

FAREWELL SERMON.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST PAUL, COVENT GARDEN,
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EDITORIAL NOTE.

THE ejection of two thousand ministers by the Act of Uniformity in 1662 could not fail to make a great impression on the minds of the people of England, and especially of the ministers who were ejected, and of the people who had enjoyed their ministry. The last utterances of these ministers in the pulpits which they were about to quit were naturally listened to with peculiar interest. Many of these were published from notes taken by hearers; and in the following year, 1663, these were collected and published in a volume, under the title of "Farewell Sermons." In this volume, that by Dr Manton occupies the second place, coming immediately after that of Mr Calamy. From this volume it is now reprinted.

FAREWELL SERMON.

Wherefore, seeing 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.—HEB. XII. 1.

In the former chapter you have a spiritual chronicle, or a catalogue of the Lord's worthies, and all the eminent effects of their faith; and now the apostle comes to make use of this history, that he had produced through so many successions of ages, of all the holy men of God that excelled in faith: 'Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,' &c.

The text is wholly hortatory. In it observe:—

1. The premises or principle the apostle worketh upon: *seeing we are compassed, &c.*

2. The practical inferences which are deduced from thence, and they are two:—

[1.] One concerning the privative part of our duty: *let us lay aside every weight, &c.* There is something external and without, like to clog us in our way to heaven: *every weight*; and something within that will hinder and trouble us within; therefore he saith, *and the sin which doth so easily beset us.*

[2.] Here is the positive part: *let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* There is motion: *run*; the manner: *with patience*; the stage or way: *the race that is set before us.*

My purpose is to give you some brief thoughts upon this useful and practical inference of the apostle from the histories of the faithful before recorded. Therefore I will sum up the whole text in this point:—

Doct. The people of God, that have such a multitude of examples of holy men and women set before them, should prepare themselves to run the spiritual race with more patience and cheerfulness.

There are two things in this doctrine—the encouragement and the duty. I shall open both with respect to the circumstances of the text.

First, the encouragement: a multitude of examples; or, as in the text, 'seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.' Mark, here are witnesses: a great cloud of witnesses; and these compassing us round about.

First, here are witnesses. By that term we are to understand those

worthy saints mentioned and reckoned up in the former chapter, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, &c., all the saints of God that have had experience of the goodness of his providence to them, and the fulfilling of his promises. They are all called witnesses. Why? Because they depose a testimony for God, and speak to future generations to be constant, as they were, that they might receive the like reward. This witness was partly in their faith, and partly in the fruit of their faith.

1. They witnessed by their faith: John iii. 33, 'He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.' A man that hath soundly digested the promises, that expresses his faith by cheerfulness and patience under all difficulties, troubles, delays, and those sundry trials that he meets with, he gives it under hand and seal, proclaims it to the world that he hath to do with the true God.

2. They witnessed in the fruits of their faith, as they give us an instance of God's fidelity towards them that faithfully adhere to and firmly believe in his promises; so it is said, Heb. vi. 12, 'Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise.' Let faith but set patience a-work, do but hold out a little while with God, and you may learn by the example of all those holy men we shall inherit the promises; they shall be made good to a tittle, and not one thing fail of all that the Lord hath spoken; as these holy men were exercised and tossed to and fro, but it succeeded well with them at the last. Oh! then, let us hearken to the deposition of these worthy witnesses that are recorded in the scripture, and with such an invincible resolution as theirs was, let us hold on our course towards true happiness. If we do not, they that are now propounded as witnesses to us, will, at the day of judgment, be produced as witnesses against us. And pray, also, let us remember that we are to continue and keep afoot that testimony to succeeding generations; for not only the prophets and holy men of God were God's witnesses, but all God's people also are his witnesses, Isa. xliii. 10; by their faith, patience, diligence, constancy, and cheerfulness under afflictions, they are to give it under hand and seal to the world that God is a true and faithful God. But now, if we, either by our sinful walking or by our drooping discouragements, discredit Christ and his profession, then we are witnesses against him; we deny that religion which we would seem to profess and cry up: Titus i. 16, 'They profess they know God, but in works they deny him;' and the more dangerous because deeds are more deliberate than words, and so a greater evidence of what we think in our hearts. If we, by drooping discouragements and sinful walking, discredit religion, we deny it, and do in effect put the lie upon Christ. Therefore let us remember they were witnesses, and so must we.

