

The Divine Teacher

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"Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." (Isaiah 48:17)

The speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is clear from the preceding verse, "and now the Lord God, and His spirit hath sent Me." The eternal love of the eternal Three is manifest in this verse. It is a great thing to me, increasingly great, to believe in the Trinity, to perceive one God subsisting mysteriously in three persons. As they are one in nature so are they one in their love, their decrees, their power, their wisdom and their faithfulness, but they are three distinct persons with three distinct offices in salvation.

The Father's part is seen in the election first of all of His dear Son to be the Saviour of the body of which He is the head, (Eph. 5:23) "Behold My servant.....Mine elect." (Isa. 42:1) This is the Lord of life and glory. The Father's part also is in sending His Son in whom He delights in our nature; to be the head of the body, the surety for the debtors, the justifier of the guilty, the liberator of the captives, the life of the dead, the light of the blind, the strength of the feeble and the purity of the impure. What a part did God the Father take in salvation's plan!

The part of the second Person in this glorious mysterious Godhead is to willingly do His Father's will, lovingly take on Him the nature He was predestinated to have, to receive the imputation of the sin of His people to Him in His human nature as united to His eternal Godhead. Love brought Him down, love made Him willing to be of no reputation, to take on Him the form of a servant, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to despise the shame, to endure the cross for the joy that was set before Him of having His bride; that out of His fullness they might live and in His presence they might be glorified and filled with everlasting bliss. He came, and says the Apostle John, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5:20)

The Apostle Paul wanted to know Him, says he, "That I may know Him." Can some of us appeal to the God of all grace and wisdom and understanding and say before His holy majesty that these desires live in us? that we at certain moments would gladly part with all to be found in Christ, to be united to Him, to be bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh and members of His body in particular? This union with Christ is the sum of all real religion and the fullness of grace and the manifestation of divine love and power and goodness. That worms of earth should ever be one with incarnate Deity is indeed a mystery and a mercy unspeakable.

The part of the Holy Spirit is here, in that He concurred with the Father in sending the Son. "The Lord God, and His Spirit hath sent me." The Father sent the Son having prepared a body for Him in His eternal purpose. In the fullness of time the Spirit came and by His divine overshadowing energy begat that wondrous, spotless human nature that the Son of God was destined by eternal decree to take into union with Himself. This wondrous mystery that angels desire to look into; and unitedly to thank, adore and bless God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the wondrous salvation revealed by the blessed Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture.

Heaven hangs here. Heaven flows from this mystery. Here is the river of the water of life flowing from beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb. Here is all a God can give, all a sinner can pray for, all a guilty creature can hope for under the teaching of the eternal Spirit. Here is the purpose that God has eternally made, that the church should be in the image of His dear Son. Here is that way in its completeness set before us in scripture, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate....moreover whom He did predestinate them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. 8:29,30) This full-orbed gospel is made the object of the fervent desire and prayer of every child of God, and as the Holy Spirit works in his soul, the desire to know and to be found in Christ grows.

Desire is not one of the first attainments only; it grows, and if I say to you that sometimes I feel as if all the religion I have consists in desire, you may be able to follow me. I desire this, said Paul. I desire that. I desire to be nothing. I desire to cast away, and utterly renounce and trample under the foot of my faith, all that I have by nature, by acquirement, by profession; and my soul's desire is to win Christ, to be found in Him, to know the power of His resurrection, to be justified in His righteousness and to stand in Him complete. With this sometimes you may be able to say, God give us this sweet, this blessed attainment, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

This great and glorious Jehovah, whose name and perfection may we revere, speaks in these words. "The Lord God, and His Spirit hath sent Me," and I being sent for this great end, say to My Israel in captivity, I am "thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Captives, this is to be the end, the issue of your prayers, desires and longings to hear Him say, I am thy Redeemer. He won't let His captives always groan in chains and languish in prison houses. He is not willing that He should be in one place and His children in another, that He should be at liberty, death having no more dominion over Him, and they should be under the power of death. The day is to come when He will bring them from their captivity:...."Thy Redeemer."

