

CHRIST ALONE EXALTEDⁱ

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With explanatory notes by John Gill

Adapted to modern English with some additional notes by Richard C. Schadleⁱⁱ

SERMON 3

CHRIST THE ONLY WAY Part 3.

“Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)¹

I HAVE more to say, so that if possible, I may more fully satisfy any who are not yet satisfied with the things I spoke about in my pervious sermons. Christ, as I said, is the way from wrath, from the wrath of the Father; from wrath in its propensity, (as I may say;) from wrath. in the fruits of this affection of wrath. This is what I clearly stated: “The punishment, or the discipline of God, or rather chastisement, is not **for** sin, but **from** sin.” This is exactly what I mean: Yet some of you do not understand what I am saying, perhaps this is just a mistake on your part. In summary then beloved, briefly therefore to help make both of us to be understood let me restate this. When I say that believers are not afflicted for sin this is what I mean: God, when he afflicts a believer, does not do so because the believers sin deserves affliction. Christ has borne the punishment for the believer’s sin on his own back, putting it behind Gods back as it were. Any punishment (desert) the believer actually bears, Christ did not bear, otherwise God is demanding satisfaction twice for the same thing and this is impossible. My beloved, please take special notice of this: If the Lord punishes a believer, pouring out upon him what his transgressions deserve, then what did Christ die for? Christ died to satisfy the blame of sin; and God was actually and fully satisfied in his death. This is clear from Isaiah 53: “He beheld the travail of his soul, and he was satisfied with it.” With what was he satisfied? He was satisfied with “the travail of his soul;” with the burthen his soul bare, with the punishment of sin that was upon him. If God was satisfied with the “travail of his soul,” how can God come to exact a new satisfaction by pouring out his wrath for sin upon believers? To be satisfied, and at the same time to ask more is a contradiction; either he was not satisfied, or, being satisfied, he could ask no more. In brief, therefore, beloved, consider this much, there is not the least action, or rather intention of any revenge, for a sin committed, when the Lord

¹ All scriptures are my own translation. I have kept to the King James version for the most part, only changing the old English words to modern English.

in any way afflicts his people. All the revenge, that sin deserves, Christ has taken away and has borne it upon his own back; and, therefore, he is said to “save to the uttermost them that come to God by him.” (Hebrews 7:25) He saves to the utmost, says the apostle; he has not left a drop, nor a tiny spot behind, not so much as the least scatterings of wrath to fall upon the head of a believer. It was for them that he bares the indignation of the Lord. Because of this the very nature of affliction in general is altered and changed. Even death its self which was the wages of sin has become the bed of rest now. As the prophet said: “They shall rest in their beds, each in his uprightness;” (Isaiah 57:2) Afflictions were the rod of God's anger; they are now the gentle cleansing of a tender father. Before God afflicted **for** sin, now God afflicts men **from** sin; “This is all the fruit,” said the prophet, “to take away his sin:” (Isaiah 27:9) This is not to take away present sin, as if affliction was the cure that takes away our sin to blot out our transgression; that would directly strike at the heart of Christ himself.² But “this is all the fruit to take away sin,” that is, to stop sin, to prevent sin. “Before I was afflicted (said David) I went astray, but now have I learned to keep your law:” therefore, (said he) “It is good for me that I have been afflicted;” (Psalm 119:67 & 71) That is with this in mind; that it is a means of preventing sin.

If you will listen to this without unreasonable censure, without a spirit that seeks contention and quarrelling, you never need to stumble at this teaching. Afflictions are the smiles of God, as gracious as the choicest embraces. God never manifests his love to a soul more then he does when he afflicts it; his love appears in these afflictions. And the truth is, as Christ has purchased rest and peace for believers, so he has likewise purchased afflictions for them too. God in his wisdom sees that afflictions are useful to us like when a parent lovingly bounces their child on their knee. This much is certain, that Christ is a way of escape from all wrath whatsoever. For example, from the manifestation of God’s displeasure upon creatures sinning; where he pours out the punishment for this sinfulness or the results of their sinfulness upon them. Christ is a way to the state of grace; grace in respect of favor, grace in respect of the fruits thereof; and this is what we have explained above.

