

SERMON II

CHRIST THE ONLY WAY

Tobias Crisp

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." {Jn.14:6}

Now we go on; Christ, as he is the way from sin, so he is the way from wrath; and indeed, must be the way from wrath, when he is the way from sin; wrath is but the wages of sin, the effect wrought by sin. Take away the cause, and the effect dies; destroy the root, and the branches wither of themselves. Man's sin is the root of wrath; when sin is destroyed and abolished, wrath must needs sink and perish. Christ is so the way from wrath, that all that receive him are wholly discharged, both from God's affection of wrath, {as I may so speak,} and from the effects of that affection of his. Wrath is considered in these two respects; First, simply, as the displeasure of God itself; the offence that God takes; Secondly, in the fruits of this offence, that he manifests in the expression of his indignation and displeasure. Christ is the way, the only way, the effectual and infallible way, from all this wrath, to all that do receive him.

First, from the affection itself of wrath. Let me tell you, beloved, {I would to God you could receive it according to the manifest evidence of Scripture,} that God no longer stands offended, nor displeased; though a believer, after he be a believer, sins often.¹ Yet, I say, God no longer stands offended and displeased with him, when he has once received Christ; and unto them, saith God, "Fury is not in me." {Isa.27:4} And in Isaiah 53:5, {among many other notable expressions of God's being well-pleased towards poor sinners through Christ,} he saith, "He was wounded for their transgressions;" and then you have this admirable expression of the effect of his wounding, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;" satisfied, here, is as much as pacified; they are all one. The travail of the soul of Christ makes God such amends for the sinfulness of believers that he can no longer stand offended and displeased with them. If God doth remain offended with them, there is yet some of their sinfulness remaining to be taken away, that this offence also may be taken away. All their sins must be taken away from them, and all offences will be removed from them. But, except God will be offended, where there is no cause to be offended, {which is blasphemy to speak,} he will not be offended with believers. For I say he hath no cause to be offended with a believer, because he doth not find the sin of the believer to be the believer's own sin, but he finds it the sin of Christ.² He was made sin for us; God laid the iniquities of us all upon him. The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; He bare our sins in his own body on the tree; and if he bear our sins, he must bear the displeasure for them; nay, he did bear the displeasure, the indignation of the Lord; and if he did bear

¹ {Note: As every believer does, and yet God is not offended with him; the meaning is not, that his sin is not offensive to God; it is in its own nature being contrary to the nature of God, as the Doctor in a following page observes, and where he also distinguishes between God's being offended with the sins of believers, and with their persons; and it is in this latter sense he is to be understood here; for God loves them with an everlasting love, and has no fury in him towards them; and besides all their sins are fully satisfied for by Christ who thereby has took away all cause of offence, that is, sin. So the very learned Witsius, referring to this passage of the Doctor's, observes, he is to be understood in respect of that most full reconciliation which Christ has obtained, and which is adjudged to believers in justification. Gill}

² {Note: Being imputed to him, and atoned for by him; and so the offence by it, to the justice of God, is ceased, having an ample satisfaction. So the above mentioned judicious professor Witsius gives the sense of the passage. "God is not offended without a cause, there is no cause of offence but sin; Christ has borne and taken away all the sins of believers, and the most just offence of God for them; and not only some part of the offence, but all, all entirely, therefore there remains none that lies upon believers; to these God says, "Fury is not in me." Is.27:4. Gill.}

the indignation of the Lord; either he did bear all, or but part; if he did not bear all the indignation of the Lord, then he doth not "save to the uttermost those that come to God by him;" as he is said to do. {Heb.7:25} I say, not to the uttermost, because here is some offence, some indignation, left behind; and for lack of taking this indignation upon himself, it falls upon believers. So that, either you must say, Christ is an imperfect Saviour, and hath left some scattering of wrath behind, that will light upon the head of the believer; or else you will say, he is a perfect Saviour, and takes away all displeasure of God; then there remains none of it upon the person of a believer. Beloved, for my part, I understand not what clouds are in the mind and judgment of other men; to me it seems, there is no truth more abundantly cleared, in all the Scriptures, than this one truth of the transferring of our sins, and so the offence for them, wholly upon the Person of Christ; and thus a poor soul hath rest from the indignation of God, as Christ takes the burden off from his shoulders. There is a twofold burden; first, in sin itself; and secondly, in the indignation of God for it. Who can bear this indignation of the Lord? Christ alone and he hath borne it.

