Submit, my brother, if you would be sovereign. Yield your will if you would have your will. The conflict, the discord, the strife of the world can never be healed till all bow to the One, and every "I will" falls on its knees and yields up its sceptre to "Thy will be done."

A.J.G.

8. THE INWARD GUIDANCE AND THE OUTWARD GOING

Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.—John 16:13.

The guidance here promised is evidently a very comprehensive one—a guidance "into all truth." Not only present truth and prophetic truth, but also practical truth, since all things which the spirit receives from the Father he is to make known unto us. From two cognate passages let us consider the inward and the outward direction of the Spirit.

1. The Inward Guidance. "He shall guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). One of our poets, speaking of our birth, has beautifully said "Every soul leaves port under sealed orders. We cannot know whither we are going or what we are to do till the time comes for breaking the seal." But I can tell you something more beautiful than this. Every regenerated soul sets out on its voyage with an invisible Captain on board, who knows the nature of our sealed orders from the outset, and who will shape our entire voyage accordingly, if only we will let Him. The difficulty is that we insist on taking command ourselves and directing our course according to our own wisdom. Hence
the coast is lined with memorials of such as have "erred from the truth and made shipwreck of the faith."

Guiding or Guided?

Here is the question. Shall we make our own plans and choose our own way and then ask the Holy Spirit to prosper us therein or whether we shall yield ourselves entirely to the Spirit to shape and guide our life according to the divine pattern? God does not force us into His way; or constrain us into His truth. What is the one indispensable condition of safely navigating a ship? It is that the needle of the compass shall be perfectly free to yield to the magnetic current. If the iron of the vessel should perchance present such attraction as to sway the needle somewhat from its full surrender to the pole, immediate danger would result—danger of missing the channel and of running upon rocks.

It is exactly so with the Christian; only as his will is entirely surrendered to God's will can he be sure of realizing the true plan and purpose of his life.

"If any man is willing to do his will," says Jesus, "he shall know of the doctrine." Our common version says, "If any man will do his will." But that is a very great requirement. "How can I be sure," says one, "that I am doing God's will? Yea, more, how can I be sure that I even understand that will." "Nay, my child," says the gracious and tender Saviour, "I do not ask as much as that." The needle is not asked to steer the ship, but only to lie passive to the influence of the pole. And you are not asked to execute God's will but only to yield to it—not "if any man will to do his will," but "if any man is willing to do his will."

Alas! that we have made the mistake of thinking not only that we must do God's will but that we must change
won that distinction by being Himself the servant. I see Him now, a "Lamb in the midst of the throne," and I read, "The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall lead them," and I remember He is the same of whom it is written, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Submit, my brother, if you would be sovereign. Yield your will if you would have your will. The conflict, the discord, the strife of the world can never be healed till all bow to the One, and every "I will" falls on its knees and yields up its scepter to "Thy will be done." Put the emphasis moreover on the word "do." If any man is willing to do His will. It is one thing to be willing to do; it is another thing to be willing to will.

Many a Christian is willing to will God's will who has balked and turned back when it came to the doing of God's work. Let our willing and our working be yoked together, and let neither hold back when the one pulls. Hear how our Lord conjoins these two: "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." What a graphic picture of divided service! Working for Christ, yet wishing for the world: the hand stretched forth in toil, but the heart all the while tugging at those hands to make them let go at the very first convenient opportunity. Working God's will, but not willing God's will. Concerning such, our Saviour's deliberate verdict is: "Not fit for the kingdom of God." So vital does the Saviour deem the inner consecration that He does not want unwilling servants in His kingdom. If one has the arms of a Samson for strength, and yet has the eyes of Lot's wife for looking back, he is rejected from the service of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I lay redoubled emphasis on consecration. I want hearts yielded to God, then will there be hands stretched forth to God. The heart is the man himself. If

that heart be consecrated, it has eyes that will see the way of duty, even when no man has observed it. The second birth gives a second sight; the Spirit's indwelling gives a spiritual outlook that is rational and according to the acceptable will of God. I am so constantly impressed with this that I am tempted to give up urging Christians to do this duty and that, to give here and give there. The ordering of the Christian life seems so much more direct and certain through the heart than through the hands. The Christian who is spiritual will be practical, and practical, too, according to God's plan and pattern; he will not labor as one that beateth the air. So I urge upon you, not so much sanctification as the Spirit; not it, but Him; not the seeking of divine guidance, but the acceptance of the divine Guide. I press it pointedly to your hearts. "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" Take aboard this invisible Pilot; give the rudder of your wills into His hands. Let Him open the sealed orders of Providence, by which you are to sail. Holy Spirit within us, hast thou been, as it were, asleep in the ship because of our drowsiness of unbelief? Awake, and take command; we resign to thee the captaincy of our lives. Guide us whithersoever thou wilt, for thou always guidest according to the will of God.

