

THE RULE OF THE RACE

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*“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.”
Hebrews 12:1, 2.*

THE Apostle says, “Let us run.” He has in his mind’s eye the Olympic games, where all the different tribes of Greece were gathered together in general assembly to display the prowess of the race. Among the athletic exercises were foot-races. The Apostle makes this footrace an illustration of the Christian life. We must run with patience along the appointed course if we would win the prize of our high calling.

He stands with us at the starting block and earnestly says to us, not “Run,” but, “Let us run.” The Apostle himself is at our side as a runner. The presence of such a comrade is most inspiring. It is good doing good things in good company. “Let us run,” says he, “with patience the race that is set before us.” Who will back out of a race wherein so great a saint takes his place at our side? You who aspire to be associated with the excellent of the earth, press forward side by side with an Apostle! “Let us run,” from Paul’s lip, puts wings upon our heels.

Before we start, with a wave of the hand the Apostle directs us to the spectators who throng the sides of the course. There were always such at those races—each city and state yielded its contingent and the assembled throng watched with eager eye the efforts of those who strove for the mastery. Those who look down upon us from yonder heavens are described as “so great a cloud of witnesses.” These compass us about. Thousands upon thousands who have run this race before us and have attained their crowns, behold us from their heavenly seats and mark how we behave ourselves.

This race is worth running, for the eyes of “the nations of them which are saved” are fixed upon us. This is no hole-and-corner business, this running for the great prize. Angels and principalities and powers and hosts redeemed by blood have mustered to behold the glorious spectacle of men agonizing for holiness and putting forth their utmost strength to copy the Lord Jesus. You that are men, now run for it! If there is any spiritual life and gracious strength in you, put it forth today—for Patriarchs and Prophets, saints, martyrs and Apostles look down from Heaven upon you.

Our Apostle, anxious that we should so run that we may obtain, points to certain burdens and impediments which he foresees will hinder us and he says, “Let us lay aside every weight.” Note how he includes himself, so that his warning may not sound like upbraiding. We cannot win if we are weighted—the pace will have to be very swift and we cannot get to it, or keep it up, if we have weights to carry. Unloaded we shall find the race taxing all our powers. But weighted, we shall be doomed to failure. Oh, to lay aside all worrisome care, fretfulness, ambition, anger, greed and selfish desire! These were never worth the labor they have cost us.

Now that we have become running men, we must have done with them. Down they must go till the last ounce is on the ground. Like the Greek footman, we would strip. And instead of adding weight, we would diminish even our own bulk, that we may fly along the course. O you that would win, heed the caution and “lay aside every weight,” whether it be great or small. And press towards the mark! Run for it, Man! You had need do nothing else but run.

Still attentively considering us, the Apostle notes that even when the weights are laid aside there is a garment about us which will assuredly twist about our feet and throw us down. Sin, as well as care, must be laid aside. It does easily beset us and therefore we must be the more careful to be rid of it. Our original sin, our natural tendencies, our constitutional infirmities—these must be laid aside as garments unsuitable for men who are running the heavenly race. We cannot win Heaven and wear sin. Heaven is for the holy—“there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles.”

Darling sins must go first—these, as they are most loved, will have the most power to hinder. Every kind of sin must be watched against, struggled against and mastered. “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” We hope to see all our ten-

dencies to sin killed and buried—buried so deep that not even a bone of a sin shall be left above ground. This will be Heaven to us. Do I not hear you say, “May God help us”? This must be a tough race which requires such stripping as this. If every weight of care must be laid aside and every rag of sin, who is sufficient for these things? How can we, poor limping mortals, run in such a race as this?

Even the starting is beyond us—how much more must perseverance in it outreach our strength! See, my Brethren, how we are driven to Free Grace—how we are driven to the power of the Holy Spirit? The race which is set before us most clearly reveals our helplessness and our hopelessness apart from Divine Grace. The race of holiness and patience—while it demands our vigor—displays our weakness. We are compelled, even before we take a step in the running, to bow the knee and cry unto the strong for strength. We dare not retreat from the contest. But how can we begin a struggle for which we are so unfitted? Who will help us? To whom shall we look? Does not all this very admirably introduce the verse which is specially my text—“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”?

