

CHRIST ALONE EXALTEDⁱ

Tobias Crisp

With explanatory notes by John Gill

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

SERMON 4

CHRIST THE ONLY WAY Part 4.

“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

The next thing we need to consider is, what kind of way is Christ to the Father. First, as you have heard already, he is a free way; there is not a roadblock set up against any person in the world, the way is open: it is a foul delusion of Satan in the heart of any man whatsoever, to say, Christ does not belong to me; I would like to have Christ, but I may not have him; let this consideration be ever so plausible, it is a false consideration; for there is no bar in the world, if there be but a heart that truly desires him. If a man has a mind to step onto the king's highway, which is the subject's privilege, no man can say to him, you trespass in so doing: it is made to be accessible for all: so is Christ a common way to all sorts of persons² whatsoever, to whom there is a heart given to accept him.

Some are offended that I should say, that Christ is a way even for the drunkard, and to the whoremonger; and the vilest sort of persons. That they too have as good a right to Christ for their way to the Father, and to apply Christ to themselves, as any. Do no harm to the grace of God, do no harm to yourselves and others as well. For what does Christ himself say when speaking to those chief justices, the Pharisees who were both devout and blameless men in their lives. Christ said that even “tax collectors and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven, while they are shut out.” (Matthew 21:31) People say that if we, the ministers of Jesus Christ, should preach that a whore has the right to lay hold upon the kingdom of God in Christ, to lay hold upon Christ for salvation; this would be considered a licentious doctrine. Be careful that you do not throw dirt in

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.

² See 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Acts 5:14

the face of Christ: He said that “Tax collectors and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven;” I say it, therefore, and say I say it boldly, about the wickedest person that exists at this present time in the presence of God. I say that the Lord gives a heart to this wicked person, that now in an instant they are willing to accept the Lord Jesus Christ, to take the Lord Jesus Christ as their Christ. It does not matter if they are at that time in the vilest condition, they were in all their life long. I say, if they have a real willingness³ at this time, to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, this gives them an absolute, complete, and perfect interest in Christ. He is as much their Christ, as the Christ of a Christian saved in glory. Men are always ready to find a false and different way. A man may have some little degree of holiness and righteousness. He may think that because of this supposed holiness and righteousness he can without being presumptuous come to Christ. By coming in this way, he subverts and destroys the gospel itself. The Bible says: “He came to save that which was lost,” This person, it seems, thinks that he must be found before he can be saved. “He came not to call the righteous, but sinners;” Yet this person thinks he must be righteous before he can be saved. It’s obvious whether this is for or against the gospel. Free grace therefore, even to sinners, is not a licentious doctrine. It in no way whatsoever gives a license to continue in sin. I say, therefore, Christ belongs to a man that believes in him, even though he is full of his sinfulness. Christ indeed washes, cleanses, and make a person beautiful, when he is clothed with Christ. None, however are clean until Christ himself enters that person, its Christ who makes them clean when he enters.

I thought it was a good idea to briefly add the words above in addition to what I taught in my pervious sermons. Had I known that objections that people would raise against what I delivered; I would have gladly endeavored to give a suitable answer. But observe then, you can see that the whole way the gospel is presented is in this fashion. “Christ came to save the lost:” (Luke 19:10) “he died for the ungodly:” (Romans 5:6) “while we were sinners, Christ died for us:” (Romans 5:8) “he received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord might dwell among them:” (Psalm 68:18) and similar passages are the terms of the gospel, upon which Christ is offered to our souls⁴. Now; then, I say, to every afflicted soul, are you rebellious, an enemy, ungodly, a harlot, lost? Even more so are you worse than enmity itself? If you are not worse, than Christ came for you, even in the state you are in, without reformation. He comes to offer⁵ himself to you for you to take him while you are in your present sinful condition. Now if this be true, when Christ has reached out to your spirit, why are you so doubtful? Why will you answer no: I dare not trust in him, he does not belong to me? Now suppose that Christ could speak from heaven as clearly to your spirit as I can do to your ear. What if he said to your spirit ‘Be carefree and do not worry, even though you are such a vile sinner, I am your Christ.’ Would you believe in him then? Would that not be good news indeed? I tell you that Christ cannot, indeed will not speak more clearly from heaven the he

³ Luke 23:42

⁴ As I noted in the previous sermon this has nothing whatsoever to do with the so called “Free Offer of the Gospel” Crisp is very careful in the context to continually stress the fact that he is speaking to people whom God has awaked already. This can be seen for example in words “when Christ has reached out to your spirit” a few sentences later and a similar instance in the text above. There are many examples of this emphasis, I noticed several in the previous sermon’s notes and there are more in this sermon. – Richard Schadle

