

## II. "The Secret of Divine Guidance."

By B. B.

"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."—Ps. xxv.

The promise of Divine guidance is given in terms the most explicit: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known." These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Again: "I will guide thee with mine eye."

He does not promise to disclose to us the future as it lies open and naked to His omniscient eye; whatever difficulties and embarrassments may arise from our ignorance of the future, a full revelation of it would give rise to far greater difficulties and embarrassments. Who would desire to know all that is to befall him in one year, not to speak of a lifetime? The deep, dark shadows that are to rest on his path—the hopes that are to end in disappointment, the plans and purposes that are to fail, the losses that are to be sustained—the great heart shocks to be received? Wisely and most mercifully, all this is hidden from our view.

There is, however, a distinct promise of Divine guidance. We not infrequently, are greatly perplexed as to whether or not we ought to move, and if so, in what direction.

At such times we are reminded of one who confessed that he was but a little child and knew not how to go out nor to come in. We feel that our position is strikingly like that.

Remembering the promise of guidance, we cry, "Lead Kindly Light." That is just what our Father God does for us, as we place ourselves trustfully in His hands.

He gives us clear indications of His will, so that we are able to move or stand still, to choose or reject, to say yes or no with the settled conviction that God would have it to be so. How or in what way the indication of His will comes to us it is not always easy to explain, oftentimes it is simply impossible to do so, but the fact itself, accounted or unaccounted for, remains.

In our more thoughtful moments we feel that He exercises a gracious superintendence over every part of our life, that our very steps are directed by Him.

Placing ourselves in all the trustfulness of the true child spirit in His hands, we do not wander, but are led.

The children of Israel are often spoken of as wandering in the wilderness, that however, is not true; they did not wander, but were led. There is all the difference between the two things. Favored as they were with the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, their course was very simple and plain; ours is not so. They were in a condition of babyhood; we are supposed to have emerged out of that, and the very discipline involved in the effort to ascertain the way

in which God would have us go, or what He would have us do, carries with it advantages of a high order. We may well be thankful that we have not the literal pillar of cloud and of fire. God's method of dealing with us in this matter it is a fine education, well fitted to develop a healthy moral and spiritual manhood.

Widely different as is the mode of guidance in our case from that of the children of Israel, the guidance itself is as real for us as it was for them.

They who fear the Lord are not called upon to shape their own course and to be the masters of their own destiny. They know that they are free to choose, to refuse or to accept, to say yes or no, but they know just as well that there is a "Divinity that shapes their ends, rough hew them how they will." Well that they are content, in that they rejoice.

"I dare not choose my lot,  
I could not, if I might;  
Choose Thou for me, my God,  
So shall I walk aright.

Amid "Life's encircling gloom," they do not always see whether they are moving. The point reached is oft widely different from what they had marked out for themselves.

Feeling assured of Divine guidance, they are satisfied to walk as blind men, and do not presume to ask "to see the distant scene."

If we set up our own will in opposition to the will of God and resolve to follow the devices and desires of our own heart, what then? We shall find ourselves on forbidden ground; difficulties and dangers will thicken at every step, because we have broken away from Divine guidance. Thank God when we do break away, He asks us to come back, through the bitter experience that falls to our lot in breaking away. He asks us to come back; He urges us; He pleads with us most tenderly to come back. Thus urged, thus pleaded with, shall we not return unto the Lord in penitence, in loving trust and hope, saying, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel," and there find out as a matter of personal experience how true it is that He leads in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Led by Him we shall reach home at last, for whither should the Father lead His children but home? Arid the light of that home we shall see and understand as we cannot now, the secret of Divine guidance, one of the secrets of the Lord with them that fear Him.

In human hearts what bolder thoughts can  
rise  
Than man's presumption of to-morrow's  
dawn?  
Where is to-morrow?

The real blessing, mercy, satisfaction, is not in the having or the lack of merely outward things, but in the consciousness that the true source of life and happiness is deeper than all these.—John W. Chadwick.

## A Tribute to Dr. Oswald Dykes.

We take the following from the Southern Cross, Melbourne, March 17, 1899:—"And then, what a surprise to the congregation, as well as a power in the city (Melbourne), the Rev. J. Oswald Dykes was! I have heard that man pray with such perception and earnestness, and pour out his soul in such lowly confession, glowing gratitude, and fervent intercession, that men and women and children felt as if their hidden thoughts were being searched by God's own candle, and looked up through their outspread fingers, and from under their brows, in something like awe of this new prophet who had come amongst them. As a preacher there was a kind of divine majesty about his deliverances. Never shall I forget how thankful we were for him when the Doctor's (Cairns') great sorrow befell, and he mourned in sackcloth and ashes the loss of his only son. I have often listened to sermons delivered with the object of improving such occasions—which I am afraid have just as often wounded as healed—but I must say that I never heard anything equal to Dykes' sermon on that occasion, from the words 'Weep not.' He just excelled himself. It was a discourse rilling over with sympathy, human and divine. You felt keenly the misery and gloom and death which sin has brought into the world, but these feelings were almost banished in the thought of life, and immortality brought to light through the Gospel. In some extraordinary way you seemed to realise the presence of Him who, with kindest sympathy, bids every mourning soul 'weep not,' and forbids despairing sorrow with the comforting and divine assurance, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' It must have been most consoling and strengthening to the doctor, and you could not help feeling thankful that God had entrusted such gifts of consolation unto men. Dykes was a great power in the land while I (it is an 'old pulpit' that is supposed to be speaking) had the honor of claiming him as an occupant, and I suppose his highest testimonial is to be seen in the Theological Hall, now within the Ormond College, with its three professors, of which, in the infantile stage, he and Dr. Cairns were the first tutors. He was a great advocate for a colonially-trained ministry, was Dykes, and you may now count the fruit of his sagacity by the score."

Do not quarrel with your lot in life. Do not complain of its never-ceasing cares, its petty environment, the vexations you have to stand, the small and sordid souls you have to live and work with. Above all, do not resent temptation. That is the practice which God appoints you; and is having its work in making you patient and humble, and generous and unselfish, and kind and courteous.—Drummond.