

The Fruits and Marks of the Lord Being Our God

Preached at Providence Chapel, Eden Street, London, on Tuesday Evening, July 10, 1849

"I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Isaiah 48:17

God has a peculiar people. We may believe it or we may believe it not; our faith or our unbelief does not alter the solemn fact. *That* stands upon the foundation of immutable truth. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. 2:13.) But I may go a step further. I may assume there is not a single individual in this congregation who doubts that truth. I may suppose there is not a person present here this evening who is not persuaded that God has a peculiar people. But you may believe that, and yet have no interest in it. There are hundreds of persons who believe that God has a peculiar people, who live and die without being one of that peculiar people. Balaam believed that God had a peculiar people; for he would have cursed them if he dared, and was only prevented from cursing them by the restraining power of God. When Ahithophel took sweet counsel with David, and walked to the house of God in company with him, their "sweet counsel" was not upon human merit, or the sufficiency of works; but it was, no doubt, upon grace, and the things connected with grace. Yet he lived and died under the wrath of God; and when his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself. (2 Sam. 17:23.) Such was the end of that great professor—David's loving friend. And Judas too, no doubt, preached free grace as well as the rest of the apostles; for had his preaching been different from theirs,

when they came home from their mission, they would have said, 'Lord, why, Judas does not preach the same gospel as we do; he cannot be of thy sending, one of thy disciples, because he preaches a different doctrine from us.' Yet Judas died under the wrath of God. It is therefore no mark, nor proof of our interest in the doctrine of election that we believe it, or make a profession of doing so. We want some other proof, some other evidence, than a mere belief, in our judgment, of God's having a peculiar people.

What want we, then, if this be not sufficient? What is needful? To this question we may answer, that one or two things is necessary. The first and highest proof is, the *immediate testimony* of God in our conscience. When God speaks to the soul with a divine power, and says, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness;" (Isa. 41:10); or, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee;" (Jer. 31:3); when God thus shines with his own light into the soul, this is the highest testimony we can have upon earth; it is the witness of the Spirit to our spirit that we are the "children of God;" and we can have no higher. But in the absence of this higher testimony, where this shining in of God's presence, mercy, and love is withheld or withdrawn, there is *another* testimony to our interest in God's electing love: and that is, the fruits and evidences that flow out of our interest in it. Thus, if the root be hidden, the stem may appear; and if we cannot see, by the Lord's own shining, our names written in the book of life, yet if we can trace the fruits and effects that flow out of electing love, then we have a testimony to our interest in it, lower indeed, and not so blessed, but still scriptural and safe.

In our text, the Lord brings forward *two* of these blessed

fruits. It runs thus, "I am the Lord thy God." These are the very highest words God can speak to the creature. "I am the Lord *thy* God." But how art thou to know it? What is the evidence, what the divine proof of it? "Which teacheth thee to profit; which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go."

Thus, we may argue from the words both *positively* and *negatively*—*positively*, thus, 'If the Lord is my God, then he is teaching me to profit; then he is leading me in the way that I should go'; *negatively*, 'If the Lord be not my God, then he is not teaching me to profit, and he is not leading me in the way wherein I am to go.' And thus the words, (as the Lord may be pleased to bless them,) may be for the comfort and encouragement of the living family, and a word of warning and conviction, if it be his will, to some of his elect, still lying in the ruins of the fall.

In handling these words, I shall, as the Lord may give me grace and wisdom this evening,

First, speak a little upon the meaning of the first leading feature, "*I am the Lord thy God.*"

Secondly, upon the "*teachings to profit*," with which God is pleased to bless the soul; and

Thirdly, the *leadings of God* in the way wherein he would have us to go.

I.—Upon my first point I shall not speak at great length, as my object is to dwell more on the teachings and leadings of God: and yet I cannot pass over this portion of my text, for it contains everything a child of God can enjoy here, and everything he hopes to enjoy hereafter.