⁵ The term offer, as used in old English has the meaning of “to present for acceptance”. The gospel is to be presented or preached to all to whom God is pleased to send it to. It will be a sweet savor to some (those who God has chosen to save, His elect) but to others it will be the smell of death. See 2 Corinthians 2:16

already does in his gospel. What you find of him speaking in the gospel is just as if he spoke that same words to your spirit from heaven. It was a delusion of the rich man in the parable, that he thought he could have Lazarus go and tell his brethren from him about the torments he was having. Abraham said: "If they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear if one arises from the dead," (Luke 6:31). I say to you, if you will not hear the voice of the gospel, neither will you hear the voice of Christ speaking to you, for you would be uncertain if it was really Christ that was speaking to you.

Well, but you will say, this is a way to lead men to a licentious course of life.

I say the opposite is true: it is the only way to lead men into a more enlarged way of holiness, than any way in the world, and this I will declare by and by unto you.

In the previous sermons we saw that Christ is a safe way; that Christ is a bright and sunny way; that Christ is a near way; we cannot review this now.

We will continue now so that I can make good to you what I promised to you: The consideration of Christ as a free way, to all who come; is the only way to build men up in a more enlarged course of holiness and righteousness, than all the devices in the world can encourage them to. Let me tell you, the most steadfast self-denial, the most frequent prayer in the world, the greatest study, most punishment to the body by constant fasting and what else you can think of; these all come up short to build up a man in obedience to the will of Christ. They all come short in this one regard: to lay hold upon him as a sinful man. He will not be able to believe as an undoubted truth, that Christ is as much his Christ now, as he is to any Christian in heaven. And this will be apparent if we ask how Christ is such a way that there is no other way, none quicker and better to take believers away from all their own works and doings than what is found in Christ. I will notice one other thing before I continue, in order to make this point as clear as possible. It is a very settled opinion among many persons, that our obedience is that way to obtain heaven. They say that although it is not the cause of or reign, it is however the way to our kingdom.^{6, 7}

Pardon me, so that I can give you a hint of two about something else before I go on. Let me explain to you the following position. There can be no believer, under heaven, who can come to heaven before he has served his generation. There is no believer, who has received Christ, but after he has received Christ, he fulfills God's purpose so that he walks in the path of the good works God created him for to do. (He that sprinkled them with clean water so that they became clean from all their filthiness also puts a new spirit into them and so causes them to walk in his statutes and testimonies) "He takes away their stony hearts, and gives them hearts of flesh; he

⁶ Crisp also gives the Latin "it be not, say they, causa regnandi, yet it is via ad regnum"

⁷ This is a distinction of Bernard's, which some divines are very fond of; though, I think, he only says, it is via regni, the way of the kingdom; so it may be the way or course of those that belong to the kingdom, and yet not be the way to it: obedience and good works are to be performed by all these that are in the way; they lie in the way, and are taken up and done by those that are in it; but they themselves are not the way, but Christ: and the learned Hoorubeeck observes, Sum Controvers. 1. 10. p. 716. The Doctor allows, in some following passages, that sanctification of life is the business a believer has to do in his way Christ; and that good works are concomitant unto heaven to those that shall come thither; and he also enumerates the several ends of doing good works, though not for salvation; which shows, that he was far from being an enemy to good works, or for giving into licentious practices. – John Gill

writes his law in their inward parts, and puts his fear into their hearts, that they do not depart from him.” So that I say in conclusion, sanctification of life is an inseparable companion, with the justification of a person by the free grace of Christ.⁸

At the same time, I must tell you all this sanctification of life does not contribute in any way at all for that justified person to get into heaven. It is an important part of what a man has to do on his way to heaven but it is not the way itself into heaven. (Titus 3:14, Matthew 5:16) If there was nothing else to prove this fact this text is sufficient: Christ said: “I am the way, no man comes to the Father but by me:” Now I ask this question, are our works of sanctification Christ himself, or are they not? If they are Christ himself, then there are thousands of Christs in the world. However, if they are not Christ, then there is no coming to the Father by them; because the coming to the father is by him alone, and by him as he is the only way. When we say that works are not the way to heaven there is no taking away or destroying the value of the works. They accompany on the way to heaven, those who will come to heaven. The truth is, since redemption is managed by Christ, the Lord has pointed out other ends and purposes for our obedience, than salvation. Salvation is not the purpose of any good work we do. The purpose of our good works is the manifestation of our obedience and subjection; the setting forth of the praise of the glory of the grace of God. It is the setting forth the praise of God's grace, by actually glorifying him in the world. By doing good to others, by being profitable to men; showing the Lord Jesus Christ to them where he will be found according to the promise; these are the special ends that obedience is ordained for. Salvation has already been predetermined beforehand. (2 Samuel 13:5, John 19:30) All that I will endeavor to show here is this, to keep the true prerogative of Christ to himself alone so that no righteousness of man intrench upon those privileges that are his alone. Take away anything from Christ; and give it to any creature, and you end up denying Christ in part. When you do this you destroy the gospel, the life of which stands in the uniqueness and oneness of Christ, from the beginning to the end; he is all of our perfection.

