

"Let us not break the command that says, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord."

"HE KNOWETH THY WALKING THROUGH THIS GREAT WILDERNESS."
DEUT. 2:7

DIVINE GUIDANCE

from "The Discipline of Divine Guidance" by Oswald Chambers

od is not a supernatural interferer; God is the everlasting portion of His people. When a man "born from above" begins his new life he meets God at every turn, hears Him in every sound, sleeps at His feet, and wakes to find Him there. He is a new creation, and tribulation but develops his power of knowing God, till on some transfiguration morning, he finds himself entirely sanctified by God; and from that unspeakable bliss God loosens Him from Heaven, a "pilgrim of eternity", to work a work for Him among men. Out he goes, a man any may take advantage of, but none dare. His child-like simplicity excites the ridicule of men, but a wall of fire encircles him. His ignorance of the way he takes makes the cunning of the age laugh at the ease which they think they can utilise him for their own ends, but lo! they are caught in their own snare, and their wisdom is turned to sorrow and foolishness. Such a man becomes a spectacle to angels and to men. Nothing can daunt him, nothing affright him, nothing deflect him. He may be tried by cruel mockings and scourgings, by bonds and imprisonment; he may be stoned or sawn asunder, tempted, or slain with the sword; he may wander about in sheepskins and goatskins; he may be destitute, afflicted, tormented; he may home in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, but ever, by some mysterious mystic touch, we know he is one "of whom the world was not worthy." All Heaven and earth and hell are "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creations, shall be able to



separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When all religions and philosophies and philogogies have tried to define God, one and all sink inane and pass, while the Bible statements stand like eternal monuments, shrouded in ineffable glory: God Is Light; God Is Love; God Is Holy. Every attempted definition of God other than these sublime inspirations negates God, and we find ourselves possessed of our own ideas with never a glimpse of the living God. When the flatteries, the eulogies, the enthusiasms and the extravagances regarding Jesus Christ have become enshrined sentiments in poetry and music and eloquence, they pass, like fleeting things of mist, coloured but for a moment by

reflected splendours from the Son of God, and our Lord's own words come with the sublime staying of the simple gentleness of God: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." When art has fixed her ideals, and contemplation has cloistered her choicest souls, and devotion has traced her tremulous records, quivering with the unbearable pathos of martyrdom, we realise that all these miss the portrayal of the saint; and again the severe adequacy of Scripture, undeflected by earth's heartbreaks, remains the true portraiture of the saint: Saved, and Sanctified, and Sent.

GOD'S SAYINGS

The Bible is the Word of God only to those who are born from above and who walk in the light. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the Bible, the words of God, stand or fall together, they can never be separated without fatal results. A man's attitude to our Lord determines his attitude to the Bible. The "sayings" of God to a man not born from above are of no moment; to him the Bible is simply a remarkable compilation of literature—"that it is, and nothing more." All the confusion arises from not recognising this. But to the soul born from above, the Bible is the universe of God's revealed will. The Word of God to me is ever according to my spiritual character; it makes clear my responsibility to God as well as my individuality apart from Him.

The pure in heart see and hear God. The stupendous profundities of God's will, surging with unfathomable mysteries, come down to the shores of our common life, not in emotions and fires, nor in aspirations and vows, and agonies and visions, but in a way so simple that

the wayfaring men, yea fools, cannot make a mistake, viz., in words. The stage of Divine guidance by God's sayings is reached when a soul understands that, by the tribulations of the providential life, God's Spirit speaks an understanding of His Word never known before. God's sayings are sealed to every soul saving as they are opened by the indwelling Spirit of God. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63).

How often have our misunderstandings of God's Word proved to us the need for the penetrating words of our Lord: "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." In our prayings, in our desirings, in our patience, does our knowledge of God enable us to say and really mean, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth"? Would we really hear God's Word, or are we not rather in this immediate tribulation waiting for God to persuade us that our own way is right after all? Oh, the bliss of that disciplined child-heart, which when He speaks, says, "Yes, Lord," and simply obeys.

GOD'S SYMBOLS

The cloudy pillar, the fiery pillar, the ark, the man, the dove, are all God's symbols. This way of Divine guidance by symbols is a deep and blessed one. God does not leave us to the vague, ungraspable intuitions of the mind of some great man for guidance, or to our own vain imaginings. He has made a world of things other than ourselves the safeguard and inspiration of our common-sense reasonings; and He has made a world of spiritual realities the safeguard and inspiration of our discernment. How often our Lord Jesus Christ emphasises the guidance by symbols—"I am the door"; "I am the bread of life"; "I am the true vine"; "I am the way." A right understanding of this Biblical conception is essential to all Christian thinking.

