

THE UNWEARIED RUNNER

NO. 876

A SERMON
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Being the Annual Sermon of the Young Men's Association in Aid of the Baptist Missionary Society

*"They shall run and not be weary."
Isaiah 40:31*

BEING asked to address myself upon this occasion principally to young people, I bethought me that running was the young man's pace, the motion of the strong man who in his earliest days rejoices in the race. It is not often that running is taken up by those who are compelled to lean upon a staff, for in the feebler and more mature years of age, a quiet pace most accords with the man's ability and best beseems his gravity.

When the steeds which draw life's chariot first commence their journey, they fly before the wind in excess of rigor, but as they close their course, they find it all that they can do to walk steadily to the goal. To the older Christian, incitements to zeal may be necessary, but to the young I need offer no exhortations to quicken their pace. With overflowing strength and buoyant spirits, the danger is not that young men should not run, but that they should run amiss, or that they should attempt to run in the right road in their own strength.

My text speaks of running and commends it. Nay, it promises as a blessing that those of whom it speaks shall run, but then it describes a character as well as gives a promise. There is a chosen band who shall run and not be weary, but these are not those who run in their own strength, as if the Lord took pleasure in the legs of a man or in the energies of unsanctified nature.

The untiring runners are described as being such as wait upon the Lord and so renew their strength. Tonight you are full of energy, my brethren, and you are resolved to make your lives real and sublime. You have high ambitions within your spirits, and far be it from me to repress them.

But let me whisper in your ear a word of caution, for if those ambitions should be directed to a wrong object, your life will be a miserable failure. Or even if you should seek the right thing—ay, seek God Himself—if you go about to serve Him without asking the aid of His Holy Spirit, sure and sorrowful decline will come upon you ere long, you shall either become a miserable apostate from that which your heart is set upon, or else you will maintain a hollow name to live whilst you are dead in the sight of God.

May God grant a blessing this evening, and while we meditate upon the energetic spiritual life described as "running," may we have grace to learn how to run in a right fashion.

I shall speak tonight, first of all, of *the running*. Then a word or two by way of *commendation of running*. Then thirdly, *the runner's girdle*—he waits upon the Lord. And lastly, *the runner's staff*—he has the promise that he shall not be weary.

I. First, then, THE RUNNING.

There are different paces among the Lord's servants—Ahimaaz is swifter than Cush and John outruns Peter, but he who by faith has truly entered upon the road to heaven, though his march be slow and limping, shall nevertheless ultimately reach his journey's end. Scores of timid believers creep towards heaven as the snail crept into the ark, and yet being chosen of God in Christ Jesus, they are safe.

However, my brethren, there is no reason why you should imitate these slowly-moving pilgrims. If Mephibosheth be lame in both his feet, it is not desirable that you should imitate his limp. Respect for his infirmity must not be made into an excuse for your own sluggishness.

Many walk with sacred dignity and consistency in the path of right. Would God their number were multiplied a thousand fold! Walking will always be the general and usual pace of the great host of God's elect, but there are a few chosen men whose hearts have been specially touched, who have learned to outstrip their fellows in their advances towards God and in their zeal for His service.

These are the mighties in the hosts of the Son of David—the flower of the church militant—under God the strength and hope of the good cause. These are runners rather than walkers. Asahels light of foot as young roes, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions, filled with the Holy Ghost, and very zealous for the Lord of Hosts.

I should say of this running, in the first place, if I must describe it, that *running is the pace of energy*. There are men in this world who never do anything with energy, who never under any circumstances throw force into anything they have to do. They walk over the sands of life with a light foot and make no impression.

While others, as they tread the pathway which God has allotted for them, take care to bring down their feet with such firmness of purpose and fixedness of resolve, that they leave behind them “footprints on the sands of time,” which shall be seen by others after many days.

The puff-ball is the emblem of many a forceless life. See yonder man with a hammer in his hand—he touches the heads of the nails right daintily, as if he were afraid to hurt them. See another, how heartily he drives them in, and gives them yet another blow to clench them and make all sure. Too many play at work, but the earnest man means work when he is working and throws his heart into it.

