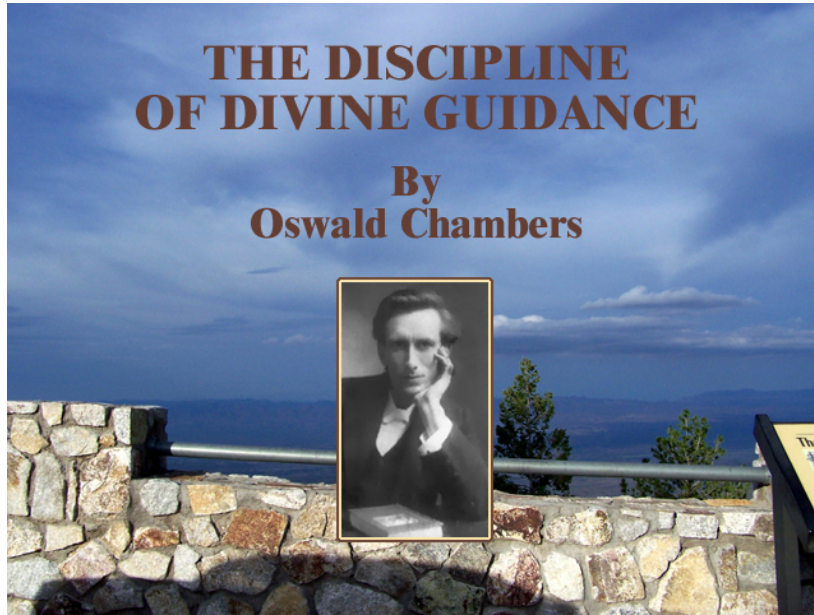


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**THE DISCIPLINE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE**  
By Oswald Chambers



God's Revivalist Office  
Mount Of Blessings  
Cincinnati, Ohio

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## CONTENTS

About Oswald Chambers (1874 -- 1917)  
Introduction

01 -- First Stage -- By God's Sayings  
02 -- Second Stage -- By God's Symbols  
03 -- Third Stage -- By His Servants

**04 -- Fourth Stage -- By His Sympathy  
05 -- Fifth Stage -- By Himself**

**Conclusion**

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#### **ABOUT OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874 -- 1917)**

**Oswald Chambers was born July 24, 1874, in Aberdeen, Scotland, and during his teenage years he was converted while walking home after a service conducted by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. His father, a Baptism minister, immediately attempted to lead him in the right way. After his conversion, and before he felt called to preach, Chambers studied Art at Kensington Art School and the fine arts and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. After he accepted the call to preach, he studied theology at Dundoon College.**

**After an initial period of spiritual "dryness" Chambers found a radiant reality in his relationship with Christ. With his new-found spiritual life, he conducted a Bible Teaching Ministry from 1906 to 1910 in the U.S., the U.K., and in Japan. On one of his trips to America he met Gertrude Hobbs, and in 1910 he and Gertrude were married. He affectionately called her "Biddy". On May 24, 1913, their daughter Kathleen was born.**

**In 1915 Chambers felt that he should help in the World War I effort. He became a YMCA Chaplain, and in October of 1915 he sailed for Zeitoun, Egypt, near Cairo, where he ministered to military troops. While there, Chambers' appendix ruptured. Though he suffered extreme pain for three days, he did not seek medical aid and refused to take a hospital bed that he felt was more needed for soldiers. Had he sought medical aid sooner, perhaps his life would have been spared. Finally, surgery was performed but, following the operation, Chambers died there in Egypt on November 15, 1917.**

**Perhaps many are unaware of the fact that Oswald Chambers actually wrote only one book: "Baffled To Fight Better." But his wife, Biddy, had been a court stenographer and was very adept at taking dictation at a rapid rate. Thus, she recorded much of Chambers' teachings as he spoke in public, and after his demise she spent the remaining 30 years\* [\*one source said half a century] of her life compiling the more than 30 books bearing Oswald Chambers' name as the author.**

**"My Utmost For His Highest" is the best-known of those books, and it has been in continuous print in the United States since 1935. It is among the top-ten religious best-sellers, and with millions of copies in print it has become a Christian Classic.**

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## INTRODUCTION

God is not the supernatural interferer. God is the everlasting portion of His people. And when a man knows God, an infinite rage impels him when he suffers and is limited, and a heartless hopelessness settles on him when he reflects on any other than that of a "splendid animal." 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 creature in a new creation, and tribulation but develops that man's power of knowing God, till, on some transfiguration morning he finds himself "entirely sanctified" by God, and from the unspeakable bliss God loosens him from Heaven, a "pilgrim of eternity" to work a work for Him among men. Out he goes, a man that any may take advantage of, but none dare. His childlike 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 with which they can utilize him for their own ends, but lo! they are caught in their own snare, and their wisdom turned to sorrow and foolishness. Such a man becomes a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Nothing can daunt him, nothing can affright him, nothing can deflect him. He may be tried by cruel mockings and scourgings, by bonds and imprisonments, 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 on mountains or in dens and caves, but ever, by some mysterious mystic touch, we know the world is not worthy of him." All Heaven, all earth, all 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 creation, shall be able to separate him from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ the Lord.

The child mind is the only mind God can appeal to. And our Lord Jesus Christ went deeper than the profoundest philosophy in that incident recorded in Matt. 18:1-6; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-47. "And Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst of them; and taking him in His arms, He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." As soon as the "gates of the head" get closed on our "experiences," we limit God, and by sealing our minds limit our growth and possibility of graduating in DIVINE GUIDANCE. The child heart is open to any and all avenues; an angel would no more surprise it than a man. In dreams, in visions, in visible and in invisible ways God can talk and reveal Himself to a child, but that profound and simple way is lost forever immediately we lose the open, childlike nature.

