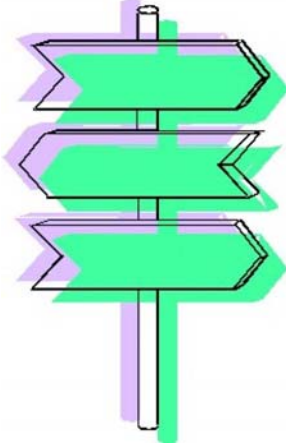




## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### “The way to the Father so often missed”



*No man cometh unto the Father, but by me, John 14:6.*

The synopsis of a sermon preached in Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church by Rev. Ivan Foster.

Man's chief invention has been religions. Paul said, "There be gods many," 1 Corinthians 8:5. This world today is filled with religions old and new. With the passing of one there is the birth of another. All this religious activity, this chopping and changing, is but a declaring of man's blindness regarding the true God. The verse that is before us, the very words of Christ, would impart so much knowledge to mankind if it were but believed. What religious turbulences would cease; what peace and calm would ensue in many places if this verse were embraced! Like the word of Christ which calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, so these words should bring

to an end all questions about the way to heaven. This verse ought to settle most if not all religious debate. Sadly, it but serves to ignite new controversies, so set is man's mind against the truth of God. But we embrace it gladly as the decree of the Son of God.

These words underscore . . .

#### I. THE IGNORANCE OF THE HUMAN HEART

These words of Christ are in answer to a question from Thomas. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? What ignorance this question from Thomas displays!

**1. Man is ignorant of the way to God.** "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job 11:7. Man has not the means, spiritually or intellectually to search out God. When God came to man, in the midst of miracles attesting to His presence amongst men, in his blindness, man did not know Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not," John 1:10-11. Nothing sets forth man's ignorance like the story of Christ's manifesting of Himself to Israel and the rejection of Him that took place.

**2. Much instruction may still find him ignorant.** This ignorance is displayed by an apostle, much instructed. It was Thomas who asks the question, "How can we know the way?" I am sure that no topic received more attention in our Saviour's preaching than that of the way back to God which sinners must travel, yet here is a leading member of the apostolic band still displaying ignorance after three years of instruction! nations The message of God has been translated into the language of the vast majority of the nations of the world. It has been preached for many centuries amongst many of those nations; it is broadcast by radio and by the means of the printed word today to an unprecedented extent — and yet man remains in great ignorance of this most basic of gospel truths.

**3. It shows how much the human mind is set against the truth of God.** Man is so



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fixed upon his notions, only the grace of God can deliver him. He is like the coiled spring which no measure of effort succeeds in taking the twist from, but it will, once released, return to something akin to its coiled state. So is man!

There is a darkness upon his mind concerning the things of God that, should divine grace cease its ministrations, nature's darkness will reoccupy his mind and soul. Africa, India and many other nations that today are wreathed in heathen darkness, had the gospel long before the United Kingdom. The same United Kingdom, which has enjoyed so much by way of blessing, is today swiftly descending into the darkness from which the gospel lifted it many centuries ago. The human heart is resistant to the truth of God.

In this text . . .

### II. WE HAVE THE CHIEF OBJECTIVE OF LIFE BEFORE US

Coming unto the Father. Our health and strength, our talents and possessions, our every breath, should be employed chiefly to ensure that we have come to the Father and have been reconciled to Him. Life will end in eternal failure and misery if it does not see us coming unto the Father in faith and repentance. Have you come to the Father, seeking His mercy and pardon and are you on the road that will take you to the Father's house in glory?

**1. Man needs to come to the Father for sin has separated us from Him.** Man had been made in the image of God so that he might dwell with God. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them, Genesis 1:27. But sin drove man from God. "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Genesis 3:23-24. Sin is the great separator. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear," Isaiah 59:1-2.

