



*A description of
the man that gets
to Heaven.*

The Heavenly FOOTMAN

John Bunyan

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN

or
A Description of the Man That
Gets to Heaven

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“So run that ye may obtain”—1 Cor. 9:24.

Heaven and happiness is that which everyone desireth, insomuch that wicked Balaam could say, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;” yet for all this there are but few that do obtain that ever-to-be-desired glory, insomuch that many eminent professors drop short of a welcome from God into this pleasant place. The apostle, therefore, because he did desire the salvation of the Corinthians to whom he writes this epistle, layeth them down in these words such counsel, which, if taken, would be for their help and advantage.

First. Not to be wicked, and sit still and wish for heaven, but to run for it.

Secondly. 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 betimes, they run apace, they run with patience, they run the right way: 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: do you so run. “So run that ye may obtain.”

These words 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

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you not that they which run in a race run all but one obtains 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.

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 obtaineth the prize?” So run ye. The prize is heaven, and if you will have it you must run for it. You have another Scripture for this in the 12th of the Hebrews, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd verses: “Wherefore, seeing also,” saith the apostle, “that we 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 so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I,” etc.

But before I go any farther,

1. Fleeing

Observe, that 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 the 6th of the Hebrews it is called **a fleeing**: “That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us.” Mark who have fled. It is taken from the 20th of Joshua, 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

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a running or fleeing for one's life—a running with all might and main, as we used to say. So run.

2. Pressing

Secondly. This running in another place is called **a pressing**: “I press toward the mark;” which 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.

3. Continuing

This running is called in another place **a continuing in the way of life**. “If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel of Christ.” Not to run a little now and then, by fits and starts, or halfway or almost thither, but to run for thy life, to run through all difficulties, and to continue therein to the end of the race, which must be to the end of thy life. “So run that ye may obtain.” And the reasons for this point are these:

1. 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. “Though a man do strive for the mastery,” saith Paul, “yet he is not crowned unless he strive lawfully;” that is, unless he so run and so strive as to have God's approbation. What! Do you think that every **heavy-heeled** professor will have heaven? What! Every lazy one? Every wanton and foolish professor, that will be stopped by anything, kept back by anything, that scarce runneth so fast

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heavenward as a snail creepeth on the ground? Nay, there are some professors that 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 be many more that run than there be that obtain; therefore he that will have heaven must run for it.

2. Because you know that though a man do run, yet if he do not overcome or win as well as run, what will they be the better for their running? They 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 it 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 in 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 from me; you come not here, you come too late, you run too lazy: the door is shut. "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 knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, I will say, I know you not; depart," etc. Oh, sad will the state 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."

3. 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.

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4. They that will go to heaven 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.” 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; and when death comes away thou must go, whether thou art provided or not; and 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 to run for it.

5. 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. “The devil, your adversary, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.” 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, that can shoot a great way; have a care thou keep out of the reach of those great guns, the ten commandments. Hell also hath a wide mouth; it can stretch itself farther 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,” 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.

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6. They that will go to heaven must run for it, because, perchance, the gates of heaven may shut shortly. Sometimes sinners have not heaven's 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 can open," 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 Spira 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. What! To be shut out! What! Out of heaven! Sinner, rather than lose it, run for it; yea, and "so run that thou mayest obtain."

7. 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 runs and misseth—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. But more of this anon.

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, oh it fears me greatly! Pray tell me, therefore, how I should run?

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

The First Direction

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

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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 nearer the prize, but rather the farther off. Just as it is 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. I have observed, 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 benefited nothing at all.

Here is one 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; and yet, possibly, most of all these sects run quite the wrong way, and yet everyone is for his life, his soul, either for heaven or hell.

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, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." 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 righteousness, 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 confirm 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 saved 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

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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; down on thy knees in prayer to the Lord for the Spirit of truth; search his word for direction; flee seducer's company; keep company with the soundest Christians that have most experience of Christ; and be sure thou have a care of Quakers, Ranters, Free-willers; also do not have too much company with some Anabaptists, 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.

2. Take heed of fetching peace for thy soul from any inherent righteousness. But if thou canst believe that 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 there unto to do it; for that is the right way; the Lord put thee into it and kept thee in it!

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The Second Direction

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 anything. 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 man;” why he cried; why he died; why he “bare the sins 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. Be much in musing and considering of these things; be thinking also enough of those places which 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, you must do. “Avoid such things which are expressly forbidden in the word of God.” “Withdraw thy foot far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, for her steps take hold of hell, going down to the chambers of death.” **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.