By every standard we know, saving One, the God of the Bible is a confusing contradiction to Himself. The God that caused to be written, "Thou shalt not kill" commanded Abraham to kill his only son Isaac, "whom thou forest." (Gen. 22:2.) The God who said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," commands His servant Hosea to marry a harlot. (Hosea 1:2.) Or again, Jesus Christ Himself presents every

standard, saving one, with a similar dilemma. He tells the seventy, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you." (Luke 10:19.) And He tells His disciples again, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God." (John 16:2.) Or St. Paul, who had "the mind of Christ," says in I Cor. 6:7, "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be' defrauded?" Yet in Acts 25:9-12, he himself, when being tried, "APPEALED UNTO CAESAR." By every standard saving one, God and our Lord Jesus and the saints are examples of contradiction. That one standard is **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD ON THE BASIS OF PERSONAL CHARACTER.**

In many testing circumstances the saints decide differently. May the different decisions be all correct? Unquestionably, for the decisions are made on the basis of personal character in its responsibility to God. The blunder of the saint is in saying, "Because I thus and thus decide in this crisis, therefore that is the rule for all." Nonsense! God is sovereign and His ways are discernible according to the attainment of the particular character. One of the most fallacious lines of reasoning is an hypothesis in this matter of God's will. For no saint knows what he will do in circumstances he has never been in, and Jesus says, He would have us without carefulness. If one might state it, the saint is a creature of vast possibilities knit into shape by the ruling personality of God.

Supernatural voices, dreams, ecstasies, visions and manifestations, may or may not be the indication of the **WILL OF GOD**; the words of Scripture, the advice of the saints, the strong impressions during prayer may or may not be the indication of the will of God. The one test taken from the Bible atmosphere is **THE DISCERNMENT OF THE PERSONAL GOD AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO HIM AS WITNESSED IN WALK AND ACT AND CONVERSATION AFTERWARDS.** A striking line of demarcation discernible just here between the Bible, God's guidance and all others, is that all other supernatural guidance loses sight of human personality and Divine Personality, and ends in an absolute swoon into nothingness. In every stage of Divine Guidance in Bible records, two elements become ever clearer, viz., God and myself. The intensest statement of this which is possible in any language is made by our Lord Jesus Himself. (Mark 12:29-31.) "Jesus answered, the first is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God from all thy heart, and from all thy soul, and from all thy mind, and from all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

the intensest and the most energetic statement regarding the eternal verity is that God created me to be distinctly not Himself, but to realize Him in perfect love. Also if I allow that He teaches me to walk in His will, -- I loving my neighbor as myself, -- will allow him the same certainty though his way seems so different. "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Professor William James in "The Varieties of Religious Experiences," Lecture I, entitled, "Religion and Neurology," page 20,

says, "Among the visions and messages some have always been too patently silly; among the trances and convulsive seizures some have been too fruitless for conduct and character, to pass themselves off as significant, still less as divine. In the history of Christian mysticism the problem how to discriminate between such messages and experiences as were really divine miracles, and such others as the demon in his malice was able to counterfeit, thus making the religious person twofold more the child of Hell than he was before, has always been a difficult one to solve, needing all the sagacity and experience of the best directors of conscience. In the end it had to come to our Imperialist Criterion. 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' not by their roots. Jonathan Edwards' 'TREATISE ON RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS' is an elaborate working out of this thesis. The roots of a man's virtue are inaccessible to us. No appearances whatever are infallible proofs of grace. Our practice is the only sure evidence, even to ourselves, that we are genuine Christians." When all religions and philosophies and philologies 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," and 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 extravagancies have enshrined sentiments in poetry and music and eloquence, regarding Jesus Christ; they pass, like fleeting things of mist, colored but for a moment by reflected splendors from the Son of God. His own words come with the sublime staying of the simple gentleness of God.

"I AM THE WAY," "I AM THE TRUTH," "I AM 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 realize they all missed the portrayal of the saint, and again the severe adequacy of Scripture, undeflected by earth's heart-breaks, or griefs, or sorrows, remains as the true portraiture of the saint. THE SAVED AND SANCTIFIED AND SENT.

It is only by being silenced by some such considerations as these, that we can behold the little' child heart nestling in the arms of God or playing around the path of our Lord Jesus Christ, or hasting with willing feet to souls perishing in the wilderness. It is only thus with chastened, disciplined, stilled hearts we whisper out before His throne,

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,  
But now mine eye seeth Thee  
Wherefore I loathe my words,  
And repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:6.

"And Moses said unto Jehovah, See thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that

I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Ex. 33: 12-14.)

"Little lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee,  
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed  
By the stream and o'er the mead,  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, wooly, bright,  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?"

"Little lamb, I'll tell thee:  
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For He calls Himself a Lamb,  
He is meek, and He is mild,  
He became a little child.  
I a child, and thou a lamb,  
We are called by His name.  
Little lamb, God bless thee!  
Little lamb, God bless thee!"

-- William Blake.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 01 -- FIRST STAGE -- BY GOD'S SAYINGS

From the Bible universe, we will consider the discipline of Divine Guidance in five stages.

1st stage. BY GOD'S SAYINGS. 2nd stage. BY GOD'S SYMBOLS. 3rd stage. BY GOD'S SERVANTS. 4th stage. BY GOD'S SYMPATHY. 5th stage. BY GOD HIMSELF.

(1st stage.) BY GOD'S SAYINGS. How often in the Bible we read such words as we have in Genesis 12:1, "And Jehovah said unto Abram," and in Ezekiel, "The word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying," or as in Matthew 7:24, "Every one therefore that heareth these words of ruing and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock."

What is the Word of God? Where are the sayings of God? The answer is readily given, "The Bible is the Word of God." But we must again ask, because we all have known battlers for the Bible as the Word of God, whom we would hesitate to call saints; so many have logically proven what never came to pass from the Bible words. And consequently the answer is given more cautiously, "The Bible contains the word of God," a most ingenious fallacy, leading to a mystical type of religious life that, by being so special, becomes speedily spurious. The Bible is only the Word of God to those who are born from above, and 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." All the damage and all the confusion arises in not knowing this. These "sayings of God" to a man who has not been born from above are of no moment. Consequently the Bible simply is a remarkable compilation of old literature, -- "that it is and nothing more." But to the soul "born from above," the Bible is the universe of God's revealed will.