**2. Standing between us and God are two things.** They are sin's guilt and sin's corruption. Adam, the representative head of mankind, became guilty before God, and we in him, when he disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit. Our guilt condemns us to that punishment decreed by God for sin — eternal death. Our condemned state banishes us from God's presence. But sin rendered us corrupt as well. We have a nature that is thoroughly corrupt. It is "totally depraved." It is incapable of doing that which is righteous and holy. Our every thought is "only evil continually," Genesis 6:5. That being the case, this corruption doubly bans us from God's presence. Our corruption renders us incapable of obeying or pleasing God. We are doomed of ourselves to dwell forever separated from God. Hence the great sentence upon sinners: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matthew 25:41.

**3. Christ by His death and resurrection has opened the way to the Father.** The removal of these two great barriers that stood between sinners and God was what the Lord Jesus Christ came to accomplish. The first barrier required an atoning sacrifice and the second required the imparting of a new and holy nature. Thus God declared His intentions



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in the famous words of the prophet Ezekiel. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh," Ezekiel 36:26. We need pardon and we need life. Both of these are supplied by the Saviour. His blood was shed on the cross to make atonement, to pay the penalty of our sinful guilt. Listen to these marvellous statements of this great doctrine. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Corinthians 5:21. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit," 1 Peter 3:18.

As well as reconciling us to the Father by the sacrifice of Himself, the Lord Jesus imparts to His elect a new nature. He regenerates them by the power and grace of His Spirit; they are thus "born again." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor 5:17. Thus Christ removes our sin by His sacrifice and by His Spirit renews us, imparting to us a new and holy nature.

This text emphasises . . . .

### III. THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CHRIST

The Saviour shuts out all ways of salvation but by Himself. Multi-faithism is the "politically correct" way of thinking, speaking and acting today. But none was more opposed to such a false philosophy than the Saviour. He states this truth both positively and negatively for emphasis. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

**1. Such a statement is required because of the folly of men.** All men think that they can of themselves find a way to God other than by Christ. But all such alternatives lead only to hell. heir Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, has indicated that he would like to be known as the "Defender of Faiths" rather than the title borne by his predecessors since the Reformation, which indicated that the religion of the Bible is the sole and only faith. Such ecumenical thinking may commend him to many in the nation today but it makes him a denier and an enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords has stated the matter in such a way as to put His meaning beyond doubt. There is only one way to God whereby sinners may be saved and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2. It is a statement that is often repeated in Scripture.** It was stated in the types of the Old Testament. There was only one door into Noah's ark. There was only one door into Moses' tabernacle. There was only one means of access to God and that was by the sacrifice of blood. It was stated in the narrative of the first recorded act of worship — that of Cain and Abel. Abel was accepted of God while Cain was rejected. One came God's way and the other tried his own way. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh," Hebrews 11:4. Abel still speaks and says: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Christ."

It is a truth that stands astride the New Testament. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved," John 10:9. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor 3:11. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is



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none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Timothy 2:5. The Lord Jesus is THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.

**3. This statement of Christ is not to place obstacles in the way but to remove them.** The Saviour does not say that sinners cannot come to the Father but that they cannot come to the Father but by Christ. This verse is one of glorious tidings and joyous news for the way to heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ is a FREE WAY. It costs the sinner nothing. It is a way easily accessed. There is no need for a pilgrimage to Rome or to Mecca or to some other shrine or so-called "holy place." It is not gained by the payment of a toll, as is common with man's religion. It is free.

*Jesus paid it all.*

*All to Him I owe.*

*Sin had left a crimson stain.*

*He washed it white as snow.*

That Christ should have opened a way is a glorious token of the mercy of God and His desire to see sinners saved. That such a way should have been opened at the cost of the sufferings of eternal wrath by God's dear Son, is a glorious token of grace that is beyond our comprehension.

*Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love;*

*The love of God to me.*

*It brought my Saviour from above,*

*To die on Calvary.*

Come to Christ and receive from His hand the pardon and mercy your soul stands in eternal need of. Call upon Him right now and He will welcome you in through the door that leads to the Father, to heaven and to home.

**Copies of this sermon on cassette are available from our church, £2, including postage, UK, \$6 US, \$8 Can.**