

COMMON SENSE.

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Opponents of the doctrine of divine guidance are continually objecting that if the doctrine is believed in and practised it will do away with common sense, reason, judgment, etc., and that therefore the doctrine is absurd. Strange that men will so misunderstand or misapply the term *guide*. A man is the guide of a tourist party; does he therefore do away with the party? The master *guides* the pupils in their studies; do the pupils not use their faculties and powers therefore? And if the Holy Spirit is the guide of man and of all his powers and faculties, does he therefore do away with any of these? But as the teacher guides the pupil in his studies, that he may make the best use of his powers, so the Holy Spirit guides all the faculties of a man, not to set them aside, but that the best possible use may be made of them. We give common sense all due honor and credit, but at the same time insist that it is not now and never was the guide of man. Man has always needed a divine hand to lead and a divine eye to guide him, and these he has always had in some form and to some extent. Perfect guidance for all men in all things is the peculiar characteristic of the present dispensation. The man who is guided by visions, impressions and dreams is universally looked upon as a dangerous character. But why not be guided by these? Because, it is answered, impressions and dreams have led men to do frightful things and may again. True, but have not men done noble deeds by following dreams and visions? Certainly they have. But have not men done dreadful things in the name of common sense and reason? Have they not committed murder itself in the name of these? Most surely. "The time cometh when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." How could he think so? Because he took common sense or tradition or the Church for his guide instead of God. So that all that can be said in favor of common sense as a guide rather than dreams and impressions, is that

the former will lead astray less frequently than the latter. Let the so-called apostles of common sense ponder this.

But are they the apostles of common sense? We can show that they are not, unless, indeed, they are false apostles.

It is easy to show that those who walk in the Spirit, and they only, are the persons who make a proper and safe use of common sense and real reason. That while all others fail to exercise their common sense when it would be highly proper to do so, and also take it for their guide, when it is sure to lead them astray, the Spirit-led ones know just when it is safe to follow common sense, and also exactly when common sense alone will utterly fail to indicate the right course to pursue.

A few illustrations taken from the commonest walks and experiences of life will show that by accepting the Holy Spirit as guide absolute, the mind is freed from traditional notions and superstitions, so that one can confidently follow common sense when it is best and *not* follow it when it only *appears* to be best.

Let us suppose the case of a man who has been reared in an orthodox family, and one in which vigorous Sabbath laws have been always enforced. And suppose that our friend has either been detained from home or delayed on a journey so that either from excessive fatigue or want of time he finds it very inconvenient, if not impossible, to perform the usual Saturday evening duties of shaving his face and cleaning his boots. Now, if our friend has not accepted the Holy Spirit as guide in all matters, with the education he has had, he will scarcely dare to exercise his common sense (as the Saviour did under similar circumstances) and go about these simple duties on Sunday morning with a clear conscience, but will most likely offend the good sense of himself and others by appearing at church in his forlorn condition, or deprive himself of the benefits of the public service by staying at home. Or he may yield to the voice of common sense and prepare himself in a proper manner for the duties of the day, but even then the chances are