

Mrs. Thomas Moran, Feb. 48

# The King's Highway

## An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

"And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

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### THE GLORY OF GOING ON

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"Let us run the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Here is one of the Bible's most vivid pictures of the Christian life. A race must have a beginning, it must have a progress, and it must have a goal. The beginning, however vigorous and promising, is not enough. It is the going that counts. It is the finish that spells victory.

The question may well be asked of any of us: "Where will you end up? What will the outcome be?"

To all of us who know the beginnings of the Christian life, I bring the ringing call and challenge of our text. "Let us run . . . the race that is set before us." "The Glory of Going On"—that is our theme. If we are to taste this glory, there are at least three things for which we must look out.

#### I.

#### Refuse the Handicaps that Will Defeat You

These handicaps are described under two heads: weights and sin. "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Weymouth's translation is: "Let us fling aside every encumbrance and the sin that so readily entangles our feet."

Sin brings condemnation, produces a bad conscience. That we know. But what we too often overlook is that sin brings weakness. It saps the strength of the runner who is out to make a success of the race of life. Whatever else may be taught by the life of Samson, one lesson that looms up with unmistakable clearness is that loyalty to God spells power and disloyalty spells feebleness. When Samson broke his vow, he lost his vigor. Only the righteous are truly robust. Tennyson was right:

"My good blade carves the casques of men;  
My tough lance thrusteth sure;  
My strength is as the strength of ten  
Because my heart is pure."

While all kinds of sin are weakening in their effect, there is a root form of evil that probably is in the mind of the writer when he urges Christians to lay aside . . . the sin which so readily entangles our feet." "The sin!" Some excellent Bible teachers have suggested that what is intended is the sin of unbelief. Perhaps so. To distrust God, to struggle against His will, to doubt His promises—this always lands us in trouble.

But I wonder if what the apostle means is unbelief or the thing that really lies deeper than unbelief. May it not be just plain old self wanting to have its own way? Wise and true are the words of a current writer who says, "We need to go beyond forgiveness to find

Him who 'breaks the power of cancelled sin' and 'sets the prisoner free'—free from every taint of the sin itself."

This does not mean that we shall live without the suggestion of evil coming to our minds, but it does mean that when the suggestion presents itself, with its bid for us to make a quick excursion into sin, our minds are occupied with Christ. The temptation is there without taking root, for the simple reason that Christ-mindedness is a soil in which it cannot grow.

Now look at the second sort of handicaps that we are to avoid if we are to experience the glory of going on with Christ. We are to "lay aside every weight." What athlete would want to run a footrace carrying a pair of dumbbells? Yet there are followers of Jesus Christ who are trying that sort of thing in the spiritual life. They avoid the things that are plainly or viciously sinful, but they carry, nevertheless, a lot of excess baggage in the form, let us say, of doubtful habits, or trifling interests, or second-best activities.

This matter of weights takes us into the realm of living where the innocent thing can be carried too far. Humor, for example, is a delightful thing, giving zest to life and relaxation when moments are tense; but our mirthfulness becomes an offense to Christ and to people of good taste when it deteriorates into silly wise-cracking; or becomes the substance of an evening's conversation instead of the spice of it.

Or take the reading of fiction. The art of putting imagination into writing has large possibilities for good. Our writers of fiction have been, however, of all sorts, both artistically and morally. What they have given us to read ranges all the way from Pilgrim's Progress to some recent third-rate novels of glorified immorality, and in between are endless shelves of trash. So, Christian, if you do not want your reading a weight to you, keep it on a high level.

Illustrations might be multiplied, but they would all add up to this: We Christians are in a race. We have started for a goal. If we are to win, we must make everything contribute toward the victory. If it does not contribute—if it does not make us stronger and more useful representatives of Jesus Christ—then off it goes. It is a weight.

#### II.

The second thing for us to remember in the running of the Christian race can be very simply stated:

#### Realize the Helps that Will Advance You

For one thing, maintain a sense of direction. We are to run the race that is set before us. In military drill there is a command called

"Front!" Eyes may have been "right" or bodies "oblique," but now the whole company is set straight ahead. That is the spirit in which we are to move and the outlook we are to maintain in this life with Christ.

Some years ago, in a football game, a player got possession of the ball and made a 70-yard run. It was a brilliant piece of work except for one thing—he ran in the wrong direction. In his confusion he lost sight of the true goal.

That is a parable of what may happen to any of us if we are not careful. In a day when grownups find life so complicated and confused, let us not be too greatly shocked if earnest young Christians have their difficulties. It should help us all, however, to realize that Jesus Christ is always out there ahead of us, giving us the right lead. If He does not give us complete answers to our particular problems, He at least gives us the direction in which those answers will be found. In this confidence we can say with David Livingstone: "I will go anywhere, provided it be forward!" Yes, keeping our sense of direction is decidedly a help if we are to win in the Christian race.

#### Understand from the Start that the Course is Not Easy

"Let us run with patient endurance" is the way Weymouth puts it. From the phrase, "patient endurance" we gather the idea that the Christian way of living is not intended to be a perpetual picnic. It is an adventure with Jesus along a road with a thousand hurdles. It is up hill and down dale. It is not so much an easy amble over a smooth track as it is a long run over an obstacle course. It requires exertion. It demands stamina. It asks for perseverance. To be sure, faith in Christ will see us through; but that faith must include the will to go through no matter what the consequences may be.

The Bible is a gallery of beautiful pictures, we say. What is also true is that the Bible is a gallery of sad pictures. There are portraits of men and women who started well in the service of God, but they fell before some obstacle or another. They were turned back. They must be labeled quitters. And who admires quitters?

There is King Saul, who stood head and shoulders above his fellows. At first his record as king was a splendid one. But he could not have his own way as he wanted to, nor could he garner all the applause of the people for himself. In the end we see him seeking the help of the witch in the valley instead of counselling with the prophet of God. Next day he died in battle—disgruntled, defeated, disgraced.

There is Demas in the New Testament. He  
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