The Word of God is ever according to my spiritual character, and makes clear my individuality as apart from God and my responsibility to Him. To quote here from an able article in the "Spectator" for April 13, 1907, entitled "The Mind of Christ," will serve us well. "If we refuse to look at the Gospel as a whole and to use our reason; if we insist on making of Christ what He distinctly refused to be, a ruler and a judge, instead of the Light of the World, we may set up tyrannies as bad as, or worse than, those instituted by Roman dogmatism. There will be no new Torquemadas, but how much suffering may not be caused by a new Tolstoy. Upon isolated sentences of Jesus absolutely conflicting Systems may be erected, and a measure of fanaticism is natural to man... But we may not forget that there is an indifference which plumes itself on its moderation, and is even more opposed to the mind of Christ than fanaticism." What applies to our present dispensation is exactly the same in principle as applied to the hoary antiquity, namely, that the pure in heart see God and hear Him; all else around simply say it thundered. 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 and aspirations and vows and agonies and visions, -- but in a way so simple that a wayfaring man or a fool cannot make a mistake in it, viz., IN WORDS.

In Deuteronomy 32:46, 47, it is recorded, "And he said unto them, Set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, even all the words of this law. For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it." And our Lord Jesus in Mark 4:14, distinctly states that "the sower soweth the word." As soon as any soul is born from above, the Bible becomes the universe of revelation facts just as the natural world is the Universe of common sense facts. These revelation facts are words to our faith, not things. And this stage of Divine Guidance is reached whenever the soul understands that by the tribulations in the providential life,

**God's Spirit speaks an understanding of His Word, never known before. For any soul to teach what he had not bought by suffering is almost sure to bring a tribulation that will destroy or lead to personal understanding of the word taught. Divine Guidance by the Word indicates preparation of heart profound and personal. His sayings are sealed to every soul, saving as they are opened by the indwelling Spirit of God. How often the individual soul has to learn by a bitter and, in some sense, an altogether uncalled for experience, that**

**"He placed thee 'mid this dance of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, would'st fain arrest;  
Machinery just meant to give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee, and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."**

**To search for a word of God to suit one's case is never Divine Guidance; that is guidance by human caprice and inclination. The Holy Spirit, who brings to our remembrance what He has said and leads us into all truth, ever does so to glorify Jesus. DIVINE GUIDANCE BY THE WORD EVER AND ALWAYS MAKES US REALIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD. And He in the tribulations brings the Divine Guidance by His Word. As we go on we begin to understand our Lord's own words, "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63.) All and every interpretation of God's words and sayings that does not reveal that one fundamental responsibility to God and a realization that I am for the "praise of His glory," is an interpretation private, and condemned severely by God Himself.**

**"We abide not on this earth but for a little space,  
We pass upon it, and while so we pass,  
God through the dark hath set the Light of Life,  
With witness of Himself, -- the Word of God,  
To be among us Man, with human heart,  
And human language, -- thus interpreting  
The One Great Will incomprehensible,  
Only so far as we in human life  
Are able to receive it."**

**How often have our misunderstandings of God's Word proved to us the need for the penetrating words of our Lord, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." In our prayings, in our desirings, in our patience, does our knowledge of God enable us to really mean and say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"? Would we really hear His 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.**

**"Pining souls! come nearer Jesus,  
And oh, come not doubting thus,  
But with faith that trusts more bravely**



His true tenderness for us.  
If our love were but more simple,  
We should take Him at His word;  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the sweetness of our Lord."

It is a school of severe discipline, the **DIVINE GUIDANCE BY GOD'S SAYINGS**; it means great heart searchings and great patience and great simplicity to be guided this way.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **02 -- SECOND STAGE -- BY GOD'S SYMBOLS**

In Exodus 13:21, 22 we read, "And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might go by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people."

In Joshua 3:3, "When ye see the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go alter it."

In Isaiah 32:2, "And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

In Luke 3:22, "And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon Him, and a voice came out of Heaven."

The **CLOUDY PILLAR**, the **FIERY PILLAR**, the **ARK**, the **MAN**, the **DOVE**, the **LAMB**, etc., are all **GOD'S SYMBOLS**. It is a deep and blessed line of Divine Guidance, this way of symbols. God does not leave us to the vague and ungraspable intuitions of some great man's mind, or to the vain imaginings of our own, for guidance. To us He has made a world of things, not ourselves, the safeguard and inspiration of our common sense reasonings, and He has made a world of spiritual realities that touch our lives in combinations of outside things, which are the safe-guard and inspiration of our spiritual discernment. It is on this God-created ingredient in our nature that every great organization, good or bad, is based: such as the Roman Catholic Church. The revolt against error on one side is ever apt to enter into error on the other. The revolt against Roman Catholicism has developed into an irresponsible individualism that is equally unBiblical.

How often our Lord Jesus Christ emphasizes this guidance by **SYMBOLS**! Take for instance the Gospel according to St. John. He says, "I am the Door of the sheep." "I am the Way." "I am the Bread of Life," "I am the true Vine," etc. Now a

right understanding of this Biblical conception is essential to all Christian THINKING. The Bible order seems to be this. (1.) THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE; (2.) THE SYMBOLIC TRUTH; (3.) THE FALSE.

All we see on this earth is SYMBOLICAL REALITY, and only as my inward heart is purged from sin can I see the SYMBOLISM. That is why, when a man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation; 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 DEVIL AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN." How simply and clearly our Lord teaches this. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be lull of light." (And vice versa.) When Jesus heard God speak, the rest said "it thundered;" when Saul was met by Jesus, the rest saw only sudden lightning and physical collapse.