Yes, but you will say, is not God offended at the sins of believers, when they do commit them? Hath Christ taken away the offence against sin by his death? I answer, No; therefore do not mistake yourself; for there may be easily a mistake for lack of serious pondering the words I deliver. I have not said, God is not offended with the sins that believers commit; but that God stands not offended with the persons of believers, {Jonah 4:6; I Kings 9:4,5,} but for the sins committed by them. He hath that everlasting indignation against sin as ever. And as there is the same contrariety in sin against his nature, so there is the same contrariety in God's nature unto sin. All contrarieties have a mutual contrariety against each other; as water is contrary to fire, so fire is contrary to water; as sin is contrary to the nature of God; so the nature of God is contrary to sin; there is an abhorrency of God to that sinfulness, but not an offence in God to the person that commits that sin; because the offence of God for that sin hath spent itself upon the Person of Christ; and, by having so spent itself, there remains none of it to light upon the person of a believer; Christ having borne all this offence for sin. And therefore, as I said before, either grant that Christ hath satisfied the Father, that the Father is pleased in his Beloved Son, according to Christ's own speech; either grant this, or say, Christ hath not done all. In Matthew, the 3rd chapter, is heard a voice from heaven, at the baptizing of Christ, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He doth not say, with whom I am well pleased, but in whom I am well pleased; that is, in whom I am well pleased, with you. Though in our natures, and in the sinfulness of them, there is matter of displeasure, yet in Christ, for all this, God is well pleased with us. And yet there is none of God's indignation against sin lost in all this, because he is not offended at all with the believer; for he hath satisfied his own offence in his Son more fully than he would have satisfied it in our own persons; for we must have been everlastingly suffering, before God would have been fully satisfied. Now therefore, as the payment of a great sum all at one payment, and at a day, is a better payment, than by a penny a year, till a thousand years be out, mark what I say; so Christ's satisfying the Father at once, by one sacrifice of himself, is a better satisfying of him, than if we should have been infinite days in paying that which his justice requires, and his indignation to sin doth expect. So here is no derogation to the loathsome nature of sin, and the purity of God, and the great offence God takes at sin; but only here is the transaction of it from the person of a believer, to the Person of Christ himself, that willingly took this upon him; and not only did he take it upon him, but it was according to the determinate counsel and purpose of God that he should do it; nay, the pleasure of God, for "it pleased the LORD to bruise Him." {Is.53:10} So much briefly for the affection of wrath, and how much Christ is a way to take away that affection of God's wrath; that is, wrath simple, as it is an offence from him to a believer.

Secondly, Christ is a way to take away the effect of God's displeasure; Christ is the only way to take it away. "Shall I give the fruit of my body," saith the prophet, {Micah 6:7,} "for the sin of my soul? Thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil?" No, alas; this will not buy out the penance of one sin, when he hath sinned; it is all too mean a price; there must be a better to take away that wrath; that is, the heavy punishment of God from a believer. I say a better price than this; not a dearer price to us poor men, but yet a more clear and acceptable price unto God; a price, in its

nature, infinite and invaluable; but, of this price, not a farthing goes out of our purse; there is the greatness. Christ is a way to take away all wrath in respect of the heavy hand of God, which is the fruit of man's sin. In brief, beloved, the sum plainly is this, Christ is so the way from wrath, that God doth never punish any believer, after he is a believer, for sin; I say, God doth not punish for sin.³ This seems to be a harsh proposition to many; but give me leave to clear what I say; and so, according to the clear evidence of truth, reject or receive what I deliver to you. In Isaiah 53, a chapter of most admirable excellency to set forth the wonderful and incomprehensible benefit of Christ; observe that Christ "was wounded for our transgressions;" mark the punishment; "He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed." Now beloved, I will ask but this question: Are the wounds of Christ only part of the punishment? Or, are they the whole of our punishment? The bruising of Christ, were they to be part of the punishment our sins deserved? If they were but part, we must bear the rest ourselves; but then, we must be co-saviours with Christ, co-bearers of indignation and wrath. "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." {Is.63:3} No creature in the world was able to be a helper with him.

