

# THE AWAKENING

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The Jail

Isa. 64. 6.  
Luke 14. 33.  
Psalm 38. 4  
Hab. 2. 2  
Acts 16. 29,  
30

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a den,<sup>1</sup> and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold *I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back.* I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled;<sup>2</sup> and not being able longer

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bunyan was put into Bedford jail for preaching the gospel. We live in happier times, when none are permitted to interrupt us. May we prize and improve our liberty, and be thankful for it! While he was in prison he wrote this book, and many other valuable treatises, which have by the Lord's blessing, administered edification and comfort to many who were then unborn, and will doubtless be serviceable to many who shall live after us. Thus by his confinement he became more extensively useful. The Lord will always so restrain and manage the wrath of men, that the methods by which they attempt to hinder the success of the Gospel shall in the event promote it.

<sup>2</sup> The awakened sinner, who sees his own righteousness to be as filthy rags, his soul in a state of wrath and wretchedness, turns his face from his own house, from himself, from all his false hopes and vain confidence, for refuge; takes his Bible in his hand, to direct him where he shall flee for refuge and salvation. The more a sinner reads therein, the more he is convinced of

to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, *What shall I do?*

*His out-cry.*  
Acts 2. 37.

2. In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he brake his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them. *O my dear wife, said he, and you the children of my bowels, I your dear friend am in myself undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me: moreover, I am for certain informed, that this our city will be burned with fire from heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape may be found, whereby we may be delivered.*<sup>3</sup>

*This world*

*He knows  
no way of  
escape as  
yet.*

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the wretched state he is in, and of his necessity of flying somewhere for safety; though which way to escape he yet knows not.

<sup>3</sup> It is observable that real convictions arise from a belief of what God has spoken, and the divine authority of Scriptures. When death and judgment are brought near to the conscience, and the awful consequences of standing before God are set

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3. At this his relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head; therefore it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did. He told them *Worse* and *worse*:<sup>4</sup> he also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him: sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber, to pray for and pity them, and also to console his own misery; He would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading and

*Carnal physick for a sick soul.*

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before him in such a light, then it is that all other inferior concerns are swallowed up in the care of the one thing needful. Awakened sinners are either scorned or pitied by their nearest friends; and their pity is almost as hard to bear as their scorn. The means they propose for relief do but aggravate their soul's distress. What can company, amusement, or physic, do for wounded spirit!

<sup>4</sup> Saving convictions cannot be shaken off, nor can they be cured, but by the blood of Christ; it requiring as much to satisfy an awakened conscience as to satisfy the justice of God.

sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time.

4. Now I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, *What shall I do to be saved?*

Acts. 16. 30,  
31.

5. I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still,<sup>5</sup> because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then and saw a man named *Evangelist* coming to him, and asked. *Wherefore dost thou cry?*

6. He answered, Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment<sup>6</sup>; and I find that I

Heb. 9. 27.  
Job 16. 21,  
22.  
Ezek. 22. 14.

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<sup>5</sup> This endeavoring to run, and yet standing still, is a lively representation of that earnestness, anxiety, and perplexity, which usually accompanies a deep conviction of sin. What would he not willingly do! But he can do nothing. What would he not give! But he is as poor as he is miserable. The way to salvation, though so clearly revealed in Scriptures, yet can only be discovered by divine teaching;—there must be a voice behind, saying “this is the way; walk in it;—and this way is Christ.” But naturally, we are as blind to this way, as we are impotent and wretched.

<sup>6</sup> Fools make a mock of sin; but when a poor soul takes his estimate of sin from the word of God, enlightening his conscience, and considers what an awful thing it is to

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am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.

7. Then said *Evangelist*, Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils? The man answered, Because, I fear that this burden that is upon my back, will sink me lower than the grave; and I shall fall into *Tophet*. And, Sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to the judgment and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

Isa. 30. 33.

*Conviction  
of the neces-  
sity of fly-  
ing.*  
Mat. 3. 7.

8. Then said *Evangelist*, If this be thy condition, Why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, *Fly from the wrath to come*.

9. The man therefore read it, and looking upon *Evangelist* very carefully, said, Whither must I fly? Then said *Evangelist*, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder *Wicket-gate*? The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder *shining light*?<sup>7</sup>

Mat. 7. 13,  
14.  
Psal. 119.  
105.  
2 Pet. 1. 19.  
*Christ and  
the way to  
him, cannot  
be found  
without the  
word.*

stand before God, it is a burden too heavy for him to bear.

<sup>7</sup> A convinced sinner must sink into despair but for the reports of the gospel. He hears there is a Savior but his thoughts of him are very confused. He cannot yet be said "to see the Son", but he embraces the word of God as true; he renounces all hope in himself, and follows the "shining light;" waiting in the use of means, not to qualify

He said, I think I do. Then said *Evangelist*, Keep that light in your eye,<sup>8</sup> and go up directly thereto, so shall thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do. So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, *Life! Life! Eternal life!* So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain. ✠

Luke 14. 26.

### NOTES:

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himself for mercy, but that Christ may be revealed unto his soul.

### <sup>8</sup> THE SHINING LIGHT

My former hopes are fled,  
My terror now begins;  
I feel, alas! That I am dead  
In trespasses and sins.  
Ah! Whither shall I fly?  
I hear the thunder roar;  
The law proclaims destruction nigh,  
And vengeance at the door.  
When I review my ways,  
I dread impending doom;  
But sure a friendly whisper says,  
"Flee from the wrath to come."  
I see, or think I see,  
A glimmering from afar,  
A beam of day that shines for me,  
To save me from despair.  
Forerunner of the sun,  
It marks the Pilgrim's way:  
I'll gaze upon it while I run,  
And watch the rising day.