All that we see on this earth is symbolic reality, and only as our inward heart is purged from sin can we see the symbolism. That is why when a man is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation, and he sees everything in the common world as symbols—unseeable realities. (Remember, there are symbols of the devil and the kingdom of evil just as there are symbols of God and the kingdom of heaven.) How simply and clearly our Lord teaches this: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" And vice versa: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When Jesus heard His Father speak, "the multitude therefore, that stood by, and heart it. said that it had thundered."

Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God; But only he who sees, takes off his shoes; The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries And daub their natural faces unaware More and more from the first similitude!

It is impossible for men to be guided by absolute Truth. God, Who is Absolute Truth, said to Moses: "Thou canst not see My face: for man shall not see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20). God guides us stage by stage, and the most marvellous stage of His guidance is by symbols. A symbol represents a spiritual truth by means of images or properties of natural things. A symbol is sealed until the right spirit is given for its understanding, and God's symbols are undetected unless His Spirit is in His child to enable him to understand. What did the cloudy pillar by day or the fiery pillar by night signify to the hordes in the desert? Nothing more than the mystery of ever-varying cloud forms. To the children of God, they meant the manifested guidance of God. How a man interprets God's symbols reveals what manner of man he is. How often we have to say with the Psalmist, "I was as a beast before Thee," i.e., without understanding. How often the ass recognises that one of God's angels is speaking before the so-called prophet on its back detects it.

All that meets the bodily sense I deem Symbolical—one mighty Alphabet For infant minds! And we in this low world Placed with our backs to bright Reality That we may learn with young, unwounded ken The Substance from the Shadow!

God shifts His symbols and we know not why; but God is ever only good, and the shifting of one symbol means surely that another symbol is to guide us to a nearer grasp of Himself. When God, so to speak, has left a symbol, it becomes transparent, and has no further binding force. How sad it is under the sun to see men worshipping a symbol which has been abandoned by God. We are not to worship reminiscences; this is the characteristic of all other religions. The Bible religion is one of eternal progress, an intense and militant going on. Obedience to the voice of the Spirit within, the Word of God without and the suffering of tribulation all around, enable the child of God to hear God's voice and recognise His changing symbols.

Blind me with seeing tears until I see!
Let not fair poetry, science, art, sweet tones,
Build up about my soothed sense a world
That is not Thine, and wall me up in dreams;
So my sad heart may cease to beat with Thine,
The great World-heart, whose blood forever shed
Is human life; whose ache is man's dumb pain.
Draw through all failure to the perfect Flower;
Draw through all darkness to the perfect Light.
Yea, let the rapture of Thy springtide thrill
Through me, beyond me, till its ardour fill
The lingering souls that know not Thee aright;
That Thy great love may make of me, even me,
One added link to bind the world to Thee.

GOD'S SERVANTS

Guidance by God's sayings has to bring the soul into the surgery of events before a new harkening attitude can be gained to those sayings. Guidance by God's symbols makes it clear to the heart that outward vision is only possible as the inward eye is opened; and as God touches the eye with eye-salve, the soul realises

that the changing symbols give deeper and more penetrating visions of God.

Guidance by His servants gives a yet more intimate nearness to God Himself. We learn that no ideal is of any practical avail unless it be incarnated. If the mystic spell of nature in her rolling air, her eternal uplands and abiding plains, her sunrise dawnings and setting glories, her perennial springs and summer nights languishing to autumn, the strenuous grip of her icy colds-if these awaken a sense of the sublime and the unreached, it ends but in a spontaneous ache when the deep within calls to the deep outside! If the imprisoned soul of sound makes the human spirit weep tears from too deep a well to be reached by individual suffering—if music turns the human heart into a vast capacity for something as yet undreamt of till all its being aches to the verge of infinity; if the minor reaches of our music have awakened harmonies in spheres we know not, till with dumb yearnings we turn with sightless orbs, "crying like children in the night, with no language but a cry"; if painters' pictures stop the ache which nature started, and fill for one amazing moment the yearning abysses discovered by the more mysterious thing than joy in music's moments—it is but for a moment, and all seems but to have increased out capacity for a crueller sensitiveness, a more useless agony of suffering. But when God's servants guide us to His heart, then the first glorious outlines of the meaning of it all pass before us.

If we trace the lineaments of the servants of God in the Bible, we find a servant of God to be altogether different from an instrument of God. An instrument of God is one whom God takes up and uses and puts down again. A servant of God is one who has given up for ever his right to himself, and is bound to his Lord as His slave. "For He that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant" (1 Corinthians 7:22).