I speak of believers only; they do not bear one lash of that deserved wrath that is poured out for sin, not one lash or stroke; for Christ trod it alone himself. Yea, but you will say unto me, does not God afflict his children and believers? All the world seeth and knoweth he doth; therefore, why speak you against this? Beloved, give me leave to ask you; is there not a great deal of difference between God's afflicting believers, and punishing believers for sin? Yea, but are not the afflictions of believers for sin? I answer, No; afflictions are unto believers from sin, but not for sin.⁴ What is the meaning of that, you will say? God, in afflicting believers, doth not intend to punish them, as now laying on them the desert of their sin, for that is laid upon Christ alone; but he doth afflict them in part to be a help to preserve them from sin; I say, all afflictions to believers are to keep them from sin, rather than punishment unto them for sin. Yet, some will say, no men in the world are afflicted, but their afflictions are for sin. I answer, Yea, there are that have been. The disciples put a question to Christ concerning the man that was born blind; "Whether did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Saith Christ to them, "Neither he nor his parents;" not that neither of them had sinned, but that neither he, nor his parents had any sin, as a cause of that affliction or trial upon him; but that the power of God might be seen in him. So God, afflicting a believer, hath no respect unto sin, as if he did afflict for sin. For my own part, I cannot see how a man can say that Christ bore all the punishment of sin, if we bear any of it ourselves. And, if Christ did not bear it all, I cannot see how Christ can be a sufficient Saviour without some other to help him out, in that which he himself did not bear. I speak all this, beloved, the rather because when poor believers are crossed and afflicted in any way, they are presently ready to suspect that God hath cast them off for their sins, and is angry with them for sinning against him. I say, in respect of sin he hath committed, which he thus suspects, there is not the least drop of the displeasure of God, not the fruit of such displeasure comes near him. "But every son whom I love, I rebuke and chasten," saith the Lord. God seeth that afflictions will purge, and so therefore he sends them. The father gives not his child a purge to make him sick, but to take away some bad humours that made him sick, and for the prevention of disease, or for the removal of some disease; that is the father's end in purging the child. And this is the end why God afflicts his people; not for their sins, but to take them away; {Is.27:9;} that is, to prevent the hastiness and

³ {Note: The reason is, because the whole punishment, due to his sins, has been borne by Christ, his surety for him; and to inflict punishment twice for the same sins, once upon the surety, and again upon the believer, is contrary to the justice of God, as well as derogatory to the satisfaction of Christ; for either he has borne the whole of punishment, or only a part; if the whole, which is the truth, then none can be laid upon the believer; but, if only a part, Christ's satisfaction is not complete, and then the believer must be a co-bearer and co-saviour with Christ, as the Doctor observes; neither of which ought to be said. Gill.}

⁴ {Note: That is, they are not punishments for sins, or are in a way of vindictive wrath for them; but they are in love, and for the good of God's people; they are fatherly chastisements for sins, in order to take them away, or purge them from them, or prevent them, or preserve from them, as the Doctor afterwards explains himself. Gill}

