

THE WAY TO GOD

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6.

Often the most precious things lie in a very small compass. Diamonds have much value in little space. Many scriptural sayings with the fullest meanings are couched in the fewest words. Who can measure the depth of that sentence, "God is love"? or that other, "God is light"? Who knows the length and breadth of that declaration, "Christ is all"? How clearly is the whole gospel condensed into that line, "By grace are ye saved"! There are many other divine words of like character, all short and precious beyond comparison and as brief as precious. This text is a notable example.

Our Lord had come to the last night of His glorious ministry upon the earth. His disciples were with Him at the Passover Meal in the upper room. This was the last intimate conversation Christ had with His disciples. In those last moments which He spent with them there fell from His lips words full of heavenly comfort. He was going to leave them, but before He left He wanted to give them an anchorage for their troubled souls. So Christ said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (John 14:1-4).

Their minds were confused and their sense of direction was gone. Thomas, striving after truth and reality with a certain despondency and morbid fear of issues which he could not grasp and yet with a great love for the Master, said to Him, "Lord, we know not whether thou goest; and how can we know the way?" The Lord replied, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

"Way" is one of the most wonderful words in our language, and on the lips of the Lord of life it shines with the light that never was on land or sea. Christ had been the way. He had led them along the right road, along the highways and up the mountain trails, across the fields and through the gardens, and by the wayside and in the desert places. He had also led them along certain highways of the mind.

The goal of man's life is the Heavenly Father, and the only one who can bring men to that goal is Christ. This is what Christ was telling His disciples. He is the truth that brings God to men by His revelation, and He is the life that brings men to God by His redemption. It is as if Christ had said, "I am the Mediator between God and man; whatever comes from God to a sinner, comes through Me; and whatever goes from a sinner to God must pass through My hands." There is not one way for God to come down to us and another for us to go up to Him. We go up to Him in the same way by which He came down to us and dwelt in His fulness with us. This way is not by a code of rules or laws. It is not a theory, but it is a concrete actuality in the form of a living Person.

The ages affirm that Christ was not making a vain boast when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." About this statement Thomas A. Kempis made a rich comment. He said, "Without a way, there can be no going; without the truth, there can be no knowing; without life, there can be no living."

Man needs to know the way to God. The world has had enough theories. Many philosophies have been devised; many systems of ethics have been invented; and many creeds purporting to explain and define the way to life eternal have been propounded, but none or all of them have given the people the thing they have needed. None of them have brought man's reconciliation to God. Christ here affirms that He is the way to God and to eternal life.

I. Christ Is The Way.

A road or a way leads from some place to another. In view of the fact that Christ was pleased to call Himself the way, let us consider two things:

1. From what is Christ the way?

(1) Christ is the way from the guilt of sin.

Many attempts have been made to remove the guilt of sin or to escape it, but there is no way to escape the guilt of sin except by Jesus Christ. Some have hoped for pardon from future good conduct, but the payment of a future debt can by no means discharge a past debt. Perfect future obedience of man, even if it were possible, certainly could not touch his past sins. There is no way by which a sinner can escape from the guilt of sin except by Jesus Christ.

(2) Christ is the way from the wrath of God.

The way to escape from wrath is to escape from the sin which causes the wrath. When you remove the cause you remove the effect. So, when the sin of people was moved from them to Christ, the wrath of God went where the sin went, and it fell upon Christ. So you see Christ is the way out of divine wrath as well as out of sin.

(3) Christ is the way from the power of sin.

The great object of a penitent soul is to get away from the tyranny and slavery of evil habits and of corrupt desires. Jesus Christ is the way to escape from the guilt of sin and the power of sin.

2. To what is Christ the way?

(1) Christ is the way to God the Father.

To be taught the way to God is man's supreme need. To reach God is the confessed goal of life. To know the way to Him is our chief necessity. God is necessary for our happiness. Life is unfinished until it is in harmony with God. Now the way to the Father is alone by Jesus Christ. This truth is expressed directly by our blessed Lord in the text: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He not merely shows us the way, but He is the way. Peter tells us that, "He suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

- a. He is the way to the knowledge of God.
- b. He is the way to the favor of God.
- c. He is the way to fellowship with God.
- d. He is the way into the presence of God.

(2) Christ is the way to heaven.