It is dreadful to see some men at their ordinary occupation—I cannot call it labor, one drop of their perspiration must be a very costly thing, as rare as a pearl of the first water. But others throw their soul into whatsoever they have to do, and not only strike while the iron is hot, but make the iron hot by striking. They do not wait for opportunities, but accept the present event as an opportunity. They work with both hands and make the anvil ring with the music of their hearty blows.

Now, in the service of God we are bound to fulfill our work with the utmost degree of vigor. If the Lord's work is worth doing, it is worth doing well. And as the service of Christ is the highest in which any man can be engaged, the Master ought to be served with body, soul, and spirit. All that is within us should bless His holy name.

We should keep our spiritual faculties strained up to the highest possible tension, that all the strength we have may be fully given to Him. Let us serve Christ with all the ability we have—how little it is compared with His deservings! Shall He be put off with our dregs and our dreamings? If we were to live always at the topmost bent of zeal. if we should put on high pressure, and should work for Christ to the highest point of spiritual energy yet exhibited by mortal man, yet should we give but a faint return for that agony and bloody sweat, that cross and passion, which have opened the kingdom of heaven for us.

By running, then, I understand an energetic spiritual life, a life on fire. And I pray that many of us may have grace in this sense to run the race which is set before us. The ideal I would form of the Christian man raised up to do his Master good service is that of Elijah when he girded up his loins and ran before the chariot of Ahab.

Hale old man, see how nimbly he flies along that dusty road, with what ardent enthusiasm he dashes forward to reach the shelter so soon to be needed, for his faith expects that speedily the heavens, which have gathered blackness, will pour down the needed rain. Be it yours and mine to outstrip the energy of this world, and so to run in our Master's ways as to prove that the servants of Christ can render Him more loyal and devoted service than princes win from their favorites and flatterers. Like Gabriel, may we be made to fly very swiftly. Like all the angels of God, may we be as flames of fire.

Running is a pace which indicates *fullness of alacrity*. If your servant has an errand to do for you, and he creeps along the road, it is probably because he is unwilling. But if he be thoroughly willing, he is usually forward and quick in all his movements.

When Abraham saw the three men, strangers, passing by his tent-door, he said to them, “Turn in, my Lord,” and he *ran* and fetched a calf and killed it—the patriarch showing by quickening his pace, how welcome they were.

When Eleazer came to the well, we find that Rebekah *ran* and hastened to draw water for him and for the camels—her readiness to do an act of kindness was indicated by the pace which she used. When young Samuel thought that Eli called him by night, he arose, and we read he *ran* to Eli and said, “Here am I, for thou didst call me.”

Now, there ought, in the service of our God, always to be a holy promptness and alacrity. I dare say you have noticed in the Gospel according to Mark, how Mark uses about our Lord so often the words, “straightway” and “immediately.” Mark’s is the Gospel descriptive of Christ as a servant, and it is one of the attributes of a good servant that he is prompt at once to do his lord’s bidding.

Our blessed Savior straightway did whatever He had undertaken to do. We ought to be ready in the Master’s service, and to say at once, without demur, “Here am I, send me.” Foul scorn is it that soldiers of the cross should ever require to be flogged to the battle as the Persian monarch’s slaves in the days of the invasion of Greece.

Every man among us should be as David, who ran forward to the giant, eager for the fray, or as Elisha, who left the oxen and ran after Elijah, or as Philip, who ran to meet the chariot of the Ethiopian. O to abide like a ship waiting for orders, with the steam ready, sailors on board, anchor drawn up—only waiting for orders to put out to sea, directly, wherever the great High Admiral of the seas may bid us steer.

May the Holy Spirit enable us to wait with our eyes upwards to our great Master as the eyes of handmaidens are to their mistress—and make us quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, so that the moment we receive the divine intimation, our will and ability move spontaneously in cheerful effort.

Gird up your loins, young men, you that have the love of God in you. Brace up your loins tonight and pray God to teach you to run—to run first with energy, and next with sacred forwardness and alacrity. So run that you may obtain. So run that the great cloud of witnesses may applaud. So run that the King may say, “Ye did run well.”

In the third place, to run is *to be diligent*. We should hardly call that running in which a man starts and stops, and starts and stops again. In some Christian works we are painfully conscious that the persons undertaking them, if they ever run, run only for a very short time. Indeed, they do not seem even to have got up to that pace for a time.

