

Missionary Correspondence.

CHAPTER IX.

Rev. H. C. Sanders, M. D.
DIVINE GUIDANCE

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps."

After my first sermon that memorable Sunday evening, God gave the following text: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." This came not as a theme for a new sermon, but as the voice of God, saying to me, "Go forward." After earnest prayer I decided that the path of duty led to a village where I had taught school the winter before. Upon arrival at Norwood, arrangements were soon made with the trustees of the Baptist hall, and an evening service announced. We had a fairly good meeting followed by another the next night. The day following, however, I was informed that the trustees were instructed by the Baptist Home Mission Board not to open the hall again to a "holiness preacher." As the Reformed Baptists were known by this name, I saw this door close before me. And now what of the text that I had felt so sure was from God? I was in the fog of uncertainty, tempted to turn about and go home; and yet the text held me.

Hectanooga was four miles farther on, where there was no regular preaching. I had thought the "open door" meant Norwood, but evidently I had been mistaken. Should I go on or return? I lacked the wisdom to decide, and asked God. My mother had often told me that God guided her steps, even in every-day matters and would lead any trusting one. How was I to find out God's will in such matters? Faith on this line seemed so very difficult to me then. I prayed without getting any definite light, then put a test, a thing I seldom have done since. I am giving this account in detail, as it marked another beginning in my life—that of divine guidance in small matters as well as great. The modern apostle of faith, George Muller, makes the statement that he has never honestly sought to know God's will in any matter without receiving the desired knowledge. There are many definite promises in God's word offering wisdom or guidance to those in doubt. Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with examples of the fulfilment of these promises, and yet many sincere children of the King, like myself at that time, are strangers to this, their rightful inheritance.

The test of which I spoke was this: While it was raining I had gone to my room to pray, saying, "Now, Lord, when I again go out, if there is still rain, I will take it that I should return home now, while, on the other hand, if no rain whatever is falling, I will believe that you would have me go on to the next village. Lord, do guide me aright by this sign. Thou canst control the rain or the time of my kneeling here." After a while I went down stairs and out doors. Not a drop of rain was falling. "Lord, help me not to doubt but what you have guided me," was my prayer as I prepared to go forward.

Soon after noon I arrived at the little school house which serves also as a church building when a preacher chances that way, and requested the teacher to announce a gospel meeting. Of that evening's congregation six or eight were English speaking, while the majority were French Catholics who understood English very imperfectly. I tried to use simple language and make the way of salvation plain, but felt, at the close, that my efforts had

been a failure. I gave an invitation, however, asking any who desired to seek the Saviour, then and there, to come forward and kneel. To my great surprise, two girls responded and seemed very earnest. In a short time they had both prayed for and testified definitely to conscious salvation.

On the morrow I visited their home, finding their mother, Mrs. Mullen, a Christian, but hungering for a closer walk with God. She soon saw and claimed her inheritance, the "promise of the Father." That same day I started for home, feeling that, for the present, my work there was done, but promising to visit them again.

Three months later this privilege became mine, but the account of this second visit will be better given in a couple of extracts from letters written to Miss Ella Kinney, of whom I shall have something to say before long.

"Jan. 4th, 1892—Last Wednesday I went to visit my friends at Hectanooga, remaining until Thursday afternoon. First I called on Mr. Reve, where I had been entertained when here before, then went over to the Mullins'. By this time the rain was falling, so I was in that home all the afternoon. Soon after dinner we had prayers. There were present Mrs. Mullen, her daughter, fourteen, her two boys, twelve and nine, and her baby girl, seven. While on our knees all three of the little ones gave themselves up to Jesus and claimed Him as their Saviour. First the twelve-year-old, then his younger brother, while lastly the little girl. She broke down and wept bitterly, poor little dear. Her mother told me that she had been trying for a long time to be "good," and just the day before had said she thought it was of no use trying, and she would have to give it up. Further, the mother informed me that ever since my last visit the boys, too, had been talking nearly every day about being "good." They wanted to become good men.