"I am the Lord thy God." If the Lord is our God, we have everything that we can ever want to have; for in giving himself to us he gives us everything. What sweet and blessed feelings are raised up in the soul, when we can believe that the Lord is our God! When we *cannot* believe it; when we cannot raise up our faith so high; when doubts and fears oppress the mind, and darkness fills the soul, then everything appears against us. For, if the Lord be not our God, where are we? what are we? what will be our end? and where will be our eternal portion? But if the Lord be our God, then we have everything that can make us happy here, and fill us with bliss and blessedness hereafter. What a sweet and blessed feeling, then, it is in the soul, when the Lord speaks thus, "I am the Lord thy God," who brought thee into being. It is I that formed thee in the womb, and brought thee forth into thy present existence; it is I, the Lord thy God, that has fed thee, and clothed thee from that hour up to the present moment. It is I, the Lord thy God, who has preserved thee on every side. When thou wert upon a sick bed, it was I, the Lord thy God, who visited thy soul, raised up thy body, and gave thee that measure of health which thou dost now enjoy. It is I, the Lord thy God, who placed thee in the situation of life which thou dost now occupy; it is I, the Lord thy God, that deals out to thee every trial, that allots thee every affliction, that brings upon thee every cross, and that works in thee everything both "to will and to do of my own good pleasure." When we can thus believe that the Lord our God is about our bed and our path, and spying out all our ways; when we can look up to him, and feel that he is the Lord our God, there is no feeling more sweet, more blessed, or more heavenly. But, as I before hinted, there are times and seasons, and these more frequent than the other, when we cannot raise up faith so high: when our evidences are beclouded, our signs not seen, the soul sitting in darkness and having no light, Satan powerfully tempting, past sins

coming to mind, and such a cloud of darkness resting upon the soul that we cannot believe any one promise. Yet, if the Lord be our God, our darkness, our unbelief, does not alter his love. He is still the Lord our God, in darkness as well as in light; he still rests in his love, though we cannot raise up faith so high, and though our soul may be sunk fathoms deep in doubt and fear.

But there are fruits, evidences, marks, tokens of the Lord being our God, though we may for the most part walk in darkness and have no light; and these marks and evidences we have in the text before us, which leads us to our second point,

II.—Which was to shew, that if the Lord is our God, He *teaches us to profit.*

It seems as though the Lord were here drawing a distinction between the teachings of men and the teachings of God, and pointing out one mark, as though he would fix our attention upon *that* as a sign whereby we may know whether the teaching that we have had is the teaching of man or of God. To use an illustration. It is like the mark upon a bank note. Take a note to the bank, and the clerk will look at the water mark, or fix his eye upon other signs, and if he find them present, he knows that the note is genuine; but let them be absent, and he knows the note is counterfeit. So it is with respect to the teaching of men and the teaching of God. I may profess a certain creed, and take a certain stand in doctrine: whence did I get this profession, or this creed, and how came I possessed of this knowledge? If it came from man, there is this certain mark upon it—it was not to profit; it never did my soul any good; it never came with any blessing to my heart; it left me just as it found me. But, on the other hand, if what I know, if what I believe, if what I

feel, has been wrought in my heart by the power of God; in other words, if the religion that I profess is of God's teaching, then there will be this mark upon it, it has been to profit. Now, just look at your knowledge of divine things, and at your profession. You profess a certain creed; you have a certain measure of knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Now just look at the character of your knowledge and profession, and see what you can find of the stamp of God upon it. If you can find this stamp upon it—that it has been to profit, then you may say, this is the teaching of God. But, on the other hand, if it be not to profit, then you may say, it is but the teaching of man. We read of those (and the Lord is against them) who are taught the fear of God by the precept of men. A man may get his religion from men, but will that profit his soul? will that save him from the wrath of God? will that stand by him in a dying hour? will that be to his peace and comfort on a death-bed? No! No; when most wanted, it will all flee away, like the smoke out of the chimney, and chaff from the threshing-floor. But if his religion has been taught him by God, and wrought in his soul by a divine power, it will be not only to his profit here, but it will be to his profit hereafter; for "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise not only of the life that now is, but of that which is to come."

Let us, by way of contrast, put side by side the teaching of man and the teaching of God. I will mention several things whereby we may know what teaching is to profit, and what teaching is not to profit; and then you may compare what takes place in your heart with what I shall endeavour to lay down from God's word and experience.

1. True teaching *humbles the soul*; false teaching puffs it up with pride. Weigh that against your profession and knowledge of divine things, and see what your religion has

done for you viewed in that light. Has it humbled you? laid you low in your own eyes? brought you to nothing in your own sight? Then it has been to profit, and you may bless God for having given you his own special teaching. But, on the other hand, has it puffed you up with pride? made you think highly of yourself? exalted you in your mind above the people of God? filled your mouth with boasting, and your heart with arrogance? Then it is the teaching of man; were it the teaching of God, it would have humbled you and brought you down to the very dust.