Alas! for the poor Sunday school teaching that is so wretchedly common. Much of the teaching is a very slovenly make-believe. If it were paid for, smallest coin of the realm might represent its value. And oh! the preaching that we sometimes hear—droning, cold, lifeless, sleepy, wretched! The preacher does not seem to have any idea that he should deliver himself with force, life, and energy.

How very common is the humdrum! It is deadly preaching, more fitted to send souls to sleep than to startle them out of their dreams. Would God we had not all of us to accuse ourselves of this in a measure. We dally over our work. We do it superficially. We plough our acre, but it is mere scratching of the topsoil—we do not plough deep.

We cover a surface, but we do not perform the work well. If we had such slovenly servants in our houses as God has in His, we should discharge them all. It is infinite mercy only that has allowed some of us to remain servants of the Lord at all. We have need to turn to Him and say, “O Master, teach us to be more diligent. We beseech You, quicken us in Your ways.

“Help us no longer to crawl and creep upon Your errands, but to quicken our pace and run, putting heart and soul into all that we do. Lead us to persevere in Your fear, not running with now and then a

spasm of zeal, but with a constant, sacred persistency—a stern and solemn devotion to the work which You have entrusted to our care.”

You have need of patience. Patient continuance in well-doing is crowned. He that runs to the goal alone is rewarded.

Running, further, in the fourth place, indicates *thorough-going hearty zeal*. It must have been a noble spectacle to have seen Aaron when the plague broke out among the people, rushing for his censer, putting on the holy fire and the sacred incense, and running in between the living and the dead, that the plague might be stopped.

He could not have had the honor of being the priest to stand in the gap in the hour of sudden wrath if he had not learned how to run. I suppose he was at that time from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and thirty years of age, but how nimbly he bestirred himself! The thought of saving his plague-stricken countrymen put new life into the venerable man.

O sirs, if anything could make a man run, it should be the fact that men are dying—dying without Christ, dying in their sins, to die eternally, and perish, without hope. Beloved, it is a marvel that we are not more zealous than we are. We who believe in death and judgment to come, and in hell, and in the casting away of the impenitent—how is it we can be so calculating, indifferent, pitiless?

How is it we can walk so leisurely when humanity demands that we run? While time runs and never ceases, and the sun, the great master and marker of our time, like a giant coming out of his chamber, delights to run his race—how is it that with so much work before us for our Master, we dare to loiter as if we were gentlemen at ease?

Christ is dishonored by our heartlessness, the Gospel is derided through our indifference, and souls are lost by our sloth. Sound an alarm in Zion, blow you the trumpet in Gibeah, that all the servants of the Lord bestir themselves, for the day of battle is come, and the swift and the strong are summoned to the fray.

These four notes may suffice to indicate what the running is. I look upon the runner in the road to heaven as one who has received the inner spiritual life in its highest degree. Luther called it, I think, a second conversion. It is a great thing when a man is not only saved from the sins of the world, but is also saved from the ordinary slothfulness of common Christians—when, to use apostolic words, he saves himself, by God’s grace, from this untoward generation.

There is a salvation that God alone can work. There is another salvation which He bids us work when He says, “Save yourselves from this generation”—when by God’s Holy Spirit we strive to rise out of the lethargy and coldness in which the most of Christians are plunged. There are some who have the Divine Spirit so resting upon them that they could not be negligent in the Master’s work as others are.

For them the chill hand of charity must be exchanged for a far more fervid grasp. For them the occasional feeble prayer must give way to long wrestlings with the angel—for they have learned that there is something higher to live for than domestic comfort and personal aggrandizement. They have learned to live for Christ in the spirit of the apostle, who counted not his life dear unto himself.

And they labor to imitate the language, and the spirit of Him who said, “It is my meat and my drink to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish His work.” Would God that the young men now present, and the young men of all our churches, were, by God’s grace, made to be runners.

II. Secondly and very briefly, I shall COMMEND THE RUNNING.

Running is most commendable, *because it is a warming pace*. In the depth of winter, when a man runs, he seldom complains of the cold. The largest fire of Christmas logs that one can pile upon the hearth will not warm a man as thoroughly as the exertion of running. And the comforts of the Gospel and the doctrines of grace do not put men in such a comfortable frame of mind as active exertions in the Master’s cause.