THE OUTWARD GOING

II. The Outward Going: "For as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14). The word "sons" should be specially noted. It marks the character of maturity and attainment in the Christian life. There are two words translated "sons" in the New Testament, the one meaning children, and the other sons. "As many as received him," says John, "to them gave he power to become the children of God." That is, simple faith in Jesus brings
us into the family of God; and being begotten of God, we are the children of God. But, says the Apostle Paul, using the same word, "a child differeth nothing from a servant, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." The child belongs to the family and has a seat at the table with the parents, and that is a high honor, for he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the man of this world. But, alas, how many Christians remain all their lives in the condition of sanctified babyhood, talking evermore in the dialect of infancy. Just as little children prattle about their birthday, and are always telling how old they are, you find many Christians who rarely open their mouth without dating back to their conversion, as though it were the end and all of their Christian lives—to be converted and saved instead of to go on unto perfection.

Signs of Maturity

"But," says the Apostle, "you are not simply children, but full-grown sons; and because you are sons, God hath sent forth his Spirit into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Little children have to be looked after by their nurses, lest they go astray. They have often to be forced to make them walk in the right way; yea, sometimes they are so stubborn and refractory that they have to be carried against their will, meantime kicking and resisting at every step. Not so with the full-grown, obedient son. He moves according to an intelligent inward prompting in the way that he should go. It is this idea which the Apostle here suggests, "as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God." They do not need petty regulations and constant family discipline to make them obedient. They have the Spirit of God within them which gently and constantly inclines them to walk obediently. "I will guide thee with mine eye," says the Lord. Be ye not as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come nigh unto thee. The Lord's eye is the Christian's polar star, to which his eye should turn as the needle. Shame on us that so many of us have to be jerked with the bit of adversity and jostled with the bridle of chastisement to make us go in God's way. Even wayward Peter rises up to condemn us at this point, for we read that when the Lord turned and looked on Peter, he went out and wept bitterly. Blessed be Simon Bar-jonah, that, though he was a denier and a blasphemer for a moment, he was not like us, a horse or a mule all his lifetime.

My brethren, have you this mark of divine sonship, that you are daily led of the Spirit, so that your outward going is evermore the result of an inward guidance? Let me apply two or three practical tests. It is a most solemn and urgent duty of Christians to bear witness for Christ among the unsaved. But the Spirit must convict before we can convert. The impressions of the Holy Ghost are double—upon preacher and upon hearer. The Spirit laid one hand on the eunuch as he sat reading Isaiah in his chariot, and he laid another upon the evangelist Philip and said, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot." The Spirit called Paul to go unto Macedonia, and in Philippi the chief city thereof he opened the heart of Lydia to attend unto the words which he spoke. This is the divine method—to bring the preacher and the prepared hearer together. How much time it will save us! How much waste of effort if we can only be directed to our spiritual double and close in with him at once. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. They get their orders daily from Heaven; they work under the great superintendent of the church, who knows how to
fit each part of His divine enterprise into each other. I have known Christians who have had just as distinct orders from Heaven concerning their work as though an audible voice had come to them from the skies. "Go to Lancaster," was the inward voice which came to an intimate friend of mine as he woke at night. So importunate was the call, so irresistible was the impression, that he rose very early in the morning and took the first train for that city. There he met in the street an old acquaintance under terrible power of the devil, and bent on killing a man with whom he was angry. But my friend led this man to Christ after a severe struggle with the adversary, and saw him bow in prayer and confess the Saviour before the day closed. It was a marked and unusual interposition of the Holy Ghost, but it ought to be a constant one in the experience of Christians. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," says Jesus, speaking of the Holy Ghost. Yes, but the wind always blows toward a vacuum. Let your heart be empty of self-confidence, and of self-will, and the Spirit can come in and bear you whither God would have you to go.

My hearers, if the Lord's business is made your principal business, I assure you that you will repeatedly have divine guidance in your Christian life. It may be direct or indirect; it may be sensible or insensible, but you will have it. Christ does not call us to be His servants and then utterly neglect to give us any orders as to our work. The trouble is that we have not looked to Him for our directions. Like wayward children, we have chosen to work by our own plans instead of asking Him to show us His plans. Let us resolve to take the position of sons, who are also servants. Many gentlemen Christians are there in the church and too few servant Christians. We make polite calls on God in the morning and pay Him our compliments and then retire.
turned again our captivity we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said we, The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.” If we know how great are the things the Lord hath done for us, should we not be ready to do for Him? And this we can know only by the illumination of the Spirit.

We have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Such knowledge is power. Such knowledge begets grateful and loving action. Oh, Holy Ghost, arise within us. Give us the heavenly impulse by which to work out our earthly calling!