O! to be redeemed by blood, and then to be redeemed by power! To be redeemed in a moment, the moment the Saviour said, "It is finished," and then for that redemption to be made manifest in due time, in each individual conscience where guilt burdens and where death seems to reign. What a great thing this is."thy Redeemer." "Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer." Do we know what captivity means? Israel had long captivity; so Israel could praise redemption. "The Holy One of Israel:" that may make you shake. What, such a sinner come to God, and you may say: Lord, I am not fit to come. I am filthy in my nature. I am unspeakably wicked in my thoughts. I get angry, I am wrathful, I am proud, I am impure, I am hard, I am unbelieving and I am not fit to come to such a holy God. But then, "the Holy One of Israel" has holiness to impart; holiness to give away, if I may speak so familiarly. He has holiness to give to those who mourn

their pollution. Blessed be His name! The older some of us get the more we feel our pollution and the more we need "the Holy One of Israel" to make over to us His holiness.

Then He says, "I am the LORD thy God." I am Jehovah thy God. If we come by faith to see this God who was sent by the Father, who hung on Calvary's cursed tree, who was buried in the rich man's grave and who rose again by the power of God; this God who ascended into heaven and who has given by the Holy Spirit the blessed gospel in the Scriptures. "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." What happy people we are! Yes, and though you may not be able to say this now, if faith brings you to stretch out your soul after the knowledge and the expression of it, the day must come when you will. If you say in your heart: Lord come to me, bless me, save me, guide me, help me, leave me not, let not the pit shut her mouth upon me, let not any iniquity have dominion over me, will He not hear?

He is a good man who can say, "Christ only I seek." He is a good man who can say respecting the Lord Jesus, My heart is fixed there, I want the Redeemer and His mercy, His goodness and His grace, His love and all that He is for His children. I want Him to be all that to me.

"I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Teacheth, means that if we receive this into our hearts, we shall be scholars and disciples that would often sit at His feet of whom it was said, "Never man spake like this man." How could it be? He came from heaven. He brought heaven's wisdom with Him; heaven's love and mercy; heaven's comfort and covenant, heaven's life and light and beauty and blessedness and liberty and glory. If we had but this God to teach us, to make us wise unto salvation, what a mercy! It was the teaching that enabled the Psalmist to say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers." (Ps. 119:99) They could teach him the letters of his own language and how to write it and how to speak it correctly, but they could not teach him the mysteries of the covenant of grace. They could not teach him what he was taught when he took five smooth stones out of the brook rather than have armour and sword given to him. Who taught him that? Who taught him to sling that unerring aim that brought the giant down? "I have more understanding than all my teachers....I understand more than the ancients," more knowledge than Job's three friends who in all their speeches showed so much ignorance of God and of His cause. David had knowledge for God was his teacher and yet he says, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." (Ps. 119:18)

Say christian, dost thou want a teacher? then go to the throne of grace where you will find One who will be discovered to you by His good Spirit. Then you will say in humble prayer sometimes: Do write lessons on my heart. My memory won't retain anything and memory is not the seat of religion, the soul is, the heart is, therefore write on my heart, let the instruction be the writing of God's own finger. Everything else will go away from us, will die away. If there be knowledge it shall fail, but this heavenly instruction written on the fleshy tables of the heart will last. So Paul says, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." (2 Cor. 3:3) Why a child of God can read you; and you can read a child of God! If you speak a few words out of God's own instruction in your heart, the child of God to whom you speak will find out where you got that feeling from; and you will find just the same in

your own heart when one should speak to you of divine teaching. You will say: that came from heaven into his soul and it will form a union that nothing else can, between the Lord's people.

A teacher. Dost thou want a teacher? Ask thy God and He'll provide. The covenant provides it. "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:11) And how is this to be? "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." One thing that seems to be the foundation of all the mercy in the covenant is this, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Do you feel foolish? Do you feel sometimes that you cannot understand what you read, that you do not understand the way you are going; that you do not know what is in your heart? What a mercy to feel it, because we are foolish whether we know it or not. "I am the LORD which teacheth thee to profit."