Give me two Christians, both truly converted to God. One of them a constant hearer of the Word and a delighter in the sweet things of the Gospel, but not a worker—and then show me another who hears the

Word and loves it, but who besides that is a diligent worker for his Master, and I will without a moment's hesitation tell you which is the happier man of the two.

The first man, the mere hearer, a consistently moral man, and so on, but not a diligent servant of the Lord Jesus, will gradually demand more and more from his minister of comfortable preaching, because he will grow more and more selfish, more and more doubting, and more and more unhappy. But the man who, loving the truth and feeding on it, nevertheless works for the conversion of others, is the man to whom the Lord ministers secret springs of consolation, which make his heart glad.

In watering others, his own soul is watered. If there be any Christians here who are troubled with doubts, and fears, and despondencies, and spiritual dyspepsia in general, let them ask themselves whether if they instructed the ignorant, fed the poor, and cheered the down-trodden, they would not find in such a course the way to the most effectual remedy! Let them resort to the Good Physician, and among His divine prescriptions will be this—"Quicken your spiritual pace. Throw more energy into what you are doing in My cause, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit shall abound towards you in a greater measure." Running is a warming pace.

In the next place, *running is a pace that clears the ground*. The more slowly a traveler goes, the more likely will he be to notice the rough places on the way, but when he has quickened his pace, difficulties pass away rapidly. He has cleared that rough piece of gorse on the common. He has leaped that ditch. He has passed that muddy lane. He has climbed that hill. He has descended that valley—while he has been running he has not had time to notice the road. He has been looking towards the end.

In our more leisurely spiritual life, when the lamp burns dimly, and love is cold, we fret over a thousand little things, and trouble ourselves about difficulties which would not be difficulties at all if we had more grace. If we did but run, we should overleap troops of obstacles, but as we walk, or creep, or crawl, we discover hundreds of hardships concerning which we pipe our mournful ditties and hang our harps of joy upon the willows.

Pshaw! You have been alarmed because a fool laughed at you? What must you be yourself? Do you think Anne Askew would have been thus alarmed when she could sit on the floor of her dungeon for two hours together, after they had racked her and stretched every bone from its fellow, and argue with the Popish priests like a heroine, though ready to faint and die for pain?

You tell me a deacon has thrown cold water upon your efforts? Cold water! Does that discourage you? Are you in a fluster about that? What would you have done if, like old Latimer, you had been called to take off your garments some cold morning in Smithfield and to be warmed after an awful fashion—by standing on a stake to play the man and light up a candle for your God?

The pity that some people sigh for on account of their petty persecutions and troubles—it is a shame to ask and a waste to give. Cannot we suffer for Christ? If we cannot, it must be because we are not runners and scarcely walkers—our spiritual strength must be low and our life unhealthy. O for more love, and more faith, and more spiritual vigor in our constitutions, and then we shall clear half our difficulties at a running leap, and scarcely call them other than light afflictions which are but for a moment, and are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Running, in the next place, is to be commended *because it is a cheering pace*. While a man advances hesitatingly and leisurely to face a difficulty, doubts and fears have time to work. But when he comes forward at a run, he has not time to be dispirited. It was good policy on David's part to run when he fought with the giant. He threw his stone at Goliath, and when the giant fell, he ran to finish the monster off at once.

Why, the lad might have said, "The giant may only have been stunned a little. He will be up again. I had better keep out of the way of that huge arm. Dying bulls gore terribly." But David gave himself no time to conjure up such thoughts as those, but he ran and stood on the giant, and drew his sword and cut off his head.

Courage maintains itself by its running, as some birds rest on the wing. There is an energy about agility that will often give a man a fortitude which otherwise he might not have possessed. I can

understand the gallant regiment at Balaclava riding into the valley of death, but I could scarcely imagine their marching slowly up to the guns, coolly calculating all the deadly odds of the adventure.

When the Lord gives His servants grace to follow out their convictions as soon as they feel them, then they act courageously. First thoughts are best in the service of God. Second thoughts often come up timorously and limpingly, and incite us to make provision for the flesh. There is nothing like a running pace, for by it courage may be maintained in our Lord and Master's cause.

Running, moreover, is *the winning pace*. "So *run* that ye may obtain." If we are ever to win the crown, it will certainly not be by loitering, but by running with all our might. We are not saved by works, we are saved by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ alone—but yet, being saved, by a work within us, we work out our own salvation into our outer lives.