Now I come to that which I promised. Christ, I say, is such a way for men, that whosoever chooses him for salvation is quickly delivered from and finished with all the business of holiness and sanctification which they are to do while they are in Christ the way. As an example, it's like merchants that go to sea. The final destination of their voyage is the Indies; but they have business to do in France, Holland, Spain or Turkey. They must stop in each of these countries but it's not where they are really going to; it's something they have to do before they get to where, they really want to end their journey. All our obedience and righteousness are like so many places we have to stop to do business here. They are things we must do while we are on our way to Christ and heaven. While Christ is our way, he makes provision for us so that our business is successful. Now this Christ that we have chosen to be our way; it's him alone who keeps us fit and active. Therefore, as the apostle says, “To whom coming as unto a Living Stone, (speaking

⁸ Tobias Crisp was not an antinomian, though he is frequently maligned as teaching this false doctrine. Possibly those who falsely accuse him have never read this sermon or perhaps they did do not believe him even if they did. Crisp strove with his whole heart to give all the glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. I like what James Wells said in sermon number 338 “Come to the excellency of Christ's character, there you are safe; there is no danger of making him out more holy than he is, no danger of making him out more righteous than he is; there is no danger of making him out more loving than he is, or more powerful than he is, or more perfect than he is, or more triumphant than he is, or more suited than he is; there is no danger there.”

of Christ) you as lively stones are built up:” (1 Peter 2:3) Please notice this, I ask you, Christ being a ‘Living Stone,’ makes every one that comes to him ‘living.’ He not only gives life to a person so he is active in all he does but he gives liveliness and quickness to all that he does. (Psalm 119:32). Just as we like to say that a man is a lively man when he is quick about his business. The Lord Jesus is as a strong arm that draws a bow. The greater the strength of the arm is, the faster the arrow will fly through the air, and the further the arrow go. A weak arm makes the arrow fly slowly, and fall quickly. The Lord Christ being the strength of every saved soul, he draws the bow with a mighty arm. We all realize that the more nauseous or sickly a person is in their stomach, the more likely it will be they will grow tired and worn out from doing any kind of labor. Now what is the cause of such an upset stomach? It comes from general sickness and weakness; weakness of life is the general cause of faintness in the stomach. On the other hand, there can be perfect health and a strong character in men, they can carry out much heavy labor. The apostle says that Christ is just such a way: “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory: I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” (Colossians 3:4). Beloved, Christ is life itself; “In him was life, and that life was the light of the world.” (John 1:4) There is no life, like the life of Christ; it is the fountain of life; all life, aside from this life is only live that flows from this same source. If therefore Christ is our life, our spirit has the strength of Christ’s life. A large tree with lots of roots sends up abundance of sap into the branches; whereas a small tree with small roots feeds the branches much less. The larger the roots of the tree are, the more sap there is and consequently the more growth. Now Christ when he is received is like a large root to the soul. Because of this there is an abundance of life coming from him. Take notice of what the apostle says, on the one hand he confesses that he can do nothing by himself, but however he “can do all things by Christ that strengthens me;” (Philippians 4:13)) Yes in fact he is so able to do all things that he confesses to the praise of Christ’s power: “When I am weak, then I am strong;” (2 Corinthians 12:10) It’s as if he had said that the stronger he is in himself, the weaker he is to do anything, but the less strength he has in himself, the stronger he is in Christ. Therefore, he sends us to Christ for strength; “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” (Ephesians 6:10) I implore you, if you want to do the works of God, you must have your strength and power from him alone. You that are poor maid-servants, or widows, you have but very little in the world, your provisions do not last long; but if you were married to a rich merchant, or some such great man, you could do much more. That is because, by marriage to such a person you gain in interest in all that person possesses; his possessions are now your possessions. So, in ending this part, once you have the Lord Christ, all that is Christ’s is yours. (Hosea 2:19, 22. John 1:16) In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and riches, and graces and all else: “For it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell,” (Colossians. 1:19) Now, when we have a great deal of money to work with, there may be a great deal of work to do; but if we have no money to work with, we cannot do much to make more money. Now because there is so much in the way of wealth in Christ, we, having him can engage in much fullness and action. This is especially true when Christ favors us with his grace to give us strength and vitality; the ability to act using his resources. (1 Chronicles 29:14. Matthew 15:20. Philippians 2:13) When he gives not only the strength but wisdom as well so that we can use the strength to maximum advantage.

