

## SERMON III

### 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}*

I have a word or two to speak more fully, if possible it may be, to satisfy such as are not fully resolved in the things I formerly delivered. Christ, I said, is the way from wrath, from the wrath of the Father; from wrath in its affection, {as I may so speak;} from wrath in the fruits of this affection of wrath. I delivered this position indeed; that 'the punishment, or the rod of God, or rather chastisement, is not for sin, but from sin.'" Some stumble at the expression, peradventure through mistake. In brief therefore, beloved, to clear both myself and your judgments, if it be possible; when I say that believers are not afflicted for sin, I mean thus; God, when he afflicts a believer, he hath not an eye to the desert of his sin, and there upon doth lay part of this desert upon his back; for Christ hath borne the whole desert of sin upon his own back. Whatsoever desert of sin the believer doth bear, Christ did not bear it, or else God takes satisfaction twice for one thing. Mark it well, I pray, beloved, if the Lord will scourge a believer, as now pouring out upon him what his transgressions hath deserved, wherefore did Christ die? Christ died to satisfy for the fault of sin; and, in his death, God was actually satisfied, as you shall find it in Isaiah 53. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied' by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." {vs.11} With what was he satisfied? He was satisfied with "the travail of his soul;" with the burden 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 to ask more is a contradiction; for either he was not satisfied, or, being satisfied, he could ask no more. In brief therefore, beloved, consider thus much, there is not the least action, or rather intention of any revenge, for a sin committed, when the Lord in any kind afflicts his people; all the revenge that sin deserves, Christ hath taken away and hath borne it upon his own back; and therefore, he is said to "save to the uttermost {Heb.7:25,} them that come to God by him." He saves to the utmost, saith the Apostle; he hath not left a dram, nor a jot behind, not so much as the least scatterings of wrath to light upon the head of a believer, for whose sake he bare the indignation of the Lord. Whereupon the very nature of affliction in general is altered and changed; as death in particular; it was the wages of sin at first; it is become the bed of rest now. "They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness," {Is.57:2,} saith the prophet. Afflictions were the rod of God's anger; they are now the gentle purges of a tender Father. God heretofore afflicted for sin, now God afflicts men from sin. "This is all the fruit," saith the prophet, "to take away his sin;" {Is.27:9;} not to take away the present sin, as if affliction did make an end, and so blot out transgression; this doth directly strike at the heart of Christ himself.<sup>1</sup> But "this is all the fruit to take away sin," that is, to break off sin, to prevent sin. "Before I was afflicted {saith David} I went astray, but now have I learned to keep thy Law;" therefore, {saith he} "it is good for me that I have been afflicted;" in this regard, because of prevention. {Ps.119:71}

If you will but carry it clearly without carping, or a spirit that seeks contention and quarrelling, you never need to stumble at such a position as this; for afflictions are the smiles of God, as gracious

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<sup>1</sup> {Note: 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." Gill}

as the choicest embraces. God never manifests a loving stroking of a soul, more than he doth, when he afflicts it, to make his love appear in these afflictions. And the truth is, as Christ has purchased rest and peace for believers, so he hath likewise purchased afflictions for them too; the wisdom of God seeing afflictions as useful as dandlings themselves; but still, I say, this remains firm, that Christ is a way from all wrath whatsoever, as it is the manifestation of God's displeasure unto the creatures sinning; and thereby pouring out the desert of this sinfulness, or the fruit of the desert of this sinfulness, upon them; Christ is a way to the state of grace; grace in respect of favour, grace in respect of the fruits thereof; and this we have dispatched.

The next thing under consideration is, what kind of way Christ is to those that come to the Father by him? I shall speak as briefly as possible I may. Take notice, in general, that the Lord hath laid out 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. {Cant.5:1} The Lord hath so furnished Christ, the way, with all possible accommodations, as there cannot be devised what the heart of man himself can desire; but he shall find it in this way, Christ; so that all I shall speak of this subject is, that as it may give abundance of light, so you may apply it all along, by way of motive to stir you up, to quicken you to set footing into this way, in respect of those several conveniences that do accompany it.