"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!"

One is made to turn with weary exhaustion from the unthinking hand-to-mouth experience of much religious literature of the day. To think as a Christian is a rare accomplishment, especially as that curious leaven which puts a premium on ignorance works its sluggish way. To speak to ninety-nine out of every hundred Christian preachers, especially holiness preachers, about Plato, would be not to meet consciousness of ignorance, but a strange and blatant pride, boasting of knowing nothing outside the Bible, which one is reluctantly obliged to state, means knowing nothing inside it, either.

Christian thinking is a rare and difficult thing, and most seem unaware that our Lord said the first great commandment was to "love the Lord your God from all your heart, from all your mind, from all your strength," etc.

Along the line of Guidance by Symbols, no mind outside our Lord's has so splendidly, so capably, so profoundly expounded it as this same amazing Plato. Plato saw with a clearness of vision that is only second to the inspired prophets of God. No wonder many in the early profoundly thoughtful days of Christianity wanted to class him as a "Father of the Church." (See Plato's "Republic," Book VII.) To be guided by absolute truth is impossible to men, as God, who is absolute truth, said to Moses, (Ex. 33:20) "And God said, Thou canst not see My face; for man shall not see Me and live." God absolutely guides us stage by stage, and the most profoundly marvellous stage is that by SYMBOLS.

Now, what are we to understand by a symbol? A symbol represents a spiritual truth by the images or properties of natural things. A SYMBOL must not be

taken as an allegory, for an allegory simply means a figurative discourse which means other than is contained in its literal words. A SYMBOL is ever sealed until the right spirit is given for its understanding. God's symbols are undetected unless His Spirit is in His child to understand. To the hordes in the desert, what did the cloudy pillar by day signify? or the fiery pillar by night? Nothing more than the mystery of ever varying cloud forms. To the children of God, it means God's manifest guidance. How a man interprets God's symbols reveals to us what manner of man he is. Very often we have to say with the Psalmist, "I was even as a beast before thee" -- that is, without understanding. How often the ass understands that one of God's angels speaks, 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."

But God shifts His SYMBOLS and we know not why. But God is ever only Good. His shifting means surely that another SYMBOL is to guide us to a near grasping of Himself. When God has left, so to speak, a SYMBOL, it becomes transparent, and has no further binding force. How sad it is under the sun to see men worshipping a SYMBOL, abandoned by God. Has not every denomination been at one time a SYMBOL Of God's guidance? But how degenerate, how idolatrous, how ensnaring it becomes when God's voice sounds to the spirit of His children, "Your house is left unto you desolater." We are not to worship reminiscences; this is the character of all other religions, saving Bible religion; this religion is eternal progress; an intense and militant going on. When God shifts His SYMBOLS, a perilous time ensues for the individual and the religious world. Obedience to the voice of the Spirit within, the suffering of the tribulation around, and the Word of God without, enable the sheep to know His voice and His shifts. It is a serious momentous discipline, this discipline of Divine Guidance by God's symbols, and God never leaves His children in such momentous times alone, for,

"Behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadows,  
Keeping watch upon His own."

The worship of a past SYMBOL is no whit more dangerous than an irresponsible individualism that refuses to have any SYMBOL. Both are contrary to His Word and ways. Where do you stand to God's great SYMBOLS today? Is it in a selfish isolation and unholy "come-out-ism"? Then may He hand you the wine cup from the hand of a despised church member fill your spiritual pride be humbled and your spiritual dullness discerned. Or is it a dead symbolism cast aside; in the economy of God, a moribund ritualism? If so, may the Spirit sting your traditional churchianity into going "without the camp bearing His reproach."

**"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.**

**"As year by year the thrills of spring-tide shoot  
Through earth's dull veins, with fresh, magnetic might,  
Nor fail, for frosts that nip and winds that blight,  
So, Lord, who erst didst stir with quickening power  
My answering soul, achieve what Thou hast aimed;  
Draw, for Thou hast drawn; hold, what Thou hast claimed.**

**"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 ardor 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."**

\* \* \* \* \*

### **03 -- THIRD STAGE -- BY HIS SERVANTS**

**"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." (Isaiah 55:4.)**

**The GUIDANCE BY HIS SAYINGS brings the soul into the surgery of events, before a new hearkening attitude can be gained to His sayings. The soul at first always hears in only one direction, that namely of its prejudices. The GUIDANCE BY HIS SYMBOLS brings clearly to the heart, that outward vision is only possible as the inward eye is opened, and as He touches the eye with eye-salve that soul sees that changing SYMBOLS give deeper, more penetrating visions of God.**

**But GUIDANCE BY HIS SERVANTS gives a more intimate nearness yet to Himself. It is during this discipline 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 dawns and her setting glories, her perennial springs and summer nights languishing to autumn, and the strenuous grip of her icy colds, if these awaken a sense of the sublime and the unreached, it ends as the spontaneous ache when "the deep in me 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, when the minor reaches of our music have awakened harmonies in spheres we know not till with dumb yearnings we turn our sightless orbs, "crying like children in the night with no language but a cry;" if painters' pictures stop the ache which nature started, fill for one amazing moment the yearning abysses discovered by the more mysterious thing than joy in music's moments, 'tis but for a moment and all seems but to have increased the capacity for a crueler sensitiveness and a more useless agony of suffering. But when His servants guide us to His heart, the first glorious outlines pass of the meaning of it all.

If we trace the lineaments of the **SERVANT OF GOD** in the Bible, we find him altogether different from the **INSTRUMENT OF GOD**. An instrument of God may be a man of circumstances that God takes up and uses and puts down again. A **SERVANT OF GOD** is one who has forever given up his right to himself and is bound to his Lord as His slave. (1 Cor. 7:22.) "For he that was tailed in the Lord being a bond servant, is the Lord's freeman, and likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant."