Besides, Christ is such a way, that the various forms of employment that you have to take care of on your way will be done by him exactly, completely, and neatly. There is never a school-master in the world that can teach us the way of walking through this life in an upright way; but Christ alone. Therefore, in the new covenant, you shall find this one of the main clauses, "They shall be all taught of God:" (John 6:45), that is, that Christ who is God and man, the mediator of the new covenant. We that are the ministers of the gospel, leave you weak intellects in Christian things, in matters of practice, until the Lord Jesus Christ comes into your ministry, and, by his Spirit, teaches you in the spirit. When he comes, he shall be an exact, skillful teacher: "I am wiser than my teachers," said David (Psalm 119:99). So, when Christ comes to teach you, you shall be wise as your school-master. Now if a school-master cannot teach good Latin, the scholar will hardly learn as well. If the professional who draws up contracts cannot write well then, the scholar will but write crow's-claws, as we used to say. Learn this truth, if you will be accurate and exact in Christian teachings, in the mysteries of Christ; go to Christ for your school; that is, take Christ for your Christ. Wait upon him to instruct you to direct you, to make you skillful; then shall you be infinitely more exact, than by running to any other teacher in the world. Christ, then you see, is such a way, by which we attain a much quicker way to the end of all we have to do in this way, than any other means possible.

Consider in the next place, as Christ is a way of quickly finishing our course so he is a sure way, a firm way, a secure way. There is no fear of sinking while we keep to this causeway, this road, as I may call it. Tons of rain make some ways muddy and boggy that sink both cart and man and all else that travel on them; making them stick firmly and sink therein. As for Christ, he is such a solid firm way, that all water that falls upon this way just runs off, there is no danger of sinking at all. A man may be as firm, as secure in the greatest storm, as he shall be in the fairest weather. I mean this, Christ will not deceive; everything else in the world will deceive a man, but Christ will never deceive him. I know that we have all observed at times, places that seem green and fair to look at, they look like the perfect place to set your foot upon. Sometimes however, you only have to set foot on this way and you sink up to your neck in what turns out to be a boggy quagmire. I must tell you, while men make their own righteousness and obedience their way to the Father, they seem to be taking a fair and green way, which promises to be firm; but he that dares to trust himself in the way of his own righteousness, to come to the Father, shall find himself sinking. He will be sinking so fast that if Christ does not come and pluck him out, he shall sink over his head and ears. You that go to the Father, and think to set yourselves up in his presence, and stand in his delight, by the way of your own righteousness, shame and confusion of face will cover you before you are aware. Paul not only found this out for himself, but he looked upon his own works as dung. Dung you know stinks. Paul knew that his own righteousness not only stunk in the nostrils of God as dung, but he also knew this was a way to sink in. He himself could not find a firm foothold to go to the Father by way of it. Therefore, he said: "I account all but dung, that I may, win Christ, and be found in him; not having my own righteousness, that is according to the law, but the righteousness that is by faith in Christ." (Philippians 3:8,9) Let a man cast himself upon Christ, as the only way to the Father, and he shall not sink. "Fear not," said Christ, in Isaiah 41:10, "I am with you, be not dismayed, I am your God; I will help you, I will strengthen you, I will uphold you, with the right-hand of my righteousness:" "I will uphold you;" all the righteousness of man is not able to uphold him. No