An instrument is one who shows God's sovereignty, an unaccountable sovereignty may be, but unchallengeable ever. A servant is one who, recognising God's sovereign will, leaps to do that will of his own free choice.

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee My power, and that My name might be published abroad in all the earth. So then He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth" (Romans 9:14-18).

Guidance by His servants! What a blessed guidance, but oh, it is stern. "A servant of God"—the meaning of this phrase is largely lost today. The phrase that suits our modern mood better is, "a servant of men." Our watch-cry today is, "The greatest good for the greatest

number." The watch-cry of the servant of God is, "The greatest obedience to my Lord." How many of us know a servant of God who has a right understanding of the science of God, and can introduce us to Him, and to His thoughts, and His hopes?

An eminent difference is discernable between biographic studies in the Bible and outside the Bible. When men write studies of the servants of God, they are apt to drop out the uncouth and the unlovely, and out of their devotion state only the elements that idealise the servant. But the Bible reveals the blunderings and the sins of the servants of God, and leaves only one idea dominant—that these men were for the glory of God. How deeply is written over the lives of the servants of God in the Bible record, "Wherefore let no one glory in men". The servants of God in the Bible are spoilt for earth, they live and speak backed by Jehovah. What kind of bosom companion would Abraham have made? or Moses, or Jeremiah? What sort of bedfellow would Elijah or Ezekiel have been? How sick we are over and over again with the vain sentimentalism about the servants of God. No wonder God lifts His servants up at times and shakes them and flings the parasites off.

The servants of God in the Bible never stole hearts to themselves, but handed them over to God. There is a ruggedness and an intolerable isolation about the servants of God in the Bible. They each one seem to do without you. There is nothing in the world saving God to these servants of His; all else is as a shadow. The lure the servants of God are made but attracts men to a wilderness wherein God woos men to Himself. Oh, the wild wail of the heart of the man or woman who mistook the fascination of

God in His servant for God Himself, and clasped to his or her heart "a man of like passions as we are"! Oh for that man of God who will hand over to God the hearts God has called through him! It is not you who awaked that mighty desire in the heart; it is not you who called forth that longing in that spirit; it is God in you. Down on your face, down in the dust, oh man of God, if those arms clasp you, and that heart rests on you!

The sheep are many and the shepherds are few, for the fatigue is staggering, the heights are giddy and the sights are awful. It is no wonder our Lord said "the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:4-5).

One of the greatest of these servants of God said he was a voice that cried but one thing, "Repent," and that pointed in one direction, "Behold the Lamb of God!" That is what a servant of God is for. What a school God puts His servant through! Its years of graduation are—Separation, Sorrow, Supreme Sanctification and Suffering.

Is there one man in disenchanted days
Who yet has feet on earth and head in Heaven?
One viceroy yet to whom his King hath given
The fire that kindles and the strength that sways?
We are dying; is there one alive and whole,
A hammer of the Lord, a simple soul,
Man with the men and with the boys a boy?
We are barren, let a male and conquering voice
Fill us and quicken us and make rejoice,
Even us who have so long forgotten joy.

God guides by His servants, and it is a guidance that disciplines heart and mind and spirit. Watch this guidance through the records of Holy Writ; the careers of Abraham, of Moses, of Joshua, of Gideon, of Deborah, and trace the discipline of their apprenticeship and mastership. Grasp the loneliness of Abraham, "the Friend of God." Enter into and imagine the rugged discipline of Moses, who esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Bow before the winnowing of the unworldly heart of Joshua. Marvel as you see how God took timid Gideon as His wardrobe, and clothed Himself with him. And be silent before Deborah, that sibyl of God's sanctity, as she leads God's army. And marking their self-effacement and other-worldliness, bow your face before God and learn the strangeness of His guidance by His servants.

Scarcely have we paid enough attention to the prefiguring of our Lord Himself in the prophets and servants of God, and perhaps we have overemphasised His prefiguring in the signs and symbols of the dispensations surrounding those prophets and servants. How strangely the writers of the Psalms launch out into a definite prefiguring of our Lord! How wonderfully the sorrows of these servants of God take on new meaning when we see Jesus! The anthropo morphism of the Old Testament can never be despatched by the statement that it is man trying to state God in terms of his own ignorance. It is rather God prefiguring the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation.