inconsiderateness of a believer, that he may not be so rash, running headstrong in his own ways, but may be the more considerate for the time to come. It is most certainly true beloved, that as soon as ever a person is a believer, he is so ingratiated into God, and with him, that there is nothing in the world from that instant, unto a believer, but mercy. God managing his mercy in his own way for the best to his; sometimes by the rod, as well as by sweet-meats; but still he runs in a way of mercy. "All things shall work together for good;" this is God's way to believers. And if this could but be received of them; and that even then, when they are gold cast into the fire, that God, all that time they are in the fire, as the prophet Malachi speaks, sits "as a refiner;" then they would be more quiet in the expectation of that purity, in which they shall come forth, when the time of their coming forth is; when you see the refiner cast his gold into the furnace, do you think he is angry with the gold, and means to cast it away? No, he sits as a refiner; that is, he stands carefully over the fire, and over the gold, and looks unto it, that not one grain be lost; and when the dross is severed, he will out with it presently, it shall be no longer there. Even so Christ sits as a refiner; when once his gold shall have its dross severed, then he takes out his gold, and it becomes as gold seven times purified in the fire. But still, I say, as a fruit of wrath, God never doth punish, or afflict, or chastise; {which word you may rather use, because it is the ordinary phrase of the gospel.} "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." {Rev.3:19}

In brief, Christ is the way from wrath, not only in respect of the present, but also in respect of the future; I mean a way from everlasting damnation. Give me a believer that hath set his footing truly in Christ, and he blasphemes Christ that dares serve a writ of damnation upon that person. Suppose a believe be overtaken in a gross sin, it is a desperate thing, in any man, so much as to serve a writ of damnation upon this believer; it is absolutely to frustrate, and make void the Mediatorship and Saviourship of Christ, to say that any believer {though he be fallen by infirmity} is in the estate of damnation. {Jn.5:24, I Thes.1:10, Rom.8:38,39} And I say unto thee, thyself, whoever thou art, that thou art ready to charge damnation upon thyself, when thou art overtaken; thou doest the greatest injury to the Lord Jesus Christ that can be; for in it thou directly overthrowest the fulness of the grace of Christ, and the fulness of the Satisfaction of Christ to the Father. Art thou a believer, and yet art thou in danger of damnation? Wherefore hath Christ suffered? Hath he died in vain? If he hath not died in vain, but hath borne thy damnation, how shall he pour forth this damnation upon thee again, unless he be unjust; which is blasphemy to speak.

But you will say this is presumption; then may a man go on, and do what he list, there is no fear of damnation; this is the way to take the bridle from men, and make them kick up their heels as the wild asses upon the mountains. I answer, it is true, were a man to be guided by himself, and to order his own way, according to the pleasure of his own will; but, beloved, you must know, that the same Christ that hath borne the wrath of the Father, and the effects thereof, doth free poor sinners from damnation; the same Christ takes as strict an order, to restrain and keep in the spirits of a man, as to save that man. Beloved, although a wild ass, being loose, runs at random, yet this ass may be taken, and so tamed, that he may be set as loose as he was before; yet he will not run as unruly as he did before, by virtue of his being tamed. It is true, our natures themselves are mad; and, if they had the reins, would run wild; but you must know, that Christ breaks this wildness, and then he dare let a believer loose to that, in respect of which, an unbeliever, a wicked man, would take advantage to sin. The Lord discourses of Ephraim; "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; {Jer.31:18,19;} here is a wild bull, an unruly creature. You may be sure Ephraim was thus; yet God hampers Ephraim well enough for all this; "Convert thou me, and I shall be converted." "Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded" within myself. Mark you, I pray, now let Ephraim loose; alas! Ephraim is ashamed. Ephraim would blush to look after that which he was mad after before; he is confounded within himself; he cannot tell which way to stir now, as before. Christ doth break the spirits of him; so that there is not now the licentiousness in him, through the power of Christ, which was naturally in him, till the power of Christ came upon him.

Why must not hell and damnation be a bridle to keep men in, will you say? I answer, marks what the Psalmist speaks, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." {Psa.110:3} Here you see how tame the people of Christ are. Thy people are a willing people. How so? By fear of damnation? No such thing. But in the day of thy power, and in the beauty of holiness, they shall be a willing people. First, the power of Christ comes over a person, that frames his spirit to a willingness and aptness; then comes the beauty of holiness, that wins, persuades, allures, and draws them to willingness; and where there is a willing spirit to walk with Christ, there is no danger of taking liberty. The philosophers observe a rule, that the will is not compelled; a man cannot constrain his will. Let the will of a person but be to the pleasure of Christ, nothing can constrain him to go beyond Christ; he may haply be overreached, and be over-taken, but he will never break loose; he will never run away, though the gate stands open on every side. The brass and pasture are so sweet that Christ hath put a believer into; that though there be no bounds to keep in such a soul, yet it will never go out {I Pet.1:5} of this fat pasture, to feed in a barren common. Therefore, in answer to the objectors, who naturally think there is a way open to such licentiousness, by taking away all wrath from a believer, and that therefore he will break out into all manner of excess, I tell you, the power of Christ restrains him. Thus I have dispatched the second thing, from whence Christ is the way; he is the way from sin and wrath; wrath in the affection, wrath in the effects of it.