there is only that in man's righteousness that will sink him. Where there is sinfulness in men's actions, in their righteousness; that sinfulness is enough to trip up their feet, to lay them in the dirt, to lay them flat upon their backs, so that they cannot rise again. (Romans 11:10) If men come before God with the righteousness and God then finds fault with them, they are gone forever. "Let a man keep the whole law, and at last fail in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10) See then, how; firmly he stands, who has built upon a rock. He that builds upon Christ, builds upon a rock; nothing can shake him (Matthew 7:2,5). It's true that he transgresses, but Christ carries away his transgression before the Father sees it. It is gone into the wilderness. "He casts it behind his back, he throws it into the bottom of the sea, it is blotted out," as the text shows (Micah 7:19). So that still, as I said before, Christ's way is like water falling upon a concrete road, the water glides away as fast as it falls. The road is just as hard as before the rain fell so a man may travel there as before. Christ is such a wonderful way, that all our sinfulness, while we are on our way to Christ, leaves us to go to him and then from him as well. We have clothing made now days that is waterproof. The rain falls on the man wearing it but the man stays dry. Christ is just such a garment; all that water that falls upon us falls on him instead. It falls from us to Christ himself. I mean of course our transgressions, when we are once in Christ, they pass from us to him. (Zechariah 3:3; Isaiah 6:7) Now Christ has a garment for himself as well as for us. Even though our sins fall from us to him, they do not remain upon him. The Lord, indeed, laid the iniquities of us all upon Christ; but he removed all this iniquity from himself, by making full satisfaction to the Father. If Christ should have any of our sinfulness remaining upon him after it leaves us, he himself would be a foul-smelling way for us. If Christ were sinful in the eyes of God, we could never be clean in his eyes; it is through his cleanness we become clean. Now Christ is such a way for believers that receive him, that he takes away all their sins from them, bears them all, and leaves them in his own grave, and raises himself leaving them behind. So, in this way there is no sin charged to believers, or to Christ. Sin was laid upon Christ, it is true, but he has thrown it off, and sweated it out; it is evaporated and gone from him as well as us.

Thus, you see Christ is a solid way, a secure way, to a person; that person shall not stir, he shall not be moved, as long as he keeps Christ to be his way. Once again, As Christ is a secure way to believers, so he is a most pleasant way; I say, a most delightful, a most refreshing and recreating way; Christ is a way, as if it were all lined with flowers; there is nothing but mirth and sweetness in him. In Proverbs 3:17, you find Christ spoken of, under the notion of wisdom, of whom it is affirmed, "That her ways are ways of pleasantness:" not only pleasant ways, but ways of pleasantness; as if there were nothing but pleasures; as if the ways were substantial pleasures, or full of all manner of delight. Do but observe a notable expression in Isaiah 35:1, 2, he speaks as if he had been an apostle in the time, or after the time of Christ: you may see, by what he says

, what a pleasant way Christ is to all those that choose him for their way: in the 1st verse, you have him expressing himself in this way, "The wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." This is what he means, That whereas men lived as in the wilderness, and in a desert place; that is, in a sad and solitary condition; they shall

be translated into such a way, into such a pleasant way, that there shall be gladness and rejoicing; there shall be the blossom of roses in this way. And to illustrate the pleasantness of the way into which Christ translates his, by translating them into himself, he goes on in the 2d verse, "It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God;" nothing but pleasure: it is compared to Lebanon, the sweetest place in the world; to Carmel and Sharon, places of great delight: such shall be the way marked out, and shown to believers. Look into the last verse of the chapter, and see what a way of pleasure Christ is unto all those that receive him; "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away." Behold the mirth that is in the way, Christ! there is nothing but joy and gladness.

But some will say, Believers find it otherwise: there is not such joy and gladness, but they are often oppressed with sadness and heaviness of spirit.

I answer, There is not one bit of sadness in any believer whatsoever, but he is out of the way Christ;⁹ I mean, in fits of sadness in respect of his protectiveness of his present and future estate; he is out of the way of Christ, he does not enjoy him as he ought to, while he is in such a state of mind. Therefore, the apostle tells believers to rejoice always; "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice," (Philippians 4:4). There is nothing but joy in him: while there is mourning in believers, there is softening, in those mourning's; and more joy when a believer mourns, than in all the mirth of a wicked man. I appeal to you, that have had melted hearts, whether you have not found a secret content in your tender dealings, that you rather fear the change of that mourning, than that you are troubled with it?

That, which is one of the most common proverbs in the world, is most certainly true in this present case, "Some men for joy do weep, others for sorrow sing." I say, believers weep for joy, and never mourn more kindly, than when they see the joy of the, Holy Ghost, in the freeness and fulness of the Lord Christ, poured out upon them: there is never any more kindly mourning for sin, than that mourning, when the soul is satisfied with the forgiveness of sins: I say, the soul is first satisfied with forgiveness of sins, before there is that real kindly mourning in those that are believers. You have heard of some persons, I know, that have been condemned to be executed, who at the scaffold have been so obdurate, and stiff-necked, that not a cry, not a tear came from them; yet, just when their necks went to the block, upon the coming of the pardon, when they were discharged, they that could not weep a tear, nor be affected with their estate, no sooner; do they see a pardon, and themselves acquitted, but they melt all into tears: so it is with believers, the more they see Christ in the pardon of sin, and the love of God in Christ to receive and embrace them, the more they melt. Therefore, Solomon has a notable expression; "If your enemy hunger, (said he) give him bread; and, if he thirst, give him drink; so shall you heap coals of fire upon his head," (Proverbs 25:21, 22). It is just as though he had said, Kindness is the best way in