An instrument shows God's **SOVEREIGNTY**, unaccountable it may be, but unchallengeable ever. A servant is one who recognizing God's sovereign will, leaps to do that will of his own free will. "What shall we say then? Is there any 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 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. Thou wilt say them unto me, Why doth He still find faulty For who understandeth His way? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Romans 9:14-21.)

**SERVANTS OF GOD!** What a blessed guidance, but oh, it is stern. A **SERVANT OF GOD**. That is a phrase whose meaning is largely lost today. A servant of men is a phrase that better suits our modern mood. Our watch-cry is ever today, "The greatest good for the greatest number." The watch-cry of the **SERVANT OF GOD** was, and ever is, "**THE GREATEST OBEDIENCE TO MY LORD GOD.**" How many of us know a **SERVANT OF GOD** who has a right understanding of the science of God, and can introduce us to God and God's thoughts, and God's hopes? We are over satiated with sympathizers of men and of that mystic sounding shibboleth **HUMANITY**. To quote Chesterton again, (whose insurgent mind is the best cure for any complacent stoic-ness) on this matter he in his book called "Heretics, Christians, and the Aesthetics," pages 95 and 96, "And the same antithesis exists about another modern religion, I mean the religion of Comte, generally known as

**Positivism, or the worship of humanity. Such men as Mr. Frederick Harrison, that brilliant and chivalrous philosopher, who still, by his mere personality, speaks for the creed, would tell us that he offers us the philosophy of Comte, but not all Comte's fantastic proposals for pontiffs and ceremonials, the new calendar, the new holidays, and saints' days. He does not mean that we should dress ourselves up as priests of humanity or let off fireworks because it is Milton's birthday. To the solid English contrast all this appears, he confesses, to be a little absurd. To me it appears the only sensible part of Comteism. As a philosophy it is unsatisfactory. It is evidently impossible to worship humanity just as it is impossible to worship the Savile Club; both are excellent institutions to which we may happen to belong. But we perceive clearly that the Savile Club did not make the stars and does not fill the universe. And it is surely unreasonable to attack the doctrine of the Trinity as a piece of bewildering mysticism, and then to ask men to worship a being who is ninety million persons in one God, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance."**

**One eminent feature is discernible between the biographic studies of the SERVANTS OF GOD in the Bible, and outside it. When men write biographic studies of the saints, they drop out the uncouth, the unlovely, and out of their devotion state the elements that idealize the servant. The Bible states in terms that reveal the uncouthness, the blunderings, the sins of the servants of God, and leave only one idea dormant-that these men were for the glory of God. How large, how deep is the writing over the lives of the servants of God in the Bible record! "LET NO MAN GLORY IN MEN." The SERVANTS OF GOD in the Bible are all spoilt for earth, and live and speak backed by Jehovah. What kind of a bosom companion would Abraham or Moses, or Jeremiah have made? What sort of a bedfellow would Elijah or Ezekiel have made? How sick over and over we are with the vain sentimentalism about the SERVANTS OF GOD. No, wonder He lifts them up at times and shakes them, and flings the parasites off them.**

**The SERVANTS OF GOD in the Bible never stole hearts to themselves, but handed them over to God. There in an uncouthness, a ruggedness and intolerable isolation about the Bible SERVANTS OF GOD. They each one seem to do without you. There is nothing in the world but God to these SERVANTS OF GOD. All else is as a shadow. The lure the servants of God are made, attracts men and women to a wilderness wherein God woos to Himself. Oh, the wild wail of the heart of man or woman who mistook the fascination of God in His servant for the servant, and clasped to human hearts, "men of like passions as we are!" Oh, for that man of God that will hand over the hearts God has called through him, to God Himself! It is not you who awakened that mighty desire in the heart; it is not you who called the longing in that spirit. It is God in you. Are you a servant of God? Point them on. Down on your face, mean man of God, down in the dust if those arms clasp you and that heart rests on you! Oh, what an awakening!**

**When that longing, loving heart awakens and finds you instead of God what will be the passion of despair that will blight you with the curses of solitariness and**

silence, for then God takes him, and the "place that knew him on earth shall know him no more forever." Are all Servants of God? No, thank God! The many are sheep and the shepherds are few, for the fatigues are staggering to all that a saved man is, the heights are giddy, and the sights are awful. It is no wonder that "the sheep know His voice, and an hireling's voice they will not hear."

"Is there one man in disenchanting 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?  
Is there a wisdom whose extremest ways  
Lead upward still? for us who most have striven,  
Made wise too early and too late forgiven,  
Our prudence palsies and our seeing slays.  
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."

Oh, these sad cries are all over the spiritual world and they are entering into the heart of GOD OF SABBAOTH, and He will avenge them. Oh, that you could hear it! "You have taken the East from me, you have taken the West from me, you have taken what is before me, and what is behind me, you have taken the moon, you have taken the sun from me, and my fear is great, you have taken God from me."

One of the greatest of the servants of God -- John the Baptist -- said he was but a Voice that cried but one thing, "Repent," and pointed in but one direction, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world!" That is what a servant of God is for. Aye! and what a school He puts the servant of God through! Its years of graduation are SEPARATION, SORROW, SUPREME SANCTIFICATION, SUFFERING. God guides by His servants, this is a guidance that disciplines hearts and minds and spirits. Watch through the records of Holy Writ. The career of Abraham, of Moses, of Joshua, of Gideon, of Deborah. Trace the discipline of the apprenticeship, the travel, and the mastership. Grasp the loneliness and the uncertainty of Abraham, "the friend of God:" enter into and imagine the rugged discipline of Moses; "he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Bow before the winnowing of the unworldly heart of Joshua. Marvel as ye see how God took timid Gideon as His wardrobe and clothed Himself with him. And be silent before that sibyl of God's sanctity, Deborah, as she leads God's army. And marking the self-effacement, the other-worldliness, bow your face before God and learn the strangeness of HIS GUIDANCE BY HIS SERVANTS.