2. Again. Teachings which are to profit, *soften and melt a man's heart*, as Job says, "God maketh my heart soft" (23:16); and we read this especial promise, that the Lord "will take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh:" in other words, that he will melt and soften the spirit. Now see if you can find any of these effects in your soul from what you believe and hope to be special teaching. Has it softened, melted, broken, humbled, dissolved your spirit? When eternal things have come with weight upon your soul; when you have had views of the Lord Jesus Christ; when the word of God has been opened up with power to your heart; when you have heard the servants of the living Jehovah; when you have been upon your knees before God; when your souls have been engaged in divine matters, has there been a softening, dissolving, melting effect produced? Or, on the other hand, has your profession rather hardened your heart, and instead of making it tender in God's fear, produced a light, trifling, indifferent state of mind.

3. Again. Teachings which are to profit make sin *exceedingly sinful*, fill us with shame and confusion of face before God, cut us up in our feelings, and make us loathe and abhor ourselves in our own sight as the veriest monster of iniquity. Divine views of what we are as fallen sinners in the sight of a

holy God will be sure to make sin exceedingly sinful, will cut up root and branch all creature righteousness, and make us feel that of sinners we are chief. But that teaching which is not to profit, makes sin to appear a light thing, gives us very slight and superficial views of its nature; does not hold up to us its awful character; does not fill us with the deepest abhorrence of it; nor make us loathe ourselves in our own sight as the vilest of the vile; but seems rather to excuse and justify it, and make sin to appear not such a very dreadful thing. Nay, it will insinuate there is no great harm in this or that indulgence, and that a child of God may do what other children of God have done. But that is the very teaching which is from beneath and not from above, and is that wisdom which is "earthly, sensual, and devilish." If your religious feelings, from whatever source they come, make sin to be in your eyes not exceedingly sinful; if they never fill you with self-abhorrence; bring no godly sorrow into your heart on account of it; cause no tear of contrition to fall down your cheek; no self-hatred to spring up in your breast; but rather fill you with light, vain, and trifling thoughts concerning sin, depend upon it, that teaching is not from above, but from beneath, for it wants this mark—it is not to profit.

4. Again. Teaching to profit makes *Jesus precious to the soul*. When God is pleased to manifest the Lord Jesus Christ in any measure unto us, and we get glimpses of his Person, glory, blood, obedience, sufferings, and love, it will make him exceedingly precious to our souls; and when he becomes exceedingly precious to our souls, then we may say, this teaching is to profit. "Unto you which believe he is precious." "Whosoever hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." But if, on the other hand, our profession of Jesus Christ never brings any of these blessed feelings into our heart; if we have but a doctrinal knowledge of Jesus, and no

discovery of him to our souls by the operations of the Spirit, there is no such admiration, no such adoration of him, no such hope in him, no such love towards him, no such delight in him,—it is but a letter Christ, a nominal Jesus, a seeing of him in the word of God, but not a seeing of him by the eye of a living faith. If such be our teaching and profession, it is not of God—for it is not to profit.

5. Again. If we are taught of God, and our teaching is to profit, it will make us *spiritually-minded*. If ever the Lord Jesus Christ is made in any measure precious to our souls, it makes us spiritually-minded, it takes our affections, lifts them above all earthly things to heaven, and fixes them for the time where Jesus sits at God's right hand; and then we shall want nothing but to have communion with the Lord, and to live to his glory. But if, on the other hand, the views of Christ which we have, or profess to have, only make us cleave more to the flesh, only strengthen the spirit of the world more in our hearts, and foster an idolatrous attachment to the things of time and sense, then we may say that these views of Christ are not of God, because they are not to profit.

Now it is good for a child of God to be comparing his religion with this mark as given in God's word. For instance;

1. When you *read a book*, a religious book, put it into this scale; weigh it by this test; does it do my soul good? Is there profit in it? What blessed feelings does it produce in my heart? Am I convinced by reading it of the shallowness of my religion, and that I must learn deeper things yet than I know already? Does it wound me? Does it shew me in what instances I have gone astray? Does it leave a solemn and abiding impression on my heart? Does it shew me more of the exceeding evil of sin than I ever saw before? and do I

find when I put it down that I am in a solemn, humble, spiritual frame? Then, I can say, this book is to my profit, and I get good thereby. But if, on the other hand, the book only hardens my heart, and darkens my mind, so that I can think lightly about sin and the evils of my nature, seem enabled to indulge more in some besetting temptation, to walk more loosely, not to watch so carefully lest I be entangled, and get strengthened and encouraged in carnal ways from the book that I have read, Oh, let me put it away; this is not the teaching of God! And why do I know it is not the teaching of God? because it does not profit my soul.

