy, slothful, cold, half-hearted professors in the country, they will be sure to take example by them. They think if they can but keep pace with them they shall do fair, but these do not consider that the hindmost lose the prize. You may know it, if you will, that it cost the foolish virgins dear for their coming too late: “They that were ready went in with him...and the door was shut. Afterward,” mark, *afterward*, “came also the other [the foolish] virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said,” Depart, “I know you not” (Mat 25:10-12).

Depart, lazy professors, cold professors, slothful professors. O! methinks the Word of God is so plain for the overthrow of you lazy professors, that it is to be wondered men do take no more notice of it. How was Lot's wife served for running lazily, and for giving but one look behind her after the things she left in Sodom? How was Esau served for staying too long before he came for the blessing? And how were they served that are mentioned in Luke 13:25, for staying till the door was shut? Also the foolish virgins: a heavy after-groan will they give that have thus staid too long. It turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26). It made Esau weep with an exceeding loud and bitter cry (Heb 12:17). It made Judas hang himself. Yea, and it will make thee curse the day in which

⁵⁸ **striplings** – those relatively new in Christ just beginning the process to spiritual maturity.

⁵⁹ **strip** – cast off everything that hinders.

thou wast born, if thou miss of the kingdom—as thou wilt certainly do, if this be thy course. But,

H. Lazy running destroys others

Again, thou by thy lazy running shouldst not only destroy thyself, but also thereby be the cause of the damnation of some others, for thou being a professor thou must think⁶⁰ that others will take notice of thee. And because thou art but a poor, cold, lazy runner, and one that seeks to drive the world and pleasure along with thee, why, thereby others will think of doing so too. Nay, say they, why may not we as well as he? He is a professor, and yet he seeks for pleasures, riches, profits; he loveth vain company, and he is proud, and he is so and so, and professeth that he is going for heaven; yea, and he saith also he doth not fear but he shall have entertainment—let us therefore keep pace with him, we shall fare no worse than he.

O how fearful a thing will it be, if that thou shalt be instrumental of the ruin of others by thy halting in the way of righteousness! Look to it, thou wilt have strength little enough to appear before God, to give an account of the loss of thy own soul; thou needest not have to give an account for others; why thou didst stop them from entering in. How wilt thou answer that saying, “ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered” (Luk 11:52)—for that saying will be eminently fulfilled on them that through their own idleness do keep themselves out of heaven, and by giving of others the same example, hinder them also.

I. Don’t run lazily or take example from those who do

Therefore, now to speak a word to both of you, and so I shall conclude.

1. I beseech you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that none of you do run so lazily in the way to heaven as to hinder either yourselves or others. I know that even he which runs laziest, if he should see a man running for a temporal life—if he should so much neglect his own well-being in this world as to venture, when he is a-running for his life, to pick up here and there a lock of wool that hangeth by the way-side, or to step now and then aside out of the way for to gather up a straw or two, or any rotten stick—I say, if he should do this when he is a-running for his life, thou wouldst condemn him. And dost thou not condemn thyself that dost the very same in effect, nay worse, that loiterest in thy race, notwithstanding thy soul, heaven, glory, and all is at stake. Have a care, have a care, poor wretched sinner, have a care!

2. If yet there shall be any that, notwithstanding this advice, will still be flaggering⁶¹ and loitering in the way to the kingdom of glory, be thou so wise as not to take example by them. Learn of no man further than he followeth Christ. But look unto Jesus, Who is not only “the author and finisher of our faith,” but “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the

⁶⁰ **think** – realize.

⁶¹ **flaggering** – falling off in vigor, energy, activity, interest.

throne of God” (Heb 12:2). I say, look to no man to learn of him no further than he followeth Christ. “Be ye followers of me,” saith Paul, “even as I also am of Christ” (1Co 11:1). Though he was an eminent man, yet his exhortation was that none should follow him any further than he followed Christ.

VII. Provocation to Run with the Foremost

Now, that you may be provoked to run with the foremost, take notice of this. When Lot and his wife were running from cursed Sodom to the mountains to save their lives, it is said that his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt; and yet you see that neither her practice, nor the judgment of God that fell upon her for the same, would cause Lot to look behind him. I have sometimes wondered at Lot in this particular; his wife looked behind her, and died immediately; but let what would become of her, Lot would not so much as look behind him to see her. We do not read that he did so much as once look where she was or what was become of her; his heart was indeed upon his journey. And well it might: there was the mountain before him, and the fire and brimstone behind him; his life lay at stake, and he had lost it if he had but looked behind him. Do thou so run; and in thy race remember Lot’s wife, and remember her doom; and remember for what that doom did overtake her; and remember that God made her an example for all lazy runners, to the end of the world—and take heed thou fall not after the same example. But, if this will not provoke thee, consider thus,

1. Thy soul is thy own soul that is either to be saved or lost; thou shalt not lose *my* soul by *thy* laziness. It is thy own soul, thy own ease, thy own peace, thy own advantage or disadvantage. If it were my soul that thou art desired to be good unto, methinks reason should move thee somewhat to pity it. But alas, it is thy own, thy own soul. “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mar 8:36). God’s people wish well to the souls of others, and wilt not thou wish well to thy own? And if this will not provoke thee, then think again,

2. If thou lose thy soul, it is thou also that must bear the blame. It made Cain stark mad to consider that he had not looked to his brother Abel’s soul. How much more will it perplex thee to think that thou hadst not a care of thy own? And if this will not provoke thee to bestir thyself, think again,

3. That if thou wilt not run, the people of God are resolved to deal with thee even as Lot dealt with his wife, that is, leave thee behind them. It may be thou hast a father, mother, brother, etc., going post-haste to heaven. Wouldst thou be willing to be left behind them? Surely no! Again,

4. Will it not be a dishonour to thee to see the very boys and girls in the country to have more wit than thyself? It may be the servants of some men, as the horsekeeper,

ploughman, scullion,⁶² etc., are more looking after heaven than their masters. I am apt to think sometimes that more servants than masters, that more tenants than landlords, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. But is not this a shame for them that are such? I am persuaded you scorn that your servants should say that they are wiser than you in the things of this world; and yet I am bold to say that many of them *are* wiser than you in the things of the world to come, which are of great concernment.

VIII. A Short Expostulation

Well then, sinner, what sayest thou? Where is thy heart? Wilt thou run? Art thou resolved to strip or art thou not? Think quickly, man; it is no dallying in this matter. Confer not with flesh and blood; look up to heaven and see how thou likest it; also to hell—of which thou mayst understand something by my book called *A Few Sighs from Hell; or the Groans of a Damned Soul*⁶³—which I wish thee to read seriously over and accordingly devote thyself. If thou dost not know the way, inquire at the Word of God. If thou wantest company, cry for God's Spirit. If thou wantest encouragement, entertain the promises. But be sure thou begin betimes, get into the way, run apace, and hold out to the end—and the Lord give thee a prosperous journey. Farewell.



⁶² **scullion** – kitchen servant that cleans pots and does other menial tasks.

⁶³ *A Few Sighs from Hell* – available for viewing or download, together with the complete works of John Bunyan, from the Chapel Library website: www.ChapelLibrary.org/literature/bunyan.