Scarcely have we paid enough care to the prefiguring of our Lord Himself in the prophets and servants of God, and perhaps we have overdone the prefiguring of Him in the signs and symbols of the old dispensations surrounding those servants of God. How wonderfully the sorrows, the expressions, the careers of those servants of God take new meaning when we see Jesus! How strangely the Psalmist launches out into the definite prefigurings of our Lord Himself. The anthropomorphism of the Old Testament can never be despatched by that statement that "it was man stating God in terms of his own ignorance." It is rather God prefiguring that stupendous mystery of the Incarnation, having therefore its rise in God, not from man's impunity.

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry  
for; my flesh that I seek  
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it,  
O soul 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."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 04 -- FOURTH STAGE -- BY HIS SYMPATHY

(Isaiah 63:7-9.) "I will make mention of the lovingkindness of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies and according to the multitude of His lovingkindness. For He said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely, so He was their Savior; In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old." "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He compassed him about; He cared for him; He kept him as the apple of His eye, as an eagle that stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her pinions, Jehovah alone did lead him, and there was no foreign God with him." (Psa. 18:35, 36.) "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation, and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped."

THE SYMPATHY OF GOD, What a phrase! God having feeling for us. This is the very heart of it in Hebrews 4:15, 16. "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points



tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need."

It is in the mystic tenderness of the guidance by HIS SYMPATHY that God gives a love like His. Oh, how can language put it, when the soul, the individual soul, knows He has kept all tears and has marked all sorrows till not one drop is lost, knows that "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." When the great big first surprise of the light of His sympathy bursts on our tear-dimmed soul and turns it into radiant rainbows of promise; when no sayings of His resound on our ears with thrilling clarion call; when no visible symbol disciplines our faltering steps; when no SERVANT OF GOD is near to help us discern His will; when the cloud gathers round us and we fear as we enter the cloud, and lo! a mystic touch is on our spirits, a coolness and balm, "as one whom His mother comforteth" so the Lord comforts. Oh, the tenderest touch of a mother's love is nothing compared to our blessed Father's sympathy! It is there, couched in His arms, that we are guided into that secret of secrets, that it is not men's sins we have to deal with, but their suffering. It is ensphered in those nights when He gives us the treasures of darkness, that disciplines us to be staying powers in the alarm moments of other lives. What an atmosphere there breathes about the life whom God is guiding by HIS SYMPATHY! We feel a larger horizon and expanding heart and brain and spirit grasping us and uplifting us. Nothing seems changed, yet a kiss as if the kiss of God touched our care, and we smilingly wonder how things altered, and now life is never the same again. From GUIDANCE BY HIS SYMPATHY we learn that God heeds not our faults or our mistakes. He looks at our hearts. This point, so blessed, so rare, we perhaps could never see before. How gladly, how nobly, how purely we grow under guidance by His sympathy!

Yet it would be dangerous if He guided us by His sympathies too soon. Just look back to Isaiah 63:7-9, already quoted, for the sad sequel to guidance by His sympathy, verse 10. "But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore He was turned to be their enemy and Himself fought against them." Or look at Deut. 32:10-12 to the sequel there, verse 15, "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked... Then he forsook God who made him and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation."

Sympathy is clearly dangerous in its effects on men. In undisciplined, self-centered lives it seems to engender a self-confident vanity that abuses the end and meaning of God's sympathy, and the goodness of God, which obviously ought to lead to repentance, does not, but rather, to blatant presumption. In a nature disciplined and chastened by self-knowledge, whose cynicisms about men and things (which ever arises from a narrow view of personal limitations) have long since given way to larger, more generous, more self-effacing views; to such a nature, guidance by His sympathy is an unexpected, unspeakable boon, ever leading that soul out in deep adoration and devotion to God. Humanly speaking, this aspect of Divine Guidance is rarely spoken of by expounders of God's ways with men, partly because of the definite indefinableness of the guidance, and partly

also because few understand or partake in guidance by those mystic touches that endear the soul beyond all words to God and God to that soul.

Sympathy among ourselves is often a very questionable guidance, because a man may sympathize out of his self-sentiment, which is really nothing more than selfishness disguised, and this has ever an unenergizing unennobling dispensation. Sympathy to benefit and brace and ennoble must spring from a higher source than the one suffering is on as yet. The purpose and heart of our Lord's sympathy is that He does not make us submissive to a broken heart and degenerate hereditary bondage, but His sympathy guides us to where He will bind up the broken-hearted, set at liberty the captives, etc. There is a distressing snare besetting certain types of saints, and this snare is a morbid desire for sympathy, which simply makes them, so to speak, sponges to mop up sympathy. Strange to say, all God's criticism of us does not hurt the soul that is here, for that soul understands it springs from a deep well of sympathy. Criticism without sympathy is cruel, but criticism that springs from sympathy is blessed; faithful wounds and goads and rousings!

The discipline of guidance by His sympathy is a clearer, better understanding of God's ideas, God's hopes and God's aims. It is this way He makes known unto us His ways; otherwise we simply know His acts. By His sympathy we understand that He "doeth all things well," and though He slay, that soul cannot fear. That soul's language is ever an amazed rebuke of those who do not know God's sympathy. It is saying by its life, "Let Him do what seemeth good unto Him." This guidance by His sympathy ever keeps the soul and heart and body in a rare atmosphere of blessed spiritual love. All that sickly, unhealthy moaning has forever ceased; that moaning, that crying, from the empty space round the heart, trying to get God into sympathy with our hopes and fears. There is one thing to note -- that every other sympathy in the deepest things of life ends in scepticism or sensualism, saving His sympathy. For it is along this line of Divine guidance that God, as it were, counsels with Himself, saying as He did regarding Abraham, Gen. 18:17, "And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?"