⁹ That is, as to the enjoyment of him, as it is afterwards explained; or with respect to the exercise of faith, or comfortable walking in the way, Christ, as becomes a believer; otherwise he that is once in Christ is always so; he can never be out of him, as to interest in him, and salvation by him. – John Gill

the world to melt the most obdurate wretch. Thus, God deals with men through Christ; he gives them bread when they are hungry, and drink when they are thirsty; and in this way he heaps coals of fire upon their heads; that is, he melts them.

So, you see, what an admirable way Christ is, all full of pleasure; there is the Spirit of Christ to make music unto a soul. "Speak comfortably unto my people," said God: and this is the office of the Spirit, and the Spirit does nothing else but speak comfortable things. Christ is a way, as the cellars of wine are unto drunkards, that are never better than when they are drinking and drunk; and, therefore, no place like the cellar, where there is fulness of wine always to be sipping and drinking: I say, Christ is such a way; and let it not be offensive to say so, for the church speaks in the same language, Song of Solomon 2:4, 5, "He brought me (said he) into his wine-cellar; stay me with large vessels of wine, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." Christ has such a variety of delicate things that are served continually, and such sweetness in this variety, that the soul is more satisfied, than in anything else, with Christ. Here we are not just using cups, much less with half cups, but using whole large vessels; there is a kind of inebriating, whereby Christ does, in a spiritual sense, make believers, that keep him company, spiritually drunk: he overcomes them with wine. "In that day, said the Lord, I will make a feast of fat firings, full of marrow, of wine well refined upon the lees," (Isaiah 35:6). Here is abundance, it is a feast, and "a feast of fat things full of marrow," which is the best of fatness; a feast "of wine well refined upon the lees," pure and clarified wines; this is the entertainment Christ has for those that keep him company. the Psalmist, in Psalm 36:7, 8, gives an excellent example for this purpose, (speaking of the excellency of Christ) he says, "Therefore the sons of men shall put their trust under the shadow of his wings:" well, what follows, when they put their trust under the shadow of his wings, that is, when they shall make the choice of him to be their way; "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house; you shall make them drink of the rivers of your pleasure." Mark, "of your," for (he said) "With you is the well of life:" here are not only pleasures, but rivers of pleasures; here is not only life, but a well of life; such delicacies and delights, such curiosities and rarities, as the world can never give, nor see, nor taste. We read in the Revelations, of "a white stone, and a new name written in it, which none could know, nor read, but he that had it." (Revelation 2:17) This I am sure of, there are delights in Christ, none can possibly reach unto, but those to whom Christ gives himself, and those that receive him: therefore, in Matthew 1:25, our Savior thanks his Father in this way; "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes; even so, because it pleased you." And it is worth observing, he does not thank him, that he has revealed them to the mighty, and great; and wise, that abound in all the manner of abilities far above others, but "unto babes;" there is much in that phrase; a babe is the weakest of all sorts of men; implying this much, that the weakest of all believers, in the body of Christ; as I may say, the feeblest babe, shall partake of such hidden things, such excellencies of Christ, that all the world shall never be able to understand, reach, nor comprehend; and Christ himself takes such delight in their societies, that he takes occasion to bless God, the Father, that he is so gracious for his sake, to do so much for them, above what he did for others. So, you see, Christ is also a pleasant way, a way of exceeding great content and delight; there is nothing lacking, nothing more.