I come now, in the next place, to consider how Christ is the way, not only from sin and wrath, but the way, and the only way, to grace and glory. Grace, in scripture, admits of a double acceptance, proper and improper. We usually take grace for that which is improperly grace; for we commonly call grace those divine qualities and virtues, and holy dispositions and actions, wherewith we are possessed, by which we do improve and employ ourselves in the world. This we usually call grace; and in some sense, it is grace; but that which is most properly grace, is nothing else but merely favour and bounty, and loving kindness itself; and so, consequently, all sanctification is not, so properly grace itself, as the fruit of grace. God first casts his favour and loving-kindness upon a person, then out of his favour flow the several fruits of his loving-kindness; and the fruits are those fruits of the Spirit, frequently mentioned by the Apostle. Now Christ is a way to grace in both these respects; Christ is a way to favour and lovingkindness in God; Christ is a way to all fruits or graces, as you call them.

Christ is a way to loving-kindness itself, and the favour of God; this, loving-kindness and favour of God, consists in these branches; first, in a willing reconciliation of God, unto an alienated creature. A person is then said to be received into grace, when he hath been cast off, and forbidden to come near; as when princes cast men out of their favour, they confine them, and remove them from them, that they shall not be near the court; now when princes are pleased to cast a fresh aspect upon those persons again, and so call them to court, and to be friends with them, this is properly grace. So beloved, after God seems to have cast off a person, and to put him far off from himself, and to remove him out of his sight, to confine him from coming near him; when he will return to him again, and will show him the light of his countenance, that he did formerly hide, this is properly favour. The Apostle, you shall find, doth expressly mention this Reconciliation of God, and ascribes this grace merely unto Christ alone, "Ye who were sometimes afar off," mark but the expression, "hath he made nigh by the blood of Christ;" {Eph.2:13;} here you see the ingratiating reconciliation by the blood of Christ. "God was in Christ," saith the Apostle, "reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them;" {II Cor.5:19;} in Christ reconciling, and therefore "Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant." {Heb.8:6} Nay the Apostle tells us expressly, that Christ is the only Mediator, and there is no other to reconcile men to God, but Christ alone. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." {I Tim.2:5} So, we see plainly, to be at peace with God, there must be only the Lord Jesus Christ that must make peace; he himself is the way.

I remember a passage in Job, when there seemed to be a variance between God and him; first, Job tugs at a pitiful stand, "I cannot answer him," saith, Job, speaking of God; why so? For there is no "daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both;" {Job 9:33;} as much as to say, there is no hope of agreement with God, till another interpose himself, and be a daysman; that is,

hath power over us both. Such effectual umpires between men are indifferent, and have both parties in difference in their power, to command the one, and the other; to command the creditor to yield and to prevail with the debtor to pay as much as he is able; and this umpire is Christ alone.

There are many other expressions of God's grace; of his loving-kindness and favour, and it is plain, throughout the whole scripture, that Christ is the only way to all. As to that adoption that the Apostle speaks of, {when he breaks out into admiration} saying, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" {I Jn.3:1} "Is it a small matter to you" {saith David, speaking to some of the servants of Saul, persuading him to marry the king's daughter} "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in Law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" {I Sam.18:23} So say I to you, "Is it a small matter to you to be the sons of God?" Oh; what great love! But this great grace and favour is only by Jesus Christ. In Galatians 4:4,5, it is plainly Christ that brings this grace of adoption, to make us sons. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Here you see, all that Christ doth is to this end; that at length, through that he hath done, we might receive the adoption of sons. As Christ is a way unto the pure grace, and mere favour, and loving-kindness of God; so also unto all the fruits of grace, all the manifestations of it in the expression of God's loving-kindness in the fruits of the Spirit.