Do we not delight in the thought of reaching heaven and dwelling there? That was also the desire of the disciples. Well, the Saviour knew that there were many in His day, and that their number would increase in future ages, who would seek to enter heaven by other ways. There were those who gloried in the law and put their trust in it, but forgot that the law could aid them only in so far as it became a tutor leading them to Christ. In their folly they imagined that they had a contract with God and could merit salvation by a diligent observance of the law. The way they preferred was that of self-righteousness. They wanted to enter heaven on the basis of their own merits, but they were doomed to a bitter disappointment. This word from the Master was certainly a warning to them, as well as to all such today. It is a warning

to all who base their hopes of heaven on their virtues and so-called good works, and are strengthened in their false security by unscriptural teachers. If we are to enter the heavenly home, in this life we must accept Christ by faith. He is the only connecting link between earth and heaven.

II. Characteristics Of The Way.

1. He is the divinely-appointed way.
Perhaps there are those who think that the Christ way is not gay enough, free enough or easy enough, but one thing about it is certain and that is the glorious fact that it will carry you safely to your destination. If God is satisfied with it, we ought to be.
2. He is a plain way.
Some ways are hard to find, but this way is easy to find. In speaking of it Isaiah said, "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein," (Isaiah 35:8).
3. He is an open way.
Sinner, Christ is the way from your sin to God and salvation, so you do not need to ask the permission of anybody to come to God and to heaven through Him. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25).
4. He is a free way.
There are private ways which belong to prominent people, and they are not open to the public and free for their use. It would be a case of trespassing for a stranger to be found in them, but this is a public way. It is free to all who desire to enter it. No one has to pay for permission to enter it, for salvation is "without money and without price."
5. He is a living way.
This way to heaven was made possible by Christ's dying; yet it is called a living way because our eternal life springs from His death.
6. He is a perfect way.
The way from sin to God and to heaven through Christ is complete. It would not be complete unless it came down where you are, but it does that very thing. You do not have to make a road to Christ because He comes to you where you are.
7. He is a joyful way.
True believers in Christ are a happy and rejoicing people. If you, who are not saved, would be happy, then accept Christ. Those who travel in this way are promised that "they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and drink of the rivers of His pleasure." They shall also enjoy the company of the saints as their fellow travelers, with whom their communion shall be sweet. Yea, the Lord Himself has promised to accompany them. "Fear not, for I am with thee." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."
8. He is a permanent way.
This way has never been broken up and never will be.
9. He is the only way.
Many ways to God and to heaven have been proposed by sincere but mistaken men, who were influenced by Satan. It is commonly supposed that any way will do, if only a man is sincere in it. But this is absolutely untrue. Do not try to find a way through your own feelings or your own works; there is no such way. Some people think there are various ways to heaven, and that one of them is just as good as the other. But God's Word teaches that no one will ever get to heaven unless he goes there through Jesus Christ.

Years ago a British ship, called Duncan Dunbar, arrived at the harbor of New South Wales one blustery evening. There is only one channel in that harbor to the sea. The ship had a valuable cargo and six hundred passengers. The captain had made a wager that he would put the ship inside the harbor in so many days. The last day had come; he must get inside the harbor that very night or lose the wager. The temptation was too great. Peering through the growing darkness the captain discovered what appeared to be the channel. He made for what he thought was the way into the harbor, but there was no channel there. He was miles south of the real entrance at a point on the coast where the high cliffs sloped down almost to the sea level. This dip the captain had mistaken for the channel. On came the ship with every sail spread. The man on the lookout suddenly shouted, "Breakers ahead! Breakers ahead!" But the warning came too late. In a few minutes the vessel struck and was broken to pieces by the heavy seas that were breaking with violence upon the reefs.

This is a parable of human life. The generations of the past have dashed into many seeming channels which looked as if they led into the harbor of safety and peace, only to find when it was too late that they were but a dip in the cliffs on the shore of life. Such are the man-made religions of the world. But God has provided a sure way. Christ is the way.

Christ is also the truth. He is not just telling the truth, although He is doing that, but He is exemplifying, illustrating, demonstrating and revealing the truth concerning God and man. He not only teaches the truth, but He is the truth. No man can know God in any full and intimate sense except through Christ.

Christ is also the life. Our main business here is not to know but to live. Truth is valueless until it is translated into character and conduct. To know Christ as the truth is not enough; we must find Him as the life. He said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

Christ is the only way. He said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." This means that there is no other way to heaven than the way pointed out in the words of our text. There is no other name by which men can be saved than that of Jesus. Christ is the way for all. He is the only way now and for all time. He said, "I am the way." Is He your way? If not, won't you accept Him now? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." No one can save you but Jesus. Receive Him now while we sing.