Secondly, By a figurative speech they are called a *cloud*—having a cloud of witnesses. Why so? I might trouble you with many conceits interpreters have had of this word *cloud*. Say some, because of the raisedness of their spirits, because clouds fly aloft. Clouds, for the fruitfulness of their doctrine, as clouds send down fruitful showers upon the earth; and clouds, because they cool and cover us from the heat; so some would gloss for our comfort. Others, with more judg-

ment, say, a cloud with allusion to the pillar of cloud which conducted the Israelites to Canaan: yet neither doth this come up fully to the scope of the apostle; for the apostle speaks not of a cloud that goes before us, but of a cloud that compasses us round about, and therefore a cloud. The reason why it is called so, is the number and multitude of those witnesses, as a cloud is made up of a multitude of vapours gathered together and condensed into one body; and so the expression is often used: Ezek. xxxviii. 9, 'Thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land,' &c., noting the increase of the people when God would restore them, the multitude of converts. And so, in profane authors, Livy hath such an expression; an army of men is called a cloud. But this is enough to show the intent of this expression, that there are a multitude, a very great number. Though the godly, comparatively, and with respect to the wicked, are a few; yet, considered in themselves, they are a great number; for if the martyrs and those glorious instances of heroic faith, and that under the Old Testament, when God's interest was more confined to one people, if there were such a church then of so great a number, what will the whole church of the Old and New Testament be, when we shall meet together in heaven? We are often discouraged with the paucity of professors, and are apt to think ourselves to be left alone, 1 Kings xix. 10. But let us remember there is a cloud of witnesses; we are not solitary now, and certainly we shall not want company when we come to heaven, 'To the innumerable company of,' &c.

Again, it meets with an ordinary and strong temptation which Satan suggests to the hearts of the godly, that they are singular and matchless in their afflictions, that none of the people of God have ever undergone such difficulties as they are exposed unto; and this makes them question their Father's affection, and put themselves out of the number of his children. Ay! but all these things are accomplished in the saints of God before you. Here is a cloud of witnesses that have been exercised and tried to purpose, 1 Peter v. 9. They are troubled with a busy devil, a naughty world, a corrupt heart; all have had their trial from God's correcting hand: 'The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' So that we have many fellows; our lot is no harder than the saints of God that have gone before us, for there is a cloud of witnesses.

Thirdly, Observe the apostle calls it a cloud that compasses us round about—*i.e.*, we have instances for every trial, temptation, duty, that we are put upon. Here we have examples of those that have fulfilled the commands of Christ on this side with an undaunted courage; and the examples of those that have borne the cross of Christ with an invincible patience. Here we have examples of those that have conquered right-hand temptations, that have despised the delights of the world; and there are those that have conquered left-hand temptations, that have not been broken and affrighted with the terrors of the world. All the saints of God have trodden that way, the same paths wherein we are to walk after them. We cannot look this way or that way, but we have instances of faith, confidence in God, and patience: 'We are compassed about,' &c. In short, here lies the encouragement that Christians should propound to themselves.

1. That there are examples. Christians of later times have more to answer for their infidelity than those of former ages. They that first believed the promises believed without such a cloud of witnesses, or multitude of examples. Many have gone before us that have broken the ice, and that found good success from their own experience; they have commended God to us as a true and faithful God, and will not you go on? When Jonathan and his armour-bearer climbed up the rocks of the Philistines, then the people were encouraged to go up after. So here are some that have gone before you, and it hath succeeded well with them.

2. These examples are many; not one or two, that might be supposed to be singularly assisted, and to have eminent prerogatives above the rest of their brethren; but many in every age—a whole cloud of them.

3. There are examples of many rare and excellent men, the best that ever lived under heaven: 'Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example,' &c., James v. 10.

