



The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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TRUSTING IN THE DARK

Sometimes we have an experience in life that seems like walking through a long dark tunnel. The chilling air and the thick darkness make it hard walking, and the constant wonder is why we are compelled to tread so gloomy a path, while others are in the open day of health and happiness. We can only fix our eyes on the bright light at the end of the tunnel, and we comfort ourselves with the thought that every step we take brings us nearer to the joy and the rest that lie at the end of the way. Extinguish the light of heaven that gleams in the distance, and this tunnel of trial would become a horrible tomb. Some of us are passing through just such an experience now. We can adopt the plaintive language of the Psalmist and cry out: "Thy hand presseth us sore; as for the light of our eyes, it also is gone from us; we are ready to halt, and our sorrow is continually before us."

One of the most trying features of our trial is that we cannot discover the "why" or the "wherefore" of our special afflictions. Our Heavenly Father did not consult us before the trial came, and He does not explain to us why He sent it. His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts; nay, they are the very opposite. The mystery of the providence perplexes and staggers us. For example, I open my daily journal, and read that the Bishop of Jerusalem, whom I left a few months ago in the prime of vigorous health and wide usefulness, is cut off in the midst of his days. All his preparatory training for his office by eighteen years of missionary life comes to naught. This very day I am called for the sixth time in a few years to bury the dead from a certain Christian household. This time it is the head of the house that is taken, and the children are left to orphanage. Beside me now sits a mourning mother, whose aching heart cannot understand why a beloved child is snatched away when she seemed the most indispensable to the happiness of the home. Every week a pastor has to confront these mysteries in the dealings of a God of love. To the torturing question, "Why does God lead me into this valley of the shadow of darkness?" we can only reply, "Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Thy sight." We are brought into the tunnel, however we shrink back. There is no retreat; we have nothing left to us but to grasp the very Hand that brought us there and push forward. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, we can only say, "I see not but that my road to heaven lieth through this very valley."

Just in such trying hours it is that the Adversary assails us most fiercely. He stirs up in our hearts bitter thoughts against God. He

points us to the actual and realized loss, and tells us that heaven is utterly unseen, and no one comes back to assure us of its reality. And so he endeavors, with devilish suggestions, to blow out such lamps of divine promise as we have, to shatter every staff that we carry, and to make the pathway of trial more dark and desperate than before. This is not fancy; it is the actual trial to which the faith of thousands of God's people is at this moment subjected. Under these severe experiences more than one Christian has been sorely tempted to turn infidel, and to "choose death rather than life."

To my own mind there is only one solution for these mysteries and only one support for these days of terrible affliction. The only relief I can find is in the certainty that this life is not the end, but simply the preparatory school for the real and the endless life that is beyond. The moment that I accept this truth fully and hold it firmly, I find solid ground for my feet and light for my sorrowing soul. Then I discover that the whole journey of the believer is "portioned out" to him, and that the dark tunnel on the road is just as surely appointed wisely as is the most flowery mead or the happiest walk over the "Delectable Mountains." Nay, more. When we reach heaven, we may discover that the richest and deepest and most profitable experiences we had in this world were those which were gained in the very roads from which we shrank back with dread. The bitter cups we tried to push away contained the medicines we most needed. The hardest lessons that we learn are those which teach us the most and best fit us for service here and glory hereafter. It is the easiest thing in the world to obey God when He commands us to do what we like, and to trust Him when the path is all sunshine. The real victory of faith is to trust God in the dark and through the dark. Let us be assured of this, that, if the lesson and the rod are of His appointing, and that His all-wise love has engineered the deep tunnels of trial on the heavenward road, He will never desert us during the discipline. The vital thing for us is, not to deny and desert Him.

Let us also keep in mind that the chief object of the discipline is to develop character and to improve the graces of His children. Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and correcteth every son whom He receiveth. "Why do you cut that pomegranate-bush so cruelly?" said a gentleman to his gardener. The answer was, "Because it is all running to useless leaves, and I want to make it bear." Ah! it is a keen knife that our Divine Gardener employs, and He often severs the very heartstrings by His discipline; but "afterward it yielded peaceable

fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness." God has a great many crucibles for His gold, where He may refine it. There is so much alloy of pride or self-will, or covetousness, or sinful idolatry in genuine Christians that they require the "fining-pot" and the furnace. Sometimes prosperity is tenfold more damaging to us than sharp adversity. A fit of sickness may do more for soul-health than years of bodily strength and comfort.

To all my readers who are wondering why a loving God has subjected them so often to the furnace, my only answer is, that God owns you and me, and He has a right to do with us just as He pleases. If He wants to keep His silver over a hot flame until He can see His own countenance reflected in the metal, then He has a right to do so. It is the Lord, is it my loving Teacher, it is my Heavenly Father; let Him do what seemeth Him good. He will not lay on one stroke in cruelty, or a single one that He cannot give me grace to bear. Life's school-days and nights will soon be over. Pruning-time will soon be ended. The crucibles will not be needed in heaven.

So, to all my fellow-sufferers who are threading their way through the tunnels of trial, I would say: Tighten your loins with the promises, and keep the strong staff of faith well in hand. Trust God in the dark. We are safer with Him in the dark than without Him in the sunshine. He will not suffer thy foot to stumble. His rod and His staff never break. Why He brought us here we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. At the end of the gloomy passage beams the heavenly light. Then comes the exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

WHAT D. V. B. S. MEANS TO A WORKER

Marian MacCallum

When the proposition was put before me last spring to enter into this field of children's work it challenged me. Inexperienced as I was, I looked forward with anticipation to the summer's work.

As soon as I got my material I began to prepare. I was to teach the tiny tots and the Primary groups. I must confess this work wasn't as easy as I thought. When I looked at the handwork, then thought of my inability to teach, I became a bit discouraged.

However, the time soon arrived for my first venture. I hope the children didn't notice how trembly I was as I stood before them. I realized that it was my duty to put before them

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