

Divine Teaching

John 1: 38; John 11: 28; John 13: 13, 14; John 20: 16.

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Consideration of such a subject would surely result in our hearts overflowing with worship — albeit causing us to approach with unshod feet — holy ground indeed! Enshrined therein is infinite mercy, matchless grace, incomparable love. Divine Persons the Teachers of failing men! "They shall all be taught of *God*". Thus spake the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and thus spake our Lord (John 6: 45). "Ye call me the Teacher, . . . for I am so" — are the words of Christ Himself in John 13: 13 (New Trans.). "The Comforter, the Holy Spirit . . . *He* shall teach you all things," (John 14: 26). What vast potentiality is there! how scanty our appreciation of its content!

Early in the Bible record God said to Moses — "I will . . . teach thee" (Exodus 4: 12), and under the patient instruction of the blessed God this erstwhile reluctant, unresponsive servant became the greatest man of his generation — "Moses, the man of God" (Psalm 90).

In the verses from John's gospel the words variously given as "Rabbi," "Master," "Rabboni," all carry the thought of "Teacher," and as looking a little into the incidents recorded, we may see not only the gain received through the teaching, but the outstanding glory of the One who is the Teacher — our blessed Lord. As the rays of His glory and the sense of His most precious love illumine our hearts we shall readily allow the teaching of this wonderful Saviour and Lord to be unchallenged in our lives. Such teaching, by such a Teacher, is worthy of the utmost response. "Gracious words" words of "authority and power" (Luke 4) proceeding from the lips of One who, having demonstrated His love and grace towards us in the poverty which marked Him here in Manhood (2 Corinthians 8: 9), is nevertheless the One "who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9: 5).

Precious beyond words is the atmosphere surrounding this first mention of the "Teacher" in John's writings! The preceding verses are replete with the glory of His Person; John, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, reaches back to a "beginning" before time and writes "In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God." Eternal in existence, distinct in personality, Divine in nature! Uncreated — the Creator Himself of all that exists! Do we not read with wonder that such a One as He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us"? As we contemplate the glory of His Person and His creatorial power, we listen with amazement to the words of His herald — "Behold the *Lamb* of God." Ah! beloved brethren who can measure the depth of suffering and yet the supremacy of glory hidden in that expression — the "Lamb of God"! It is this testimony that draws hearts to Himself, "Teacher where abidest Thou?"

How blessed this first reference to the Teacher is! Not immediately to be instructed in doctrine, but to reach Him as the gathering Centre of the heart's affections; to reach where *He* abides; to breathe the atmosphere pervading that scene of holy joy; to abide with One whose own dwelling place is the "bosom of the Father." No other gathering-point can compare with this; here only does the heart find its rest, its peace, its joy; a blessed realm fragrant with the incense of holy love and lighted with the rays of a glory which that love would sacrifice itself to secure in eternal display; a sphere where Jesus — wondrous Teacher indeed — would tell us of the Father's love, the Father's Name, the Father's house, thrilling our hearts with the sweetness and blessedness of His Father's words. Beloved brethren, may our affections be found more and more responsive to His gracious words "Come and see." They *abode*

with *Him*". Blessed indeed to experience something of the sweetness implicit in John's oft-repeated word — abide! continue! dwell! Our hearts are charmed as we meditate upon the precious content of this gospel by John, following with joy and wonder as we see the glory of One who ever abode in the Father's love; His pathway devoted completely to the will of God; hearing the words of His Father and finding His own joy in doing His Father's works. As by the leading of the Holy Spirit we appreciate — and assimilate — the grandeur of this most wondrous *objective* truth, shall we not with gladdened hearts respond to the Apostle's *subjective* appeal, "And now, children, *abide in Him*" (1 John 2: 28).

The incident in the beginning of John 8, where we find this word "Teacher" on the lips of His enemies, again manifests the glory of our Lord. Completely void of honesty and uprightness the scribes and Pharisees attempt to use the law to entangle the Lord, not realizing that if He applied the law they, together with the whole world, would be condemned. Self-condemned they leave the scene to One who, having searched heart and conscience, could yet dispense mercy. How precious the teaching of the following verses, indicating that in following Him the sphere of moral darkness and death would be exchanged for a path leading to the "light of life." What surpassing glory shines in the Person of One who came "not . . . to condemn" but to establish by His death and resurrection the rights of God in sovereign mercy.