4. They are propounded to us, not for their words only, and for their profession, but for their deeds, for their bitter sufferings; and they abundantly manifest to us that there is nothing impossible in our duty, or anything so difficult but may be overcome through Christ's strength enabling us. They all had the same nature we have; they were of the like passion with us, flesh and blood as we are, of the same relations and concerns. And then, on the other side, we have the same cause with them, the same recompense of reward to encourage us, the same God and Saviour to recompense us. He suffered for us as well as for them; therefore we should follow in their steps, and hold fast our confidence to the end; for they have showed us that poverty, reproaches, death itself, and all those things that would look harsh and with a ghastly aspect upon the eyes of the world, are no such evils but that a believer may rejoice in them, and triumph over them. I say, they have showed the blandishments of the world have not such a charm, but they may be renounced without any loss of considerable joy and contentment; and that the duties of Christianity are not so hard but that a little waiting upon God will bring in grace enough to perform them; therefore saith the apostle, 'Seeing we have a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside,' &c. And so I come to the encouragement, to the—

Second thing, and that is the duty here pressed. (1.) Here is the privative. (2.) The positive part of our duty. Here is mortification and vivification. Mortification: 'Let us lay aside,' &c.; vivification: 'Let us run with patience,' &c. In both the branches he alludes to terms proper to races. In a race, you know, men strip themselves of their clothes and whatever is burdensome and heavy, that they may be the more light of foot; and so the apostle bids us 'lay aside every weight;' and they did withal diet themselves, that they might have no clog from within: 1 Cor. ix. 25, 'Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things;' *i.e.*, they took care that they did not clog and dispose¹ themselves for the race they were to run. But they verily run only for a corruptible crown; we for a crown that

¹ Qu. 'indispose' ?—Ed.

is incorruptible and glorious; so, according to this double practice of racers, we are to cast aside every weight from without, &c. So here is a double object—laying aside every weight, and every sin. There is *onus externum*—the weight without that presses us down and hinders our speed; and then there is *impedimentum internum*, there is sin, that which weakens within. By reason of the former we make little speed, by reason of the latter we are often interrupted; and therefore we must do as they, that they might be swift and expedite: ‘Lay aside every weight,’ and be more ‘temperate in all things.’ Herein a runner in a race differs from a traveller: a traveller strengthens himself for his journey as well as he can, his clothes on, sometimes carries a great burden with him; but a runner of a race makes himself as light as he can. But to come more particularly to the words.

First, ‘Lay aside every weight.’ By *weight* is meant those things that burden the soul, and make our heavenly progress more tedious and cumbersome; and by *weight* is meant (I think) the delights and cares of the world, the multitude of secular business, all our earthly contentments and affairs, so far as they are a burden to us, hinder us in our way to heaven; these must all be put off: Luke xxi. 34, saith Christ, ‘Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life,’ &c. The heart that is depressed cannot be so free for God and the offices of our heavenly calling, when we give way to surfeiting, drunkenness, and cares of this world.

1. The heart may be overcharged with the delights of the world. Surfeiting and drunkenness must not be taken in the gross notion; you must not think of spewing, reeling, vomiting, as if to avoid these were a full compliance with Christ’s direction; the heart may be overcharged when the stomach is not. There is a dry drunkenness and a more refined surfeiting; and that is when the heart grows heavy, unfit for prayer, relishes not the things of the Spirit; when the delights of the flesh clog the wheel, abate that vigour and cheerfulness that we should show forth in the worship of God and holy actions. When the delights of the flesh withdraw us from that watchfulness and diligence that is necessary in taking care for our souls, then the heart is overcharged. Voluptuous living is a great sin, it chokes the seed of piety so soon as planted in the heart, so that they can bring nothing to perfection; it brings a brawn and a deadness upon the conscience and affections; there is nothing that hardens the heart so much as the softness of carnal pleasure: Jude 19, ‘Sensual, having not the Spirit.’ Sensuality quenches our natural bravery and the briskness of spirit that becomes a man; much more doth it hinder the sublime operations of the Spirit of God. Well then, remember, Christians, you are not only travellers by the way, but runners in a race. If we were to speak to you only under the notion of travellers in a way, this were enough to wean you from the delights of the flesh: 1 Peter ii. 11, ‘As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.’ The more you indulge these fleshly lusts, the more you hearten and strengthen the great enemy of your souls, and starve the better part. But you are as runners in a race. By this metaphor the duty is more bound upon you; much more should you beat down

