

THE WAY TO GOD

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CHRIST ALL AND IN ALL

Colossians 3:11

CHRIST *is* all to us that we make Him to be. I want to emphasize that word “**ALL**.” Some men make Him to be “**a root out of a dry ground,**” “**without form or comeliness.**” He is nothing to them; they do not want Him. Some Christians have a very small Saviour, for they are not willing to receive Him fully, and let Him do great and mighty things for them. Others have a mighty Saviour, because they make Him to be great and mighty.

A Saviour from Sin

If we would know what Christ wants to be to us, we must first of all know Him as our Saviour from sin. When the angel came down from heaven to proclaim that He was to be born into the world, you remember he gave His name, “**He shall be called Jesus, (Saviour) for He shall save His people from their sins.**” HAVE WE BEEN DELIVERED FROM SIN? He did not come to save us in our sins, but from our sins.

Now, there are three ways of knowing a man.

Some men you know only by hearsay, others you merely know by having been once introduced to them, you know them very slightly, others again you know by having been acquainted with them for years, you know them intimately.

So I believe there are classes of people today in the Christian church and out of it:

- those who know Christ only by reading or by hearsay,
- those who have a historical Christ;
- those who have a slight personal acquaintance with Him;
- those who thirst, as Paul did, to “**know Him and the power of His resurrection.**”

The more we know of Christ the more we shall love Him, and the better we shall serve Him.

Let us look at Him as He hangs upon the cross, and see how He has put away sin. He was manifested that He might take away our sins; and if we really know Him we must first of all see Him as our Saviour from sin. You remember how the angel said to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, “**Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord**” (Luke 2:10, 11).

Then if you go clear back to Isaiah, seven hundred years before Christ’s birth, you will find these words: “**I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour**” (43:11).

Again, in the First Epistle of John (4:14) we read: “**We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.**”

All the heathen religions, we read, teach men to work their way up to God; but the religion of Jesus Christ is God coming down to men to save them, to lift them up out of the pit of sin. In Luke 19:10, we read that Christ Himself told the people what He had come for: “**The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**” So we start from the cross, not from the cradle. Christ has opened up a new and living way to the Father; He has taken all the stumbling-blocks out of the way, so that every man who accepts of Christ as his Saviour can have salvation.

Christ is More Than a Saviour

But Christ is not only a Saviour. I might save a man from drowning and rescue him from an untimely grave; but I might probably not be able to do any more for him.

Christ is something more than a Saviour. When the children of Israel were placed behind the blood, that blood was their salvation; but they would still have heard the crack of the slave driver’s whip, if they had not been delivered from the Egyptian yoke of bondage: then it was that God delivered them from the hand of the king of Egypt.

I have little sympathy with the idea that God comes down to save us, and then leaves us in prison, the slaves of our besetting sins. No; He has come to deliver us, and to give us victory over our evil tempers, our passions, and our lusts.

Are you a professed Christian, but one who is a slave to some besetting sin? If you want to get victory over that temper or that lust, go on to know Christ more intimately. He brings deliverance for the past, the present, and the future. “**Who delivered, and doth deliver, who will yet deliver**” (II Corinthians 1:10).

When Things Look Dark

How often, like the children of Israel when they came to the Red Sea, have we become discouraged because everything looked dark before us, behind us, and around us, and we knew not which way to turn.

Like Peter, we have said: **“To whom shall we go?”** But God has appeared for our deliverance. He has brought us through the Red Sea right out into the wilderness, and opened up the way into the Promised Land. But Christ is not only our Deliverer; He is our Redeemer. That is something more than being our Saviour. He has bought us back. “Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money” (Isaiah 52:3). We **“were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold”** (1 Peter 1:18). If gold could have redeemed us, could He not have created ten thousand worlds full of gold?

When God had redeemed the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and brought them through the Red Sea, they struck out for the wilderness; and then God became to them their way.

I am so thankful the Lord has not left us in darkness as to the right way. There is no living man who has been groping in the darkness but may know the way.

“I am the Way,” says Christ. If we follow Christ, we shall be in the right way, and have the right doctrine. Who could lead the children of Israel through the wilderness like the Almighty God Himself? He knew the pitfalls and dangers of the way, and guided the people through all their wilderness journey right into the Promised Land.

It is true that if it had not been for their accursed unbelief they might have crossed into the land at Kadesh-Barnea, and taken possession of it, but they desired something besides God’s word; so they were turned back, and had to wander in the desert for forty years.