In the first place, there is this great and ineffable excellency and accommodation in Christ, the way, that he is a free way for all comers to enter into, without any cause of fear, that they shall trespass by entering; for Christ is a free way, I say; a way that costs nothing; a way barred up to no person whatsoever; a way whose gates are cast off from the hinges; nay, rather, a way that hath no gates at all unto it; a cheap way to us, but a costly way indeed unto the Father, and to Christ too. 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. Ye are bought with a price; {saith the Apostle;} not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." {I Pet.1:18,19} Observe it, I pray, that Christ might be a fit way for us to the Father, it cost the Father and Christ himself that in comparison of which, silver and gold, and the most precious things in the world, are called but corruptible things; which makes the Apostle break out into a way of expostulation and admiration, rather than into a way of affirmation. Oh behold, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." {I Jn.3:1} Greater love than this can no man show, than to lay down his life for his enemies. What did it cost the Father? It cost him that which 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 doth not lose his child, yet it goes to his heart to see his child tormented; much more when he himself must be forced to be the tormentor. Abraham thought God put him hard to it, when he must be the butcher, to slay his own and only son, his dear Isaac. God, the Father, was put to it as much, nay, much more; for in Abraham the thing was but offered, God would not have him do it actually; yet it went to his heart that he should be appointed to do it; but it would have cut his heart severely if he had actually done it, if he had cut the throat of Isaac. If nothing could content him before he had a child, {"what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless,"} 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. Christ was his only beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased. {Mt.3:17} "I was daily his delight, {speaking of the Father and Christ under the notion, wisdom} rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth." {Pv.8:30,31} Must it not come near unto him to part with such a Son? Nay, must it not go near to him that he himself must not only be a spectator of all that cruelty, but the principal actor himself in the tragedy? He doth not leave Christ to men, but when men could not fetch blood enough, he takes the rod into his own hand, and will fetch it himself from his beloved Son. "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand." {Is.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 apprehension, 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; as much as to say, it did his heart good to see it. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" not only satisfied towards men, but satisfied himself; it gave him content to see the travail of his Son.

Certainly, beloved, the bowels of God must infinitely be beyond the reach of the creature, towards a poor sinner, that he could go so far in a contrary way to his own Son; that there might be the fruit of these bowels 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, that his enemies might escape scot-free; but this it cost the Father; he must not only behold, or allow the suffering Of his Son, but he must be an actor of it himself; nay, he must be pleased in it. Certainly, the Father was exceedingly pleased with it, because it doth commend the great end of the Father; for the main end he drove at was the salvation of sinners; and this, in his infinite wisdom, he saw the fittest way; that it could not be done, but by this way; therefore it pleased him, in that his purpose should not be frustrated of his end. You know, when a man hath a great mind to a thing, if the way he goes in prospers not, he is displeased; if it prosper, he is contented in it, 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; "My God, my God, {saith Christ} why hast thou 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; nay, 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 thereof; as Phil.2:6-8, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Christ did empty himself, as the meaning of the word is; he did put off and lay aside the majesty and glory he had, that he might seem to be a mere Carpenter's Son. For a king all his life-time to undergo the notion of a beggar, and not to recover out of this estate all his whole life, but even to lie down in this low condition in the grave, it would seem a great loss unto him; man would reckon this a great matter, for a king to debase himself so low; yet it cost Christ more than this; for look upon all the sufferings of Christ; look upon death itself, together with the reproach and shame thereof. 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 set footing in Christ. There is nothing can bar one person more than another from entering into Christ as a way. I know beloved, that this seems harsh to the ears of some people, that there is no difference to be made among men, not only poor, as well as rich, but that the wicked, as well as godly, are admitted; that is strange. 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 as free a way for such a person to enter into him, as for the most godly person in the world.<sup>2</sup> 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 hath given to enter in himself. Mark well what I say; but for entrance into him, Christ is free a way for the vilest sort of sinners, as for any person

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<sup>2</sup> {Note: 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. Gill}

under heaven. If Christ hath given a heart to a sinner, to set footing into himself; that is, to receive, to take him for his Christ; if Christ hath given him a heart to take him for his Christ in reality, to take him truly and unfeignedly; Christ is a way for such a person to the Father, though he be 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 soever, he looks for nothing from them, to have a right to Christ; but he did freely give Christ unto them, without considering of anything that they might bring along with them.

