

## THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

(OUR LORD OUR SAVIOUR OUR KING)

As the Saviour met with His disciples for the last time before His baptism of suffering, His thoughts were not of His approaching agony and death, but of the bitter disappointment that was to come upon His disciples. He saw them downcast and sorrowful; and, with a heart full of sympathy and tenderness for them, He 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."

Thomas showed his unbelief by saying mournfully, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" This question showed that the disciples had not understood Christ's oft-repeated lessons in regard to the kingdom of heaven and the future life. But Christ did not rebuke them. He answered Thomas, not alone to instruct him and his fellow-disciples, but for the benefit of all who should believe on Him through their word, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Jesus here made more distinct and plain than ever before the great central truth of all the Gospel. Every lesson given by the great Teacher called forth questions requiring explanation. His answers to these questions presented the truth with freshness and power. This truth is appropriate to all ages, and is spoken to us just as truly as tho Christ in person were among us, teaching us of the things of the kingdom of God.

Truth must be presented to the people in clear lines, and never was this more needed than when Christ came to this earth. Satan had arranged matters after his own order. Truth was not appreciated. Where God should reign supreme, the enemy of God and man was seen. Light was called darkness, and darkness light. Licentiousness and fiction had taken the place of righteousness and truth. Men seemed to be fascinated by evil. Any new ideas that started into life, even tho they were mere vagaries, seemed to possess a bewitching power.

The standard of morality was low. The impure mysteries of the worship of the people had a degrading power on them; and anything that called to remembrance the goodness, mercy, and love of God, was destroyed. The people could not even endure hereditary nobility of character, because this had a tendency to lift them from their debasement. Men of talent, through whom Christ was working to bring about a reformation, were despised, and many of them suffered a violent death.

Statues were worshiped. Art was made to minister to sin. Nearly every work of art and science was mingled with defilement. Genius was used to obliterate the knowledge of God. The richness of intellect was blotted out of existence. Satan's dark shadow brooded over everything, and the

only people who could have revealed God to the world were so destitute of faith and love that they could not be expected to do anything to stem the tide of woe.

Christ came to illuminate the chambers of the mind, to dispel the darkness, and to fill the soul-temple with hope and gladness. And the truth He brought lost nothing by being questioned and critically examined. Christ often illustrated His lessons by parables, which were afterward explained to the disciples, who were to herald the Gospel message.

The perversion and misinterpretation of the Scriptures by the Pharisees, and even by those who claimed to believe His words, made it necessary for Christ to speak plainly. It is thought by some to be a misfortune when erroneous theories are advanced, but the Lord has said, "All things work together for good to them that love God." The contention among the Corinthians made it necessary for Paul to write his wonderful epistles to them. If the Gentiles had not backslidden from the faith, Paul would not have written, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you out of the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another." It was a misapplication of the Scriptures, to prove falsehood and error true. If the Thessalonians had not misinterpreted the instruction they received, they would not have entertained the belief that the Lord was immediately to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, thus making it necessary for Paul to present the truth as it is in Jesus, leaving on record truth important for all time. And so opposition against light and truth called from Christ a clearer definition of the truth. Every time that error is advanced, it will work for good to those who sincerely love God; for when the truth is shadowed by error, those whom the Lord has made His sentinels will make the truth sharper and clearer. They will search the Scriptures for evidence of their faith. The advancement of error is the call for God's servants to arouse, and place the truth in bold relief.

There are those who would rather start speculative ideas, and dwell on new themes, so arousing a desire for something new and strange, than learn the precious lessons given by Christ. By some these speculative ideas are made all and in all. And thus they neglect to seek for the qualifications that they must possess if they would win the eternal reward. The one thing for us to know is Christ, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "This is life eternal," He said, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." If men and women would hear these words, meditate on them, and believe them with the whole heart, all controversy would be ended. Men think too much of what they themselves can do. They become elated and self-confident. They fail to realize their entire dependence upon God. They think that God is dependent on their ability in His work of saving souls. If these looked to Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, they would realize the truth of the words, "Without Me ye can do nothing." "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me," Christ declared. But while the good works even of the best men can not save them, none can be saved without bearing the fruit of good works. The sanctifying power of Christ upon the heart will produce precious fruit, and His Spirit and power will make our works acceptable to God. If by His Holy Spirit Christ abides in the soul, our features, our attitude, our words will reveal Him to the world.