The next thing to consider is this: ‘What kind of way is Christ to those that come to the Father by him?’ I will speak as briefly as I possibly can. Take notice, in general, that the Lord has revealed Christ as a way, with all the possible conveniences that may either win a people into this way, or satisfy and refresh a people that are in this way; (Proverbs 9:1 – 3; Song of Solomon 5:1) He has presented Christ as the most suitable and applicable answer to mans needs so that the heart of man can desire nothing better in any way. He shall find that Christ is the way. I shall speak, therefore upon this subject in a way that will shed an abundance of light upon it. The purpose is that you may apply these motives as we go along to stir you up, to quicken your steps into this way by showing you the different ways that make is so convenient.

First of all: There is the great, unspeakable excellency and fitness in Christ, the way. The fact that he is the free way for anyone at all to enter in, without any fear that they shall be accused of trespassing, he is the correct way. I say: a way that costs nothing; a way barred up to no person whatsoever; a way whose gates are taken off from the hinges; (Psalm 112:16). In fact, it is a way that has no gates at all. It’s a free way for us but a costly way indeed to the Father and to Christ as

² For it is Christ's work to take every present sin from off the conscience of the believer, by the application of his blood and sacrifice; hence he is said to be "the Lamb of God that taketh away," that continues to take away, "the sins of the world." – John Gill

well. O beloved! a man might study a while to find out, whether there be more preciousness in Christ himself, as he is our way, or in the fitting of Christ to be our way. The person of Christ is invaluable, there is nothing to be compared with him: but considering him as our way to salvation, whether there be more preciousness in that, or in the fitting of him for it, is not so easy to determine. The apostle said, You are bought with a price not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18,19). Observe this, I pray, in order that Christ might be a fit way for us to come to the Father, it cost the Father and Christ himself much more than anything compared to silver and gold; more than the most precious things in the world which are if fact only corruptible things. This fact makes the apostle cry out in a way of expostulation and admiration, rather than into a way of affirmation; "Oh! what manner of love is this, that the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! (1 John 3:1) Greater love than this can no man show, than to lay down his life for his enemies. (John 15:13) What did it cost the Father? It cost him that, that was most precious to him of all things in the world; it cost him his Own Son, not a cessation of the being of his Son, but the bitterness of his Son: though a man does not lose his child, yet it goes to heart of him to see his child tormented; much more when he himself must be forced to be the tormentor. Abraham thought God had put him to a very hard test, when he to be the killer, to slay his own and only son, his dear Isaac. God, the Father had the same test, no, even much more so. For Abraham only had to offer his son as God did not require the thing to actually be done. Yet it went to Abraham’s heart that he should be appointed to do this task; but would have been much harder still if he had to actually carry it out but cutting Isaac’s throat. Remember his discontent before he had a child: “What will you give me, seeing I go childless?” (Genesis 15:2). What would Abraham have said, if receiving a child, he should have been made a butcher to his own child? Yet the Father was put to this, to make Christ a way to believers: He was his only beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased. “I was daily his delight, (speaking of the Father and Christ under the notion, wisdom) I was his delight, rejoicing always before him in the habitable parts of his earth.” (Proverbs 8:30). How deeply it must have affected him to part with such a Son? Yes, it must have affected him deeply, that he himself must not only be a spectator of all that cruelty, but the principal actor himself in the tragedy. He does not only leave Christ to men, but when men could not fetch blood enough, he takes the rod into his own hand, and fetches it himself from his beloved Son: “It pleased the Lord to bruise him,” said the prophet (Isaiah 53:10). It did not only please the Lord, that men should bruise him; but “it pleased the Lord” himself “to bruise him.” It was a strange contemplation of things, that God should look upon the anguish of the soul of Christ, and, instead of breaking out into furiousness against the instruments of cruelty, he himself should be satisfied with beholding it. It was as if to say, it did his heart good to see it; “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;” (Isaiah 53:11). As much as to say, not only satisfied towards men, but satisfied himself: he was content to see the travail of his Son.

Certainly, beloved, God’s compassion towards a poor sinner must be infinitely beyond that of his creatures in that he should treat his own Son in this way; that his compassion should be to his enemies. One would think, God should rejoice to see the confusion of his enemies; and not rejoice to see the bitterness of the travail of the soul of his Son, so that his enemies might escape scot-free. It so cost the Father, that he must not only behold, or allow the suffering of his Son, but he must be an actor of it himself: not only so, he must be pleased in it. Certainly, the Father was exceedingly pleased with it, because it accomplished his great end; the main thing he desired was the salvation of sinners. This in his wisdom, he saw was the very best way that it could be done. Therefore, it

pleased him, in that his purpose should not be frustrated and his end accomplished. You know a man is displeased when he has a great desire to do something, if what he desires does not prosper. If he accomplishes his desire, he is content, he delights to see his business succeed; so was it with the Father.

