

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. John 6:45.

These words of the Lord Jesus come in the middle of John chapter six, and are spoken to those who had just declared, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread'; that is, 'the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world', verses 33,34. To all outward appearances then here were sincere followers of Jesus, desiring the right things while not being ashamed to call him Lord. But Jesus knew what was in man, as he still does, and how to make separation between false and true sheep; between fair-weather professors and cross-bearing followers; in a word, he knows how to expose the goats, and strip the sheep's clothing off the wolves who like to come and raven the flock.

For Jesus said that there were many then, as there are many today, who will say unto him on the coming day of judgment, 'Lord, Lord...', who always had called him Lord in this life, though they had never 'done what he said', Luke 6:46; cp. Matt. 7:21,24. Likewise he said that his sheep, the true flock of God, hear his voice – not just read his words – 'and they follow me'; not, they follow their own interpretation of what they think he is saying, but they follow *him*, as taught, John 10:27,28.

Jesus will separate his sheep, and he will do it by speaking his word to them, Heb. 4:12, John 10:3-5; by his separating them from false professions in religion, cp. Acts 19:8,9, and by calling them out of the world and its mentality, 2 Cor. 6:17, Rom. 12:2; a new covenant command of the Saviour which will prove irresistible to the sheep; while the goats will read the words but hear nothing.

He separates by his doctrine: witness the following verses of this chapter regarding 'eating my flesh and drinking my blood', culminating in the testimony of the 'many' – all professing disciples – 'This is an hard saying; who can hear it', verses 48-60, cp. Matt. 13:13. And when their carnality in religion was well and truly exposed – for as Jesus' words are spirit and life, therefore 'the flesh profiteth *nothing*' – then, verse 66, 'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him', never to walk with him again; and no, Jesus didn't call after them and try to put his doctrine in an easier-to-accept way – and certainly not in a 'fun' way – but, letting them go, he turned to his true disciples, save one, and asked if they also would go away; to which Peter

replied, as one being taught of the Father (our text): ‘Lord, to whom *shall* we go? Thou, thou, THOU, hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.’

Jesus separates by the application of ‘the truth’ into which he leads his sheep experimentally, giving them a desire for greater fulness of understanding of the truth as it pertains to Christ and his gospel, and to all aspects of their lives, regardless of the cost to themselves: John 17:17, 18:37, Prov. 23:23, John 8:30-36, etc., Luke 9:23. But those who are not his sheep, though they be found in the places where his voice sounds, Luke 13:23-27, Matt. 22:14, hate his truth in their hearts, John 8:44, Mark 7:6, despising and rejecting him *there* – although this is not always so apparent outwardly – and rail upon all in whom his truth is planted by his teaching.

So here, in John chapter six, we have the Lord Jesus separating those in whom is no love for the truth from those who are being taught of God: ‘No man can come to me,’ declared Jesus, ‘except’ – unless – ‘the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets,’ Isa. 54:13, cp. also Jer. 31:33,34, Micah 4:2, ‘And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.’

It is sadly true to say that were the Lord Jesus to come and preach in the churches of our land today the same thing as happened in John 6 would occur again; many would ‘go back and walk no more with him’, for his words remain ‘hard sayings’, and who, but the sheep, can hear them? Even that declaration is separating. What am I saying? That *most* who go to church or chapel – whether they be found in pulpit or pew – and who profess Christ are actually false disciples? Well, yes, that is what Jesus says! Matthew 7:21-23.

But when this truth is brought before them they rage against [his words], thereby proving the Saviour to be true indeed. Yet they go on professing, believing, praising, worshiping, yea, and preaching too, and ‘doing many wonderful works in his name’, etc. – although he doesn’t know them – a truth they have yet to realise, but then too late – and roundly condemn and ostracize those who repeat his words, who fear at the import of them, and who seek to warn in the light of them. But ‘twas ever thus; *because* ‘many’ *are* to appear at the day of judgment with the words, ‘Lord, Lord’ frantically spluttering from

their lips, who presently will be cast into the lake of fire *by their Lord* – or at least, they thought he was. Oh, horror of horrors!