Christ prayed that His followers might be one, "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me." If the truth were received, its transforming power, as seen in the lives of Christ's followers, would have a convicting power on the most hardened sinners. The holy conversation, humble deportment, the meekness

and kindness, would present such a marked contrast to the spirit and character of worldlings, the line of demarcation would be so evident, that this in itself would bring conviction. The words would reveal the purity and fragrance of heaven, and they would also be sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow, and of soul and spirit.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Through sin the world had been separated from heaven. Men might have looked hopelessly at the heavenly battlements, and in distress and anxiety exclaimed, How shall we reach the abode of bliss? With Thomas they could say truthfully, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way? But with His own body Christ bridged the gulf that sin had made. I have provided a way, He says, whereby you may again be united with heaven. I have bridged the deep and impassable gulf. To every soul that desires to cross that gulf I will give help and strength.

Thus the exiles are made prisoners of hope. They are placed on probation. God would have us realize the estimate He places on us. He would have us consecrate our whole energies to the help of the heavenly angels, who are striving to lead men to the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Men are working out their own destiny, but God helps every soul that appeals to Him in its helplessness. Those who look to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith, never look in vain. They will never miss the road to Paradise; for they are walking in the true way, and from Christ they receive moral power.

Christ is the ladder to heaven. The base of this ladder rests firmly on the earth, brought to the very level of humanity, while the topmost round reaches and rests firmly on the throne of God. Jacob saw the glory of God shining above this ladder, while the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness illuminated its whole length. Descending this ladder of shining brightness were angels of God, with communications to the inhabitants of this earth.

Only by Christ's aid can we be saved. If by our own efforts we could reach heaven, Christ need not have left the royal courts, to come to a world all seared and marred by the curse, to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, to be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin. But we can reach heaven only by the mystic ladder, Jesus Christ; and He came to this earth that we might be enabled to do this. Here the battle between the prince of darkness and the Prince of light was fought, and here Christ conquered in our behalf. Of His own free will He laid down His life, that He might take it again; and today a living Saviour stands in the heavenly courts as our Intercessor, pleading for us, that through His merits we may be enabled to resist the temptations of the enemy, and be more than conquerors through Him. He knows how to succor them that are tempted, and to deliver the godly out of temptation. Surely He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

In the announcement, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," Christ by no means pointed His disciples to a new way. Since the days of Adam, the Lord has had His representatives, men who have kept alive the influences imparted to them from heaven. Since the first Gospel sermon was preached, when in Eden it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, Christ has been uplifted as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The same Christ that is at work today among all classes of people, was at work in the days when Adam lived, when Abel died by the hand of his brother because he presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of Christ. Abel's faithful adherence to God's commands in bringing a lamb as his sacrifice, offended Cain. He had another way, and this way he wanted Abel to follow, instead of following

the way of the Lord. Abel would not yield God's way for the way of his brother, and he was murdered. But tho dead, Abel yet speaks.

Enoch was one of God's representatives. During his life on earth he walked with God, and God took him to heaven without seeing death. Enoch prophesied of the great event which is the consummation of all things earthly,--the second coming of Christ. Noah's persevering righteousness and faith made him a representative man. The deep, earnest fidelity of Abraham cause him to be called by God "the father of the faithful." For his self-sacrificing zeal Moses received the testimony that he was the meekest and most humble of all the human family. These were characters illustrious for spirituality and moral excellence.

In every age Christ has been the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He was the Originator and foundation of the Jewish economy. In the pillar of cloud He guided the children of Israel in their wanderings. Everything was adjusted and arranged by the hand of Divinity. And all the knowledge that came direct from God to them, all the power and glory of that ancient economy, had been poured into the treasury of the Christian church. Nothing has been lost. The accumulated light of generations is given to the church of today, not to be hoarded, but to be circulated. Messengers are to be sent to every part of the earth, proclaiming Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The earthly temple is no more. Its mysterious veil has been rent asunder; its sacred vessels have been demolished, and the Jewish people are scattered to every part of the world. But the judgments that fell on that nation are a symbol of those that will fall on all who, like Jerusalem, know not the time of their visitation. Let not man mock the ancient Jewish economy, of which Christ was the Originator, and the One to whom the types and shadows pointed. In these types and shadows is revealed the everlasting Gospel.