You may see what it cost Christ too, as well as the Father. The Father must resign his part in his Son; a great matter, not only to part with him, in respect of death, but in a manner to part with him in life too; Christ said: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Here, you see, God parts with him in life; and Christ must part with his life, as well as the Father must part with the Son. Yes, in some manner, Christ must part with that which is better than his life, with the glory and majesty of his divinity. He did not part with the essence of his divinity, but with the glory of it; he parted, as Philippians 2:6 says, "Though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation;" He emptied himself, as the meaning of the word is; he put off and lay aside the majesty and glory he had, that he might seem to be a mere Carpenter's Son. For one who was a king for all of his life to become as it were a beggar, and then to stay in this condition his whole life, even in this low condition till he came to the grave would be a great loss. Any man would consider this a great matter; that a king should debase himself to so low a condition. It cost Christ more than this; look upon all the sufferings of Christ; look upon death itself; together with the reproach and shame of it. The death he died, was called "A cursed death of the cross;" although he was not ashamed, that is, he despised the shame; yet shame and reproach he must bear. So, if we look upon God and Christ, as making a way for men, it is not a free way, it is not a cheap way, but looking upon ourselves, that have received the benefit of this way, and this Christ, it is a free-way indeed. Free for man, without any cost or charge; free, as he is a way to all sorts of men, none excepted, none prohibited; whoever will, may have access in Christ. There is nothing can hinder any one person more than another, from entering into Christ as a way. There is no difference to be made among men in this matter of coming to Christ. Be they poor or rich, wicked or godly, all are admitted. I know, beloved that this seems harsh and strange to some. But let me tell you, Christ is a free way for a drunkard, for a whore-master, for a harlot, an enemy to Christ; I say, Christ is the way for such a person to enter into him,³ as for the godliest person in the world. But do not mistake me; I do not say, Christ is a free way to walk in him, and yet to continue in such a condition; for Christ will never leave a person in such a filthiness, to whom he has given to enter in himself. Note well what I say with regard to Christ being the way, Christ is free a way for the vilest sort of sinners, as for any person under heaven. If Christ have opened a sinner's heart, to have an interest in himself; that is, receive and take him as his own savior. If Christ has given him a heart to take him for himself in reality, to take him truly and unfeignedly then Christ is a way for such a person to come to the Father. This is true even if they are the vilest person under heaven. And he is to him a way unto the Father, even while he is ungodly, before he is amended; and he may take his part in this Christ, as an ungodly person, as well as when he is righteous. In this regard I say, Christ is a free way; God looks for nothing in the world from the sons of men, be they what kind of men what so ever, he looks for nothing from them, to have a right to Christ. He gives Christ to them freely, without considering of anything that they might bring along with them. No, I say more yet; God not only

³ That is, who has been such a person; not that continues so, as is presently observed; the sense is, that such are free to come to Christ, notwithstanding their former life, and that without any conditions and qualifications fitting them for his acceptance; and so stand upon as good a foot with respect to Christ's free and hearty admittance of them into him, the way, as the most godly person in the world. – John Gill

does not look for anything but he will not take notice, nor regard anything that men think of as discouragement's; things to keep them from the inheritance, anything that stop him giving unto them a right to Christ.

I greatly desire to have this point made clear, and fully and exactly proved. It's not that many persons will not receive it; but I tell you we must not be afraid to set forth the praise of the glory of God's grace because we fear some men will not welcome this. Therefore, consider first that Christ has been made the way to the Father by the way of a gift, a free gift. What costs less than a gift? That Christ is delivered over to be a way to the Father, by a mere and absolute gift, is most plainly expressed: "I will give you," says the text, "to be a covenant to the people." (Isaiah 42) With regard to that receiving of a gift, what difference is there between the richest man in the world than to the poorest beggar, as long as the thing comes to him as a gift? A beggar can take a gift as well as the richest man; yes, a thief, that is condemned to the gallows, may receive a gift of the king, as well as the greatest favorite in court. If anything is given as a simple gift to a thief, then the fact that he is a thief, and in fact being ready to be executed, has nothing to do with stopping him from receiving the gift that which was given to him as a gift. If Christ is a free gift to men, then it must be true that to any to whom the Father wants to give Christ, there is nothing in that person to hinder them from participating in Christ.