So we come to consider what it is to be ‘taught of God’; for only those thus taught will learn aright, and come to Christ truly, never to be cast out, verse 37.

Now it has to be said that to be taught, and to learn, are things which many people enjoy, especially those with ‘a form of godliness’; for Paul writes ‘of this sort’ that they are ‘ever learning’, and yet with their amassed and increasing knowledge they ‘never come to a knowledge of the truth’, 2 Tim. 3:1-7. But they love to learn, and to be taught. They love to take the Bible, read it, study it, digest it, and use it as a text book on ‘how to live’, who, although admired of all for their ‘good Christian lives’, never actually *learn of God at all* – hence Matthew 7:21-23. No, having entered into their Christian profession through a wide gate, a way taught only by men and never by God; and although professing to be ‘Bible-believing Christians’, they in fact overlook verses like 1 John 2:27 and Galatians 1:11-17. ‘Ah, but those kind of verses’, they say, ‘are for those more ‘devotional’ types, even ‘existential’ types’ – as I heard someone say once; ‘for we don’t recognize the concept of *not* being taught of men!’ If they did, then why would they concentrate so much on the letter of scripture in all their note taking in the sermons, discipleship classes, Bible study groups, college courses, seminaries, exams, and degrees?

But Jesus, who they profess to follow, or at least believe in, says that all who come to him aright *are* taught *of God*; John, the beloved apostle, whose writings they love to study in the letter, said that they had *no need* that any man should teach them; and the Lord *did* confirm to Peter that his blessedness was as a result of the Father’s revelation, and not of the teaching of men – ‘flesh and blood’, Matt. 16:17. Nevertheless, because they lack this teaching of the Father they must teach themselves, and they must learn of others.

But God’s own, *he* teaches. He teaches them, they hear, and they learn of him; they come, therefore, to Christ, and he raises them up, and *only* them, on the last day – assuredly.

To be taught of God is to have the God of heaven break into our hearts and minds with divine light and revelation. It is to receive a new nature; totally different to the old, first-born nature – one which God never, in grace, communicates with. This new nature only yearns after God, hungers and thirsts

after a saving knowledge of him, his will and ways. It naturally and fundamentally abhors and distrusts the flesh and everything which emanates from what Paul calls 'the carnal mind', Rom. 8:7, which, being irreparable, just sins, sins, sins. That carnal, or fleshly, mind is not just merely the enemy of God, but is *at enmity* against God, naturally and constantly.

But the untaught man – the man not taught of God – who never has these desires, is left to employ the natural mind – in ignorance of its natural state – in trying to make himself acceptable to God. Hence his following after works, immersing himself in the law and academic Christianity, employing natural repentance, and self procured faith, with a turning to legal 'this do and live' preachers who feed their natural desire to grow as (carnal) Christians. But it is all a denial of the grace of God – although lip-service is paid to the scriptural doctrine of grace. But a true knowledge of the nature of grace, having never been received, escapes them completely. And no wonder, for when the grace of God which bringeth salvation appears to a man, it teaches him! Titus 2:11-14, and teaches him aright, with the effect of, among other things, the aforementioned separation from all fleshly religion.

The shining of light from heaven into the soul, therefore, teaches natural corruption. It exposes the depths to which man is fallen in sin. It shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. It teaches that God must make 'all things new', that a man must be born again if he is to see the kingdom of God, for the old man is dead to God, cursed in his sin, under just condemnation, at constant enmity, and must be judged by that law which he thinks gives him life – not knowing or feeling the curse that it brings. But when the light of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ begins to shine into and illuminate the heart of the newly made man – as being taught of God – then all these other legal employments will be fled from as one flees the plague.

Divine teaching, which is divine revelation, *unveils* truth hitherto hidden and unknown, thus Matt. 16:17. To be taught of God is to have the truth of God, the truth of his Son, and the truth of the work of his Spirit brought to light, so as to reveal not only the total reprobation, natural unbelief, constant rebellion and enmity of the natural man in his own eyes, but to reveal it to such a degree that the soul will seek for all his life – and his eternal state now rests upon it – the truth of how he *might* be saved, if God will, and saved aright; for he knows by now that salvation can only be all of God.