2. So in *hearing a minister*, (I do not say you are to go and be as some who are watching to make a man an offender for a word; God is utterly against that,) this is what you should do: you should ask, Is it to my profit? what feeling, what impressions does it leave upon my spirit? When I go from chapel, can I plunge into the first carnal conversation which comes across my path? Can I go home, and be as carnal and as worldly as I was before? Or, is there some solid, solemn, spiritual impression left on my heart? Does it lead me to prayer? Does it make God's word sweet? Do I go home and spend the rest of the day engaged more or less in divine things? Do I feel my heart drawn more from earth to heaven? Am I shewn more and more of my own sinfulness and misery, and more of the beauty, blessedness, and suitability of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I feel a solid, abiding, spiritual impression left upon my soul, so that the things of God lie with weight and power upon my mind? When I lie awake upon my bed on the Lord's day evening, is my mind more drawn up to the Lord than it was before? On the Monday, when I go about my business, do I still carry with me what I heard on the Lord's day? Does it separate me from the persons with whom I have to work, and the business I have to do? And am I from time to time during the

day lifting up my heart to God, and asking him to visit and bless my soul? Can I trace these things to what I heard on the Lord's day before, and feel that what I heard was really made profitable to my soul? Now this is how we are to weigh sermons and ministers: whether they are made profitable to us: by this we know what is the teaching of God.

3. And so with respect *to our companions*, who make a profession of religion. When we go into their company and converse upon the things of God, we should weigh what effect it has left upon our minds. Has their company made us light and trifling? Has it made us think less of sin? Has it given greater looseness to our own carnality? Has it brought a hardness, deadness, and barrenness into our spirit? Has their conversation robbed us of any sweet frame that we were in before? Has their company entangled us in any snare, or opened any door to temptation? Then these companions are not to our profit, and what is ministered by them is only to our harm, and not to our good. But, on the other hand, if we have fallen into the company of an exercised child of God, and his conversation has been blessed to our soul, has drawn up our affections more to the Lord, made prayer more our element, shewn us that we have gone astray, convinced us that we have walked in wrong paths, softened and melted our soul, then we say, his conversation has been to my profit; I have got good in speaking with this child of God; I will see him again; the Lord may bless his conversation to my soul.

4. And thus it should be with *every hymn* given out. It should be, is this to my profit? Does it bring a sweet and blessed feeling into my soul! Does it solemnize my mind?

5. So with every *chapter* we read; so with every *petition* we put up. So all the day long with everything we do, we should

be continually watching the Lord's hand, and saying inwardly, Is this for my profit? Is this for my good? Am I learning real religion thereby? This minister, this work, this book, this person, this circumstance, this company, this occupation, this engagement, this line of life, this way of business—what is it doing for me? Is it doing me harm or good? Is it for my profit or for my injury? If it is for my profit, doing my soul good, melting my heart, softening my spirit, bringing Jesus near, separating me from the world, fostering a spirit of prayer in my breast, making me to walk with the Lord in sweet and blessed communion with him, it is of God. Why? Because it is to profit; it is doing my soul good, bringing life and feeling to my heart, communicating sweet and blessed impressions to my soul. I feel that it is doing my soul good; let me then avoid everything else, because I know it is not for my good, but my injury. This, then, is the way whereby we may, if we be honest to ourselves, weigh in the scales of the sanctuary whether the teachings we have, or profess to have, are to profit.