Or before we take our last final meditation and musing on Divine Guidance, on those serene thoughts by GOD HIMSELF; just let our hearts lie open before that marvel of revelation in the 14th chapter of John, 16-18: "And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another COMFORTER, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive," for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans." Call this Comforter by what term you think best- Advocate, Helper, Paraclete -- the word means that indefinable blessedness of His sympathy; that inward, invisible kingdom within, that sings through every night of sorrow. That Holy Comforter represents the ineffable motherhood of God. Protestantism has lost for many generations (by violent antipathy to Maryolatry in the Roman Catholic Church) this side of the Divine Revelation which is hinted at in this Guidance by His Sympathy. And it behooves us to remember that

Protestantism is not the Gospel of God, but a true expression of a tiny view of the truth of God, specially adapted to the crying needs of a particular time, and it is time we considered other elements in this Gospel of God from the Bible standpoint. Dr. George MacDonald in one of his books, "Sir Gibbie," chapter 23, says the following (it is a striking indication of the trend and shallowness of the modern reading public that George MacDonald's books are so neglected): "See revelation culminate in Elizabeth and Mary, the mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus. Think how much fitter that it should be so; that they to whom the Word of God comes should be women bred in the dignity of a natural life, and familiarity with the large ways of the earth; women of simple and few wants, without distraction, and with time for reflection -- compelled to reflection, indeed, from the enduring presence of an unsullied consciousness, for wherever there is a humble, thoughtful nature, into that nature the divine consciousness, that is, the Spirit of God, presses as into its own place. Holy women are to be found everywhere, but the prophetess is not so likely to be found in the city as in the hill country."

This is quoted simply with the purpose of suggesting how many are limiting themselves and God's conceptions in them by ignoring this side of the Divine Guidance and nature, namely, the side best symbolized to one's conceptions by womanhood. The Comforter, surely, (let it be reverently said), represents this side of the divine nature. It is the Comforter that sheds abroad the love of God in your hearts. It is the Comforter whom Jesus, in the amazing language of Scripture, baptizes us into, till we are indwelt by a mysterious union with God. It is the Comforter who brings forth love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Guidance by His sympathy leads by a blessed discipline into a wonderful understanding of God that passeth knowledge.

"Whatsoever spark  
Of pure and true in any human heart  
Flickered and lived, -- it burned itself towards Him  
In an electric current, through all bonds  
Of intervening race, and creed, and time,--  
And flamed up to a heat of living faith.  
And love, and love's communion, and the joy  
And inspiration of self-sacrifice!  
And drew together in a central coil  
Magnetic all the noblest of all hearts,  
And made them one with Him, in a live flame,--  
That is the purifying and the warmth  
Of all the earth."

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05 -- FIFTH STAGE -- BY HIMSELF

**"For in all the world there is none but thee, my God, there is none but thee."  
Gen. 15:1. "After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abraham in a vision,  
saying, Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."**

**Ex. 33:14. "And Jehovah said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."**

**Deut. 13:1-4: "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or unto that dreamer of dreams; for Jehovah your God proverb you, to know whether you love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him and cleave unto Him."**

**Psalm 23: 1-3: "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside waters of rest. He restoreth my soul; He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."**

**This is the goal on earth. In all we have touched we have not approached the conception of the HEREAFTER. God is never in a hurry, and His guidance is so severe and so simple, so sweet and satisfying, that nothing but the child-spirit can discern it. But this is the goal. GOD HIMSELF, not joy, nor peace, nor even blessing. How true is that note of St. Paul's, Col. x: 11, "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience." How our Lord strikes the same note of PATIENCE in Luke 21:19, "In your patience possess ye your souls." And in Revelation 1:9, John says, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and PATIENCE of Jesus Christ." Oh, the discipline of PATIENCE! How His guidance chastens us, sweetens us and quickens us till, without let or hindrance, He can guide me by HIMSELF.**

**"Go thou into thy closet, shut thy door"--  
And pray to Him in secret: He will hear.  
But think not thou, by one wild bound to clear  
The numberless ascensions, more and more,  
Of starry stars that must be climbed, before  
Thou comest to the Father's likeness near;  
And bendest down to kiss His feet so dear,  
That, step by step, their mounting flights passed o'er,  
Be thou content if on the weary knee  
There fails a sense of showers and of the spring;  
A hope that makes it impossible to fling  
Sickness aside, and go and do the deed:  
For highest aspiration will not lead**

Unto the calm beyond all questioning."

From earliest childhood there hovered over us in a vast o'erarching the "Over Soul," the blessed Presence that was indefinable. But it is only to the SOUL DISCIPLINED BY SUFFERING, by LONELINESS, and by DIVINE GUIDANCE, that "my Father's feet" appear among the dusty clouds. In those days and years of the preparation of our physical, moral and spiritual characters, the vision tarried and wearied us. How often it seemed like some vagrant "'will-o'-the-wisp," and all our life grew sick with longing. But ever and anon a vision came, perhaps in the wrapt spell of prayer, when one felt as if when he put out his hand he might, nay he would, touch God Himself. Perhaps it was in a holy spell of contemplation that God Himself enfolded you, till fear was impossible, and God was all and in all beyond all language and all thoughts. But these passed.

"God's fashion is another, day by day,  
And year by year He tarrieth; little need  
The Lord should hasten; whom He loves the most  
He seeks not oftenest, nor woos him long,  
But by denims quickens his desire.  
And in forgetting best remembers him,  
Till that man's heart grows humble and reaches out  
To the least glimmer of the feet of God,  
Grass on the mountain-tops or the early note  
Of wild birds in the bush before the day,--  
Wherever sweetly in the ends of the earth  
Are fragments of a place that knows not man."