But the Apostle has not quite done with us, for he warns us to remember the rules of the course in these words, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” You are not to run anyhow, or anywhere—you must keep the appointed course, or you might as well stand still. The way of God’s command, the way of obedience, the way of humble trustfulness, the *spiritual* way, the way of the life given from above—this and no other way will do, for this is the race set before you! Do you shrink? Does the way seem too mysterious, too contrary to the flesh, too trying? All this adds to the force of the precept—“Looking unto Jesus.” Because the way itself and the rules of the running are such as your nature will fight against—therefore look the more earnestly to the great Captain of your salvation.

In a race, a great point is the way in which a man keeps his eyes. He cannot run straight who has an eye to this or to that. Straightforward is the best running. But he who has his eyes on this and on that will run crookedly and waste his strength. Look to the end and then run in a direct line. I have read of a competition between certain young plowmen who were set to plow for a prize. The most of them made very crooked work of it. After they had ended, one of the judges said, “Young man, where did you look while you were plowing?” “I kept my eyes well on the plow handles, Sir and saw what I had to hold.”

“Yes,” the judge said, “and your plow went in and out and the furrow is all crooked.” He asked the next plowman, “and where did you look?” “Well, Sir,” he answered, “I looked at my furrow, I kept my eye always on the furrow that I was making. I thought I should make it straight that way.” “But you did not,” answered the judge, “you were all over the place.” To the next he said, “What did you look at?” “Well, Sir,” he said, “I looked between the two horses to a tree that stood in the ledge at the other end of the field, right in front of me.”

Now that man went straight because he had a fixed mark to guide him. This helps us to appreciate the wisdom of the text, “Looking unto Jesus.” Run—run straight—you cannot run straight except you keep your eyes on One who is always the same. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith,” you will have a sure preservative from wandering. Spiritual plowmen, take heed that you look not back but plow a straight furrow towards Jesus on the Throne! Spiritual runners—make a covenant with your eyes that you will look only to Him who is the great end of all your running! Looking unto Jesus means life, light, guidance, encouragement, joy—never cease to look on Him who ever looks on you.

To help us, the Apostle describes the mark to which we are to look in four ways. “Look unto Jesus,” the Savior, is the sum and substance of it all. But He is set forth before us in four lights. First, the Author of faith. Secondly, the Finisher of faith. Thirdly, the Pattern of faith. And lastly, the Prize, or the end of faith. We must look to Jesus Christ in each of these four respects. Oh, for the Holy Spirit’s help while I speak thereon!

I. First, then, we are to look to Jesus as THE AUTHOR OF FAITH. The Apostle would have us view the Lord Jesus as the Starter of the race. When a footrace began, the men were drawn up in a line and they had to wait for a signal. Those who were in the race had to look to the Starter. For the runner who should get first by a false start would not win, because he did not run according to the rules of the race. No man is crowned unless he strives lawfully. The Starter was in his place and the men stood all waiting and looking.

At last he dropped his glove, or a handkerchief, and away they went. Our word at starting in the Christian life is, “Look unto Jesus.” We must fix our eyes on “the Beginner of our faith.” For if we do not begin by looking to Him, however quickly we may hurry along, we shall run in vain and labor in vain. To what purpose will your running be if the umpire determines that you started improperly?

The beginning of faith is “looking unto Jesus.” Let us consider this. We have to look to Jesus, first, by trusting in that which He has worked for us. It is described in these words—“Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame.” Jesus has endured the suffering and shame which were due to us. O Soul, you can never start on the road to Heaven unless you look to Him who “endured the Cross” on your behalf! Your sin will make you to endure the wrath of God forever unless you look to Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

You must get a faith’s view of the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, or else you have not even begun the heavenward race. Do you look upon your own righteousness with pleasure? This is a false start for you—“As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Do you look to your frames and feelings? You will make a bad start with these for they will guide you into a fog in which you will lose the track. Look to Jesus, the suffering Savior. He by His bearing the Cross has removed your heaviest weights and by His death has destroyed your entangling sin. He can renew your nature by His resurrection power and save you from the dominion of sin by His glorious reign. If you look alone to Him you start well.