The teaching. The Teacher is God, and He teaches by preaching. He is anointed to preach. What does He teach? What makes His teaching profitable to us? He teaches a profitable lesson when He teaches us depravity and ruin. Who can value the Lord Jesus who does not know himself? Seldom should we think of prayer if we could do without the Lord. Never should we pray for a righteousness wrought out by Christ if we had one of our own in our own imagination. Never should we want to be plunged into the fountain of His infinite merit if we had no conception of our own pollution. Ah! but the Lord lights a candle and puts it into the soul. He searches His children with candles. "I will search Jerusalem with candles." It is not enough to have a general knowledge of things in the brain; that is not the seat of religion and God will put a knowledge of what you are into your very soul so that you won't be able to get rid of it. If He teaches you to profit, nobody will be able either to argue, or to lift you out of what He has taught.

"To see sin smarts but slightly;
To own, with lip confession,
Is easier still; but O to feel
Cuts deep beyond expression."

This is divine teaching and the life of God in your soul. Here is foundation instruction, teaching that prepares for the reception of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is what brings a sinner into the sensible and painful concern that he may have that preaching in his heart of which the prophet speaks, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek." (Isa. 61:1) This is a very painful lesson and because we are apt to forget and very wishful to forget it at times, He writes it again and again and again, "Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see yet greater abominations," see yet more painfully and feel your inclination to sin and your disinclination to God and to everything that is good and holy. Those of you who have been in the way of God and in the school of the Lord Jesus Christ for years, will be able to follow me when I say that in my beginning I did not half know what a sinner I was. I know something more now and I would not be without the instruction that this gracious Teacher writes on my heart of my sinfulness and ruin, because I find it makes me prize Him more. I want Him more. I need a great deal more saving today than I did in the beginning; I speak experimentally. Salvation is complete in Christ and was so from eternity. But when you come into the knowledge of things you want saving. So that is a heart-felt humbling lesson, penetrating

to the depths of your soul and to the ruin there and to the corruptions that are there and to the bondage to sin that is natural to us all.

This, gazed on under the gospel is a sacred thing, and deeply humbles, but it does not drive us away from God. The law does drive us, but the sacred teaching of Christ does not drive us away from Him. Do you understand me? I am sure you do, because these deeper discoveries that are made to you of your ruin turn you to Him and make you say: Save me from myself. You see the gospel to have everything in it you need, the Lord Jesus to be everything you can pray for, and so your heart is turned toward Him. "He teacheth thee to profit."

He "teacheth thee to profit," when He teacheth thee of thy weakness. "My weak resistance O, how vain." He teaches you your weakness and inability and non-submission in the matter of taking up your cross and following Him; of your inability to pray an acceptable prayer, or to desire Himself acceptably. He teaches you your ignorance of the way you ought to go, and then He says, "This is the way, walk ye in it." This I find very wholesome, humbling and sobering. It makes one feel sometimes that one would give all your best things for meat to relieve your soul of the trouble you come into by reason of sin felt and feared in the conscience.

The Lord thy God teaches you to profit when He teaches you the utter valuelessness of all religion except that which comes from Him. That is a cure for idolatry, for self-reliance, for self-wisdom and self-strength. Long captivity cured Israel of idolatry, and divine teaching in our hearts will cure us of the same. Watch this in your own case. There is a peculiar interest in every child of God at times in watching the growth of the knowledge of sin, and the next thing is that Christ by His Spirit teaches His people to know Himself. Who He is; why He came: what love brought Him; the end He had in coming to suffer bleed and die; the end He had when He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He teaches us all these things. He lets the light to shine into our hearts upon His priestly office and sacrifice; upon His prophetic office and how He is the One who came from heaven to speak His Father's will and to say what His Father taught him to say; and upon His kingship. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

Now when He teaches by His Spirit His priestly office and sacrifice, is not that profitable? Does it not bring you to say to Him, looking by faith upon the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness,

"Put me in with Thy own hands
And that will make me well."