But some people say even though Christ is a gift, he is a gift with conditions.

My answer is that this is a flat contradiction. You say he is a gift, yet there are conditions required. What are the conditions in a covenant, but only purchase and sale? I will do this, and you shall do that; do this, and you shall have that. What difference is there between this, and a purchase and sale? That God should require conditions of men, is but to receive Christ's upon purchase and sale. The truth is that Christ must be really and actually a gift. When the king gives a pardon to a thief, what are the conditions? It's possible that the thief can do his king some service if his life be spared; but if his life be spared upon doing service, it is not a gift, but a purchase. It would be as if a contract was made: do this and this service for me and then I will spare your life. I say it derogates from the nature of a gift, that there should be a condition required. The gospel, this is Christ given for men, cannot be said to be freely given if they must in fact buy him. Don't mistake me here in what I'm saying. I am not speaking against holiness and righteousness, what happens to a people who find Christ as the way for they shall be holy and righteous. Christ will make them holy, and put his spirit into them, to change their hearts and to work upon their spirits; but this is not the condition required to partake of Christ. Christ himself gives himself, and then he bestows these things when he is given. I say, Christ is given to men first, before they do anything in the world; and all they do, they do by Christ present in them; "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Galatians 2:20) We do not so much live, but by the life of Christ, which is life in us. All the actions of life proceed from the soul, now present; how then comes the actions of the soul to be a condition to partake of the soul, that gives life, and, by its presence, works such actions? Christ is the soul of every believer, that animates, and acts the believer in all things whatsoever; must not this life, Christ, be put into a believer, before he can actuate life, which is a stream that springs from that life? How then can this be a condition to receive, to have Christ, when it is Christ that must come first? It is by Christ himself, that these things which are called conditions, are performed or effected in us. His presentence itself works these things in us. So, say I, God confreres Christ upon men to be a way to bring them to

the Father; he is an absolute and free gift: there is no other motive that Christ should be any one's savior, than merely the good pleasure of the Father, the mercies of God himself; "Not for your sake, but for my own sake; not for your sake, you are a rebellious and stubborn people, but for my own sake." (Deuteronomy 9:6 in part) Here is the freeness of Christ, to a person coming to him, when he comes merely for God's sake; and God merely upon his good pleasure will do it, because he will; As Paul said: "He has mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardens: it is not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that shows mercy." (Romans 9) So that Christ becomes a way unto them, not out of their will, not out of their disposition, not out of their holy way of life, but out of that mercy that proceeds out of the mere will of God; his own good pleasure is the only fountain and spring of it. Beloved, I beseech you, seriously ponder and consider, that the gospel is therefore called the gospel, because it is glad tidings unto men; and so, the angel interpreted it, "Behold, I bring glad tidings." (Luke 2:10) Why glad tidings? In this respect glad, the poor sinner, he is a broken creature; even more, he is a dead creature, "You, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians 2:1) Life has been given to such a person, a person who was dead. Its obvious then grace comes from the Lord so that a creature who was dead, who could do nothing at all with regard to life, is able to receive life. "The time is coming that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it, shall live," (John 5:25). How did they come to life? Was there anything that they did to bring them to life? No, they are dead. It is the voice of the Son of God that puts life into their dead souls; and it is good news. Though the creature can do nothing⁴, yet Christ brings enough with him from the fountain of the Father, to give to them in order to bring them to him. Let me show you an evident scripture showing Christ is the way to the Father, solely as a free gift, without anything being required of man. Its Isaiah 55:1. "Ho, every one that thirsts," that is, every one that has a desire, "come to the waters, he that has no money; come you, buy, and eat; yes, come and buy wine and milk without money, and without price," said the prophet; and then he continues by way of reproof in the next verse; "Wherefore spend your money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which satisfies not? Eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness: incline your ear, hearken, and your soul shall live; I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David?" Here is the conclusion of all; are you thirsty, that is, have you a desire to really know Christ⁵, that Christ should say really to you soul, I want your salvation? It may be that you doubt and say to yourself, Christ is not for me; I am not fit to be a Christian. I am a great sinner; I must be holy first before I can come. This is trying to buy Christ with a price, but you must come without money and without price. How do you come then without money and without price? There is nothing to do but to take the offer⁶ of Christ, these waters of life, to take them merely and simply as a gift brought, and this is a sure mercy indeed. What does it mean to come without money and without price? It is this to take these sure mercies of David. When a man receives these things of Christ, because Christ gives them and