The idea that the Old Testament no longer possesses vital interest because the New Testament has been written, is an idea fatal to the soul of him who believes it. Both the Old Testament and the New are necessary. The New Testament does not contain another Gospel, a new religion. It is but the unfolding of the Old. The past ages are of peculiar value to us; and those who are ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the power of God as manifest in the history of His people, understand but dimly the manner of His working.

In the Scriptures the past is brought down to our time. The Word of God offers us the treasures of inspired wisdom that have been accumulating from age to age. Before us are examples of piety and devotion. The lives of these men have been placed on record, not to exalt them, but to make us wise unto salvation, to show us the errors and mistakes of good men, and to lead us to imitate their virtues. Let those who talk of the patriarchal and prophetic age as a Christless age, read their Bibles with humble heart, praying for power to follow the example of holy men of God.

Christ was the way by which patriarchs and prophets were saved, and to pour contempt upon this way is to pour contempt upon Christ, enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, and giving directions to Moses to be given to the children of Israel. There was plenty of light in the old way to lead every soul to the abodes of bliss.

The prophets of God spoke less for their own time than for the ages to come, and especially for the generation that would live amid the last scenes of this earth's history. "Not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have

preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." "All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The prophets and apostles meet and unite their witness, testifying of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The wonderful events in the history of the children of Israel are not to be lost sight of or ignored because of the lapse of time. They are jewels of truth that have been placed in false settings. Christ came to redeem them from error, and to reset them in the framework of truth, that they might shine in their native purity and attractive loveliness. By Him they have been made to give forth a brighter and more powerful luster than ever before.

The patriarchs and prophets were representative men, and through them, from century to century, a flood of knowledge was poured into the world. Adam, repentant and converted, was a Christian; Abel was a Christian; Enoch was a Christian; Noah was a Christian; Abraham was a Christian. In types and symbols the Gospel was revealed to those of former dispensations. The Old Testament Scriptures show us the power possessed by those who looked to Christ. The glorious beams of continually-increasing light are all concentrated in our time. All testify of Christ, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." But never was this truth so clearly defined as in Christ's answer to the words, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way." Christ is revealed to us in His first advent. We see Him sacrificing riches, power, and glory for poverty, temptation, privation, and suffering.

Christ is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There are not many ways to heaven. Each one may not choose his own way. Christ says: "I am the Way. . . . No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Unless we are individually in this way, we can not reach the heavenly mansions. The Question for each one to ask himself is, Am I following Christ because I know that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life? Am I in the path that leads to perfect obedience? Those who walk in this way never lose their strength, but constantly receive new power for their heavenward march.

In answer to Christ's words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," Philip Said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" Christ said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

Christ came to our world to reveal the Father. Whatever attractions He possessed, He manifested only those that dwell in the character of God. His words revealed the goodness, mercy, and love of the Father. His excellence was the perfection of the Father. In His every word and work may be seen the manifestation of the attributes of His Father.

In Christ dwelt all the fulness of the God-head. But the only way in which He could reach men was to veil His glory by a garb of humanity. The angels beheld the hiding of His glory, that divinity might touch humanity. Christ ever retained the utmost hatred for sin, but He loved the purchase of His blood. He suffered in the place of sinful men, taking them into union with Himself. This is the mystery into which angels desire to look. They desire to know how Christ could live and work in a fallen world, how He could mingle with sinful humanity. It was a mystery to them that He who hated sin with intense hatred felt the most tender, compassionate sympathy for the beings that committed sin.

Satan had worked long to efface the true impression of God, and to represent Him as a God

having no love. This is Satan's character. He is destitute of mercy and compassion. Overbearing and revengeful, he delights in the misery that he brings on the human family. With these attributes he attempted to clothe the God of heaven.

Christ came to remove these unjust impressions. He came to assure men that they need not fear to approach God because of His greatness and majesty. He constantly sought to carry the attention of His hearers to God. He presented the greatness of the Father's love, declaring that He had so great a care for His children that even the hairs of their head are numbered. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the heavenly Father. He sympathizes with all the creatures He has made, and if the heart is given into His hands, and attuned by His power, it will respond by strains of melody and thanksgiving.