To give you some instances; the first of all these kinds of the grace of God, that he doth ever bestow upon a person is the opening of his eyes to see himself filthy and to see what he is; here begins a closing with Christ, to see a need of him, and to see the usefulness of him being received. Now mark this great business, of the opening of the eyes of a person, and you shall see that Christ is a way unto it; {Isa.42:6-8;} there the Father doth treat with Christ, and in his treaty he speaks thus to him, I will "give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." You see that it is Christ that must open the blind eyes of men. Beloved, men are mistaken that think that the Law makes them to see their own vileness; for a gracious sight of our vileness is the only work of Christ. The Law is a looking-glass that is able to represent the filthiness of a person; but the Law gives not eyes to see that filthiness; bring a looking-glass and set it before a blind man, he seeth no more spots in his face, than if he had none at all; though the glass be a good glass, yet the glass cannot give eyes; yet, if he had eyes, the glass might represent his filthiness. The Apostle James compares the Law to a looking-glass and that is all the Law can do; to have a faculty to represent; but it doth not give a faculty to see what it doth represent; it is Christ alone that doth open the eyes of men, to behold their own vileness and filthiness; and when Christ will open the eyes, then a man shall see himself what he is.

Secondly, repentance is a great grace; yet you shall find, beloved, {Acts 5:31,} that it is exclusively the work of Christ to give repentance unto men; for God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel. It is Christ that grants repentance unto life; and if ever you will repent, with a Gospel Repentance, either you must fetch it from Christ, he must be the way, or you must go without it.

Faith is a grace of graces, the root of all graces to believers, and this is properly Christ and none but Christ, that works faith in a believer; the Apostle speaks this expressly. "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." {Heb.12:2} Christ is the Author, it is he that begets it.

Thirdly; consider the whole spiritual life; for Christ is the only way to all spiritual life whatsoever. "I live," {saith Paul} "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." There is no life, but as Christ lives in men. Whence is the natural life of man? It is from the soul; the soul once separated from the body, is dead; so long as the soul is united to the body, the man is alive. Christ is the life of every believing soul; Christ is he that frames and gives life to men. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." {Eph.2:1} Christ it is that quickens men when they are dead in trespasses and sins. And in John 5:25, you have this admirable expression, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the

Son of God; and they that hear shall live." There is no life but by Christ alone; he is the way to all spiritual life whatsoever. So in brief, beloved, there is not a scrap {as you may say} pertaining to a Christian, but it comes from Christ alone.

Fourthly, God hath therefore filled Christ full of all things that we might fetch all from him. The Apostle tells us expressly, "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, tells us to what purpose he was "full of grace and truth," saying, "and of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace." The Psalmist, {Ps.68:18,} hath this expression, "thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them." The Apostle, quoting that text, turns the words thus; "wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men;" {Eph.4:8;} it is as much as to say, that God bequeathed as much to Christ, as shall serve for his body; and this he distributes to the body, according to the proportionable need of it. The head is first the fountain, and hath all animal spirits planted in it; then doth it from itself derive all those animal spirits to every part, from whence all have their several motions. So that, I say, the supply of all the believer's wants concerning grace, be it in matters of mortification of sin; be it in the performance of duties of piety, mercy, and justice, or any other whatsoever; the supply of all must come from Christ alone, as he speaks himself. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." {Rev.1:8} The beginning and the end of all things. "All my springs" {saith the Psalmist, Ps.87:7;} "are in thee." He speaks of Christ in the name of God, as if God spake to Christ his Son; "all my springs are in thee;" therefore you shall find God always dealing with men, as Pharaoh dealt in Egypt with his own people; they came complaining of their wants to Pharaoh; "Go to Joseph," {saith Pharaoh} "hear what he saith;" he turns all over to Joseph. Thus doth God deal with men; "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him;" with God the Father; therefore, Christ saith, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" so that Christ is Judge alone; as Christ will dispose of all things, so his Father sets to his seal, and underwrites his hand, and never examines what Christ doth; but every deed that is signed by Christ, the Father without any more ado, seals it, and manages all things by the hand of Christ; therefore, Christ saith, in the last of Matthew, "All power is given unto me, both in heaven and in earth." The Father made all over to him, everything. The truth is, beloved, the Godhead is absolutely a Being of itself, {Deut.6:4,} but this Godhead was pleased to unite the humanity to itself, and the Godhead having the humanity united to it, is one person.⁵ Thus it pleased Christ to manage all things in the world, not in the Godhead alone, but as the Godhead hath the manhood united to it. You must not conceive, when God makes over the managing of things to Christ that he sits still. But the Godhead hath now the manhood united to itself; so it is Christ, God and man; that works together; and, by this kind of way, there is nearer and better access for us unto God; because here is an humanity that is of some relation unto us, and so of near acquaintance with us. The Godhead in its simple nature is of too remote a distance for us to come near.