⁴ John 14:5. Isaiah 26:12

⁵ This is an important point. Crisp is not talking about what is called the "free offer of the gospel" as it is called today. This can be seen in his description of the sinner in a previous section: "If Christ has given him a heart to take him for himself in reality, to take him truly and unfeignedly then Christ is a way for such a person to come to the Father." He does use the word "offer" a short time later but it the correct sense. A sinner, awakened by God's grace as the one portrayed here often needs all the encouragement and support possible. Crisp is advising and correcting at the same time. The Holy Spirit has already begun the work of grace, leading the sinner to desire salvation. That salvation, however is free and entire, requiring nothing of the sinner but the faith which the Holy Spirit brings to make the Savior real to the sinner. Taking, or accepting the offer is to reach out in that faith to Christ to save us. – Richard Schadle

⁶ Revelation 3:18; John 7:37

for this reason alone; not in regard to any action of ours, as the reason for this taking them. I mean, in regard of any action of ours, that we must bring along with us, that must concur that we may partake of this gift. In Hosea 14:4 Christ speaks to his people in this way, "I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely;" that is, I will love them for mine own sake. In Romans 3:23, 24 the apostle speaks of the excellence of this free grace of God given to them in Christ. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." Notice, brethren, first he takes away from all creatures and all that a creature can do: "all have sinned and come short or the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23). Then he shows how we should take part in this matter of justification, that is freely through Christ. (Romans 5). The apostle speaks freely of our participation in Christ, he is our Christ as a free gift. He makes a grand comparison of our being in the sin of Adam and our participation or life in Christ. Showing in every passage the participation of life from and by Christ, using expressions that show it is a gift freely given. "But not as by the transgression of one, so is the free gift; for if through the transgression of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one-man Christ, has abounded unto many." (Romans 5:15) You can see there is grace and the gift by grace continuing in the 17th verse. He said "For if by the offence of one, death reigned by one much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." Still, I say, observe this, that we partake of life in Christ, and by Christ; and it is summed up in this manner, that it comes by mere gift.

Do but look in Ephesians 2:4-10, and there you shall perceive how clear and full the apostle is in this business, that Christ is made a way to life absolutely and merely by free gift; "But God," said he, "who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ; by grace you are saved: and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Jesus Christ, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Notice how he goes on; "For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Still he continues to show mercy and grace, and works he excludes, that no creature might boast.

If anything were done on our part, to partake of Christ, we might have something to boast about. The same was said about Abraham, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he had something to glory in:" (Romans 4:2) God chose to give Christ freely to his creatures so that we should have no credit in our partaking of Christ. God chose that man should have no part at all in partaking of Christ so that all might be to the praise of the glory of his grace. His will was that we should not glory, yes, "That no flesh should glory in his presence." (I Corinthians 1:29) And therefore the same apostle, in Ephesians 3:12, tells us, that from this grace "we have boldness, and access with confidence through the faith of him." We have boldness and access with confidence by the faith in him because Christ was given to men to bring us to the Father by the free gift of grace alone. Should we regard our own works or qualifications, there would be some mixture of distrust; we should have some fear that God would find out such and such a thought; therefore, we could never come with boldness and confidence, if we did not come in Christ as a free gift bestowed upon us. For if there was but one single condition⁷, and someone failed in that regard, God could take advantage of that failure and so we might fail. We are all anxious and privately aware that there

⁷ Romans 11:6; Romans 4:16

are faults in all that we do. We should in fact be “subject all our lives to bondage,” (said the apostle,) and we would fear that God will take advantage of all that we have not done; and so not do what he has promised he will do. But seeing we have Christ bestowed as a free gift of the Father, “we come with boldness and access to the throne of grace.” To establish, or at least make this a little clearer, look at these scriptures (Hebrews 10:18, 19, 20,) “Now where remission of sin is, there is no more offering for sin; having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way that he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” How come we to have boldness? Through the new and living way made by the blood of Christ; not a new and living way by his blood and our actions, but by his blood; that is, only by his blood, merely by his actions; and so passed over freely to us; this is that which makes us come with so much boldness.