The Greek word for “looking” is a much fuller word than we can find in the English language. It has a preposition in it which turns the look away from everything else. You are to look away from all except to Jesus. Fix not your gaze upon the cloud of witnesses. They will hinder you if they take away your eyes from Jesus. Look not on the weights and the besetting sin—these you have laid aside—look away from them. Do not even look upon the racetrack, or the competitors—but look to Jesus and so start in the race.

What have you to trust to but His blood and righteousness? Beware that you set up nothing as a rival confidence. Look off from everything you have ever relied upon in days gone by and say to your soul, “None but Jesus.” You must have a single eye and a single hope. “Christ is all,” and He must be all to you, or you are out of the race altogether.

The instructive original has in it the word “eis,” which is translated “unto,” but in addition has the force of “into.” We shall do well if we look *unto* Jesus but better still if we are found “looking *into* Jesus.” I want you, when you begin your Divine life, to take care that you look to Jesus with so penetrating a gaze that your “unto” grows to an “into.” Read not only the outside of the volume of His life but loosen the seals thereof and read His heart. Dive into the meaning of what He has done for you. Look at His enduring the Cross—know what it means—and enter into the fellowship of His sufferings.

Study well the sin-bearing, the curse-bearing, the forsaking and the sorrow unto death. Think how the Lord Jesus came under shame for your sakes and see how He rose above it all. Look to Him till you are familiar with the different views of the one great Sacrifice. Under the Law, a poor man brought his two young pigeons and the birds were divided in the middle and so offered. A richer man brought a lamb or a bullock. This was divided carefully and all its anatomy laid bare—this was to be done with the leg, and that with the shoulder—and there was an ordinance concerning the fat and the innards.

Thus some Believers know the details of the sacrifice and we want you, dear Friends, to be among this better instructed class. May you discern the Lord’s body and penetrate into the secrets of His soul and so begin your Christian life with an intelligent and instructed faith. This will secure better running throughout the rest of the road. Still you must look to Jesus only, whether you know little or much. It is not your knowledge, but Himself, that must be your one ground of trust. You must take Jesus to be Alpha as well as Omega. To you His name stands at the head of the book and it is also the Amen which closes it. To your experience the Scripture is true—“In the beginning was the Word.” You begin to run when you look to Jesus.

But then, dear Friends, we also begin looking unto Jesus because of what He has worked in us. I would remind you who are a good way on in the course of those first eager paces with which you started heavenward. Did you not begin with looking unto Jesus? As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue in Him. The Lord Jesus first called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He sweetly inclined us to think upon Himself as the way and made us wishful to become heavenly footmen. It was He that quickened us even as of old He raised the dead. The Father quickens whomsoever He will and even so does Jesus.

Even now I seem to hear His voice crying, “Lazarus, come forth!” Well do we recollect when serious thought, anxious desire, deep repentance, lingering hope and trembling faith entered our souls through “looking unto Jesus.” Did He not give us pardon at our setting out? It was by looking to Him that the great load of sin fell from off our conscience. With pardon of sin came a great loathing of sin—washed in the precious blood we could not wantonly repeat the stains. Our earliest repentance and its fruits came from “looking unto Jesus.” Our heart of stone had been hardened by looking elsewhere, but the vision of the sacred head crowned with thorns did the softening work. We looked and were enlightened, enlivened, enraged against sin and enamored of Jesus.

Our first acceptance with God came from looking to Jesus by faith. We found ourselves accepted in the Beloved. O my Friend, do you remember that rapturous moment when you perceived that the robe of righteousness had covered you from

head to foot and that your filthy raiment had been taken away? You cannot forget that time of love. At that moment you felt the love of God within your spirit like a consuming fire burning up your sin. You also were filled with love to the Lord your God. You wondered how it came there till you perceived that you loved Him because *He* first loved *you*.

Then was every evil abhorred of your soul. Then were you ready for any holy service. Then self-denial became a pleasure to you. Then you forsook the company of the wicked and sought the society of the saints. The love of Jesus had started you upon a race which otherwise you would not have chosen—you were converted, turned, turned quite round. You owned that henceforth you were not your own and could not run towards self—you were bought with a price and therefore must run towards your Redeemer. A sight of the Crucified did it all.