"Towards evening there came in a young fellow, John Green by name. I entered into conversation with him and learned that he is from England (there are only three English families in this settlement), but has lived with the French Catholics for six years, having even been to the priest several times. I asked him a few questions about his soul's salvation, and he frankly told me that he was not a Christian, and knew he would go to hell if he died in his present state. I said to him, 'The reason the people who know the way of salvation do not get saved is that they are unwilling to give up their sins.' 'That is not me,' he replied. 'I am willing enough.' So we knelt and he gave himself up to 'Heaven.' He was dreadfully ignorant, but Jesus receives the ignorant and sinful, and, I believe, received this homeless orphan boy. He then told me that he had been to the meeting I had held at Norwood, just before coming here for the first time. I learned, too, that Mrs. Mullen's two daughters were also there. Upon their return home the younger had remarked to the mother that at that meeting was the first time she had ever understood anything about salvation. You will remember that it was the very next night that she got saved."

The second letter, written May 21st, says: "I had letters from six different persons to-day. One from Bear Point and four in one from Hectanooga, from the young converts up there. It is wonderful how they are kept, even the little girl of seven. Of the one aged fourteen Mrs. Mullen says, 'My younger daughter is greatly changed, she seems to understand everything so well now'—things of the kingdom, she means."

Though this was my last visit to Hectanooga, yet I was in touch with that family for years, sending them religious literature and answering their letters. The visible fruits of my going to that settlement was evidence to me that God had guided. I always look back to that experience as the one used of God to teach me my first real lesson in divine guidance. Having seen that God had led, it was more easy to believe. The tiny mustard seed plant of faith was now permitted to remain undisturbed until it grew into a "tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord."

DELIVERED FROM OUR FOES.

DR. B. CARRADINE.

Very many are the promises God makes His people. Among them we find blessings for body, mind and spirit too numerous to mention. Prominent among the Heaven-sent mercies is safety in the presence of our foes and deliverance from our enemies. This is repeated so often that it becomes quite remarkable.

Perhaps the most friendless thing in the Universe is the most precious, and that is the human soul. Made in the image of God and doubtless the most wonderful of all the divine creations, yet it is the most imperiled by virtue of its nature, mission on earth and destiny in eternity.

If the soul would consent to go along through life heedless of these three facts just mentioned, its adversaries would be greatly diminished in number as well as in virulency of attack. But to become aroused, quickened, regenerated, sanctified and perfectly obedient to the will of Heaven is to have all hell on its hands, and the greater part of the earth. In fact, the truer the soul is to its best interests and to the Word and leadings of God, the more its enemies are multiplied, Satanic and human hate increased, friends drop away, and the path of life grows lonelier and more dangerous.

Some of the soul's adversaries are devils from the pit. Why they hate us might be questioned if we did not know that they are filled with that dark spirit and have nothing else to pour upon us. Evidently their desire is to nag, worry, accuse, distract, darken, confound and destroy the followers of Christ on earth, and to torment them forever in hell. As for the unsaved, they are already in their power.

There come from them to the soul not only whispers of unbelief; suggestions of evil; and surges of power to overthrow; but imitations of the voice of God to deceive, confuse, condemn and lead astray.

Dr. Winans, one of the ripest Christians in the Methodist Church, South, and recognized as one of her saintliest and most effective preachers, tells of a whole hour when the devil, or a devil, urged him to blaspheme. His distress in that hour was beyond words to describe and he could only groan and call upon God. Suddenly the dark spell was lifted as instantaneously as it came.

Then there are the enemies of earth. People hate us no matter what we do. To be a Christian increases the host that are arrayed against the soul. Nor does living right lessen the number, but adds to the battalion of irreconcilables, implacables, plotters and would-be destroyers.

Some of God's people have gotten into condemnation and trouble at this point, thinking that if they had been wiser, tenderer, better and more tactful, that instead of the stones they receive, both the church and a great part