

CHRIST, THE WAY

"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, with its four one syllable words, "I am the way," is a notable example.

"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. He is speaking to twelve troubled men who are about to lose Him whom they loved and who had been leading them. Their minds are confused. Their sense of direction has gone. They are in a maze. Thomas speaks for them all--"Lord, we know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way?" "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." He 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.

Christ made this amazing statement to His disciples that last night in the upper room when He instituted the Lord's Supper. They were troubled because He was about to leave them. He comforted them by saying that He was going to heaven, His Father's house, to prepare a place for them, and that He would come again, and receive them unto Himself, that where He was they also might be; and then He added, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

In a little while armed men would come and arrest Him. All that night, He was to be dragged by ruffians from place to place, going through the ghastly farce of a trial whose verdict was already determined. The next day they would nail Him to a cross until He was dead. But He was not disturbed. He had not lost any of His poise and composure. There He sat quietly talking to His friends, fully conscious of the shadow that is falling across His path. He had predicted His death.

Thomas, who was rather of a doubtful turn of mind, replied, Lord, after all Thou hast said, we are still at a loss about the place where Thou art going, and how then can we know the way to follow Thee? Jesus answered, "I am the way"; which is as if He 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.

Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The ages affirm that He was not making a vain boast. About this verse Thomas A. Kempis made a rich statement. 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."

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. What He is the way from.

(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. What He is the way to.

(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 into the presence of God.
- c. He is the way to the favor of God.
- d. He is the way to fellowship with 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 This 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. 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.