the body and keep it in subjection. The apostle hath a notable word: 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'I keep under my body, and bring it in subjection,' &c. I beat down my body; you must either keep under pleasures, or pleasures will keep you under; for a man is soon brought under the power, dominion, and tyranny of evil customs and some brutish pleasure by indulging the lusts of the flesh, 1 Cor. vi. 12. Be but a little addicted to any one thing, and you are brought under the power of it. The flesh waxes wanton and imperious, and a slavery grows upon you by degrees. The more you cocker carnal affections, the more they increase upon you; and therefore you must hold the reins hard, exercise a powerful restraint. Solomon in his penitentials gives us an account of his own folly, and how fearfully he was corrupted this way: Eccles. ii. 10, 'Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy,' &c. This was that which brought him to such a lawless excess, and at length to fall off from God. When we give nature the full swing, and use pleasure with too free a license, the heart is insensibly corrupted, and the necessities of life are turned into disease, and all that you do it is but in compliance with your lusts; your eating and drinking is but a meat-offering and drink-offering to lusts and carnal appetite. I remember Solomon saith, Prov. xxix. 21, 'He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at length;' *i.e.*, allow a servant too much liberty, and he will no more know his condition, but grow contemptuous, bold, and troublesome; so it is here. We are all the worse for license. Natural desires, unless they feel fetters and prudent restraints, grow unruly and excessive; and therefore it is good to abate the liberty of the flesh, that the body may be a servant and not a master. When you deny yourselves in nothing, but satisfy every vain appetite, custom grows upon the soul, and intemperance proves a trade and a habituated distemper, so that you cannot when you would, upon prudent and pious respects, refrain and command your desires; and therefore it is good sometimes to thwart and vex the flesh, as David poured out the water of Bethlehem that he longed for, 2 Sam. xxiii. 17. Not to deny ourselves in what we affect and covet, lust grows into a wanton, and bold and imperious, and so prescribes upon us, and we are 'brought under the power' of these things.

2. The business and cares of this world; for these immoderately followed, and not in obedience to God, are a sore burthen, and makes the soul heavy, and allows no time and strength for God and his service, and those happy opportunities of private communion with him. When we are 'encumbered with much service,' we neglect that 'one thing necessary,' Luke x. 42; and therefore Christians must take heed that the lean kine do not devour the fat, that Sarah be not thrown out of doors instead of Hagar, that religion be not thrust to the walls, which should be our prime and chief business, while every business hath its time and course. The scriptures, knowing the proneness of our hearts to temporal things, deal with us as we do with a crooked stick; we bend it so much the other way, and therefore sometimes they forbid necessary labour: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth,' &c. The meaning is, *not chiefly*, but it bends the stick another way: 'Set not your affections on things on the earth.'

A man must have some kind of affection to his work here below ; but we had need to be bent the other way. We may gather this from this precept : It is better to encroach upon the world, than the world should encroach upon godliness. In short, things are a burthen and clog to us, according as our delight and scope is. If the pomp and increase of the world be our end and scope, then religion will be looked upon as a burthen, that will be a weight, and all duties of godliness as a melancholy interruption ; as they, Amos viii. 5, 'When will the sabbath be over ?' The exercise of godliness will be a troublesome thing, and we shall go about the work of religion as if we went about it not. But on the other side, if heaven and heavenly things be our scope, then the world is a burthen, and then we shall use it in the way, but not abusing, as taking up our rest here, 1 Cor. vii. 31, 32. Man hath a body and soul, and he doth provide for both ; but for one in subordination : the soul is the chief, and therefore we must not so look after the interests and concernments of the bodily life as to forget the interests of the soul, or to neglect them. Many will not so grossly idolise present things so as to renounce things to come. Ay ! but they so often follow the things of the world that they neglect their eternal concernments. The happiness of a people lies in communion with God, and therefore that must be looked after ; we must take heed that the cares of the world have not such a hand and power over us as either to divert us from, or unfit us for, these higher and nobler pursuits, the enjoyment of God in Christ. This is the first thing the apostle speaks to these spiritual racers, to lay aside every weight ; that is, the delights of the flesh and the cares of the world.