Thus, dear Friends, Jesus is the beginner of our race of faith by what He has worked *for* us and by what He has worked *in* us. Have I any here this morning who are about to start for Heaven? Mind that you start aright. I pray you, do not fall into any delusion. Do not imagine that your life will avail you anything—however good and moral it may have been—unless you begin by looking unto Jesus.

Mr. Bunyan, in his “Pilgrim’s Progress,” frequently speaks of those who tumbled over the wall, or came in by other irregular ways. But they all missed the end. As they came in without Christ, so they went out without hope. One who came near to the Celestial City, who had not come in at the gate, was made to know that there is a back way to Hell, even from the gate of Heaven. You must begin with looking unto Jesus, or you will end with a fearful looking for of judgment. Does not Jesus say, “I am the Beginning”? Would you set up another beginning? He must be the first letter of your hope, or else you do not even know the alphabet of salvation.

II. But now, secondly, we must look to Jesus as THE FINISHER OF FAITH. As Jesus is at the commencement of the course, starting the runners, so He is at the end of the course—the Rewarder of those who endure to the end. Those who would win in the great race must keep their eyes upon Him all along the course, even till they reach the finish line.

You will be helped to look to Him when you remember that He is the Finisher of your faith by what He has worked for you. For the text says, “He endured the Cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.” You also shall have Heaven—for He has it. You shall sit upon the Throne—for He sits there. Look to His passion on the Cross to begin with. Look to His session on the Throne, that you may hold on to the end. Look to Jesus as dying for the pardon of your sins but as living for the justification of your souls. Incarnation and death have led on to intercession and endless life.

Jesus has sat down—He takes His rest because He has completed His work. Here on earth He was filled with shame but yonder in Glory He is full of honor—for He is set down “at the right hand of God.” Here He was bound and led captive. There He is King of kings and Lord of lords, for He sits at the right hand of the Throne of God. Here on earth we see His manhood—born in a manger, living in poverty, dying the ignominious death of the Cross. There we adore His Divine Glory—for He is “at the right hand of the Throne of God.” Think of your Savior as your God, clothed with all power and authority. Surely this should urge you to quicken your pace and never to become weary or faint.

You began by looking to Him as a sufferer, persevere by looking to Him as a victor. “Be of good cheer,” said He, “I have overcome the world.” In that fact He gives you an assurance of your own victory. The Seed of the woman has bruised the serpent’s head and therefore the Lord will tread Satan under your feet shortly. The death of Christ is our death for sin. But the life of Christ is our life unto holiness. The shame of Christ was our shame and the triumph of Christ is our triumph. Therefore, looking unto Jesus let us run.

We are helped to run to the end, not only by what Jesus has *done* for us, but by what Jesus is *doing* in us. Beloved, you that are in the middle of the race, remember that Jesus sustains you. Every atom of your strength for running comes from your Lord. Look to Him for it. Do not take a step in creature strength. Nor seek after any virtue, or growth, or progress apart from His life and grace. He says, “From Me is your fruit found.” He works all our works in us and because He works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure, therefore we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

We are not only sustained by looking unto Jesus but we are inspired thereby. If we win a glance from His eye, our feeble knees are confirmed. We catch our second and third breath as we behold Him on the Throne and dash forward again. Those dear eyes of His are to us as stars are to the mariner. Jesus says to us, “Come on, I am victorious and so shall you be.” A sight of the exalted Leader fires the zeal of each Believer and makes him run like a young hart.

Looking unto Jesus you will get correct directions. For, as He sits at the finish line, His very presence indicates the way. If our eyes are up to Him—as the eyes of a servant to her mistress—we shall run well. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” But say with David, “You shall guide me

with Your eye.” A look from the eye of Jesus is enough for a saint. And if you, my Hearer, are indeed “looking unto Jesus,” you will avoid crooks and turns and will take the shortest road to holiness and eternal glory. Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself and you will not grow weary—neither will you miss your way.

Look to Jesus, for by that look He draws you. The great magnet up yonder is drawing us towards itself. Christ’s cords of love give us speed. The more in the power of the Holy Spirit you meditate upon our Lord’s passion on the Cross and His session on the Throne, the more will you be drawn towards Him and the faster will you move. “Draw me, we will run after You” is the cry of the Old Testament Church and it is ours also. Lord, we would look that You may draw.