And this teaching will sooner or later separate him from the general swathe of professing Christianity which is mostly devoid of life-saving truth, as it is devoid of the gospel of Christ and therefore of the power of God which brings salvation, Rom. 1:16. Such is the bankrupt state not only of the Spirit-taught soul, but of the ministry of the modern church, that these 'slight healers', Jer. 6:14, cannot even begin to describe the malady, let alone expound the doctrine of the cure.

'*Simply believe*' they cry. 'Believe what...?' replies the soul under conviction of sin in his soul, '...that I am not in this pit? that I am not in the dark? that I am not blind?' 'Ah, but look to Jesus and live!' The reply comes. 'What? Look with blind eyes! See into heaven from the sides of the pit, while sinking lower in the mire?' 'Believe the gospel then!' 'What? Believe the gospel when I am *struggling* all I can to *get myself out* of this dreadful state?' (Oh, how *can* a working man believe!) 'Are you telling me that I have the ability to believe myself out of this state?' Miserable comforters, false prophets, and blind to their own state – despite the name of Jesus on their lips – all of them.

This is to be taught of God, and it will be a lesson which they will attend all their lives – alas, alas. To be taught of God is to have all self-effort, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency 'rooted out, pulled down, destroyed, and thrown down', Jer. 1:10, till there is 'nothing with which to pay' – and nothing *means* not a thing, no thing, not a scrap with which to pay God for salvation, for mercy, for grace; no, and barely a cry is left with which one hopes to be heard. Yes, it goes that far, because the bankruptcy must be shown – by the teaching – to be total. *God* must save; *God* must rescue; *God* must work; it is *his* will and *his* work in you; it is *his* work that ye should believe, John 6:28,29; for – and here is the thing that the natural man hates, despises and detests the most – it is *God* that must have ALL THE GLORY in the salvation of the soul.

All who trust to works and self-righteousness; to believing freely-offered texts; to relying upon their own acts of repentance – acts nothing different in nature to the world's 'resolutions' of January 1<sup>st</sup> each year – all, actually, despise Christ and his cross, for they are setting themselves up to procure salvation by their own labours instead of looking to Christ alone: to his broken body and shed blood alone for all that is required in God's eyes to bring in salvation for them. Try to offer one scrap of self-worth to God and you make the cross of Christ of none effect and trample upon his blood. God will save by his way alone, and it is by his Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Well pleased? Yes. Pleased to the full. Completely pleased. Pleased so totally

and absolutely that there is no room for, nor any desire after, any other sacrifice, righteousness, work, obedience, faith, to be brought from any other quarter to satisfy God and enable him to bring in and declare salvation for his people. *So why, O religious man, wilt thou keep trying?!*

Works? But without *faith* it is impossible to please God. Faith? Exercise your own faith? But yours is only a natural faith which, deep down, seeks only to preserve self but not glorify God. True saving faith is a gift of God, and it is found exclusively in Christ to bestow upon whom he will. In Christ? Yes, of course; after all he is the Author and Finisher of faith, Heb. 12:2. True faith resides only in him. So how can you exercise faith towards God if all the faith he requireth resides out of your reach in his Son? No, he will give it when you are brought to see, and know, and *feel*, and *despair* that you have no faith, and can never hope to exercise saving faith; *then* to realise that salvation is to be freely given.

What do people actually think the work of the cross was? A foundation, only, of their salvation? A first step taken by Christ to procure the possibility of salvation for them, while their faith or acceptance was further needed to make the work complete? No, salvation would then be, ultimately, of the sinner who finished the work with his own belief. But that would make Christ the author only and not the finisher of saving faith.