Secondly, The next thing to be laid aside is 'sin, which doth so easily beset us.' As we must guard against things without, so we must mortify our corrupt inclinations within, or else it will soon make us weary of our heavenly race, or faint in it. Sin, you know, is twofold—original and actual. Actual sin is not meant primarily, for that is not *peccatum agens*, sin that easily besets us, but *peccatum transiens*, the sin that passes from us ; and original sin is that which is emphatically called sin, Rom. vii. 8. Now this original corruption may be considered as merely native, or as acquired and improved into evil customs and habits ; for according to men's tempers and constitutions, as they are severally disposed, so by the corruption of nature they are inclined to one sin more than another : as the channel is cut, so corrupt nature finds a vent and issue. In every man there is some predominant sin, and in every regenerate person some relics of that sin, from whence is the greatest danger of his soul ; thus David speaks of *his* iniquity, Ps. xviii. 23. Well, then, this is that sin that doth easily beset us ; original sin improved into some tyranny or evil custom, which doth increase and prevail upon us more and more. Now, this is said easily to beset us for three reasons. Partly because it hath a great power and restraint over us, and implies the whole man, the members of the body, the faculties of the soul ; so great an interest hath it acquired in our affections, it doth easily beset us, it hath great power and command over us. Partly because it sticks so close that we cannot by our own strength lay it aside : Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?' &c. A

man can as soon change his skin as lay aside his customs, that are so deeply engraven as the blackness of an Ethiopian or the spots of the leopard. And partly because it mingles itself with all our motions and actions, Rom. vii. 21, &c. It easily besets us, it is present with us, it impels us, and solicits us, and draws us to sin further and further, and doth make us negligent in what is God's; we cannot do or speak anything but it will infest us in all our duties of piety, charity, justice; on every side it is interposing, vexing, thwarting the motions of the Spirit, and so abates our strength, vigour, and agility, and retards our course towards heaven and glory. Therefore lay aside, as every weight, so every sin, &c.

Quest. Now, what is it to *lay aside*, or how can we lay aside, since sin sticks so close to us, and is engraven in our natures?

Ans. Certainly something may be done by us, for this is everywhere pressed as our duty: Eph. iv. 22, 'Put off the old man;' and 1 Peter ii. 11. We may put it off more and more, though we cannot lay it aside. Then we are said to lay aside the sin that so easily besets us, when we prevent and break the dominion of it that it shall not reign over us: Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin reign,' &c. Though it dwells in us, lives in us, and works in us, yet it should not overcome us and bring us into bondage, and so it will not be imputed to our condemnation; and at length, when the soul shall be separated from the body, we shall be wholly free from it.

Quest. Ay! but what must we do that we may so repress it (the question returns), that we may break the dominion of it?

Ans. I answer—This is the work of the Spirit of God; but we must know the Spirit of God doth work the work of mortification two ways—by regeneration and after regeneration. By regeneration, and so he doth immediately, without any co-operation of ours, mortify the deed of sin, gives sin its death-wound: that which is left is as a thing mortified, it is broken. The scripture often speaks of this first work of regeneration: Rom. vi. 6; Col. ii. 11. First, when we are planted into Christ, then we put off the body of sin; and though it doth not presently die, yet it is weakened, that it cannot reign, though it be not destroyed.

2. After regeneration the Spirit doth more and more destroy sin, the relics of sin, this crucified body of sin, till it dieth wholly away; this he doth *in* us, but not *without* us: Rom. viii. 13, 'Through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body.' Not the Spirit without us, nor we without the Spirit, but 'ye through the Spirit.' What is then required of us?

[1.] Seriously purpose not to sin, and promise to God to yield him unfeigned obedience. Especially should we make this promise in the use of those solemn rites by which the covenant between God and us is confirmed. Take up a solemn purpose not to grieve the Spirit, nor to break his law: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' This purpose of heart is the root of all good actions; therefore, in the confidence of God's help, in the sense of thy own weakness, Ps. cxix. 32. We cannot lay wagers upon our own strength, yet it is our duty to engage our hearts to God. To sin against the light of our own conscience, and illumina-

tion of the Spirit, and the chastening and instruction of our own reins, that aggravates our sin; but to sin against and besides our fixed purpose of not sinning, that lightens sin; for then it is a sin of weakness and infirmity, not of wilfulness and malice. And then we can say, as Paul, Rom. vii. 19, when the heart is fixedly bent towards God, 'The evil which I would not, that do I.' Two ways may we be said to sin against purpose: either when we are overborne besides our purpose, our purpose still remains to please God; as when the water breaks over the bank, the bank remaining; in such a case the fault is not in the bank, but in the violence of the flood; or, secondly, when we break off our purpose, or consent to do evil; as when we cut through the bank the water may easily make through. There is a great deal of difference between sin dwelling in us, and sin entertained by us, between sin remaining and sin reserved. When you have a firm purpose against all sin, there is sin remaining, but it is not reserved, it is not kept and allowed.