I believe there are thousands of God’s children wandering in the wilderness still. The Lord has delivered them from the hand of the Egyptian, and would at once take them through the wilderness right into the Promised Land, if they were only willing to follow Christ. Christ has been down here, and has made the rough places smooth, and the dark places light, and the crooked places straight. If we will only be led by Him, and will follow Him, all will be peace, and joy, and rest.

Blazing the Way

In the frontier, when a man goes out hunting he takes a hatchet with him, and cuts off pieces from the bark of the trees as he goes along through the forest. This is called, “blazing the way.” He does it that he may know the way back, as there is no pathway through these thick forests.

Christ has come down to this earth; He has “blazed the way”; and now that He has gone up on high, if we will but follow Him, we shall be kept in the right path.

I will tell you how you may know if you are following Christ or not. If someone has slandered you, or misjudged you, do you treat them as your master would have done? If you do not bear these things in a loving and forgiving spirit, all the churches and ministers in the world cannot make you right.

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

Christ is not only our way. He is the light upon the way. He says, **“I am the Light of the world”** (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).

He goes on to say, **“He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”**

It is impossible for any man or woman who is following Christ to walk in darkness. If your soul is in the darkness, groping around in the fog and mist of earth, let me tell you it is because you have got away from the true light. There is nothing but light that will dispel darkness. So let those who are walking in spiritual darkness admit Christ into their hearts: He is the Light.

I call to mind a picture of which I used at one time to think a good deal; but now I have come to look more closely, I would not put it up in my house except I turned the face to the wall. It represents Christ as standing at a door, knocking, and having a big lantern in His hand. Why, you might as well hang up a lantern to the sun as put one into Christ's hand.

He is the Sun of Righteousness; and it is our privilege to walk in the light of an unclouded sun.

Trying to Catch One's Shadow

Many people are hunting after light, and peace, and joy. We are nowhere told to seek after these things. If we admit Christ into our hearts these will all come of themselves.

I remember, when a boy, I used to try in vain to catch my shadow. One day I was walking with my face to the sun. As I happened to look around I saw that my shadow was following me. The faster I went the faster my shadow followed; I could not get away from it. So when our faces are directed to the Sun of Righteousness, the peace and joy are sure to come.

A man said to me some time ago, “Moody, how do you feel?”

It was so long since I had thought about my feelings. I had to stop and consider awhile, in order to find out. Some Christians are all the time thinking about their feelings; and because they do not feel just right they think their joy is all gone. If we keep our faces towards Christ, and are occupied with Him, we shall be lifted out of the darkness and the trouble that may have gathered round our path.

I remember being in a meeting after the War of the Rebellion broke out. The war had been going on for about six months. The Army of the North had been defeated at Bull Run, in fact, we had nothing but defeat, and it looked as though the republic was going to pieces. So we were much cast down and discouraged.

At this meeting every speaker for awhile seemed as if he had hung his harp upon the willow; and it was one of the gloomiest meetings I ever attended.

Finally, an old man with beautiful white hair got up to speak, and his face literally shone. “Young men,” he said, “you do not talk like sons of the King. Though it is dark just here, remember it is light somewhere else.” Then he went on to say that if it were dark all over the world, it was light up around the throne.

Rise Above the Clouds

He told us he had come from the east, where a friend had described to him how he had been up a mountain to spend the night and see the sun rise. As the party was climbing up the mountain, and before they had reached the summit, a storm came on. This friend said to the guide, “I will give this up; take me back.”

The guide smiled, and replied, “I think we shall get above the storm soon.”

On they went; and it was not long before they got up to where it was as calm as any summer evening. Down in the valley a terrible storm raged; they could hear the thunder rolling, and see the lightning’s flash; but all was serene on the mountain top.

“And so, my young friends,” continued the old man, “though all is dark around you, come a little higher and the darkness will flee away.”

Often when I have been inclined to get discouraged, I have thought of what he said. Now if you are down in the valley amidst the thick fog and the darkness, get a little higher; get nearer to Christ, and know more of Him.

You remember the Bible says that when Christ expired on the cross, the light of the world was put out. God sent His Son to be the light of the world; but men did not love the light, because it reproved them of their sins. When they were about to put out this light, what did Christ say to His disciples?

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me” (Acts 1:8).

He has gone up yonder to intercede for us; but He wants us to shine for Him down here.

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).

So our work is to shine; not to blow our own trumpet so that people may look at us. What we want to do is to show forth Christ. If we have any light at all it is borrowed light.

Some one said to a young Christian: “Converted! it is a moonshine!”

