

# Divine Guidance

by Loudon Hamilton

**GUIDANCE** is no new idea. We are all guided by something: by money and status; by what the neighbours think; by sex, success and security; by self-interest, self-importance and self-concern; wanting to have our own way and to control others, thinking we know best and can cope.

We can be guided by some pet ambition or private relationship; by our reactions and feelings, our likes and dislikes, our moods; by our attitudes and habits; by some bitterness, disappointment or hurt from the past; by fear of making a mistake, being criticised or laughed at.

Fear is the worst form of guidance. All these things, and many more, do in fact guide us in ordinary life, often unconsciously.

But they are not the kind of guidance we are thinking of now. Just the opposite.

Guidance is a triangle between you, God and the other person. Power flows round if there is no break. The only thing that can break that power is sin. Sin in us not the other person. **SIN** with the big capital 'I', the *ego* in the centre.

It may be some sin we won't let go. Something in our lives we will not call sin or be honest about. Some habit we will not let go, like impure thoughts or any such private indulgence.

Some person we won't forgive, some apology we won't make.

Some guidance we have already had but have not obeyed.

Something we won't seek God's guidance about because we know quite well what the answer would be if we did.

Some point at which we have stopped fighting and ceased to expect change.

So we accept the second best, calling it 'realistic'. It may be just atheistic.

What is the answer?

One of the first things I heard Dr Buchman say was that God can put a thought in a person's mind. 'So live that God can say "hullo" to you at any time of the day or night.'

Guidance requires two things—absolute honesty and a readiness to obey.

Guidance is for everything or it's nothing. Don't be like the young man who said he hurried through his guidance in the morning so he could have the rest of the day to himself.

If we hold back at one point, we are powerless at all points. If we compromise anywhere, we are compromised everywhere. Remember, it is always the last five per cent that counts.

Don't use God like the Fire Brigade: only call on Him in a crisis, and when that's over, carry on in the same old way. A young lady once said that whenever she saw her mother on her knees, she knew something awful had happened in the family.

Why not deal with the things that caused the crisis in the first place?

We humans often love to get along in our strength—only when we have reached our limit do we ask for help.

## Reaching our limits

A Scottish farmhand in remote Glencoe who had never seen the sea decided to spend his holiday at the well-known seaport town of Oban. He even ventured out in a rowing boat, but soon found himself in very rough water. Thoroughly frightened he began to pray: 'Oh God, if only you will get me back to Oban, I will get back to Glencoe by myself.'

It is sometimes asked, is not guidance just your conscience? Of course it is conscience, but it is more than that.

An Indian boy once told Buchman: 'My conscience tells me the difference between right and wrong. My guidance tells me what is the right thing to do at the time.'

Conscience corrects. Guidance directs. Of course, consciences are sometimes flexible. A doctor introduced himself once at a meeting. 'My name is so-and-so, pulse 200. I have very little conscience left and what I have is guilty.'

A business man came to an MRA conference at Caux in Switzerland. He may have been a Scot. He heard a Swiss businessman say from the platform that he had returned a large sum of money to the Income Tax. The Scot was very upset. 'If I were to do that, it would not be absolute honesty, it

would be absolute bankruptcy.' He did not sleep much that night. Even when he got home he was still not at peace. So he wrote to his Tax Inspector, 'I have been to a place called Caux—my conscience is troubling me. Here is £500' and he signed his name. Then he added a postscript: 'If my conscience troubles me any more, I will send you the balance.'

Guidance is something to have daily, like breakfast, only have it before breakfast, first thing before the day starts. The violinist tunes his violin before the concert, not after. It sounds better that way.

Guidance begins the night before. Don't waste time getting to bed or talking late. You'll be fresher in the morning. Use an alarm clock if you have to, but agree with your room-mate about that. The day is won or lost in the first waking hour.

Take unhurried time to listen—enough time to forget time. Have a notebook and pencil handy and whatever book has for you divine authority. For the Christian that is the Bible.

Decide beforehand how long you are going to have for quiet and stick to it. Don't let anything or anyone interfere with that. Those with small children will understand what I mean.

It is natural to feel sleepy in the morning. A lady said to Dr Buchman: 'Oh Dr Buchman, I find it so hard to get up in the morning. How do you do it?' He replied: 'I just get up.'

Write down the thoughts you get, all of them. It makes them definite. Your mind is then free for the next thought.

You don't forget them. It is easy to forget. A man told his Doctor: 'My trouble is I cannot remember anything from one moment to the next.' Doctor: 'When did this trouble start?' Patient: 'What trouble?'

The length of time you need in the morning will grow as you do. St Francis de Sales (1567-1622 A.D.) said: 'The secret is to listen to the inner voice.' He taught that half an hour a day is the basic minimum, except when you are exceptionally busy. Then a full hour is necessary.

Continued overleaf

