

The Highway of Guidance



by James H. McConkey

©Copyright 1985, Braille Circulating Library
All rights reserved.

The Highway of Guidance

"He leadeth me" (Ps. 23:3).

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice"
(Rom. 12:1).

As the traveler journeys through a strange country he finds it is covered with a network of byways. Some skirt the banks of swift-flowing streams; others plunge into the great forest and are soon lost in its depths. Some make their way up the steep mountainside until they reach its lofty summit; others pierce great landed estates, and meander through lawn, field, and woodland copse. All these are byways, and most of them private ways. In them you and I would be trespassers for they are not meant for us. But in addition to these byways the same country will be overrun with broad highways. Stretching from town to town and city to city run these great highways of shining sand, or rich red clay, or gray macadam. And they are the ways of the people. They are free to all who will walk therein. Rich and poor, bond and free, high and low, alike may enter upon and use these great arteries of commerce and travel.

Even so is it in the Christian life. Men say, "God has never revealed to me any individual plan for my life. I have never found His byway of guidance for me." And that may be true. Perchance you have never seen God's byway for your life. But here is a greater truth. Have you ever entered into God's Highway? For running all the way through this Book of God, and blazoned upon every page of it is a great highway. It is the highway of consecration. It is for all believers. No man who walks in this highway need ever fear missing God's byway. And the reason most men are missing the particular call of God to their own personal life-work is because they have never obeyed the general call of God to all believers to enter upon this highway of dedication to Him. "If any man will to do My will he shall know the teaching." Here is an absolute promise of guidance. But to whom? To the child of God who yields his own will to do the will of God.

Away up in the north country a Christian missionary was speaking to his Indian friends of consecration. Presently, as he spoke, an old Indian chief arose, walked forward and laid his tomahawk at the missionary's feet: "Indian chief give his tomahawk to Jesus Christ," said he, and sat down. Still the missionary spoke on of the love of God in Christ Jesus; of the gift of His Son for us and of His claim upon our lives. Rising from his seat the old chief walked forward once more to the front. Unwrapping his blanket from his shoulders he laid it at the

preacher's feet, saying, "Indian chief give his blanket to Jesus Christ." Again he sat down. But still the messenger preached on concerning the love of God in Christ. Still he showed how God had rifled heaven of its choicest gift and sent Him to earth to redeem us lost men and give Himself for us. Presently the old chief was seen to disappear from the meeting. By and by he came leading his pony to the tent door. He tied it to a stake and again walked up the aisle. Facing the missionary, he said, "Indian chief give his pony to Jesus Christ." Once more he took his seat. He had given about all he had—all the things he had. Have some of us too given Him things instead of ourselves? And now as the missionary preached of the God who spared not His only Son, but freely gave Him up for us, he pressed upon his hearers the claim of Jesus Christ upon the life. Still the message kept sinking into their hearts. And then the old chieftain arose for the last time. He walked forward with tottering steps to the front of the tent. He kneeled down reverently before the missionary. With tears streaming down his bronzed cheeks he said, with trembling lips, "Indian Chief give himself to Jesus Christ." Then and there through the open portal of a yielded will he took the first blessed step into the highway of consecration. Mark first concerning this highway that,

It Is a Highway of Love

Why does love follow in the train of conse-

cration? Why shall the children of God who enter the highway of dedication know the love of Jesus in their hearts? Because "The fruit of the Spirit is love." And as we yield the life to Christ in dedication, it gives the Spirit of God opportunity to bear His fruitage of love in our hearts and lives. And so the more the life is yielded to Christ in consecration, and the more that consecration is lived out in it, the more will the love of Christ himself flow forth in a stream of life to others.

Have you ever noted that after Paul has gone through this wonderful catalogue of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, he shows "a more excellent way"? There is one gift more wonderful than all these. This gift is the climax and consummation of all gifts. Such is God's word concerning Christian love. It is the summing up of all gifts. The man or woman to whom there comes the gift of love in Christ Jesus has the mightiest equipment for Christian service possible for any individual believer.

Into the life of a dear brother of my own came this experience. The winter was ending. The ice was breaking in our native river. The freshets were piling it up in great gorges along the banks. A few miles above our home was a little town at which an immense ice gorge had formed in the river. Just below this gorge was an island, upon which the gorge had imprisoned eleven men, women and children. Every one knew the fate which awaited them. The instant this huge ice gorge, with its great weight of water behind it, should break, it

would sweep those lives out of existence. My brother learned of the situation. Putting fifty dollars in his pocket he hastened to the little town. Arriving there he found the people waiting on the banks of the river for the catastrophe which seemed inevitable. Stepping up to the crowd he offered the fifty dollars to any man who would attempt the rescue of the imperiled ones. But not a man stirred. Again and again did he repeat the offer, but there came no sign of response. Then he sent a little lad into a nearby store for a line. When he brought it out, my brother tied one end of it around his waist, and offered to join with any man who would rope himself to him in an effort to rescue the lives that were in instant jeopardy of death. Immediately four men leaped to his side. They roped themselves to the same line of peril with himself, and these five men, picking their way over the dangerous gorge at the imminent hazard of their own lives, brought in safety to the shore every man, woman and child upon the ice. When my brother offered money to the people on the river bank not a man stirred. But when they saw him give himself and saw the love for these imperiled lives that was back of it, it drew them to his side in an instant.