Look at the conclusion of all the scriptures, you can't find or imagine anything more free than what you find there about Christ being the way to the Father, nothing so free as this: “Both the Spirit and the bride say, come; let him that hears, say, come; and let him that is thirsty, come; and whosoever will, (notice the expression) let him take of the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17). Do you have a desire for Christ? If so, come and take of the water of life freely then, it is yours; it is given to you. Nothing is expected of you in order for you to take Christ as your portion. He is yours as well as any other person under heaven. We find that the Savior often complained of not coming as a great fault: “You will not come to me, that you might have life;” “He that comes to me, I will in no way reject him;” that is to come without any conditions. You may have a thousand objections; like that if you should come and believe Christ is yours, he will reject you. That it was all presumption on your part. If you do this you reject yourself and forsake your own mercy. Christ says the whosoever he be, what ever person no matter who: “I will in no wise reject him, if he come unto me.”⁸ (John 6:37)

Secondly, not only is Christ a free-way, given to men by free gift without any conditions upon men; he is also a safe way to those who come to him⁹. I say, Christ is a safe way, a secure way; there is no danger of failure in Christ. Let men take any other way in the world to heaven, but Christ, and there are thousands of dangers, and thousands of ways to fail; but there is no way that a soul can possibly fail, that takes Christ for his way. "Satan has desired to winnow you," said

⁸ There is a wonderful section in one of James Wells sermons (“Who Will Give Ear To This” number 335, 1865) where he goes over this same doctrine. He too seeks to encourage sinners seeking grace. He says in part. “How happy, then, you that are unconcerned, if the Lord should be pleased, for he alone can wake the dead, he alone can give life to the dry bones, he alone can pour the spirit of grace and supplication into your sin-numbed soul, what a mercy for you if while you are living you should become conscious of what you are, made miserable through your condition as a sinner, driven asunder from the world, and constrained to seek the Lord, and the words should follow you up, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts”! And what shall he then do? work out a righteousness of his own? No. Try to save himself? No. Do something, and then come before the Lord and plead that? No. “Let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy.” Ah, mercy! Then you will join with us who are saved, and we will join with you, to sing of his mercy. “He will have mercy; and our God,” as some of us most happily know from our own soul's experience, as well as from the testimony of others, as well as from the Holy Scriptures, that “our God will abundantly pardon.””

⁹ The point here again is to encourage people who have a desire, any desire for God to come to Him though Christ Jesus the Lord. No one who wills or desires salvation will be turned away. That very desire was put in place by the Holy Spirit. As he says a few sentences later “believers that receive Christ”. This has nothing to do with a make believe ‘free offer’ or as the Marrow Men put it ‘a dead of gift or grant’ to all men alike. It is to all, but only to all who thirst. – Richard Schadle

Christ, Luke 22:31, speaking to Peter, "but I prayed for you, that your faith will not fail:" I say that he undertakes in this way for them that come to him: "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them." (Matthew 16:18) Believers that receive Christ, have not only the guard of angels to secure them, but they have the guard of the Spirit of Christ, that shall lead them; not only lead them into truth, but lead them into all truth. The Spirit will not take believer and lead him by the hand, and set him into the way, (as a friend does, to lead one a mile out of town, and then leave him alone to go the rest of the way,) no, but the Spirit leads him into truth, and into all truth. He will be a companion of the soul, to secure it; a conduct to the very harbor and haven itself. It is a privilege of this nation, that merchants may be part of a convoy, a navy royal. It may be able to go out with them, but it will not come in with them; therefore, there is not absolute security in this convoy. He that takes Christ, however, he has the Spirit to go in and out before him; to go forth, to come back, to be there all the way. Christ has given himself to be your protector. "I will never fail you, nor forsake you," (Hebrews 8:4). In all other ways there may be danger, in respect of frictions, in respect of difficulties or troubles that may arise because of them. If you look at Isaiah chapter 35, you will see what safety there is in Christ to those the trust in him because of the dangers that lie in the way. In Isaiah 35:8 the prophet tells us: "That a highway, there shall be, and that way shall be called the way of holiness, and the unclean shall not pass over." Just note the security there is in verse 9: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall be found there; but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there:" no lion, no ravenous beast, nothing to make them fall or fail. If a man has to travel through a wilderness, there may be bears and lions; as in New England, and in other foreign parts, they may fall into many dangers. What if a man chooses righteousness; I mean his own righteousness, as his way to heaven. Oh! what a world of danger lies here! Satan has continual advantage against him from that righteousness; his own corrupt heart is ready to swallow him up; but there is no lion in the way, if we choose Christ.