But salvation was fully completed at the cross: after all Jesus did cry, 'It is finished.' All the enemies of the lost soul for whom Christ died were defeated at the cross when Christ's body was broken, his blood was shed, and when he 'gave up the ghost.' Christ *died*, the just for the unjust. He met, overcame and finally vanquished all the powers of Satan, death and hell in his dying and rising again. His soul was made an offering for sin – *he* was made sin for his people. He also bore away their actual sins in his body on the tree. He took upon himself all the righteous judgment of God upon sin and sins in himself. He was judged, condemned and damned by God who saw him in the place of sacrifice as though he were all his people gathered together to the bar of judgment to be judged, condemned and damned – except they weren't there! Behold, it was the Lamb of God – God's own lamb – which *he* brought and sacrificed for them, Isa. 53:6,10. God sacrificed his own Son *for* them! In their place. As them. They sinned, he was punished. They broke God's holy law, he took the penalty of death for their transgression, instead of them – in their stead. God looked down upon them in their sin and transgressions, declared them 'guilty', and then

turned and passed sentence upon his Son. And when all had been carried out: the sentence passed, the punishment delivered, the justice satisfied, the Lamb slain, the sacrifice burnt up, the sin-offering made, the sins borne away; the Saviour cried, 'It is finished', bowed his head and, literally, 'breathed out his spirit' and died.

And as it was all done 'for us' – as Paul says countless times in his writings to the people of God – then it was, all in all, a complete substitutionary sacrifice, fully wrought, totally accomplished and once for all time finished; salvation was completed; God's people were saved there and then – for God counted them to have been *in Christ* on the cross, punishing them for their sin and sins in his Son. This is why Paul could write, '*In* whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins', Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:14. So when Christ died, they died. When Christ lay in the tomb, they lay in the tomb. When Christ rose from the dead, they rose from the dead. When Christ ascended into heaven forty days later, they ascended with him and are now with him 'seated in heavenly places', because they are counted by God – as they always have been – to be 'in Christ Jesus', Eph. 2:4-6.

As far as God is concerned, his people, in Christ, at the cross, were there and then fully justified by his blood, redeemed from the curse of the law, and sanctified; yea, they were saved for ever! 'Who *hath* saved us', past tense. Now the Spirit of God is sent into the world to teach all those people for whom Christ died, that their salvation is complete in him, giving them the gift of faith to see it and believe it when they so feel their need of it. It is not so much that they believe *to be* saved, but that they are given the gift of faith to look to Christ to see that they *have already* been saved. Therefore salvation is seen to be all of God in the working of it from beginning to end – the sinner 'merely' being brought to see that his salvation is all in Christ, and by his blood alone. Now, where are works? and where is free will in all that? Yea, where is boasting? It is all excluded!

Oh, why *do* we want to pay? Because we *will* have glory. Even in our most wretched, miserable, helpless state; even when gasping for one last breath, pride will raise its ugly head (and it remains alive and well, thank you very much) and cry, Let me just give God a mite, a scrap, a good thought even, one heaven-ward glance, a natural inclination, so that salvation may not be *all* of God! Not *all* of God, surely! No, but pride must go too: the last bastion must fall.

Being taught of God then is a drawing away from self so totally that there is nowhere else to look but to Jesus Christ, to the revealed Saviour, by faith, as the worker of salvation, the completer of salvation, yea, and as his name suggests, as Salvation itself. 'They come to *me*', he said. Indeed, 'Come unto me.'

But to which Jesus do they come? To the historical Jesus to be found merely on the pages of scripture? To a corn of wheat yet abiding alone? John 12:20-27. To one hanging on a 'wondrous' 'old rugged' cross as seen with the outward eye only? To one crucified and in a tomb? But he is not there! He is risen! No; they come to a risen, living, ascended Jesus that dwells in glory *now*, having sprinkled his blood on the heavenly mercy-seat – or, place of propitiation – who ever liveth to make *present* intercession for them. They don't rely on millennia old doctrines amassed in the head, gleaned from all their favourite texts, applied to their natural willingness to take them and apply them presumptuously to give themselves the full assurance of salvation, *without ever having felt a thing* – save a few pricks of conscience and a shudder at the thought of hell. No, they come not to an historical Jesus, not to a pre-cross Jesus, not even to merely a resurrected Jesus still on earth, but to an ascended, seated and reigning Jesus, to the Man currently at God's right hand, Acts 5:31, Heb. 12:22-24.