The Third Direction

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 whatsoever else thy heart may be inclined unto which may hinder thee in this heavenly race. Men than run for a wager, if they intend

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to win as well as run, they do not use to encumber themselves or carry those things about them that may be an hindrance to them in their running. “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;” that is, he layeth aside everything that would be any wise a disadvantage to him; as saith the apostle, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” 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 pocket with stones, hang heavy garments on his shoulders, and great lumpish shoes on his feet? 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.

The Fourth Direction

Beware of by-paths; take heed thou dost not run 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. Some of them are dangerous because of practice, some because of opinion, but mind them not; mind the path before thee, look right before thee, turn neither to the right nor to the left, but let thine eyes look right on, even right before thee: “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.” This counsel being not so seriously taken as given is the reason of that starting 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

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the way to heaven be but one, yet there are many crooked lanes and by-paths 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, most travellers go those ways; and 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. So it is here: the scarlet streams of Christ's blood run throughout the way to the kingdom of heaven; therefore mind that, see if thou do find the besprinkling of the blood of Christ in the way, and if thou do, be of good cheer, thou art in the right way; but have a care thou beguile not thyself with a fancy for then thou mayest light into any lane or way; but that thou mayest 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 written with the heart-blood of Christ that he came into the world to save sinners, and that we are 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." How easy a matter is it in this our day for the devil to be too cunning for poor souls by calling his bypaths 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! 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

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they a sense of their own insufficiency; but are bold, proud, presumptuous, self-conceited. And therefore,

The Fifth Direction

Do not thou be too much in looking too high in thy journey heavenwards. You know men that run a race do not use to stare and gaze this way and that, neither do they cast up their eyes too high, lest haply, 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 mayest stumble and fall, as many hundreds in England have done, both in ranting and quakery, to their own eternal overthrow, without the marvellous operation of God's grace be suddenly stretched forth to bring them back again. Take heed, therefore, follow not that proud, lofty spirit that, devil-like, cannot be content with his own station. David was of excellent spirit where he saith, "Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters or 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." Do thou so run.

The Sixth Direction

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

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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 I am undone; and therefore hinder me not. Thus wise are men when they run for corruptible things, and thus shouldst 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, pleasure, 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 neighbors do—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-souls as these are. “My son,” saith Solomon, “if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

You know what it cost the young man which Solomon speaks of in the 7th of Proverbs, that was enticed by a harlot: “With 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 knew not that it was for his life. Harken 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, many strong men have been slain [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,

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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; if I lose, I lose all; let me alone, for I will not hear. So run.

The Seventh Direction

In the next place, be not daunted though thou meetest with never so many discouragements in thy journey thither. That man that 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 broke 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 an hundred other discouraging suggestions. And thus it was with David where he saith, "I had fainted, unless I had believed, to see the loving-kindness of the Lord in the land of the living." 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 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, or 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 as free as ever. If these be

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not thine 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 my enemy, for when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me.”

The Eighth Direction

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 waymark by which all they that go to glory must pass by.

“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” If thou art in thy way to the kingdom, my life for thine thou wilt come to 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.” The cross! It stands and hath stood from the beginning as a waymark to the kingdom of heaven. 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

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that leads to heaven, and turn up some of those crooked lanes that lead down to the chambers of death.

Now thou may know the cross by these six things:

1. It is known in the doctrine of justification; 2. In the doctrine of mortification; 3. In the doctrine of perseverance; 4. In self-denial; 5. Patience; 6. Communion with poor saints.

1. 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 to 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 accursed; 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; and 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) my own righteousness.” That is the first.

2. 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 sticks 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 these prayers, sighs, watchings?

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What need we be so backward 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's in vain? I will assure you, to cut off right hands and pluck out right eyes is no pleasure to the flesh.

3. The doctrine of perseverance is also cross to the flesh, which is not only to begin, but 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, 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; oh 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 (followed me always, he hath continually followed me) fully; he shall possess the land." Almost all the many thousands of the children of Israel in their generation fell short of perseverance when they walked from Egypt toward the land of Canaan. Indeed they went to 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: oh, 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, especially if as he goeth he meeteth with briers, and quagmires, and other encumbrances that make his journey so much the more painful.