Said he: “I thank you for the illustration; the moon borrows its light from the sun; and we borrow ours from the Sun of Righteousness.”

If we are Christ’s, we are here to shine for Him: by and by He will call us home to our reward.

The Blind Man and the Lantern

I remember hearing of a blind man who sat by the wayside with a lantern near him. When he was asked what he had a lantern for, as he could not see the light, he said it was that people should not stumble over him. I believe more people stumble over the inconsistencies of professed Christians than from any other cause.

What is doing more harm to the cause of Christ than all the skepticism in the world is this cold, dead formalism, this conformity to the world, this professing what we do not possess? The eyes of the world are upon us. I think it was George Fox who said every Quaker ought to light up the country for ten miles around him. If we were all brightly shining for the Master, those about us would soon be reached, and there would be a shout of praise going to heaven.

People say: "I want to know what is the truth."

Listen: "**I AM THE TRUTH**," says Christ (John 14:5).

If you want to know what the truth is, get acquainted with Christ.

People also complain that they have not life. Many are trying to give themselves spiritual life. You may galvanize yourselves and put electricity into yourselves, so to speak; but the effect will not last very long. Christ alone is the author of life. If you would have real spiritual life, get to know Christ. Many try to stir up spiritual life by going to meetings. That may be well enough; but it will be of no use, unless they get into contact with the living Christ. Then their spiritual life will not be a spasmodic thing, but will be perpetual; flowing on and on, and bringing forth fruit to God.

Then Christ is Our Keeper

A great many young disciples are afraid they will not hold out. "**He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep**" (Psalm 121:4).

It is the work of Christ to keep us; and if He keeps us there will be no danger of our falling.

I suppose if Queen Victoria had to take care of the Crown of England, some thief might attempt to get access to it; but it is put away in the Tower of London, and guarded night and day by soldiers. The whole English army would, if necessary, be called out to protect it. And we have no strength in ourselves. We are no match for Satan; he has had six thousand years experience. But then we remember that the One who neither slumbers nor sleeps is our keeper.

In Isaiah 41:10, we read, "**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.**" In Jude also, verse 24, we are told that He is "**able to keep us from falling.**" "**We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**" (I John 2:1).

But Christ is something more. He is our SHEPHERD. It is the work of the shepherd to care for the sheep, to feed them and protect them. **“I am the Good Shepherd”**. **“My sheep hear My voice.”** **“I lay down My life for the sheep.”**

In that wonderful tenth chapter of John, Christ uses the personal pronoun no less than twenty-eight times, in declaring what He is and what He will do. In verse 28 He says, **“They shall never perish; neither shall any *man* pluck them out of My hand.”** But notice the word “*man*” is in italics. So that this verse could read: **“Neither shall ANY pluck them out of my hand”**—no devil or man shall be able to do it. In another place the Scripture declares, **“Your life is hid with Christ in God”** (Colossians 3:3). How safe and how secure!

Christ says, **“My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me”** (John 10:27).

A gentleman in the East heard of a shepherd who could call all his sheep to him by name. He went and asked if this were true. The shepherd took him to the pasture where they were, and called one of them by some name. One sheep looked up and answered the call, while the others went on feeding and paid no attention.

In the same way he called about a dozen of the sheep around him. The stranger said, “How do you know one from the other? They all look perfectly alike.”

“Well,” said he, “you see that sheep toes in a little, that other one has a squint, one has a little piece of wool off, another has a black spot, and another has a piece out of its ear.”

The man knew all his sheep by their failings, for he had not a perfect one in the whole flock. I suppose our Shepherd knows us in the same way.

An Eastern shepherd was once telling a gentleman that

His Sheep Knew His Voice

and that no stranger could deceive them. The gentleman thought he would like to put the statement to the test. So he put on the shepherd’s frock and turban, and took his staff and went to the flock. He disguised his voice, and tried to speak as much like the shepherd as he could; but he could not get a single sheep in the flock to follow him. He asked the shepherd if his sheep never followed a stranger. He was obliged to admit that if a sheep got sickly it would follow any one.

So it is with a good many professed Christians; when they get sickly and weak in the faith, they will follow any teacher that comes along; but when the soul is in health, a man will not be carried away by errors and heresies. He will know whether the “voice” speaks the truth or not.

He can soon tell that, if he is really in communion with God. When God sends a true messenger His words will find a ready response in the Christian heart.

Christ is a tender Shepherd. You may some time think He has not been a very tender shepherd to you; you are passing under the rod. It is written, “**Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth**” (Hebrews 12:6). That you are passing under the rod is no proof that Christ does not love you.