Is that not one effect of His own blessed teaching? O! the beauty of the merit of Christ. O! the attraction of the merit of Christ. The one thing in your heart is; this would make me perfect; this would make me acceptable to God; this would deliver me from the bondage of sin and corruption; and this would make me a child of God. You will find it is a profitable teaching when this goes on; that there is one particular effect, and that is that it draws you after Himself. "That I may win Christ." That I may stand in Him. That I may have life from Him, and light and mercy and truth and righteousness and peace and comfort and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is profitable. O! we hang about Him, and cannot let Him go when we are taught what He is. He will fill your eye sometimes. If your eye is single your whole body is full of light, and you can see the right way

from hell to heaven. He will fill your eyes, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12) You do not stumble then and it will fill your thoughts. You will be thinking of Him and of His name as it is written of those who desired to fear Him and did fear Him; they thought upon His name, and He wrote a book of remembrance of their thoughts. How kindly they thought of Him. How great were their thoughts about Him. How wonderful these thoughts. They stretched beyond time. They stretched beyond all sin. They went higher than guilt and deeper than ruin, and broader and longer than all a man's wandering and sinning against a good God. These thoughts are such as to carry the soul away in given prayer and in supplication. O! what a Christ He is to teach a poor sinner to see and believe in His infinite merit, His infinite goodness, His everlasting righteousness, His omnipotence to save. He teaches us the value of prayer:

"Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give;
Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray they live."

What value there is in prayer; that relief we get from trouble; what prospect is set before us sometimes when we pray; what a sight there is of a good God, with His heart full of love, His hands full of mercy and willingness, moving Him to bless us with answers of peace. He says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

They would often be at His footstool, going with their cases, finding errands in their straightness and weakness; finding in all these things errands to the throne of His heavenly grace. One would wish to be in that frame that the Apostle speaks about when he says, "Being careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

He "...teacheth thee to profit." He teacheth thee also the greatness and blessedness of love. The love of God which is in Christ Jesus and from which the church shall never be separated.

"O love divine, how sweet Thou art!"

Happy the sinner who can say,

"When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?"

Sometimes you will put the emphasis on willing, and say: Lord I have not a willing heart; and sometimes you can say: Lord, it is a willing heart; it is a bad heart, but I have nothing better to bring to Thee, but it is a willing heart; I do want that love.

The Lord teaches you also the greatness, and the necessity, and the blessedness of His intercession. "He ever liveth to make intercession," for His people. Before God He presents the infinite worth of His blessed death. O! the blessed death of Jesus Christ. He is now in heaven

before God and as He is before God as the lamb having the marks of His death upon Him. He is a prevailing Intercessor. The Lord Jesus Christ entered heaven with His own blood, with His own infinite worth and merit, having given His life a ransom for many to be justified in due time.

The Lord teaches this also, that there is no good without the Holy Ghost in any sinner. No knowledge, no faith, no hope, no love; nor can you know the Lord Jesus nor call Him Lord without the Holy Ghost. Says the Apostle, "I give you to understand,....that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12:3) This profits a sinner, and makes him say; Give me Thy Holy Spirit to teach me."

The Lord teaches us to profit by afflictions which come and stir us up and make us know that this is not our rest. A cross is a profitable teacher; an affliction is very profitable; emptiness is profitable though unpleasant; weakness is profitable to us though mortifying. All these are profitable. We must walk this way. We must know what it is to be under the influence that will make us see we are in that condition that the Lord Jesus Himself speaks about when He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing;" nothing that is acceptable to God; nothing that would bring profit to your soul. I am sure some of you believe all this and you will be enlarging in your own minds now, and saying mentally things that I have not said. May the Holy Ghost help us to inwardly enlarge on this profitable teaching.

The final clause in the text is, "which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Not, the way thou wouldest go. I do not want anyone to tell me the way that my flesh would go if it could have its own way, and you may say the same. When grace comes, its subject says: Lord, do not let me have my own way. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 16:25) Says the man of God: Lord do not let me walk that way, it is a slippery way, a deceiving way, a broad easy way and the gate into it is very wide. Do not leave me to walk in that way. In what way is it that the Lord leads us? "The way that thou shouldest go." You are to go to heaven. This is the way appointed. We walk by faith not by sight. That is the way, and when we are perplexed as to which way to turn, what to do, or what not to do, what to receive and what to refuse, the Lord may give you faith to leave all things below and look to Him alone for everything. Look to Him for supplies of temporal good, supplies of spiritual life and power and understanding; supplies of prayer for prayer that goes to heaven comes from heaven in the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Look to Him for supplies of hope that you may hope against hope; of love that you may not be offended in the Lord Jesus, of patience that you may wait on Him humbly and look to Him and seek to have His will done; and look to Him for supplies of all things that are needed for life and godliness, for time and eternity. This is the best way you can walk. It is a way in which sometimes you seem to be on wings of fervent desire, seeing the suitableness and the graciousness and the tenderness and the love of the Lord Jesus. This is the way.