Men do not ride to heaven in carriages. They are not carried there in ambulances. But they toil like pilgrims, and they do not come to their journey's end through sluggishness, but through energy. The righteous scarcely are saved. If we would win a crown that shall sparkle and shine with many jewels of precious souls whom we have brought to Christ, we shall not win such a crown by being negligent, but it will be by putting out all our God-given strength and living with all our might in our Master's service.

Running, again, is *a fitting pace for a believer*. Jesus Christ deserves that we should run for Him. He has done so much for us that we ought to spend and be spent in His service. For men who have so short a time to live, for men to whom such solemn interests are entrusted, for men who are so indebted to their best Friend, for men who have so long a time before them in which to rest, even for ever and ever, for men who expect so bright a reward, there ought to be no arguments needed to urge them to run with diligence the race that is set before them.

I am persuaded that those Christians to whom God has given grace to live highly diligent, spiritual, useful lives, would, if their humility would permit them, tell you that they have found themselves far other men in the point of happiness than they were before they fell in love with "life in earnest."

To live in God's fear at a low rate is sorrowful work, but to live for God a high and self-denying life, to live in the light of His countenance, to lean one's head on His bosom, to live in singleness of consecration, and with fervor of purpose and devotedness of heart—this is to live, as it were, like Milton's angel, in the very midst of the sun, never lacking for life, and heat, and light, because dwelling near to God, and existing alone for God, in the power of His might.

Young men, I commend to you the pace. And I pray for you that you may gird up your loins and maintain this your running henceforth, until you reach your journey's end.

III. The third meditation concerns THE RUNNER'S GIRDLE. "They that wait upon the LORD shall run, and not be weary."

What is it to "*wait upon the LORD*"? This is the essential of the running, evidently. *They* shall not be weary, all others shall. It is a very sorrowful thing that, under many ministries, which we cannot but admire in other aspects, hundreds are led to start on a sort of running which very soon comes to an end. When I hear it said of such and such preachers that they have many converts for a time, but that few of these can be found after a month or two, I am grieved that there should be so much truth in the statement, but I am not at all surprised.

You can go into your garden, and you shall see tens of thousands of buds upon the trees in the month of April, and yet, in the autumn, you shall not find more than one apple for every thousand blossoms. This being the case, is the gardener disappointed? Does he not count the one apple a good percentage on the amount of flower?

Suppose there be but one apple—perhaps there had not been that one if there had not been the thousand blooms. No one expects every bloom to become a fruit, and we cannot expect everyone who is impressed under our ministry to become really a living child of God. We are thankful for the bud because of the hope it gives, but we do not reckon every flower to become a lasting fruit.

Let us inquire who they are that last and do not grow weary! They are those that wait upon the Lord. And I take it, that to wait upon the Lord is, first, *to yield yourselves, by God's grace, to be His servant*.

He is likely to hold on who is entirely given up to the Lord's work and waits on Him as servants wait on their mistress. Some men have never realized that a saved child of God is, from the moment he is saved, a servant of God.

They talk of being saved and then they serve self. They speak about—

*“I do believe, I will believe
That Jesus died for me,”*

and then they live in the world as if making money, or bringing up a family, or indulging in pleasure, were to be the object of a saved sinner's life.

Why, my dear friend, if Christ has saved you, you belong to Him—every hair of your head belongs to Him, and your business is from this day to feel, “Now, Lord, I give myself up to You, and from this day forth every day, and every hour of the day, I desire to study Your interest, to do Your business, to promote Your honor, and to bring Your Gospel fresh renown.”

If you do this, by God's grace, you shall run and not be weary. But if you join a Christian church because you were a little excited, and thought you were converted, and if you still live a selfish life, seeking your own comfort, and not the glory of God, you will grow weary of religion, and very soon you will give it up, and you will go back to the world from whence you professed to have come out.

If you do not in heart and soul belong to the Redeemer, you will be like the mixed multitude who went into the wilderness with Israel—who sighed after Egypt, because they had the taste of the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions in their mouths. You must be a consecrated servant of God or you will never keep up the running so as to win the crown.

To wait on the Lord means, in the next place, *to go to Him for all your strength*, to be entirely dependent upon the spiritual power which comes from the Holy Ghost and not at all upon the power which you fancy dwells within yourselves. All the strength that there is in any man by nature is perfect weakness as to spiritual things.