If we are God's children, all *his* teachings will be to our profit. He will teach us sometimes by providences; they shall be to our profit. He will teach us by afflictions; they shall be to our profit. He will teach us by trials; they shall be to our profit. He will teach us by temptation; it shall be to our profit. He will teach us by enemies, who will shew us our faults when friends would not; it shall be to our profit. He will teach us by ministers; it shall be to our profit. He will teach us by books; he will teach us by hymns; he will teach us by the Scripture; teach us by his various dealings with us. If we are his children, all these will be to profit. By all these things we shall be instructed. Now this is the grand difference between a child of God, and a child of the Wicked One. All that the child of God goes through is for his profit, all that the child of Satan goes through is for his injury. Everything heaps

blessings on the head of the one, and everything heaps curses on the head of the other. If he has sickness, it is a blessing to a child of God; if in poverty, it is a blessing to him; if he is persecuted, it is a blessing to him; if he is in temptation, it is a blessing to him. Whatever he passes through, however rough, however difficult, however painful, however opposed to flesh and blood, it is all made a blessing to him. But, on the other hand, it is all made a curse to a child of the devil. Look at Saul, and look at David. Here was Saul; everything was made a curse to him; the very throne which he sat on, the crown which he wore, the sceptre which he carried in his hand, all made a curse to him, all plunging him deeper and deeper into perdition. And here is David; everything made a blessing to him. Not a single thing he passed through but is overruled and made a blessing to his soul. And so it is with the child of God; everything is a blessing to him; it may not come as a blessing, but it will end in one. All that God sends upon his children ends in their good. What a mercy, then, to have a hope that we are in the right way, that the Lord is teaching us to profit! I want you that desire to fear God to weigh this matter well in your heart. Do not say, 'I know *this* and *that*; I have made a consistent profession many years; I am sound on the point of election; I am a member of a gospel church; I hear *this* and *that* minister.' But look at this. 'What has my religion done for me? What has my profession wrought in my heart?' Let me fix my eyes upon this one thing; let me draw my attention away from everything else, and fix my eyes as closely upon it as the clerk at the Bank fixes his eye upon the water-mark—What have I learned to profit? Do I bear Scripture marks of being one of those whom God is teaching? If I do, then I am one of God's children, for "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Isa. 54:13.) But if we cannot find any of this profitable teaching, we must write upon all our profession,

"Tekel; weighed in the balance, and found wanting."

III.—But we may pass on to our third point; "I am the Lord thy God, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Now there is a way that we should go, and there is a way that we should not go. And the way whereby the Lord leads us is the way that we should go. But what is the way that we should go? We may look at it in two points of view: *first*, as a way of *providence*; and *secondly*, as a way of *grace*.

1. There is a way whereby we should go in a way of *providence*; and it is the Lord, and the Lord alone, that can lead us in the way that we should go in temporal matters; and it is a mercy if we can wait and watch his guiding hand, for if left to ourselves we shall be sure to go the way that we should not go. But how may we know whether it is a way that we should go, or a way that we should not go? Here is an opening for you; you can establish your business in a better neighbourhood; or enlarge it; or change your position of life; or take some situation; or embrace an opportunity that seems likely to be beneficial to your interests. Now how are you to know whether this be a way whereby you should go, or the contrary? What says conscience? Is it a *right* way to go? Shall I bring temptation upon my soul by going in that way? Shall I sin against God? Shall I provoke him? Shall I commit known evil? Shall I put myself into a situation where temptation will be too strong for me? Shall I cause the Lord to hide his face from me? Shall I bring his correcting hand upon me? Shall I find nothing but briars and thorns there? It may seem a very nice way, a very flesh-pleasing way, just what a worldly person would like, but it may be just such a way as a child of God dare not take. Now if we are made willing that God should lead us in the way wherein we should go, and that we should not choose our own way, he will take

care to lead us in the right way. It is true that the Lord does overrule all our crooked ways for our good, though we may have to repent, grieve over, and suffer for them; it is our mercy the Lord does overrule all our ways, though they may bring much pain and grief into our hearts. But still, how much better it is, how much wiser, how much safer to walk in a God-honouring way, than to walk in a God-dishonouring way; to walk in a right way instead of a wrong way; to walk in a straight way instead of a crooked way; to walk in an upright way instead of a deceitful way; to walk in the fear of God, and not to walk according to the lusts and wishes of our fallen nature. But, it is our mercy, that if we are the children of God, he will lead us in the way that we should go.

2. But this is more true still in a *way of grace*. Now in a way of grace we often know not what is the way which we should take, for he promises to lead the blind by a way that they know not; and we cannot often see the leading of God. We desire to be right, but we cannot always see how we ought to act, or what we ought to do. Here is one way that would not be dishonouring to God, and here another that would not be dishonouring to him, and still we know not which to take. But the Lord says, "I will lead you in the way whereby you should go." There shall be sooner or later an opening up of the will of God, an inward admonition, a leading in the way of providence, a word resting on the mind, and all fulfilling the promise that he will lead you by the way that you should go.