This way is celebrated remarkably in that notable chapter, the eleventh of Hebrews, "By faith," it is written, "by faith." All is by faith. They left the world by faith. They kept the Passover by faith, the blood of sprinkling by faith. By faith they sought a city whose builder and maker is God. By faith they forsook the world and esteemed the treasures of Egypt nothing. All by faith. It is a mortifying way to flesh but a profitable way to the spirit. "I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee in the way that thou shouldest go." Even when we are

godly we want to go a good deal by the way of sight and sense. I am sure you believe that, you know it yourselves those of you who are walking in the fear of God, there is a disposition always to turn in to self and walk by sense only. Sense will follow faith, faith will not follow sense. When you go by sense and sense alone you are not walking in the way you should walk, but when you walk by faith the time will come when sweet sense and feeling will follow sense, and it is a good feeling then. Sense will take us wrongly, sense will put us in a wrong way, sense will make us misjudge the Lord and misjudge His dealings and His providence, but faith will not, faith won't hear a bad report of Him. Sense brings up a bad report of Him. Faith will say the way is straight, sense says it is crooked; faith will say the way is right, sense says it cannot be because there are so many difficulties in it. Well are we exhorted in the hymn,

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Following this, the way we should go is the way of prayer. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you;" "Pray without ceasing;" "Make known your requests to God;" "Call upon Me in the day of trouble;" "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." But this is difficult. He who finds no difficulties in the way of prayer probably never prays. The devil won't let you go to heaven by prayer without molesting you if he is permitted, and unbelief won't let you go Scot free. There will be bars and blocks and stones and boulders and mountains and difficulties in the way. It is hard to pray sometimes. This is God's way. Why? Because we have to go through tribulation. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Therefore come to Me, your Captain. Cast your care on Me who was here below your sin-bearer and I will bear your cross, I will carry the cross and you also. I will bear you in My own arms; you who are so weak. Prayer was appointed as the way for us. This is the way to heaven.

The way we should go is also, the way of love. "We love Him because He first loved us." The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of love. Love is in Him, and it begets love in us when He lets it down into our hearts. How can you be as cold as a stone, as ice itself, if the love of Christ comes? It moves. It is difficult to love Him sometimes. John the Baptist found it very difficult when he was in prison, and Christ sent him no word and paid him no visit for a time. John's faith seemed to fail, he faltered, questioned whether his testimony on Jordan's bank was a true testimony. You would hardly have believed it if it had not been recorded that he who said, God "sent me to baptize with water,....Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He....and I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God." That same man sent two of his disciples from prison and said to Christ by them, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" You may think when you get it: I can never lose this mark that love has made on my heart. I can never forget it. Yet you may get such a long time of darkness and absence and silence on God's part that you begin to say: Was it real? You will not really give it up, as John did not, because his sending to Christ was proof that he had not given up; but he feared, and you will fear; but love still remains. It is a perfecting grace, a grace that will not, does not, cannot allow tormenting fear, when grace is prevailing. Love shall still remain, its glories cannot cease. This is the greatest grace, greater than faith and hope, for when they are no longer needed love will be there and fill the soul. And this is the Lord's way, walk in it.

It is a way of humility He will have us go. Trouble will mortify, but as it is sanctified it humbles. It makes us little in our own eyes. It shows us how dependent we are. It brings us to perceive we are nothing without Christ and can be nothing without Him, nor can we deny self without Him, nor walk in any pleasing way without Him. That makes a soul say: leave me not.

This is a way in which there is no lion, no ravenous beast. A way straight and so plain that he who runs, runs from the world to Christ; runs from self to Christ, may read the blessed truth, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37) This is the way. "I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." May it please the Lord to bless this scripture to our good, set out minds on Himself, and enable us to look to Him to be supplied with every good that we need. Amen.