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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 many that, after they had followed the ways of God about a twelvemonth, others it may be two, three, or four (some more, some less) years, they have been beat out of wind, have taken up their lodging and rest before they have got halfway to heaven, some in this, some in that sin, and have secretly, nay sometimes openly, said that the way is too strait, the race too long, the religion too holy, and I cannot hold out, I can go no farther.

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 of this advantage and of that gain, nay, of 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 if it make my brother to offend;" again, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." But how forward, how hasty, how peevish, and self resolved are the generality of professors at this day! Alas! How little considering the poor, unless it be to say, Be thou warmed and filled! But to give is a seldomer work, also especially to give to any poor. 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.

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It is the cross which 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.

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 that the cross is approaching, they turn aside to the left hand or to the right hand, and so think to get to heaven another way, but they will be deceived. “For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall”—mark shall—“be sure to suffer persecution.” 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. Therefore if you meet with the cross in thy journey, in what manner so ever 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 by faith and a heavenly conversation, and let that soul alone at quiet? Did you never read that “the dragon persecuted the woman?” And that Christ saith, “In the world you shall have tribulations.”

The Ninth Direction

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

One of the great reasons why men and women do so little regard the other world, it is because they see so little of it; and the reason

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why they see so little of it is because they have their understanding darkened. And therefore, saith Paul, “Do not you believers walk as do other Gentiles, even in the vanity of their minds, having their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God through ignorance (or foolishness) that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” 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 afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” He refused to be called the son of the king’s daughter, accounting it wonderful riches to be accounted 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 recompense of reward. 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; and that they might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” Pray, therefore, that God would enlighten thy understanding; that will be a very great help unto thee. It will make thee endure many a hard brunt for Christ; as Paul saith, “After you 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

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and an enduring substance.” 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—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 his sake. This is the first.

The Tenth Direction

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 [or willing] not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 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 what you can. Indeed to have a will for heaven is an admirable advantage to a man that undertaketh a race hither; 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 Him.” “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” I will, I

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will, I will. Oh 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 in both saints and sinners, in them that are the children of God, and also those that are the children of the devil. As—

1. The saints of old, they being willing and resolved for heaven, what could stop them? Could fire and faggot, sword or halter, filthy dungeons, whips, bears, bulls, lions, cruel rackings, stoning, starving, nakedness, etc. “And in all these things they were more than conquerors, through Him that loved them,” who had also made them “willing in the day of his power.”

2. See again, on the other side, the children of the devil, because they are not willing, 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, 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 burnt flax; I tell you the will is all; that is one of the chief things which turns the wheel either backwards or forwards; and God knoweth that full well, and so likewise doth the devil, and therefore they both endeavor 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,

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saith he, “You will not come to me.” “How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens, but you would not!” The devil had possessed their wills, and so long he was sure enough of them. Oh 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; and 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.” Get thy will tipt with the heavenly grace and resolution against all thy discouragements, and then thou goest full speed for heaven; but if thou falter in thy will and be not sound there, thou wilt run hobbling and halting all the way thou runnest, and also to be sure thou wilt fall short at 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, but 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.
9. Cry hard to God for an enlightened heart and willing mind, and God give thee a prosperous journey!

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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 journey.

The First Motive

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 shalt 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, and if thou lose, then thy loss is heaven, glory, God, Christ, ease, peace, and whatever else which 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.

The Second Motive

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

The Third Motive

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.

The Fourth Motive

Know also that now heaven-gates, the heart of Christ, with his arms, are wide open to receive thee. Oh methinks that this

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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:

The Fifth Motive

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:

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 must lose heaven for want of considering the prize and the worth of it. And therefore, that thou mayest 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 with augers, their bodies broiled on gridirons, their tongues cut out of their mouths, boiled in caldrons, thrown to the wild beasts, burned at the stake, whipped at posts, and a thousand other fearful torments, “while they looked not at the things that are seen, [as the things of this world,] but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Oh, this word “eternal!” That was it that made them, when they might have had deliverance, not accept of it, for they knew in the world to come they should have a better resurrection.

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

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is prepared for whosoever will accept of it, and they shall be entertained with a hearty good welcome. Consider, therefore, that as bad as thou have got thither; thither went scrubbed, beggarly Lazarus, etc. Nay, it is prepared for the poor: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, (saith James—take notice of it,) hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?" Therefore take heart and run, man. And:

The Sixth Motive

Think much of them that are gone before. First, how really they go 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, Oh that he did but see what we see, feel what we feel, and taste of the dainties that we taste of! Oh if he were 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 favor 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 stop them from running to heaven. 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

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things of this world together, how they would befool me if they did but know that my heart was drawing back, 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. Oh therefore throw away your 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 sayest thou to this? Art thou resolved to follow me? Nay, resolve if thou canst to get before me. So run that ye may obtain.

