

Published based on [A Classic Sermon -- John Bunyan \(1628-1688\) THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN](#)

# **A Classic Sermon -- John Bunyan (1628-1688) THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN**

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## THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN

So run that ye may obtain.—I Cor. ix., 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." 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 this 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, 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, 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, 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 were taken from men's funning for a wager; a very apt similitude to set before the eyes of the saints of the Lord. "Know you that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth 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 xii. of the Hebrews, the 1st, 2d, and 3d 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 vi. 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 that xx. 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 offense he had committed; therefore it is a running or fleeing for one's life: a running with all might and main, as we use 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. Thirdly, 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 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." And the reasons are:

(1.) Because all or every one that runneth doth not obtain the prize; there may 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 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. "Tho 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 stopt by anything, kept back by anything, that scarce runneth so fast 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 are many more that run than there be that obtain; therefore he that will have heaven must run for it.

(2.) Because you know, that tho 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 to win the prize; but if he doth not obtain it, he doth lose his labor, 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-gates, and not able to get any farther, 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 lazily; 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 to 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.

(4.) 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 thou now enjoyest: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, 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, they 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 the 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 I say to thee, Take heed, tarry not, lest either the devil, hell 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 all considered, then thou, as well as I, wouldst say, They that will have heaven must run for it.

(6.) They that 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 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 you 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 mayst 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 I will say of thee, if thou be such a one who runs and misses; 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.

Quest. 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.

Ans. That thou mayst 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 thing to think that ever thou shalt have the prize, tho 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, tho 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 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. 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, tho 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 Freewill, and another for Presbytery; and 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.

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 you 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.

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 seducers' 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, tho I go under that name myself. I will tell thee this is such a serious matter, and I fear thou wilt so little regard it, that the thought 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.

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 any way. This therefore thou shouldst do; let thy study be much exercised about Christ, which 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" (Phil. ii.); why He was "made in the likeness of man"; why He cried; why He died; why He "bare 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. 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 whatever else thy heart may be inclining unto, which 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 use to 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"; that is, he layeth aside everything that would be anywise 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, tho he run, if he fill his pockets with stones, hang heavy garments on his shoulders, and get lumpish shoes on his feet? So it is here; thou talkest of going to heaven, and yet fillest thy pockets 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 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. Some of them are dangerous because of practise, 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, 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. Tho 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, most travelers 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 not 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 mayst light into any lane or way; but that thou mayst not be mistaken, consider, tho 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, tho 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 vail—that is to say, His flesh." How easy a matter it is 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. But it 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,

The fifth direction: Do not thou be too much in looking too high in thy journey heavenward. You know men that run 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 haply, through their too much gazing with their eyes after other things, they in the mean time 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, lofty spirit, that, devil-like, can not 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 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 every one 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 can not 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 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 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 neighbors do, carry the world, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, esteem among men, along with you? Have a care thou do not let thine ear 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 whom Solomon speaks of in the vii. of the 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 he knew not "that it was 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 incline to her ways, go not astray in her paths, for she hast cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain (that is, kept out of heaven); by 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.

The seventh direction: In the next place be not daunted tho thou meetest with never so many discouragements in thy journey thither. That man that is resolved for heaven, if Satan can not win him by flatteries, he will endeavor to weaken him by discouragements; saying, Thou art a sinner, thou hath broken God's law, thou art not elected, thou comest too late, the day of grace is passed, 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 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 not thy meditations, thou wilt draw very heavily in the way of 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." So run.

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 way-mark by which all they that go to glory must pass.

"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 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." The cross it stands, and hath stood, from the beginning, as a way-mark 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 that leads to heaven, and turn up some of those crooked lanes that lead down to the chambers of death.

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.

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 thou wilt go safe to heaven.

One of the great reasons why men and women do so little regard the other world is because they see so little of it: And the reason 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 understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the 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." ...

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 resolutely to go up to Jerusalem (tho 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 use 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 a race thither; a man that is resolved, and hath his will fixt, 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; "tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I will not let thee go except thou bless me." I will, I will, I will, oh this blest inflamed will for heaven! What is it like? If a man be willing, then any argument shall be a 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,

1. The saints of old, they being willing and resolved for heaven, what could stop them? Could fire and fagot, sword

or halter, stinking 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 a married 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 backward or forward; 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 closer to the matter, indeed, 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, tho 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 tipped 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 last. The Lord give thee a will and courage.

Thus I have 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 a willing mind, and God give thee a prosperous journey.

Provocation: Now that you may be provoked to run with the foremost, take notice of this. When Lot and his wife were running from curst 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 example, 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 once 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 looked behind. 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 thine own soul, that is either to be saved or lost; thou shalt not lose my soul by thy laziness. It is thine own soul, thine own ease, thine own peace, thine 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 thine own, thine 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 thine 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 thine 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 dishonor to thee to see the very boys and girls in the country to have more with them than thyself? It may be the servants of some men, as the housekeeper, plowman, scullion, 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 greater concernment.

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; have no 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.

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