God teaches his people thus to look to the ascended Saviour alone. Oh, how many will glory in a two thousand year old Christ while denying a contemporarily working Christ. Why? *Because he doesn't, and has never worked in them*, therefore all they have is a head knowledge of, and presumptuous faith in the man of years gone by. But it must be One who comes and makes his dwelling-place *in* you. The only assured Saviour is he that is found living and reigning in you, thus being to you 'the hope of glory'. Christ by his Spirit indwells his people as their very life. He is the light of life to them. He is the light of the world to them. He manifests himself – in their living daily experience in this deadly wilderness – as their resurrection and their life. He communicates to them; his sheep hearing his presently speaking voice. No imagination, no merely read words off the page, can overcome the power of the world in you; no self-taught, though sincerely believed, doctrines in the brain can drive away the legal, carnal spirit which *must* work in us unto self-righteousness and self-destruction; except the power of the Person and presence of the victorious Lord and Saviour abides and overcomes in you.

So then, in the light of all this, look up, all ye convicted of sin, condemned under the law, and lost. Cry for faith to behold him, the Lamb of God, risen, ascended, seated, and interceding. Look to his blood, shed on earth and sprinkled in heaven, which therefore has cleansed, covered, and washed away your sin, borne it away, propitiated the wrath of God, and met divine justice which otherwise would have raged against your sin for ever. Behold him 'the end of the law for righteousness', having brought in justifying righteousness, even the very righteousness of God, by his faith to justify you freely. Look to Christ who has sanctified you wholly unto God. He who indeed is all your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption – for you will have at least learnt by now that all your wisdom is nothing but foolishness with God, and all your righteousnesses are nothing but filthy rags.

Look to Christ. Salvation is by his blood alone – can you hear? BY HIS BLOOD alone! Still not convinced? Still not sure? Are you still working? Still trying to keep the law? Still acting sanctimoniously from midnight Saturday to midnight Sunday? You hypocrite! You Pharisee! Still setting yourself up against Christ? His blood not enough? Where exactly is the scripture which tells you that God is looking for anything other than the shedding of the blood of the Innocent for the remission of sins? When you have found it then you can justifiably tear Christ off his cross, and off his throne, prove God a liar, despise the avowed work of the Holy Ghost – which is called 'blasphemy against the Holy Ghost' – win salvation by corrupt works, disannul grace, and open the floodgates to populate heaven with proud men who entered there in the teeth of all revealed scripture and to the confounded consternation of God himself! Some heaven! Sounds more like the present evil world to me. But we are to be delivered *out* of this present evil world!

How often we have sung the words of Toplady, but forgotten the wonderful truth on our lips as we've wallowed in the stirring tune: listen without the music to what he prayed:

NOTHING in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling.  
NAKED come to thee for dress,  
HELPLESS look to thee for grace,  
FOUL I to the fountain fly,  
Wash me Saviour, OR I DIE!

Is that really our testimony before the eyes of the God that searcheth the heart? Is that our experience? Have we truly been brought there by the teaching of the Father? If we haven't then we are still lost, regardless of the profession of our lips, despite all our good works, and regardless of what we do on a Sunday.

And *when* they had *nothing to pay*, he frankly forgave them both, Luke 7:36-50. Lord, if *thou wilt*, thou canst make me clean', Matt. 8:1-4.

This is something of what God teaches. And this is what God brings all his people to; for it is his eternal purpose to bring them to a knowledge of the salvation so freely wrought for them upon the cross. And this teaching will bring with it true assurance of salvation and the peace of God which passeth all understanding; as saith the prophet,

‘And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD;  
and great shall be the peace of thy children.’

Isaiah 54:13.

---

(For a fuller discussion of what it means to ‘hear the voice of Christ’ please see ‘Contentions’, chapter 4, part iii: ‘My sheep hear my voice’, elsewhere on this site.)