What is all the pain, the longing and the questioning for? Why does He not tell me plainly of Himself? Ah! our God is a Master-workman in perfecting His ideas in me. He never hurries. So often we mistake Him and His purpose, and sinking into quietism and contemplation where we repose in a sanctified stagnation, He suddenly, ruthlessly uproots us, and we, agreed with Him and His ways, and in clouds and tribulations in earth and sea and sky, He dazes and confounds us with questions, You will find that all put for our instruction in the last chapter of Job. We do so want God to realize that we take ourselves very seriously. But some of God's questions He asks us as we join to guidance by Himself destroys this seriosity:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days began and caused the day spring to know its place? Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee? Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death? Hast thou comprehended the earth in its breadth? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou lead forth the signs of the Zodiac in their season, or canst thou guide the bear with her train? Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens? Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth?" Oh, these

terrible questions when God seems to laugh at the soul, destroying its serious self-importance, even while He upholds that soul. "Then Job answered Jehovah and said, Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee? I lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, and I will not answer, -- yea, twice, but I will proceed no further... I know thou canst do all things and that no purpose of thine can be restrained. Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not... I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye seeth thee; wherefore I loathe my words and repent in dust and ashes." It is by these processes, for the most part unstateable, that God by His Divine Guidance, destroys that awful barrier of taking ourselves too seriously.

"Lord, what I once have done with youthful might,  
Had I been from the first true to the truth,  
Grant me, now old, to do -- with better sight  
And humbler heart, if not the brain of youth;  
So wilt Thou, in Thy gentleness and truth,  
Lead back thy old soul, by the path of pain,  
Round to his best, -- young eyes and heart and brain.

"Come to me, Lord: I will not speculate how,  
Nor think at which door I would have Thee appear,  
Nor put off calling till my floors be swept,  
But cry, 'Come, Lord, come anyway, come now.'  
Doors, windows, I throw wide; my head I bow,  
And sit like someone who so long has slept  
That he knows nothing till his life draws near."

God is a light so bright that the first vision of Himself is black with excess of light. In that very chapter, the 15th of Genesis, quoted at the beginning of this section, where God in a vision (mark that it was in a vision God's order is Vision, Humiliation and Reality), came to Abraham, "Saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," we read in the 12th verse, "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and, lo, a horror of great darkness." "AND, LO, A HORROR OF GREAT DARKNESS," a darkness by excess of light. Along this discipline of Divine Guidance, much changes, but one thing grows clearer and clearer, namely, the revelation of God Himself. Take the case of Moses himself -- guided by the cloudy pillar and outward mysterious method; then guidance from Mt. Sinai with its innermost understanding of the words written and spoken. Then, in chapter 33 of Exodus, we have the God of the cloudy pillar, the God of Sinai's law, showing Himself and saying, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," and the rarity, the unspeakable rapture of the whole thing, made the heart of

Moses plead, "Show me thy glory," and God, condescending and in overflowing graciousness, did so, saying, "And I will take away my hand and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen." That is the secret place of the

Most High, unapproachable safety. Affliction and tribulation and trouble may destroy all else, but abiding in this secret place of the Most High is untouchable. There is no self-consciousness there. There is not an uncertainty REST! Unfathomable rest in Himself. Not in a vision of Himself, but in Himself as a reality -- a living, bright reality. Walking and talking to God as a friend with friend, and knowing that God knows He can do what He likes with us. There are no questions and no troubles. He knows. Here God reveals His secrets; here, in the heart of this guidance by Himself, does God convey the "secret of the Lord."

"Within the place of certain good  
Love evermore expands her wings,  
Or nestling in Thy perfect choice,  
Abides content with what it brings.  
Oh, lightest burden, sweetest yoke!  
It lifts, it bears my happy soul,  
It giveth wings to this poor heart;  
My freedom is Thy grand control.  
Upon God's will I lay me down,  
As child upon its mother's breast;  
No silken couch, or softest bed,  
Could ever give me such deep rest.  
Thy wonderful, grand will, my God,  
With triumph now I make it mine;  
And faith shall cry a joyous, Yes!  
To every dear command of Thine."

-- Madam Guyon.

A dear little friend of mine, not four years old, facing some big difficulty to her little heart, one day said, "I'll go and tell my papa," with a very wise shake of her head. Presently she came back with this time every fiber of the little body strutting with the pride that shone in her eye, "Now, my papa's coming." Presently her papa came, she clasped her little hands, and screamed with delight, and danced round about him, unspeakably confident in "her papa." Child of God, does something face you that terrifies your heart? Say, "I'll tell my Father." Then come back "boasting" in the Lord, "Now my Father's coming;" and when He comes you, too, will clasp your hands in rapture and your mouth will be filled with laughter and you will be like one that dreams, when your Father comes.

And does this seem unmeasurable bliss, all here and now? What will it be when this order has passed away? If all this is as but His back, not His face! oh, what will it be? "It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive."

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CONCLUSION

The deep secret of God is LOVE, and no one but the child-heart and child-spirit can find the way to learn that secret. He satisfies the last aching abyss of the human spirit, and until He. does, a great element of the precarious is in the life. Half the heart-breaks in this life are caused by the loss of this understanding, -- that "we must love the Highest when we see Him, not Launcelot nor another." Half the wasted days and languid reveries and immortal contemplations that embarrass human relationships and obliterate individual responsibility, arise from the same misunderstanding. God is not an outward gush of sentiment and a vague abstraction of impersonal good nature. God is a living, intense reality, and we must love Him, walk with Him as friend with friend, and until this is grasped the puzzles and the questions are more than can be met with. But when, by the discipline of HIS DIVINE GUIDANCE, we know Him, and He going with us doth give us REST, then time and eternity are merged and lost in that amazing vital relationship; that Union becomes not one of mystic contemplation, but one of the intensest perfection of activity. The Rest is not the placid peace of stagnation, but the perfect Rest of perfect motion.

"Only, my God, see thou that I content Thee--  
Oh, take Thy own content upon me, God!  
Ah, never, never, sure, wilt Thou repent Thee  
That Thou hast called Thy Adam from the clod!  
Yet must I mourn that Thou shouldst ever find me  
One moment sluggish, needing more of the rod  
Than Thou didst think when Thy desire designed me.  
No less than Thou, O Father, do we need  
A God to friend each lonely one of us.

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THE END