[2.] Watch over thyself with a holy self-suspicion, because thou hast sin within thee that doth easily beset thee; therefore 'consider thy ways,' Ps. cxix. 59; guard thy senses, Job xxxi. 1; but, above all, keep thy heart, Prov. iv. 23. Conscience must stand porter at the door, and examine what comes in and what goes out. Watch over the stratagems of Satan, and seducing motions of thy own heart.

[3.] Resist and oppose strongly against the first risings of the flesh and the tickling and pleasing motions of sin that doth easily beset us when it doth entice us away from God, or to do anything that is unseemly and contrary unto the duties of our heavenly calling. Oh! remember we are not debtors to the flesh, Rom. viii. 20. Thou art tied to the Lord by all obligations and indulgence; therefore break the force of sin by a serious resistance; check it, and let thy soul rise up in indignation against it: my business is not to pleasure the flesh, but to please the Lord.

[4.] Bewail thy involuntary lapses and falls with penitential tears, as Peter 'went out and wept bitterly,' Mat. xxvi. 75. Godly sorrow is of great use for laying aside of sin, as salt potions kill worms. When children are troubled with worms we give them salt potions; so these bitter penitential tears are the means God hath appointed to mortify sin. That is the reason the apostle saith, 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.' It is not only a part of repentance, but worketh preserving durable resolutions, a walking closely with God; it is a means God hath blessed to this end and purpose.

[5.] Recover from thy falls, renew thy combat; as Israel, when they were overcome in battle, they would try it again and again, Judges xx. 28. Take heed of ceasing for the present; for though thy enemy seems to prevail, though the flesh seems to prevail against the spirit in the battle, yet thou shalt have the best of it in the war; by the power of grace thou shalt have the victory.

Thus have I gone over the privative part of our duty: 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us.' I should have come to the positive: 'Let us run with patience the race that is

set before us.' There is the duty, let us *run the race* that is set before us; and there is the manner of the duty, let us run *with patience*. I should have shown you that a Christian's life is like a race from earth to heaven, in a way of holiness and exercise of grace. This race it continues as long as we continue in the world, from our nativity to our death; after death the strife is ended. Now, in this race we must run, and so run that we may obtain the crown, 1 Cor. ix. 24. Running is a motion, and a speedy motion; there is no lying, sitting, or standing, but still there must be running. We must make a further progress in the way to heaven, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,' Phil. iii. 13.

The runner was not to inquire how much of the way already was past, but to strain himself to overcome what was yet behind. And so should we consider what sins are yet to be mortified, what duties yet untouched, almost untouched; what hard conflicts are yet to be undergone, and still to hold on our way without turning aside or halting because of difficulties, discouragements, stumbling-blocks. And there are fellows and co-partners with us that run this race, with whom we may strive in a holy emulation who should go forwardest, who should be most forward in the course of pleasing God. O Christians! there are many contentions amongst us, but when shall we have this holy contention? Heb. x. 24. In a race there is the *agonotheta*, the judge of the sports; so here God observes all. No matter what the standers-by say, the judge of the sports must decide who must have the crown, 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4. And then at the end of the race there is the crown: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' &c. In a race there are spectators; so there are here God, angels, and men: 1 Cor. iv. 9, 'We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men,' &c.

Thus, for the similitude of our race in our way to heaven. Now wherein it differs.

This is a race, not undertaken out of wantonness, but out of necessity. God hath called us to this course; and if we run not in this race, we are undone for ever. And in other races but one had the crown; here all are crowned, 2 Tim. iv. 8, though they be not so eminent as the apostle. Here all are crowned that run in the manner God hath required: 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them that love his appearing.'

For the manner, *with patience*: 'Let us run with patience.' Patience is necessary:—

1. Partly because of the length of the race, and the distance between us and the promised reward. Our race cannot be ended but after some degree of time; long waiting is troublesome to the flesh, and therefore we have need of patience.

2. Because we meet with many impediments, troubles, and temptations by the way; there are spiritual adversaries with whom we

must fight ; for we go on, we not only run, but fight ; therefore ‘ run with patience.’

3. Because the spectators will be ready to discourage us. We are set forth not only as a spectacle to God and angels, but to the world ; and they will be ready to deride, scorn, and oppose us for our zeal to God, and our forwardness in the ways of God, to discourage us by bitter mockings, &c. ; therefore ‘ Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.’