Christ is a way, and of all the ways in the world he is easiest to be attain unto; there is no difficulty to find it out, nor to find out the way to it. Many ways may lead unto a comfortable end; but there are so many cross ways to turn men out, that they lose themselves. In the way of works a man may presently lose himself; there is not one work he can do, but he commits sin in it, and so he presently steps out of the way, and loses himself, and must begin again, and go about, and come where he was at first. God will never let any soul come near unto him, that comes to him with any sin whatsoever; if there be even one sin, all must be undone, a man must begin again, as they say. I am speaking in this way only about the righteousness of man, while he makes that his way to God. Therefore, Christ is the way; there is no stepping aside in Christ, no losing of him. There cannot be an error committed, which when a man comes to the Father by Christ, that shall be taken notice of, as an error from that person: so, I say, it is the easiest way in the world to be attain to. It is true what Peter said of Paul, "Many things in his writings are very hard to be understood;" (2 Peter 3:16) but notice, in the gospel, things that do pertain to the justification of a sinner, are written in such great and plain letters, that even he that is running may read them. Do but observe a few expressions, which show how easy it is to find the way, Christ himself being the way; in Isaiah 35:8, "A highway there shall be, and the wayfaring men; though fools, shall not err therein." the Psalmist tells us, that "the commandments of God give light unto the eyes;" (Psalm 19:8) the gospel without question makes the simple wise: there are some things you know, that you are able to teach fools; though you are not able to teach them deep mysteries.

Beloved, Christ the way to salvation, makes himself so plain to those that come unto him, that though they be indeed fools, yet they shall not mistake, nor err; no, though fools and wayfaring men: they become a wise man, if he be a wayfaring man, that is, a stranger, may miss his way; but if a man be a stranger, and a fool too, it must be a very easy way if he is to find it. A fool may hit a way in which he has long conversed, which strangers may easily miss; but, said the Holy Ghost, the way that Christ is made to men, is such a way, that "fools, though wayfaring men, shall not err therein."

Again, Christ is the way, and such a way, as is a spacious, large, elbow-room way, as I may so say: there is abundance of largeness and elbow-room in Christ the way to the Father; therefore Christ himself said, "If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed." When Christ comes bringing liberty to men, then they are at liberty indeed: therefore, it is said, Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage:" when a man enters into Christ, he enters into liberty and freedom; there is a contracted bondage in every way and condition but by Christ alone.

But some will say, How do you answer that place in Matthew 7:14, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto life, and few there be that find it?" How can Christ be such a way of liberty, when the way is said to be an exceeding straight and narrow way?

I answer, (first read this passage in context, notice the words that go before) Christ speaks not of this alone, but comparatively; the way is straight and narrow, in comparison to what he compares this way to; for the words before are, "Broad is the way, and wide is the gate, that leads to destruction, and many there be that enter in there in:" After these words he brings the

comparison; "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto life;" that is, in comparison of the vast liberty and scope the world takes to walk in, and the vast wanderings of their vain hearts, it is a strait way; but, simply considering as in himself, he is a large way; large in respect of the number that go in it, and in respect of the elbow-room in it. In a narrow way, few can go abreast, it will hold but a few men; but, in open broad ways, many may go together. Mark, now, how Christ is a large and spacious way; "He died not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world," (1 John 2:2).^{10, 11}

See what a spaciousness there is in Christ, that the whole world, the multitude of people of all sorts in the world, may have elbow-room in this way.

But, secondly, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way:" what is this straightness? to this question perhaps you will answer, a strict, austere, and severe life; a preciseness and exactness without giving to a man's self any liberty whatsoever: this is the straightness of the way, that leads unto life. But give me leave to add, I confess the stricter Christians can walk the better; and Christ will more and more confine the life of a believer unto a holy exactness; but, under favor, I conceive, this is not the meaning of the text here, that by the straightness of the way, is meant strictness of conversation: but rather the meaning is, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way;" that is, it has not that latitude in it, that generally men think it has. What is that? men generally think, that besides Christ, there is something more in the way that leads to life, and that is a man's own righteousness; not only Christ, but a man's own righteousness joined together with Christ; these two together are the way to salvation: this is the false belief of many men; but I say, it is straight and narrow, in this regard, that all a man's own righteousness must be cut out of the way: it must be so narrow, that there must be nothing in the way, but Christ; when a man's own righteousness is taken into the way, besides Christ, then it is a broader way than Christ allows