Thirdly, as he is a safe way, so he is a luminous, cheering way; Christ, I say, is a luminous way to the Father. Solomon tells us, "It is a joyful thing for a man to behold the light of the sun." (Ecclesiastes 11:7) It is a great heaviness and bitterness to the spirit of a traveler, to be stranded overnight; to be overtaken with darkness is very uncomfortable. Therefore, when we come to the summer-seasons, they are the best seasons for travelers, because the days are light and long. All ways to the Father, but Christ, are mere darkness; nothing but darkness. Christ is the light of the world; "I am come a light into the world: He is that light, that lights every one that comes into the world." (John 1:9)

Fourthly, Christ (and this is an excellent consideration) is a near way; all that take him to come to the Father by him, have a short way to the Father, in comparison of any other way whatsoever. Christ is the string, all other ways are the bow; all other ways are roundabout; even more, they are labyrinths, in which men lose themselves, after they are wearied with toil. Christ is a near way to the Father; "He is nigh that justifies me; who shall condemn me?" (Isaiah 1:8) But more especially observe, how near a way Christ is to the Father. Romans 10:6 describes this in a most excellent way: "The righteousness which is of faith, (that is, of Christ) speaks in this way, Say not in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead: but what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart; this is the word of faith which we preach." Notice then, that when a man chooses Christ for his way to the Father, there is no need to climb up to heaven to bring Christ down, nor to dig into the deep depths to bring him up. Christ is such a

way to the Father, that instead of bringing the man to the Father, he brings the Father down to him; “The word is near unto you, even in your heart.” Therefore, the apostle tells us, “You who were sometimes afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ,” (Ephesians 2:13) This is just as if it were possible that the wealth of the Indies (were there are all treasures) could be brought to England and set out in all that suburbs of London.¹⁰ In just such a way Christ brings the Father to men. He becomes such a way that in one step we go from the lowest condition of sinfulness to the highest place of being a son of God. There is but one step between the Father, and them that choose Christ to be the way. And therefore, this is the first thing that Christ preached “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:” (Matthew 3:2; 4:7). What is that? It is present. You have heard much, I suppose, of your northern passage to the Indies; a great deal of time has been spent to find such a shortcut, now the voyage may be done in half the time. O look upon Christ, he is such a way to the Father, that the voyage is done in a step from a state of ungodliness, to the state of justification, to the state of salvation settled upon the soul. Christ is such a way, that there is but one step from one term to another. Look now but upon the old way of the law, there must be a continuance “in all things written in the book of the law to do them:” (Deuteronomy 27:28). There must be a going on to perfection of righteousness, before men can come to justification unto life and salvation. This is a long way.

Now, how pure and free has Christ made the way unto the Father? this near, “He that believes, shall be saved” (Mark 16:16) Let me be bold to tell you, You are in as full an estate of justification before God; you are in as true a state of salvation, you that are believers; as they that are now already in heaven.¹¹

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved;” (Acts 16:31) - this is Christ the near way.

Yet still people will complain, where are good works in all you teach? What, justified by faith alone! Saved by Christ alone! Let me tell you, if Christ is the way, works are not the way, except they be Christ.¹²

But must we not do works? Yes, but for other reasons; the Lord has proposed other purposes for which we need to do work for. “You are bought with a price, (that is done,) therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits: Being delivered, (our safety it seems is past,) being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we serve in holiness and righteousness, without fear before him, all the days of our life.” Do you serve to be delivered? Then deliverance does not come before serving. However, as Zachariah said: “Being delivered, we serve,” (Luke 1:74). First, we are delivered from wrath, before we step a step into any duties whatsoever; **(we do not the duty to be delivered, but we do the duty because we are delivered.)**

And, seeing that all things are settled by Christ for us, as a free gift, all we do is for Christ himself; I say, what we do, we do for Christ, not for ourselves.¹³

¹⁰ At time Crisp wrote this that was an impossibility where as now it is more or less a fact.

¹¹ That is, their state of salvation is real, and they are in as safe a state, and have as good a right and claim as the saints in heaven, though not in equal possession; they are heirs of it, kept unto it, and shall certainly enjoy it; and are as completely justified as they; and, therefore, their state of justification is as full. – John Gill

¹² They are ways which God has ordained his people should walk in, in order to glorify and serve him, as follows, but not the way of salvation. – John Gill

¹³ Not to obtain righteousness, life, and salvation to ourselves, but for the honor and glory of Christ. – John Gill

If we do it for ourselves, we do but labor in vain. Even if we could do a great amount of good by our doings and works it is all laboring in vain. It was obtained beforehand for us. Let's suppose that a person agrees to run a hundred miles for a certain amount of money. If they were to be paid before they took one step out the door of their house, that running would be in vain. They might have had all that money without leaving their house. The purpose to obtain the money might have been gotten without any effort at all. Christ comes and brings justification, loving-kindness, and salvation, he lays them down, presents them, delivers them to the heart. Even when we were ungodly, he enters into the covenant, so that we may become his. What need is there then for all the working for life and salvation, seeing it is here already?