A friend of mine lost all his children. No man could ever have loved his family more; but the scarlet fever took one by one away; and so the whole four or five, one after another, died. The poor stricken parents went over to Great Britain, and wandered from one place to another, there and on the continent. At length they found their way to Syria.

One day they saw an Eastern shepherd come down to a stream, and call his flock to cross. The sheep came down to the brink, and looked at the water; but they seemed to shrink from it, and he could not get them to respond to his call. He then took a little lamb, put it under one arm; he took another lamb and put it under the other arm, and thus passed into the stream. The old sheep no longer stood looking at the water: they plunged in after the shepherd; and in a few minutes the whole flock was on the other side; and hurried them away to newer and fresher pastures.

The bereaved father and mother, as they looked on the scene, felt that it taught them a lesson. They no longer murmured because the Great Shepherd had taken their lambs one by one into yonder world; and they began to look up and look forward to the time when they would follow the loved ones they had lost.

If you have loved ones gone before, remember that your Shepherd is calling you to “**set your affection on things above**” (Colossians 3:2). Let us be faithful to Him, and follow Him, while we remain in this world. And if you have not taken Him for your Shepherd, do so this very day.

Christ is not only all these things that I have mentioned: He is also our Mediator, our Sanctifier, our Justifier; in fact, it would take volumes to tell what He desires to be to every individual soul.

While looking through some papers I once read this

Wonderful Description of Christ

I do not know where it originally came from; but it was so fresh to my soul that I should like to give it to you:

“Christ is our Way; we walk in Him.

- He is our Truth; we embrace Him.
- He is our Life; we live in Him.
- He is our Lord; we choose Him to rule over us.
- He is our Master; we serve Him.
- He is our Teacher, instructing us in the way of salvation.
- He is our Prophet, pointing out the future.
- He is our Priest, having atoned for us.
- He is our Advocate, ever living to make intercession for us.

- He is our Saviour, saving to the uttermost.
- He is our Root; we grow from Him.
- He is our Bread; we feed upon Him.
- He is our Shepherd, leading us into green pastures.
- He is the Water of Life; we slake our thirst from Him.
- He is the fairest among ten thousand; we admire Him above all others.
- He is **'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person'**; we strive to reflect His likeness.
- He is the upholder of all things; we rest upon Him.
- He is our wisdom; we are guided by Him.
- He is our Righteousness; we cast all our imperfections upon Him.
- He is our Sanctification; we draw all our power for holy life from Him.
- He is our redemption, redeeming us from all iniquity.
- He is our Healer, curing all our diseases.
- He is our Friend, relieving us in all our necessities.
- He is our Brother, cheering us in our difficulties."

Here is another beautiful extract: it is from Gotthold:

"For my part, my soul is like a hungry and thirsty child; and I need His love and consolation for my refreshment. I am a wandering and lost sheep; and I need Him as a good and faithful shepherd. My soul is like a frightened dove pursued by the hawk; and I need His wounds for a refuge. I am a feeble vine; and I need His cross to lay hold of, and to wind myself about. I am a sinner; and I need His righteousness. I am naked and bare; and I need His holiness and innocence for a covering. I am ignorant; and I need His teaching: simple and foolish; and I need the guidance of His Holy Spirit. In no situation, and at no time, can I do without Him. Do I pray? He must prompt, and intercede for me. Am I arraigned by Satan at the divine tribunal? He must be my Advocate. Am I in affliction? He must be my Helper. Am I persecuted by the world? He must defend me. When I am forsaken, He must be my support; when I am dying, my life: when moldering in the grave, my Resurrection. Well, then, I will rather part with all the world, and all that it contains, than with Thee, my Saviour. And, God be thanked! I know that Thou, too, are neither able nor willing to do without me. Thou art rich; and I am poor. Thou hast abundance: and I am needy. Thou hast righteousness; and I sins. Thou hast wine and oil; and I wounds. Thou hast cordials and refreshments; and I hunger and thirst.

"Use me, then, my Saviour, for whatever purpose, and in whatever way, Thou mayest require. Here is my poor heart, an empty vessel; fill it with Thy grace. Here is my sinful and troubled soul; quicken and refresh it with Thy love. Take my heart for Thine abode; my mouth to spread the glory of Thy name; my love and all my powers, for the advancement of Thy believing people; and never suffer the steadfastness and confidence of my faith to abate—that so at all times I may be enabled from the heart to say, 'Jesus needs me, and I Him; and so we suit each other.'"

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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