I like the saying of a man who declared to his minister that God had done His part in his salvation and he had done the rest. “Well,” said his minister, “What part did you do?” “Why,” said the poor man, “God did it all and I stood in His way.” That is about all that you and I shall ever do in our own strength. Human strength only opposes the work of grace until the divine strength comes in, and sweeps our human strength away, and finds in our perfect weakness a reservoir into which the strength of God may pour itself, to fill us with the fullness of God.

Dear friends, if there is anything you are persuaded you can do, and do well without God, I would advise you to cease from it, because it will be in vain. No blessing can rest on it. If any man here imagines that he can preach a Gospel sermon without the help of the Holy Spirit, he had better not try. If there is any man here who thinks he can live a holy life without the constant help of God's Spirit, he will make a very unholy life of it.

Ay, and if you say, “Well, at least in one point I can take care of myself—I should never be a drunkard. I could never lie—I cannot bear those two sins. I should never fall into them under any circumstances.” See you to it! Mischief is ahead. That very point which you think you may leave unprotected is that in which the enemy will break in to your destruction.

Where you are strong, you are weak, and where you are weak, you are strong. They that wait upon the Lord, and draw all their power and grace from Him, shall never grow weary in their sacred running. Whatever strain your exertions for Christ may make upon your spiritual strength, if you go to God for more, you shall have your power renewed day by day.

If you are called to high and lofty enterprises far beyond your strength, if you have faith enough to go onward in the name of God, leaning upon His promises, and believing that His mighty arm will not fail you, you shall rejoice in divine all-sufficiency. And the more you lean on it, the more you shall feel it your pleasure and your wealth to be independent of all but God.

The more you dare for God, the more easy you will find it to dare something yet beyond. The oftener you can, like Peter tread upon the waves of the sea, trusting in the invisible God, the more easily shall you be able to perform the same exploit yet again. O Christian man, never think you can trust God too much. Never think that faith can go too far. Shun self-confidence, dread the self-reliance which some cry up as a virtue, but which is to the spiritual life the vice most to be dreaded of all.

Our description of waiting upon the Lord is not complete unless we add to it the expectancy *of hope*. He that would renew his strength in his running must be looking for fresh supplies from the eternal fountains. You have the promise of it—expect that you will have the fulfillment of the promise. We often have not from God because we do not believe God.

Some bank bills require the signature of the person for whom they are drawn, and they would not be payable at the bank, though regularly signed, unless countersigned by the person to whom they are due. Now many of the Lord's promises are drawn in like fashion. Armed with such promises, you go to the bank of prayer, and you ask to have them fulfilled—but your petitions are not granted because they need to be countersigned by the sign-manual of your faith in them—and when God has given you grace to believe His promise, then shall you see the fulfillment of it with your eyes.

Alas, we are poor and miserable when we might be clothed in scarlet and fine linen! It is our unbelief that makes us poor. We are bowed down with infirmities, and are lame and halt, and I know not what besides, and all because we have not confidence in God, though we know He cannot lie. And though we are sure He never did, nor can, fail the soul that puts its trust in Him.

O for a higher spiritual life! Where must it begin but in a deeper confidence in God and in a fuller expectation of the fulfillment of His promise? O young men, and to this I think I may call the fathers, and the matrons too, let us ask the Lord who gave us first the germ of faith, to increase our faith, that from this time forward we may wait at the posts of His doors expecting that His mercy will enrich us. And abide patiently at the foot of Jacob's ladder, expecting that the angels will bring us down the blessings which our prayers have sought through Jesus Christ.

Thus, with the three things put together—singleness of eye in serving God, simplicity of dependence upon the divine power, and constant expectation that the power will be given—we shall wait upon the Lord, and we shall run and not be weary.

IV. So I close with the last point, THE RUNNER'S STAFF.

The runner's consolation lies in this promise, that *he shall not be weary*. Weariness in the way to heaven is not at all an uncommon trial. Some of us can say that we are not weary of God's work, although we often grow weary in it. It were easy to complete the Christian life if it consisted in half-a-dozen acts of piety and then all were over.