In the record of John 11 we discover a further ray of divine glory radiating from our Lord as Teacher. The details shew the desire of the Lord that His own should witness this glory — "Let us go unto him." Lazarus was dead; the grave and corruption held him, but the Lord knowing what He would do, would have His disciples with Him. Wondrous grace! Martha and Mary were loved by the Lord — and they loved Him; but they were to learn His love and power, and the glory of His Person in a way not known before. Death had extinguished their hopes, but they were to learn that death must yield before the power of the Son of God. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" were words which (as another has said) could be said of the greatest enemies of Christ. Divine power will effect this, but that power was resident in Jesus. He is "the resurrection and the life." Faith in Him can appreciate the wonder of His own words — "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Precious words of *the Teacher*, to be fulfilled in all their blessedness when He raptures His saints to Himself. What volumes for our hearts are to be found in that shortest verse — "Jesus wept." The glorious Son of God (the very occasion itself marking Him out as such "with power") weeping in the presence of death. We cannot think that His tears were confined to the sorrow of the sisters — He was about to turn their sorrow into joy; those tears revealed the deep feelings of His heart as He contemplated the awful havoc that sin and death had made in His fair creation. As He entered so feelingly into the sorrows of the human race, can we not rejoice with Him in the anticipation of that day when the triumphant cry shall go forth, "Death shall not exist any more" (Revelation 21: 4). Thus in the darkest circumstances would He teach us the unchallenged glory of His Person and the incomparable love of His tender heart. The sympathies of our precious Lord are unique (the original of the verb in v. 35 appears nowhere else in Scripture), and we rejoice as by the Holy Spirit we discern glories and power peculiar to Himself.

As the Lord washed the feet of His disciples (John 13) their hearts must have been affected by His love and consideration for them, but it is apparent from verse 7 that what He would *teach* them by His service was not understood by them until they later received the Holy Spirit. He had ever loved them, and now as going to the Father His love continues "unto the end." He was about to change His circumstances of rejection, in which the hatred and betrayal of men had manifested itself, for the affection and glory of His Father's presence. He must leave His own here in a hostile scene, but would assure them of His constant unceasing love for them — a love which would continue to serve them

through all. Love which could feel in every way for them as here, but more than this, love which would so serve them that they might have "part with Him" in the enjoyment of the Father's love and in communion with Him. He had served them here in circumstances of humility, as glorified in heaven He would serve them still.

Precious indeed to *our* hearts is the content of these verses as by the Holy Spirit we enter a little into the purport of their teaching; embracing as it does the Lord's present service as Priest and Advocate. How often we consider, and rightly so, the doctrinal bearing of this service; how incomparably blessed to understand and appreciate the unceasing love in which it is carried out! Love manifested in its perfection at every point in His pathway here; love which has conquered death; love which has nourished and cherished "His own" throughout the centuries of the Church's sojourn here; love which will never cease in the day of glory yet to come (Luke 12: 37). Such love has its own *rights*, and with adoring hearts we recognize the order of the words used by the Saviour in verse 14 — "the *Lord* and the Teacher." As in responsive affection we more readily yield to His claims as Lord so will our hearts be led into the joy and gain of divine teaching.

Mary Magdalene (John 20) sorrowful of heart and mystified by all that had happened comes to the sepulchre in early morn. The stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty — glorious *fact!* Others may find their home in the place where Jesus was not, but Jesus alone could satisfy the longings of Mary's heart. Unintelligent, but with an overflowing heart, she would have embraced her Lord, satisfied to have Him again in her circumstances here. Had she not proved the power of His love and known the preciousness of His company here? But He whom she had addressed as "Rabboni" would illumine her heart and mind with words the bearing of which transcended her every thought and desire. "I ascend to My Father, and your Father, and to My God, and your God." What wondrous words are these — association with Himself, uninterruptedly and for ever, before His Father and His God. Glorious realm of satisfied affections! The eternal heart of God rejoicing in those secured for His glory by the Son; the Son's affections gladdened by those given to Him by the Father, and myriads of the redeemed having hearts filled to overflowing with praise and worship, responsive to divine love throughout an eternal day.

Thus, as in John 1, divine teaching would conduct us to the very source of eternal love — the bosom of the Father, where in company with the Son, we may enjoy even now the secrets of love and glory which have filled that bosom from eternity.

Love divine, our present portion,
Heaven's choicest store,
Thee we worship, God and Father,
Thee adore!