'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! My flesh, that I seek in the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be A face like my face that receives thee; A Man like to me Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: A Hand like this hand Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

Praying for the Spirit

from "Pentecostal Light" by Aaron Merritt Hills

We need to pray for the Spirit that we may be purged from sin and sanctified.

seraphim brought fire from heaven to Isaiah and put it on him, and said: "Lo, Lthis hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:7). Malachi prophesied of Christ that "He is like a refiner's fire ... and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3: 2, 3). John Baptist said of Jesus: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." We are told in Acts that at Pentecost "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire" (Acts 2:3); and that this Holy Ghost fire "purified their hearts" (Acts 15:9). "Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:16). Here, then, is the great work of the Holy Ghost, foretold by prophets, realised by apostles, and promised of the Father to all believers of every age. This purging, sinconsuming, fiery energy of the Holy Spirit, burning the canker of sin out of our hearts, is the need of us all. As fire refines the gold, so does the Holy Spirit fire, when coming in Pentecostal power, purge out the "sin that dwelleth in us," and sanctify the heart. Then what growth in grace — what fruitfulness! "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

And this glorious cluster of Christian graces is by no means a complete list of the fruits of the Spirit. There are adoration, obedience and gratitude toward God. There are justice, courtesy, pity and sympathy that go out toward our neighbour. There are humility, zeal, courage and the like — the holy characteristics of the renewed heart in which God dwells. We are by nature such lean and meagre souls! Our hearts are so barren of all good!

What can convert our sterility into fruit-

fulness and cause our desert life to blossom as the garden of the Lord? Only the HOLY **SPIRIT.** Four times in Scripture He is directly declared to be the source of our sanctification, and many times indirectly. Beloved, there is a growth of soul which we know little about — a spiritual development far beyond what we usually see. There is a tenderness of conscience, a strength of holy purpose, a singleness of eye, a degree of devotion, a oneness with Christ, a victory over the world and a holiness of heart possible to God's loved ones, which few Christians attain unto. It is a state of rest in Jesus, a union with Him, in which the "old man" is crucified, and sin loses its power to charm, and the victory of faith is complete, because the life is hid with Christ in God, and we are the temple of the Holy Ghost. In Scripture language it is called "sanctification" a state in which everything is set apart as sacred, and "holiness unto the Lord" is written upon every faculty, and every employment, and every possession; and the soul, like Enoch of old, continually walks with God. Who does not hunger for such a life? What Christian is not weary of backsliding and succumbing to temptation and coldness of heart, and clouds, and doubts, and heaviness, and faintness of spirit? But victory comes not, and such life is not known, save as we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. It is something to believe in, to long for and to pray for, until the unspeakable blessings are given. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Whitefield said: "I would rather have five men who are led by the Spirit and walk with God than to have five hundred men at whose piety the devil laughs." Wesley said: "Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but God, and hate nothing but sin, and I can take the world for Christ." Is not this the sad need of the world today — sanctified Christians, baptized with the Holy Spirit, fearing nobody but God and hating nothing but sin, and free from a slavish love of the world, and as good as their Book? May God send us the sanctifying Spirit in power.

Rev. J. Hudson Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, said, in 1896: "Whosoever drinketh of this,' continued the Saviour, 'shall thirst again.' But the Lord does not stop there. If He had stopped there He would have told us no more than we know, and than heathen China expresses in its proverb, 'Man's heart is never satisfied.' Christ continued: 'But whosoever' no matter whom he may be - 'whosoever drinketh' drinks and continues to drink — 'of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.' And the 'shall' means SHALL, and the 'never' means NEVER, and 'thirst' means THIRST. It may seem a very simple thing to say, but it has been a great revelation to me that 'shall' means SHALL, and 'never' means NEVER, and 'thirst' means THIRST. It carries me back to an afternoon in a Chinese city, where, alone, I was reading this chapter, oh, so hungry, so disappointed with my own life, my own service, wishing I could throw it all up, feeling it was hardly honest of me to go on preaching Christ to these poor heathen while I felt myself not fully saved, while I knew that if temptation came in certain directions I should inevitably fall. How could I go on telling the Chinese that Christ was a perfect Saviour, and could help them at all times, when I knew there was scarcely a day that I was not betrayed into irritability of temper, or in some other ways that my heart told me were displeasing to God. I knew a good many floodtides, but the ebb-tides came, too, and the ebb was often greater than the flood. That day the Holy Spirit showed me, in a fresh light, that 'shall' means SHALL, and 'never' means NEVER, and 'thirst' means THIRST, and went on to say, further, not only 'shall never thirst,' but 'the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well' - a spring, springing up,

overflowing. How long? 'Unto everlasting life.' I just accepted the Master's word, and with a joy that I can never, never tell (and that I never think of without gratitude, as I go back to that time in my study in China in the winter of '68-'69), I sprang from my chair. O, how I did praise God! Praise the Lord, my thirsty days are all over! They are behind! They will never come again! I cried aloud in my joy. I accepted His Word that 'shall never thirst' means SHALL NEVER THIRST; and I did not expect to be thirsty again. 'Praise the Lord,' I said, 'there will be no more going over the flower-beds with an empty water-can! No more pumping!' And I do praise God that the experience I have had since has not disappointed me. He keeps His word. 'Shall never thirst' means what it says; and twenty thousand years hence it will be as true. And I want you all to take it home to you, and go wherever the Lord sends you. It does not matter where it is, 'shall never thirst' means SHALL NEVER THIRST. The woman came to the well with a pot for water; she went away with a WELL in her bosom, and it overflowed all over the city."