And so shall it be with you, my friends. Would you be a famous singer? You may give your matchless voice. Would you stand high in some chosen profession? You may give your best brains, and it shall be done. Would you chisel your way to fame in marble, or paint it

upon canvas? You need but give your artistic talent with its years of toil, and it shall be accomplished. But if you are going to enter into the biggest business in God's universe—that of transforming men's lives, that of shaping the immortal destinies of men and women, that of uplifting and inspiring the lives of those with whom God brings you in touch—if you want this to be the aim of your life, then you must give yourself. And when men see you give yourself a strange and beautiful thing will happen. The young man and young woman who sit at your feet as learners, or who toil in your employ, will come into a new experience. Into the faces of some of them will come a holy light. Into their hearts will steal a high and divine purpose. They will tie themselves to the same great life line which binds you, and with you will give themselves to the task of reaching out for lost men. Oh! what a magnet is the love of Christ through us! Hear these words: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men." The Christ of love lifted up on the cross is drawing all men; and that same Christ, pouring forth His love through your heart, will draw men through you. Some day some of these splendid young men whose lives you are influencing will turn their faces to the foreign mission field. Some day they will stand in a pulpit, preaching the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ. Some day, as successful business men, they will be giving their skill and their gold and their time to Christ and missions. Yea, perhaps some day out in the dark lands, when some faithful

missionary is asked the question, "What brought you here?" "How came you to the foreign field?" the answer will come, "Away back in my little hometown, I had a school teacher who was yielded to God. She lived the love life. I saw it in her face. I heard it in her words. I felt it in her life, and it drew me, it *drew* me and that is why I am here today."

"He leadeth me." But whither is He leading you? First into this highway of love. For how vain would it be for Him to lead you into His individual byway of service for your life until you first knew the touch of His love. Though you could speak with the tongues of men and angels: though you possessed the rarest personal gifts: though your intellectual equipment was that of a genius: though you could cleave your way to the highest pinnacle of success in your chosen byway of activity, yet, if you had no touch of His love in your heart, it would profit you nothing to lead you into your pathway of individual service. He has a "more excellent way." He would, as you enter into this highway of consecration, make your inner soul to glow and burn with that love for lost men which will be your supreme furnishment for the pathway of special, personal ministry in which He will then make your life so rich and fruitful.

It Is a Highway of Power

Is the power of the Spirit for the many or for the few? Is it a highway or a byway? It is clearly the former. "Ye shall receive power when the

Holy Ghost is come upon you," said Jesus. All who receive the Spirit are meant to know His power. There is no monopoly upon such power. The man who walks in the way of consecration shall know the power of the spirit of God. For it is a power which gives itself to the children of God who yield themselves to Him.

I have a Christian railroad friend, a passenger conductor on a train running into a southern city. One morning on his usual run he was sitting beside a wealthy turpentine merchant. Presently the train stopped at a wayside station. A young man, visibly intoxicated, stepped aboard the train. He dropped down beside a companion with the words, "I drank a quart of whiskey since 5 o'clock this morning." And then he went on with a perfect stream of profanity and blasphemy. My friend stood it as long as he could. Then he said to his companion, "I cannot endure this any longer. Please excuse me." He arose and crossed the aisle. The companion of the young man vacated his seat. The Christian railroad conductor sat down beside the blasphemer. "I have listened to your profanity, young man," said he, "until I cannot bear it any longer. My dear boy, have you a mother and father?"

"Yes," replied the young fellow. "Are they Christians?" asked the conductor. "They are," said the boy. "My father is an officer in a church." "Well, young man, can you imagine how your mother's heart would bleed if she stood here and heard you blaspheme the name

of Christ as I have heard you this morning? Why she would not take all the silver and gold in the world, and hear that." And then as he went on with increasing earnestness, my friend put his arm over the profaning boy's shoulder and pleaded with him to cease from his manner of life. Presently the boy broke down utterly. He put his head on the conductor's shoulder and sobbed out his penitence like a child. As they dismounted at the end of the run the young fellow made an appointment to meet the conductor at his room at the hotel to talk it over with him. And talk it over they did to a finish. It ended in the young man giving his heart to Christ and parting from the conductor. The next year the conductor learned he was superintendent of a prosperous little Sunday school and giving noble testimony for Jesus Christ.

But the stream of power from this Christian railroad man's life did not end there. The wealthy turpentine friend had witnessed the whole scene and heard the conversation. As the conductor started toward his hotel he heard his name called. Looking around he saw the turpentine merchant standing in the middle of the road beside his team, which had come to meet him. "Hold on, conductor, I want to say something to you. I was listening to your conversation with that young man. You did not mean it for me. But I want to say this: I am a wealthy man. I have a good wife and children and a comfortable home. Yet I never in my life read a chapter from the Book nor had a prayer

with them. Conductor, your talk has reached my heart. I am going home this very night to set up my family altar, and from this time on I will be a different man." Out from this man's life had flowed a stream of power from God. Not the power of great scholarship, or eloquence, but the power of the Spirit of God, pouring its stream through the life of the man who walked in this highway of God, the highway of a consecrated life. It is a highway in which all of us may walk. Shall we not enter therein?

