

THE GUIDANCE OF GOD

by H. C. Heffren

Destiny for the most part is determined by destination, and direction will decide what that will be. Man has engaged all the skill of scientific inventions to assist him in providing infallible direction finders. These instruments are so reliable that a pilot many miles aloft soaring over a trackless ocean can pinpoint the exact spot of his location at any given time and estimate the distance to any given place on the globe. Men of the forest use other means of keeping bearings. Without a compass and even without sun or stars to tell the points of the compass, a competent guide can read the eloquent writing of nature accurately without getting lost. If you are lost it is more important to discover the right direction than it is to multiply miles of travel. Distance is not as important as direction. This is so true in the physical sense that it is entirely obvious. Basically it is even more true in the spiritual sense even though the importance is less obvious.

Since direction is so important, God has endowed almost all his creatures with intricate and very delicate equipment for this purpose. A minister friend was visiting at our home one day and he observed a tiny insect possibly not more than one-half an inch long. This insect evidently wanted to cross our lawn and to this end it found a launching pad on a blade of grass where the course was clear and heaved itself forward two or three feet. It landed topsy-turvy like; scrambled around until it righted itself and then took another flying leap. The entire procedure took the better part of an hour but in all that time the tiny insect never got confused or altered its direction. It always leaped towards its objective no matter how much it tumbled about on landing. We call this nature. Sometimes we call it instinct or providence. But if God can put such reliable mechanism in such a tiny and transitory creature, how much more it seems certain that He would not leave the destiny of man to chance. Surely then God can guide His children if they will but discover the instruments through which His Mind can reveal itself to us.

Nature is replete with examples of things which cannot be accounted for by Chance. A certain small fish lays its eggs in the sand on one particular seashore. This may not seem extraordinary in itself, but the fact that this fish comes in with the tide and that in some miraculous manner instinctively knows the last wave of the high tide is beyond explanation. Yet it is this one and only breaker that deposits millions of the fishes on a particular shore where they perform their domestic duties of laying eggs before the return of high tide. How can all these millions of fishes determine spontaneously and infallibly which towering wave crest of the incoming tide will leave its lapping waters highest on the shore line? If God can put that

much guidance in a tiny fish, would He leave the guidance of man to chance?

Many birds travel south for winter and migrate northward again in the spring. There are many marvels related to the various species with scarcely any two being alike although there is a similarity in general. One bird called the cliff swallow, nests in various parts of North America during the summer. In winter the entire species congregates in Capistrano, California. This in itself is a marvelous achievement but it is only a minor part of the phenomena. Nature has in some manner endowed these birds with equipment which enables the entire species to arrive in Capistrano within the space of a few hours. When you reflect that they come from many different sections of the country, and the differences in distance amounts to hundreds of miles, this simultaneous arrival is a staggering accomplishment. If God can put such timing and guidance in such a tiny bird, will He leave the homecoming of the soul to chance?

Nature is not only kind in its provisions for its creatures but it is harsh in enforcing its laws. You may have heard the proverb, "The eagle stirs its nest." This is based on actual fact. Mother eagle builds her aerie, or nest on some lofty rocky pinnacle and she lines it with sheep skins and other comfortable material. The young egrets are contented, but as they begin to reach maturity, the mother eagle tosses out all the lining of the nest leaving only sharp prodding sticks to jab and irritate the nesting birds. This is Mother eagle's way of making life so miserable and unbearable that the young ones long to flex their wings and soar. One by one they take the fateful plunge and although terrified at first, they soon learn they are not alone in space. Mother eagle swoops beneath the young one and bears it up to heights aloft until it masters the art of flying solo. Is the launching of an egret more important than the initiation of a person on the road of life? Will not God's provisions be adequate for youth?

Mother bear has a different technique. When her cubs are old enough to be on their own she sends them scampering up a tree and tells them in bear language to stay there. Then Mother Bear gets lost, so to speak. She disappears from the scene and leaves the cubs whimpering until hunger finally drives them down -- and from that time forward they are on their own. Each creature in some miraculous manner has a pattern of its own with which Providence has equipped it for survival. No creature is entirely safe. The element of danger is never absent. The laws of Nature are rigid and can be ignored only at one's peril. But the fundamental principle of God's laws works for the good of all His creatures while any violation reacts to the destruction of the violator!

Spiritual guidance may be much more complex, but the God Who said, "I will guide thee with mine eye," is capable of redeeming His promise. If a salmon can leave the spot where it was spawned and wend its way for

several years through the uncharted paths of the oceans and then unerringly return to the identical place in the stream where it first found life, and there spawn its roe and die, surely the God Who gave us the spirit of life is competent to complete the cycle of bringing us ultimately into His everlasting fellowship. The big question is how? This answer must be simple rather than obscure. Where do we turn for direction? What are the fixed stars of the spiritual realm? What compass or magnet do we consult?

God gave us a magnet. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me." John 12:32. The magnets of the world universally pull downward. Water cascades downward to the sea. Avalanches crash down gorges. Trees topple down in the storm. And sad to say, when men follow their own inclinations, their course is downward too. Someone has said truly, "Men and rivers become crooked by following the way of least resistance." God's magnet is Christ. He reverses the pull of the world. He draws us upward when our spirit is akin to His Spirit -- a magnet only attracts substances of a similar nature. When Christ is our center of gravity our entire life will revolve about Him and be drawn upwards toward Him.

Secondly, God gave us the light. Jesus is the Light of the World. No one needs to get lost if he regards the sun. Sin is compared with clouds that obscure the sun. Isa. 44:22 and Isa. 59:2. Sin is the cloud that obscures the light of God. Jesus is called the Sun of Righteousness, and as long as we walk in His light we can be sure of our direction. The Bible says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Psa. 66:18. We can only be sure of God's guidance if we unquestioningly walk in the light and turn our backs on sin.

A third direction finder for guidance is the Word of God which is often correctly compared to a map. People who are intent on reaching a destination invariably consult a map to chart their course. They first find out where they are, and then proceed to plot the route which will lead to the desired destination. The Bible will reveal this information to those who will follow its instruction.

God has many other methods of imparting guidance to His children if we are in tune with Him. Godly parents or Spirit-filled leaders, or sometimes our Christian companions help. Circumstances and even sickness may speak in a language which the seeking soul will discover in the path leading to God. However, in addition to the Map, the Sun and the Magnet, or any other means, God has also given us a Guide. When Christ was about to leave this world, He said "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter..." John 14:16. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will "Guide us into all truth." John 16:13. God did not leave His children in this world as orphans. We are not left alone stranded or deserted. We are not islands in a shoreless sea. A Guide goes with us. A map can show the way; the

magnet can attract and the sun can reveal, but a Guide keeps company with us and shares the journey. This is the role of the Holy Spirit Who unerringly and faithfully interprets God's will to us. God gives His best to those who leave the choice to Him.

God, the great righteous Judge seals our destiny but we determine what it will be by the direction we choose. Jesus emphasized this in these words: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:14. Nature may seem harsh with its inflexible laws, but when we co-operate with them they work providentially. When we violate them we cannot escape the consequences. The laws relating to the spiritual realm are no less precise and the penalties are no less severe than in the natural kingdom because the same God operates in both spheres. But God has made the compensations for obedience so rewarding that they far excel any sacrifice that may be required in order to attain the goal. If God can guide a tiny insect, or a little bird or creature of the field, then I know God can guide me too. And just as they must co-operate with the laws with which a kind Providence has endowed them and conform to those laws, so must my mind and will be subject to, and in harmony with the Divine Transmitter in order to operate effectively.