May the sanctifying Holy Spirit come upon all of us till the irritability shall be taken away, and the hunger and thirst of the heart shall be satisfied, and the ebbing of the spiritual life shall cease, and the now barren, desert-like Christians shall be "well-of-water" Christians, overflowing the communities where they live, and making them oases in the kingdom of God. This leads me to say, —

We ought to pray for the Holy Spirit that we may be endued with power from on high.

This was Jesus' parting charge to the disciples — they were to pray till the Holy Spirit came to endue them with power to win souls.

They did pray until the Holy Spirit was poured out, and Pentecost was the result. They continued to pray, and "there were added to the church daily those that were being saved." What do Christians need now more than this power to save men which the Spirit can impart? Individually and collectively, we stand so impotent in the presence of sin and sinners. We have little power to cast out demons and to bring many to righteousness. The sermon at Pentecost resulted in the conversion of three thousand souls. A wit has scornfully said it now takes three thousand sermons to convert one soul. Moreover, the responsibility of saving men is now, for the most part, laid upon a class of hired professionals, whereas formerly all Christians felt a solemn responsibility resting upon them to bring others to Christ. Every Christian was then a preacher; that is, he bore public testimony to the work of Christ in his soul, and the power of Jesus to save. This Holy Spirit is as near to us as to the early disciples, and the same power is as possible to us as its need is urgent.

All successful soul-winners are such by virtue of the Holy Spirit power that is resting upon them.

Mahan tells us of a man who lived in New Jersey in the early part of this century, by the name of Carpenter. For a time his Christian life was like that of thousands of others — he had only a name to live. He became painfully conscious of his moral and spiritual inefficiency and impotency, and of the absence of any assured hope or settled confidence or trust in God. He consequently set his whole heart upon attaining through the Spirit, in answer to prayer, a more perfect work of grace in his soul. At length the light of God encircled him, and after his anointing he had "power with God and with men." He was only a layman, of limited common-school education, yet his influence for Christ was well-nigh irresistible. At his funeral it was publicly stated by one of the ministers present that, from the most careful estimate, it was fully believed he had been directly instrumental in the conversion of more than ten thousand souls. And what was the secret of this wonderful power? He himself revealed it to an intimate friend a little before his death, when he declared that "for ten years he had walked continuously under the cloudless light of the Sun of righteousness." Sanctified and clothed with power by the Holy Spirit was the explanation of it all. There is abundance of proof that this gift is still for us, and for all time. It is something we should all desire and pray for with unutterable longing till the enduement comes.

I am persuaded there is a serious difficulty lying at the very roots of our modern church life. Our resources are so vast and our opportunities are so many, while our triumphs are comparatively so few! There must be a cause for this widespread leanness in the church of our day. We are forgetting the hiding-place of our power. We are neglecting and casting a slight upon the Third Person of the Trinity. We are trying to build up the churches without the counsel and assistance of the Master Builder, forgetting that when God would rear His temple He says to men: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." O Christians, there is such an Agent in the Church of Christ as the Almighty Spirit of God, whose aid can be secured in answer to importuning prayer. He can lead us into all truth, and help us to live a holy life, and animate our hearts with unwonted zeal, and clothe us with the invisible power.

Ye that love the Lord, keep not silence; send up a loud, long, united and unsparing entreaty for this promised aid. This, this is what we want, and this is all we want. Till this be obtained, neither human nor angelic agency can be of much avail. But let this Power be felt; let the ministry be fired with the faith and zeal of the apostles, and let all Christians have the purity and prayerfulness and singleness of heart of the first disciples, all, like them, having a mind to work and a heart to yearn over and travail for souls, and, as Bishop Pierce affirms, "Pentecosts might be multiplied, and converts be as numerous as the dew-drops of the morning."

You never get to the end of Christ's words. There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs, they pass into laws, they pass into doctrines, they pass into consolations; but they never pass away; and, after all the use that is made of them, they are still not exhausted.

DEAN STANLEY