But how contrary this way is to our own way! We would walk in an easy path, the Lord leads in a rough one; we would walk in a flesh-pleasing path, he would have us to walk in a God-fearing one. We would have our own will gratified, our inclinations followed; we would have as much of the world as we can embrace, and yet have the favour and love of God, and go to heaven at last. But no; if we are to walk in the way

that we should go, we must be led in a straight and narrow way, an afflicting way, a way we should have never chosen for ourselves, a way in which flesh and blood cannot possibly walk. Yet the Lord himself says, "he leadeth thee in the way that thou shouldest go;" he leadeth thee in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ; he leadeth thee to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; he leadeth thee in the path of tribulation, that you may know more of a suffering Jesus and have union and communion with him. What a mercy it is that the Lord should lead us in the way; in a way of prayer, in a way of watchfulness, in a way of supplication, in a way of desire, in a way of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, in a way wherein none but himself can really satisfy and bless our souls, "in a way which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen," (Job 18:7), in a way wherein his redeemed walk, and his redeemed alone; in a way which none ever chose for himself, and which only God could choose for him, but in which he constrains him from time to time to walk.

Now you may be tried in your mind from time to time to know whether the Lord is your God. God's people are often thus tried; for they cannot take up an empty profession; nor can they rest upon a sound creed, nor walk in the path of presumption and vain-confidence. They want the Lord himself sweetly and blessedly to speak into their souls, "I am the Lord thy God;" and they want nothing more. But even when they have not that, are there no marks in their favour, no tokens for good, no signs and evidences of the Lord being their God? Yes; he is their Lord in the dark as well as in the light. He has left these two marks upon record for their comfort and encouragement. "I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way which thou shouldest go." 'I teach thee to profit; I make my

blessed word to sink with a divine power into thy soul; I cause my doctrine to drop like the rain, and my speech to distil like the dew; I open thy eyes to see; unstop thy deaf ears to hear; touch thy heart to feel; I bring the truth home to thy conscience. Thus I teach thee to profit; my teachings and dealings with thee are for thy good; not to puff thee up with pride, not to harden thy heart and sear thy conscience, but to thy profit, that thou mayest be a partaker of my holiness, and have a foretaste of heaven before thou arrivest there, to make thee a companion for the saints above that walk in the full light of God's countenance.' Now can we find this mark? We may have doubts and fears, and temptations, and sinkings, and many gloomy things to distress our minds; but can we say this with an honest conscience, 'What I have learned of religion, and the things of God, has been I believe for my profit. I have been taught things in the school of affliction, and in exercise and trial, that I could have learnt no other way; I have seen the emptiness of profession, the folly of resting upon a mere letter creed, and brought to this point to know that none but the Lord Jesus can bless my soul, and to wait upon him with earnest cries and sighs for a sweet application of his love, blood, and grace; and at times and seasons I can say, I have seen him by the eye of faith, and have felt and embraced him as my salvation.'

If we can say this, then we can say the teaching of God has been to our profit. And if we can find that the leadings and dealings of God in our soul have been to lead us in a way we should not otherwise have walked in; if we see that in providence and grace the outstretched hand of God has led us in right paths, we can add also, 'the Lord has led me in the way that I should go; a way which my conscience tells me I should walk in, but which I never could or should have walked in, had it not been for his leadings. And thus, if I can find these two marks of his teachings and leadings in my

soul, then I have two blessed evidences of the Lord being my God.

But whatever be our profession, whatever our creed, if these two things be not there; if what we profess to have been the teachings of God have not been to our profit, but have hardened our heart, seared our conscience, puffed up our minds, made us think lightly of sin, and plunged us more into the world than before; if all men can see that the teachings of God that we profess to have experienced, have not been to our profit; it is not all our boasting that the teaching of the Lord has been ours that will make them believe it. If they can see that we have not walked in God's ways, but in paths of our own pursuing, we may speak very strongly and boastfully, and may say, 'I am sure that the Lord is my God;' but if we do not bear spiritual marks that we have walked in the way wherein God leads his people, will God witness it? will his people agree with it? and will an honest conscience add its verdict? I say, boldly, No.