In His wisdom the Saviour teaches us to approach God with the confidence of a child. He instructs us to call Jehovah by the endearing name of "Father," that we may not separate from Him in awe and coldness. Constantly He points us to the emblems of fatherly love, seeking to encourage faith and confidence in God. He pleads with us to have a correct idea of the Father. He throws back the accusation of the enemy, declaring, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." He would have the memorials of redeeming grace arrest our attention, that we may know that all the goodness, mercy, patience, forbearance, seen in Him, belong to God.

But notwithstanding the fact that the disciples were privileged to be with Christ, and were greatly blessed by His instruction, they were slow to appropriate His words to themselves, and many times they remained in ignorance of the true meaning of the precious utterances that fell from His lips. He pleaded with them to have faith in Him. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake." "By their fruits ye shall know them." Is not the fruit I bear sufficient evidence?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me [not with a fluctuating faith, but as the only-begotten Son of God, and a personal Saviour], the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." This promise the disciples held fast by faith, and on the day of Pentecost it was graciously fulfilled by the Lord. They were bidden not to leave Jerusalem till they had been endued with power from on high. They therefore remained in Jerusalem, fasting and praying. They emptied from their hearts all bitterness, all estrangement, all differences; for this would have prevented their prayers being as one. And when they were emptied of self, Christ filled the vacancy. The Holy Spirit came upon them, and filled all the house where they were sitting. Then was the promise fulfilled: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.'

The Holy Spirit leads men to co-operate with God. This is the design in divine help. And in our turn we are to lead others to Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. As we engage in this work with heart and soul, we are blessed and strengthened. God stands ready to co-operate with us, but this He can not do till we do our duty. If ministers and teachers would learn the lessons given here so clearly and explicitly, a great change would take place in the ministry of the Word. They would realize their entire dependence upon God, and would work for Him with whole-hearted earnestness. The Holy Spirit would work in and through them, and the unconverted would be

rescued from their insensibility.

The great reason why the church has not more efficiency and power is that its members love the world. They reject the Spirit of God, and fill their hearts with idols. They love the world, and the things of the world, and of all such the words of inspiration declare, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." They are not, as was Christ, in the world but not of the world. The Lord can not manifest Himself to professed Christians who love the world; for spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

The Holy Spirit is given to bring to our remembrance the words and works of Christ, spoken for the salvation of the soul; and if this Spirit were recognized and appreciated, spiritual life would increase one hundred-fold. But many do not choose to remember. They seek rather to forget the good impression made on mind and heart. They do not desire to yield their way for God's way. God bears long with them, and his Spirit is constantly employed to bring spiritual things to their remembrance, that subjects of vital importance may find a lodgment in their hearts. The Spirit takes of the things of God, and presents them to mind. Constantly the mind is given glimpses of God. If men listen for the voice of God, these spiritual impressions become more and more frequent, and extend from one to another till the leaven seems to go through the whole church. A divine presence hovers over the people, and a revival is the result. Souls are converted. The sympathies and energies of the people are enlisted on the side of the truth. God works in them, to will and to do of his good-pleasure, breaking the spell of the world, and engrossing the thoughts with subjects of eternal interest.

The most powerful motives and attractions that can be imagined are offered to reclaim man, and win him from the path of transgression to the path of humble obedience. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?" No stronger inducement could be offered. Nothing is withheld. In Christ God gave Himself. He has enriched the world with a gift beyond all parallel. This gift is the source of all patience, forbearance, and mercy. In it is love sufficient to fill the whole world. It is of infinite value; for with it was given all that heaven could bestow.

Our great peril is in regarding the Lord's plans with cool indifference. All heaven is actively engaged in working out the plans of God for the salvation of an unbelieving world. How then do finite men dare to put aside God's plans for their own? By doing this, they place their souls in great peril. Shall we not respond to God's love by giving ourselves to Him without reservation, by walking in His way, by determining to do His will? Angels are enlisted in this work. They do the bidding of God by co-operating with human endeavor. They are filled with amazement; for they are unable to measure the greatness of God's love. The chosen instruments of righteousness join in the testimony, saying, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." As the followers of Christ see Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, they exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Charged with a special message, they proclaim Christ, and Him crucified.

## SOURCE

The Signs of the Times  
January 6, 1898 - The Way, the Truth, and the Life.

---