But to stand, and having done all, to stand, to bear the wear and tear of daily temptation. to be roasted, as it were, before the slow fire of constant trials from inward sins, and Satanic suggestions, and above all, to pass through that horrible land called the Enchanted Ground, and to feel the sleepiness that comes over you there, to keep awake in a sluggish body, and to continue persevering against flesh and blood for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years, perhaps—why this is a thing impossible to flesh and blood.

It is only possible to God and only as God gives us grace shall we be able to achieve it. To keep up the running pace through life is an impossibility of impossibilities except much grace be given. And we have virtually the promise that it shall be given when we are told that we shall not be weary.

How is it that running Christians do not become weary? Answer, first, because they have daily strength given them for all their daily needs. They would be worn out if they had nothing more to rely upon than the first portion they received. God does not allot us a stock of grace to draw from, and when that is exhausted, award us another measure. But as "day by day the manna fell," so hour by hour fresh grace streams into our souls.

We are lights, but we are not like the candle that burns supported by its own fat, but we are like these gas-lamps—once cut the communication between the jet, and the gasometer, and at once the light is

gone. We only live by fresh communications from the Great Fountain-head of all spiritual life. And no runner can weary while fresh strength is given. h

He is not weary, because as he advances he finds fresh matter to interest him. Yesterday I heard a gentleman say that he could walk any number of miles when the scenery was good. "But," he added, "when it is flat and uninteresting, how one tires!" What scenery it is through which the Christian man walks—the towering mountains of predestination, the great sea of providence, the mighty cliffs of divine promise, the green fields of divine grace, the river that makes glad the city of God—oh, what scenery surrounds the Christian, and what fresh discoveries he makes at every step!

The Bible is always a new book. If you want a novel, read your Bible. It is always new. There is not a stale page in the Word of God. It is just as fresh as though the ink were not yet dry, but had flowed today from the pen of inspiration. There have been poets whose sayings startled all England when first their verses were thrown broadcast over the land, but nobody reads their writings now.

Yet the pages that were written by David and by Paul are glowing with the radiant glory which was upon them when long ago the Holy Spirit spake by them. As we advance in the King's highway of righteousness, there are such fresh things in the Christian's experience, and in Christian truth, that we run and are not weary.

Above all, there is one fact that keeps the Christian from weariness, namely, that he looks to the end, to the recompense of the reward. He longs for the resurrection, and he hears the voice that cries, "Therefore, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

When travelers sail near to certain spice-islands, they can tell their nearness to the gardens of perfume by the odors wafted to them on the winds. Even so, as the Christian runner advances nearer to heaven, he enjoys new delights such as celestial spirits rejoice to experience. In proportion as he draws nearer and nearer, the perfume from the many mansions, from the garments of Christ who dwells there, and whose garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia—that perfume, I say, comes to him and it quickens his pace.

The body may be waxing feeble, but the soul is growing strong. The tabernacle may be falling, but the sacred priestly soul within carries on its devotion with greater zest. So, when you would think that the pilgrim's soul must faint, he grows vigorous. When he sinks to the earth, he stretches out his hand, and grasps his crown.

I wish I could speak tonight as I desired to do, but I scarcely find ability equal to my task. As God's Holy Spirit speaks by us according as He wills, I submit to deliver myself feebly, if He so permits.

Let me conclude with these three or four sentences. If there be any brother in Christ here who was once a runner, but has begun to slacken his pace, let him beware of slackening. It is a business which goes on much faster than we think.

I question, my Brother, whether there is an easy stopping-place in a downhill life. If you do a little less, you will do still less. If you backslide by little and by little, you shall backslide into a terrible fall. Keep the pace up, brother, by the grace of God, and on your knees tonight, if you have begun to grow cold and chilled, pray Him who washed you years ago in His precious blood, to take you afresh, and baptize you in the Holy Spirit, and in fire, that from this time forward you may serve Him better than you ever did in the best part of your previous life.

If there is another here who has never served Christ at all, let me ask him, how will he answer the Master in the day when He comes? You have never trusted in Christ? You have never reposed your confidence in Him? How will you face the King when He sits on His throne, after having rejected Him here, when in loving tones He said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest"?

You who love not Christ, O that you might be brought to trust Him and to love Him. And you who love Him, may you love Him more, and run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. And God's shall be the glory, and yours the comfort. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 CORINTHIANS 5

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.