¹⁰ The design of the apostle in these words, is to comfort his little children with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin, through weakness and inadvertency: but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation, not only for the sins of the apostles and other saints, but for the sins of every individual in the world, even of those that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances, to argue rather against, than for themselves, and conclude, that seeing persons might be damned notwithstanding the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that this might and would be the case. In the writings of the apostle John, the word world admits of a variety of senses; and therefore the sense of it in one place cannot be the rule for the interpretation of it in another; which can only be fixed as the text or context determine: sometimes it signifies the whole universe of created beings, John i. 10; sometimes the habitable earth, John 6:28; sometimes the inhabitants of it, John 1:10; sometimes unconverted persons, both elect and reprobate, John 15:19; sometimes the worse part of the world, the wicked, John 17:9; sometimes the better part, the elect, John 1:29, and 6:33, 151; sometimes a number of persons, and that a small one in comparison of the rest of mankind, John 12:19; in one place it is used three times, and in so many senses, John 1:10, he i.e. Christ, "was in the world," the habitable earth, and "the world," the whole universe, "was made by him;" and "the world," the inhabitants of the earth, "knew him not;" and which is not to be understood of them all; for there were some, though few, who did know him: and I will venture to affirm, that the word world is always used in the apostle John's writings in a restrictive and limited sense, for some only; unless when it designs the whole universe, or habitable earth, senses which are out of the question; for none will say Christ died for the sun, moon, and stars, for fishes, fowls, brutes, sticks, and stones; and that it is never used to signify every individual of mankind that has been, is, or shall be, in the world; in which sense it ought to be proved it is used, if any argument can be concluded from it in favor of general redemption. – John Gill

¹¹ Crisp obviously also believed in limited atonement as is evidenced in the very next sentence and in his sermons in general. - Richard Schadle

for; he allows only the one single way, himself;¹² And that this is the meaning, is clear to me by the words that follow: "Beware (said Christ in the next words) of false prophets, that come in sheep's clothing, that inwardly are ravening wolves:" It seems, that in this Christ gives a warning, how to beware of false prophets, by telling men, "That strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life:" And what false prophets were they? if you consult with Luke, Acts 15:1–24, you shall understand who these false prophets were, and therefore, the meaning of this text. There you shall find that these false prophets were they that troubled the church, and occasioned that assembly, the first council that ever was: some (say the council) "that went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, you must be circumcised, and keep the law, or else you cannot be saved:" these are the false prophets Christ meant, that would make the observation of the law of Moses, and circumcision, to be co-partners with Christ, as way to salvation; to whom the apostles say, "We gave no such commandment." You shall find that in the epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, all the apostle's contests were with such "false prophets that came in sheep's clothing;" they were not false prophets that came in wolves' costume, that are openly prophane and scandalous; they can deceive no man, they show themselves to everyone; but they are "false prophets in sheep's clothing;" that is, they seem to be sheep, they seem to be austere; they seem to preach nothing but righteousness and holiness; but yet they are ravenous wolves; how is this? They make men build upon their own righteousness, and not upon Christ, and so destroy poor souls: these are those the apostle bids us beware of, in Galatians 4:1-3, "Who, has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" Thus, he argues against the false prophets, that will establish the righteousness of man as the way to life.

In a word or two, there are two things more to be considered, I will but touch upon them; Christ is a shady way; in hot weather, men much desire shady places: you know the case of Jonah, when he was scorched with heat, God provided for him a gourd, and how: comfortable was it for him? Christ is a shady way: "Hide yourself for a little moment, till the indignation is past," said Christ, Isaiah 26:20. When the scorching darkness of God's wrath breaks out into the world, Jesus Christ is a hiding-place, "till the indignation be past."

Again, Christ is a quiet way; (Isaiah 32: 17) there are some peculiar ways men try, because they appear to be such easy ways; but in some other ways, especially in some common road-ways, there is nothing but quarrelling and reveling; but Christ, he is a quiet way; all is peace while you

¹² Mr. Anthony Burgess, in his "Vindicae Legis," p. 32, finds great fault with the Doctor's sense of Matthew 7:13, 14, applying the words to Christ, which he represents as a forced interpretation of whereas nothing is more easy and natural, for, as Christ elsewhere calls himself a door, and a way, John 10:9, and 14:6, why not here a gate and a way? Moreover, if anything besides Christ is here meant, there must be more ways than one to heaven, and Christ could not be the only way; for certain it is, that the way here spoken of leads to eternal life, for nothing else can be meant by life: and as to what this writer says, that then by the opposition, not wickedness, but the devil himself would be the broad way; it may he replied, that not the devil only is opposed to Christ, but everything that is wicked, yes that has the appearance of good, but is not really so; and the broad way may very well be thought to take in the devil, and all his lusts, which men will do, and walk in; and not only open vice and prophaneness, but all the false guises of religion and holiness, and a man's own polluted and pharisaical righteousness, to which Christ and his righteousness stand opposed. Matthew 5:20. – John Gill

are in Christ; “The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,” (Romans 15:13); believe, and there is nothing but peace for you; “being justified,” (Romans 5:1) that is, while you are in Christ to justify you, there is “Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and nothing but peace. I see the time is past; there are other things I would have liked to consider, especially the reason why Christ is such a way, but I shall have to stop abruptly.

ⁱ 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 distain 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 though 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 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.