While we are running we look to our Lord as the Finisher of faith and we see Him leaning forward and holding out the crown—

*“It is His all animating voice
That calls us from on high;
It is His own hand presents the prize
To our aspiring eye.”*

The sight of the crown removes all weight from our crosses. The race ceases to be severe when we see Jesus enthroned. I see Him today at the end of the course holding out the wreath to me and saying, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Oh that you may each one see Him and feel that “the crown of glory that fades not away” is worthy of a life’s running. Thus will Jesus, by holding out the reward, become the Finisher of faith.

When the race is over, Jesus will appear as the Finisher of faith by coming forward to crown you with His own right hand. Yes, His hand shall award the prize and His lips shall say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Jesus Himself will admit the faithful to the place which He has gone to prepare for them. Therefore be of good courage and run! Jesus at the end of the race will enthrone us with Himself—“Let us run.”

I invite you, taking the sense of the word “looking” which I have already hinted at, to turn over in your mind these things. Look away from all self-denials, difficulties, labors, sufferings, temptations and persecutions. And equally look away from all pleasures, profits and preferments and look to Jesus, who has won the race Himself and now helps you in the race and holds out the crown at the end of it. Look till you begin to look *into* Him and see somewhat of His inward glory and of its out flowing to His redeemed.

Say to yourself, “All things are in Him for me. All spiritual blessings God does bestow upon me according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Does the Father bless me in my enthroned Lord? Then my feet shall not weary in the heavenward way. Does Jesus lean forward as if He would crown me even now? Then I will quicken my pace to come to Him. Does the Holy Spirit help my infirmities? Then will I run swiftly in His strength.”

Thus I have tried in my own feeble way to set before you Jesus as the Author and the Finisher of faith—look to Him and run.

III. Let us next consider our Lord Jesus as THE PATTERN OF OUR FAITH. Run, as Jesus ran, and look to Him as you run, that you may run like He ran. How did our Lord pursue His course?

You will see this if you first note His motive—“Who for the joy that was set before Him.” Jesus had a motive in all that He did. Men do not do much if they act from mere feeling and have no underlying design. Indeed, a life without an object must be a frivolous, useless life. Jesus had before Him the great joy of glorifying the Father in the salvation of His chosen. For this He lived, for this He died—it was a joy to Him to think of accomplishing this object.

Beloved, if you want to run your race aright, it must be for the glory of God and in the hope of the salvation of your fellow men. These two things, blended into one, must be your joy. Oh that this motive took possession of our entire being! The chief end of man is to glorify God—let it be my chief end, even as it was my Lord’s. Oh that I might glorify You, my Creator, my Preserver, my Redeemer! To this end was I born and for this end would I live in every action of my life. Brethren, we cannot run the race set before us unless we feel this. We must, like the Savior, seek the glory of God by saving our fellow men. Live for this. Live to seek out the wandering sons of men and thus to be a shepherd under the Great Shepherd.

Learn from Him to carry the lambs in your bosom. There is no running heavenward unless the service of God is a joy to us. We run in an approved fashion when we spend and are spent in glorifying God. May you throughout eternity have to rejoice that you were not fruitless! Oh, may none of you be written down as “creation’s blot, creation’s blank.” But may you all have the joy of glorifying God on earth and finishing the work He has given you to do!

Wherein are we to imitate Jesus? First, we are to copy His endurance. He “endured the Cross.” Ours is a trifling cross compared with that which pressed Him down. But He endured it. He took it up willingly and carried it patiently. He never rebelled against it and never relinquished it. He bore the Cross till the Cross bore Him and then He bore death upon it. He

could say, "It is finished." Brethren, let us do the same. Are you persecuted, are you poor, are you sick?—take up the appointed cross. Christ ran with the Cross on His shoulder and so must we run. Do not try to escape trouble—the followers of the Crucified must be familiar with the Cross. Endure it patiently, joyfully, in the strength of God.

"Looking unto Jesus," behold His Cross whenever you begin to faint under your own. Think of the bloody sweat, the scourging, the wounds, the blasphemies of men, the forsaking by God! Behold and see if there was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow, or endurance like His endurance. Shoulder your little cross and run towards the Crucified.