Fifthly, moreover, Christ is not only a way to grace, but the increasing of it is in Christ. The Apostle {Col.2:10} tells us, that "we are complete in him, who is the head of the body, the head of all principalities;" not only that we have substance and being, but that we are complete in him; and, in the latter end of the chapter, the Apostle follows the allusion of the head and body, and saith, that the parts "having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." {Col.2:19} When the parts are united to the head, and the head, through the veins and nerves conveys nourishment to those parts, then the parts not only live, but increase with the increase of God. The Apostle, {I Pet.2:4,5} saith, "to whom coming, as unto a living stone," {speaking to believers,} "ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." He doth not say, stones that have life, but "lively stones;" they have more than bare life; nay, further, as lively stones are built up together.

⁵ {Note: That is, the Godhead, as subsisting in the Son of God, is a Person of itself, and taking the humanity into union with it, both became one person. Gill}

There is a growing up by the power of Christ, in coming to the "living-stone," as the Apostle doth there call Christ.

And that is not all neither; for we have not only growth by the grace of Christ, but restoration {Ps.23:3,} and recovery in case of relapse. Suppose a believer fall, the same Christ that gave him life, and set him upon his legs, must raise him up again when he is down. "Though I fall, yet shall I not be cast down," saith he; that is, I shall not be left, but shall be raised again. "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." {Is.35:10} They shall return to Zion; they were of Zion before; a man is not said to return, except he were in the place before, and so is coming again; so the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion. How? They are ransomed of the Lord; for it is the ransom of Christ that brings them back from bondage to their Zion again; and when he brings them back, he brings them back "with everlasting joy upon their heads;" they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing fly away.

Thus I have endeavored to declare the main thing, in what kind of way Christ is a way from a state of sin and wrath, to a state of grace. I should have further considered what kind of way Christ is, and upon what grounds Christ is become such a way as he is; but I consider the season; I shall not therefore trespass upon your patience, though my fingers itch to be dealing in that which remains. There is an abundance of excellency behind. Christ is a free way; Christ is a near way; Christ is a way of quick riddance of all business you have to do in the way; Christ is a firm way, for there is no fear of sinking; Christ is a satisfying and pleasant way. All his "ways are ways of pleasantness." {Pv.3:17} Christ is a safe way, there is a continual guard and conduct in that way; Christ is an easy way to hit; "way-faring men, though fools," {saith Isaiah} "shall not err therein." Christ is a spacious way, "thou hast set my feet in a large room," saith David. Now all this is founded upon the good pleasure of God; who will have Christ to be the way; it is founded upon the interest that Christ hath in God; it is founded upon the purchase of Christ that hath bought this for man; it is likewise founded upon the conquest of Christ, as he makes his own way, and beats all off that keeps thee from finding this way; and it is founded, lastly, upon his bowels to the sons of men, that can never pass over the gulch, till he hath made himself a bridge for them. These things I should have showed you by setting forth the excellency of this Way; but of these hereafter.