It Is a Highway of Manifestation

"He that keepeth my commandments I will manifest Myself to him," says Christ in John 14:21. What does He mean? He could not have referred to His bodily manifestation because that was already with them. Already they were looking into His face. They were hearing the tender tones of His familiar voice. His loving eyes were searching them through and through as He gazed upon them. He was clearly not speaking to them of His bodily presence. He was revealing to them the great secret of the manifestation of Himself in their own inner souls. What was that secret? Simply this: he who would see the face of Christ must walk in the path where Christ walks. If we live in His will we shall know the manifestation of His presence.

It is this. Suppose you are my dear friend. You have been absent in a strange land for many years. I hear you are in the city. I write

and ask you to tell me where I can see you. You say, "You may find me any time this afternoon walking on Broad Street between two certain points." I go downtown. I begin to walk up and down Market Street instead of Broad. Hour after hour I walk, but have no manifestation of your presence. I go back and write you of my disappointment. You answer: "You kept your trust in the wrong street. If you want to see me you must come where I walk."

Even so is it in the Christian life. How shall we know Him in our inner soul? If we want to see the Master's face we must walk in the Master's path. "If any man will come after me"—what? Let him walk in the pathway of his own self-will? Nay; let him deny himself. You cannot meet Christ in the pathway of selfishness, for He never walked that pathway Himself. "A body hast Thou given me," said He, "Lo, I come to do Thy will." He gave that body to do His Father's will, even to the bitter moment when He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." And now He is saying to us, "Present *your* bodies a living sacrifice." And why? For the same purpose—to do His will. God has given us our bodies for the same purpose that Jesus Christ had His, to do the Father's will. When we walk in that pathway we will walk with Him and know His manifestation. For that is what consecration means. It is simply leaving the pathway of self-will to walk in the pathway of the Master. And he who walks in the highway of Christ's will shall know the spiritual manifestation of Christ in

his innermost soul as none other can possibly know it.

It Is a Highway of Revelation

I had been living on the banks of the Mediterranean all winter. Many a time had I stood by its shore. Many a long walk had I taken along its white sands. But the time had come for me to leave my winter home. Taking my bicycle—for I was traveling awheel—I started up the mountain road which led from the beautiful city where I had been wintering. Moment by moment I steadily climbed the steep summit until I reached the highest point of the road overlooking the water. The great inland sea lay at my feet an infinite expanse of beauty; the surf broke in snowy whiteness upon the beach two thousand feet below me; lovely islands slept half submerged in the blue haze; white sails dotted the horizon in the dim distance; the telegraph wires were droning their song in the gentle breeze; heaven seemed to brood over the spot with a holy awe. It was a scene of transcendent loveliness. As my soul feasted upon it in the hush of the afternoon hour I realized that I had never really seen the Mediterranean until I saw it from this lofty mountain eyrie on the great highway of the Corniche road.

Ah, my friend, you who are living the self-centered life, you will never really see life until you see it from the lofty viewpoint of God's own highway of consecration. You may dream its dreams: you may sing its songs: you may

hear the roar and tumult of its conflicts: you may grasp after its prizes: you may float at ease upon the stream of its numberless pleasures, but you will never really see life until you see it as God sees it for you, and is lovingly and tenderly waiting to show it to you. And when you stand upon that uplifted place of consecration and look out over the broad expanse of God's will and purpose for your life, what a vision it will be for you! Then will darkness flee away: then will faith grow steady: then will groping cease: then will the bewildering labyrinth of human plans and pathways vanish away, and blazed like a pathway through a great forest will lie your trail of life marked out by God from all eternity and only waiting for you to hear His word "Follow thou Me."

"He leadeth me." But whither? Into this highway of consecration. It is the first sight which greets the believer's eyes as he steps out from the crimson fountain which has cleansed his sin-stained soul. It confronts him like a great triumphal arch, opening into the pathway of his life of ministry. A pierced hand flings open its portals before his eyes. A voice from the Redeemer of his soul cries out, "I beseech you present your body a living sacrifice." Its gates are crimsoned with the blood of Him Who gave Himself for you. Its archway is empurpled with the rich clusters of fruitage the hidden Vine in the heavenlies is seeking to bear through you, His yielded branch. It echoes with the shouts of victory of those who walk its blessed path. It is resplendent with the

glory of God which shines from the lives that walk therein in the light of His face to face presence. Oh, what a highway is this! Have you entered it?

Published by and available from:
SILVER PUBLISHING SOCIETY
2700 Stuart Avenue
Richmond, VA 23220

A Ministry of the Braille Circulating Library
Write for a free listing of other publications.