Imitate your Lord in His magnanimity. He endured the Cross, "despising the shame." Shame is a cruel thing to many hearts. Our Lord shows us how to treat it. See, He puts His shoulder under the Cross but He sets His foot upon the shame. He endures the one but He despises the other. What? Shall His disciples make much of that which He despised? Are you such gentlemen, that none may come between the wind and your nobility? I wonder when I hear some people say, "I cannot stand being laughed at." Does laughter break bones? "But ridicule is very sharp!" Is it? Do the wounds bleed? "Well," cries one, "a keen sarcasm from a wit stings you!" Does it? Have you no cure for such bites?

Some of us have in our minds been like Marcus Arethusa who was stung to death by wasps. And yet we are none the worse but rather are we all the better—for there remains no place whereon a new sting can operate. Oh, that some of you, who are so tender, could have thicker skins in this respect! I heard of a prayer the other day which I did not quite like at first but there is something in it after all. The good man said, "Lord, if our hearts are hard, make them soft. But if our hearts are too soft, make them hard."

I know what he meant and I think I can pray that last prayer for some of my friends who are so delicate that a sneer would kill them. May the Lord harden them till they can despise the shame! Answer shame by making it see that you are ashamed of the scorner. Laugh at the laughter of fools—despise their despising. With glorious greatness of spirit Jesus remained unprovoked amid the cruel taunts of godless men. Run through the ribald throng. Shut your ears and run, despising the shame.

Our Savior is to be imitated in His perseverance. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame and "is set down." He never stopped running till He could sit down at the right hand of the Throne of God. And that is the only place where you may sit down. My Brother, Satan puts before you a comfortable armchair and he says, "Take your ease." No, no! Run till you can sit down at the right hand of the Throne of God. There are many dainty little arbors all along the Hill Difficulty, with settles and tables. And men, if they get into them, are very apt to fall asleep and lose their roll of comfortable assurance—therefore, pass these arbors by.

Runners must not sit down—that were to throw the race away. The only running that will save is persevering running. From starting block to finish line there must be no pausing. We must practice daily obedience, daily holiness, daily service. An off-and-on religion is a false religion. We must keep to the running till God gives us rest. Our Lord has won the victory. His enthronement "at the right hand of God" has well rewarded the Man Christ Jesus for the depth of His shame and misery. We must not cease our following of Him till we triumph, too. When we have finished our course, then we shall receive our crowns. But as yet we must copy the Captain of salvation by running steadily on.

Our Lord's body bore five wounds and these shall help your memory to think of the five virtues in which you are to imitate your Lord. The piercing of the right hand is the memorial of His faith. He believed in God in the depth of His agony and trusted that He would deliver Him. Oh, for more faith! The left hand wound is His patience. He "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible," He reviled not again. He said "Your will be done." One wounded foot reminds me of His humility and how He was obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.

And that other wounded foot suggests to me His perseverance. His feet were nailed to the wood—His soul was joined to His work. Best of all, in the great wound in His side I see His love. The spear opened a passage to His heart. Love as Jesus loved—loving God and loving men. Then shall you triumph as He triumphed and He will crown you as He Himself is crowned. God help you so to run.

IV. Lastly, our text sets before us Jesus as THE PRIZE or END OF FAITH. We are to run "looking unto Jesus" as the end that we should aim at. We go towards our Lord every step that we take. True faith neither goes away from Christ Jesus, nor takes a roundabout road to Jesus. Nor does it so much as dream of going beyond Jesus. We have wise men about us nowadays who are going a long way beyond the Gospel. The old faith—which inspired Apostles, enabled the glorious army of martyrs to lay down their lives and produced the noblest of human characters in past ages—is not good enough for the superfine sophists of these days.

This boastful nineteenth century demands a new God, a new Christ, a new Heaven, a new Hell, a new Gospel and everything else new—except a new heart. But we, Brethren, are not going to run in that direction. We run towards Christ and that

is the good old way, “the way the holy Prophets went.” We never expect to get beyond the teaching of our Lord Jesus either in this life or in the life to come. The end of our conversation is, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever.”