The Seventh Motive

To encourage thee a little further, 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, oh, 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 arms and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." This is the way that fathers take to encourage their children, saying, Run sweet babe, until thou art weary, and then I will take thee up and carry thee. "He will gather his lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom." When they are weary they shall ride.

The Eighth Motive

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

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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.” 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.

The Ninth Motive

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 destruction 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, and this world, and a few base, drunken, swearing, lying, covetous wretches like themselves, and shall not we labor as hard, run as fast, seek as 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?—that they spent more hours, days, and that early and late, for hell, than you spent for that which is ten thousand of thousand times better? Oh let it not be so, but run with all might and main.

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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.

The First Use

You see here that he that 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.

1. And now let us examine a little. 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 sayest thou dost, even to lose that too. Oh 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, 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? 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.

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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, 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 the jostles, all these rubs, over all the stumbling blocks, over all the snares, from all the entanglements that the devil, sin, the world, and their own hearts lay before them—I tell thee if thou art going 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.”

The Second Use

If so, then, in the next place, what will become of them that are grown weary before they are got halfway 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.” Ah! but it was but **almost**, and so he had as good have been never a whit; he steps fair indeed, but yet he stops short; he was hot while he was at it, but he was quickly out of wind. Oh this **but almost**! I tell you, this **but almost**, it lost his soul. Me thinks 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 bitterness of their soul, saying, “Almost a Christian.”

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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 all together. Oh 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,

The Third Use

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 lust of the flesh! Oh, “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.” 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. I say, this man declareth this, even by his running back again. Oh sad! What a doom they will have who were almost at heaven-gates and then run back again! “If any draweth back,” saith Christ, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” 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 heaven.” 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 “briers and thorns, are rejected, being nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.” Oh there is never another

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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?” 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?” Or, if Judas the traitor or Francis Spira 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.

The Fourth Use

So again, fourthly. How like to these men’s sufferings 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 the 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; and 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.”

The Fifth Use

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 them to mend their pace if they

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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 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 part speedily with all, with everything that is an hindrance to thee in thy journey, and run; yea, and so run that thou mayest obtain.

The Sixth Use

Again, sixthly. You that are old professors, take you heed that the young striplings of Jesus, that began to strip but the other day, do not outrun you, so as to have that Scripture fulfilled on you, "The first shall be last and the last first;" 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 hindermost, 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 hindermost to endeavor 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,

The Seventh Use

Again. How basely they do 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

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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 the other (the foolish) virgins, saying, Lord, open to us; but he answered and said, “Depart, I know you not.” Depart, lazy professors, slothful professors. Oh, methinks the word of God is so plain for the overthrow of your 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 the 13th of Luke, for staying till “the door was shut?” Also the foolish virgins; a heavy after-groan will they give that have thus stayed too long. It turned Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt; it made Esau weep with an exceeding loud and bitter cry; it made Judas hang himself; yea, and it will make thee curse the day in which thou was born if thou miss of the kingdom, as thou wilt certainly do if this be thy course. But,

The Eighth Use

Again. How and if thou by thy lazy running should not only destroy thyself, but also thereby be the cause of the damnation of some others? For thou being a professor, thou must think that others will take notice of thee; but 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 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

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keep pace with him; we shall fare no worse than he. Oh how fearful a thing will it be if that thou shalt be instrumental to 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, You would not enter in yourselves, and them that would, you hinder; for that saying is eminently fulfilled on them that through their own idleness do keep themselves out of heaven, and by giving of others the same examples hinder them also.

The Ninth Use

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 wayside, 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 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 flagging 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 farther

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than he followeth Christ. But look unto Jesus, who is not only the author and finisher of faith, but who did for the joy that was set before him, endure the cross, despise the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God; I say, look to no man to learn of him farther than he followeth Christ. “Be ye followers of me,” saith Paul, “even as I am of Christ.” Though he was an eminent man, yet his exhortation was that none should follow him any farther than he followed Christ.

Provocation

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:

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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 own 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?” 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 had 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.

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 not dallying in this matter. Confer not with flesh and blood; look up to heaven, and see how thou likest it; also to hell, 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.