Objection: Some might object and say: Seeing we get nothing by our efforts is this not a discouragement for men to work?

Answer: It is true, it is a discouragement to all **selfish** men to do work. In fact, if a man works or does not work at all, it comes to the same thing **if the work is for himself**. It does not matter how much or how hard a man works if the working is out of selfishness for himself; God rejects it. However, a man may work for Christ with the spirit of loving-kindness of Christ and because of this he is able and ready to give all the praise and glory to Christ that has so freely saved him. This is pleasing to God for Christ's sake. For a man to work in this way is acceptable to him for Christ's sake as if he were working for his own salvation.¹⁴ There are many ingenuous people in the world who would rather serve a friend who has already profited them, than others would be to serve a master so that they can gain profit. There is a service of thankfulness that is usually more sincere, more persevering, than all mercenary services that we are forced to do. This is the true service of a believer in serving Christ. His eye is to the glory of Christ, in regard of what Christ has done already for him; and not in expectation of anything Christ has to do, which he has not yet done. He looks upon all as perfectly done for him in the hand of Christ, and ready to be delivered out into his hand, as several occasions require. Being in this way complete in Christ and not by any works of the creature, having nothing to do for himself, all he does, he does for Christ. Thus, you see Christ is a near way unto the Father; there cannot be possibly a nearer way; so that now there is a great deal of labor and bitterness saved. Thus, you may be encouraged to receive Christ for your way. There are some remarkable considerations in Christ, wherein he is our way, wherein we may receive him, wherein is abundance of comfort; but the time has overtaken me.

¹ Why Tobias Crisp and "Christ Alone Exalted". If the reader does not already know it, it may surprise him or her to learn the Crisp was a member of the Established Church of England. In other words, he was an Anglican. Even a very casual reading of James Wells sermons reveals that he had great disdain for the Established Church. Equally obvious, if not more obvious is the fact that he also believed that there were good and true Christians within that community. Crisp died in 1643. It was not until 1644 that the Particular Baptists, which then consisted of seven churches, published their first confession of faith. It is impossible to say if Crisp would have ever become a Baptist. I personally think that very unlikely. God is Sovereign, He is free to use any and all means and people to give glory to Himself. One has only to think of that great child of God, William Huntington, who Wells thought very highly of. Huntington was a paedo-Baptist independent preacher. I believed that he allowed baptism in the form of immersion, but the point here is that he is another, among a huge number, who were mightily used of God, yet were not strict Baptists. Wells, and myself as well, was very careful to distance himself from John Calvin. As I stated in the about

¹⁴ This is because the work is done in Christ's name and for God's glory. It answers to the reason why we are saved: to give glory to God.

page of the Surrey Tabernacle Webpage no man, including James Wells is 100% perfect and correct in everything. The church as a whole and myself in particular have benefited immeasurably by John Calvin and a host of non-Baptists. We must however view them as humble servants whom God chose to use for his own glory. Coming back to Tobias Crisp. I would place him, like King David's mighty warriors, at the very top of the list for adherence to the truth as it is in Jesus. One sermon, among many, that shows the close allegiance in what James Wells preached to what Crisp also taught is titled "The Family Sacrifice". It was first preached in 1838 and republished in 1860 as sermon number 84 in volume 2 of James Wells sermons. It can be found at this location: [The Family Sacrifice](#)

ⁱⁱ Tobias Crisp lived from 1600 to 1643 and his sermons were first published in 1643 the year of his death. The edition this translation is based on was published in 1690. In their unedited form these sermons are difficult for anyone not versed in old English to understand, thus limiting their usefulness. I have attempted to keep as much of his original words as possible but at the same time to make this sermon come alive for the modern reader. My edition is entirely my own work and is presented without apology or any form of copyright. The sermons are available on the internet in their original unedited form for no cost. My edition is based on that of John Gill. An 'as originally published' version can be found at: <http://crispchristaloneexalted.com>. Please add "This version by Richard C. Schadle" when quoting from this version.