Now we are to run towards Him, looking unto Him. Looking to Jesus and running to Jesus will look well and run well together. The eyes outstrip the feet but this also is well. For the feet will thus be made to move faster. Look that you may see more of Jesus. I have already told you what differences there are in men’s perceptions of Christ—now I want you to keep on looking and running—that you may be among the best instructed, seeing most of Him and in Him. Those who have seen most of Jesus have only taken a cupful out of the great ocean of His fullness. We who live in this land of murk and cloud may imagine that we have seen the sun—for now and then it peeps out through a veil of mist.

But ask an Italian who lives beneath the clear blue sky, where the sun is at home and walks the heavens without a veil and he will tell you that an Englishman does not see the sun. For myself, the sun seems in those regions to brighten my nature and lighten my mind—the lord of day talks to my heart and makes it dance for joy. Many a Believer lives in a foggy atmosphere of doubts and fears. He sees his Lord now and then but it is not half a sight. Oh that we could all dwell under the unclouded skies of full assurance and see Jesus more nearly! I urge you in your running to come nearer and nearer to Jesus—that you may see Him more and more clearly.

Let us run towards Jesus that we may grow more like He. It is one of the virtues of Jesus that He transforms into His own image those who look at Him. He photographs Himself upon all sensitive hearts. There are no mirrors that I know of which improve the looker’s eyes. But this mirror of God, as you look into it, enlightens your eyes and beautifies your character. As you see Christ you become Christians. O Beloved, our lives would not be so faulty, so wrinkled, so uncomely if our eyes were more completely taken up with beholding the transcendent charms of the altogether Lovely One! It would make us glorious if we saw more of the glory of Jesus.

Run that you may come nearer to Jesus. Seek after more near and dear fellowship with Him. He is not far away from us. He is absent as to His corporeal frame but He is with us in spirit. He comes very close to us at times when He finds us fit for the joy. We remember Him from the Hermons and the hill Mizar. We can never forget the golden moments and the hallowed places wherein He has manifested Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. There are hours when our head is on the bosom of Christ. There are times when we sit at His feet and hear His Words and looking up behold His beauty and are ravished therewith.

Run towards Him till you are nearer to Him in communion than up till now you have been. This is worth running for. But you will not have it without running. Remember how the Spouse in the Song could not find her Lord till she had gone through the streets of the city mourning till she embraced Him. Keep on looking and running till you are with Him. Oh, I talk to you now about being with Him and how soon this may be realized in the most literal sense!

During my ministry in this place it has occurred two or three times that when the service has ended dear Friends have attempted to go to their homes but they have died in this House of Prayer. What must it be to go from this congregation to the assembly above? What a change from the poor talk of the preacher to the voice of the Well-Beloved! We do not know how near to Jesus on the Throne we may now be. The sea fog is around our vessel. Could we see before us, the white cliffs of our native shores are almost within reach. Think not that we are far out at sea. Within the next week, perhaps, some of us will see the King in His beauty.

We may spend next Sunday in Heaven! Does anybody shrink from such a prospect? No—each heir of Heaven says “Amen. So let it be.” Then the sweat of the race will be wiped away and the sweet of the triumph will begin. Then the fatigue and distress will have ended and the rest and the glory will have commenced. I would cheer you with the thought that you are much nearer the finish line than you think. How soon you may sit among the blood-washed throng! You older Brothers and Sisters in the course of nature must be there soon—be glad of it. Do not talk about being on the wrong side of seventy—you are on the right side—for you are so much nearer Heaven.

Formerly when great ships went to the Indies, the passengers would for a while toast the friends they left behind. But when they were in the Indian Ocean, they began to drink the health of friends ahead. Though comparatively young, I have many, many friends who are in the land beyond, to which I am making my way. I salute the glorified. Some of the dearest and best people that ever lived were members of this Church but they are now safely landed on the celestial shore. They are waiting and watching for us. We are coming, Brethren! We will be with you soon.

Best of all, our Lord is there! Once crowned with thorns, His head is now radiant with the diadem of universal dominion. He will come to welcome us on that blessed shore. Hasten, O time! Be like a seraph with six wings and bear us swiftly to that golden strand where we shall see the face of Him we love and shall be—

***“Far from this world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”***

Amen. Amen. Amen!

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307