Nay, more, God doth not only not look for anything, but he will not take notice, nor regard any discouragements in men, to keep them from the inheritance, to keep him off from giving unto them a right unto Christ.

I would fain have this point cleared, and fully and exactly proved, because, I fear 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, as fearing the squeamishness of some men. First, therefore consider, that Christ is delivered over unto men, to be their way unto the Father, of mere gift, of free gift; what is freer 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 the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people. {Is.42:6} In matter of gift, what is there in the richest man in the world, more than in the lowliest beggar, to partake of it, supposing the thing that comes to him as gift? A beggar can take a gift as well as the richest man; nay, a thief, that is one condemned to the gallows, may receive a gift of the king, as well as the greatest favorite in court; and, if anything be tendered as a mere gift unto a thief, his very being a thief, and his being ready to be executed, is no prejudice in the world to bar him from participating of that which shall be bestowed upon him as a gift; if Christ be a free gift unto men, then it must follow, to whom the Father will reach out Christ; there is nothing in that person to hinder the participating of him. But some will say, though Christ be a gift, yet he is a gift upon condition.

I answer, I cannot say but there is a flat contradiction to say that Christ is a free gift, and yet conditions required. What are the conditions in a Covenant, but a mere bargain and sale? I will do this, and thou shalt do that; do this and thou shalt have that; what difference is there between this, and a bargain and sale? That God should require conditions of men, is but to receive Christ upon bargain and sale; but Christ must be really and actually a gift. When the king gives a pardon to a thief, what are the conditions? Peradventure the thief can do his king service, if his life be spared; but if his life be spared upon service doing, it is not a gift, but a bargain, as much as to make contract, thus, do such a piece of service, then life is yours. I say that this derogates from the nature of a gift, that there should be a condition required; and the Gospel, that is, Christ given over to men, cannot be said to be freely given over to them, if man must buy him. Mistake me not, I speak not all this while against holiness and righteousness that becomes a people to whom Christ is a way; for holy and righteous they shall be; 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." 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 Christ is first come, by whom these things are produced that are called conditions, and afterwards wrought, he himself being present to work them? So, say I, God bestows 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 anyone's Saviour than merely the good pleasure of the Father, the bowels of God himself. "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should my name be polluted; and I will not give my glory unto another." {Is.48:11} 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. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," {saith Paul,} "so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." {Rom.9:15-17} So that Christ becomes a way unto them, not out of their will, not out of their disposition, not out of their holy walkings, but out of that mercy that proceeds out of the mere will of God. The Lord's own good pleasure is the only fountain and spring thereof. 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." Why glad tidings? In this respect glad, the poor sinner, he is a broken creature; nay more, he is a dead creature. "Ye, who were dead in trespasses and sins." That life now is reached out unto such a person, that is a dead person; herein it is plain, that there comes forth that grace from the Lord himself that a creature being dead, who can act nothing towards life, yet he shall receive life. "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." {Jn.5:25} How come they by life! Is there any action of theirs towards life? They are dead; it is the voice of the Son of God that puts life into their dead souls; and it is glad tidings, that though the creature can do nothing, yet Christ brings enough with him from the fountain of the Father, to bestow upon them, to bring them to him. {Jn.15:5, Is. 26:12} To show you a plain scripture, that Christ becomes a way to the Father, merely as a free gift, without any thing in man required, look into Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," saith the prophet; and then he falls upon an abjuration in the next verse; "wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread; and your labour for that which satisfieth not; hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Here is the closure of all; dost thou thirst, that is, hast thou a mind really to Christ, that Christ should say really to thy soul, "I am thy salvation?" It may be thou dost suspect, saying within thyself, Christ is not my portion; I am not fit for Christ; I am a great sinner, I must be holy first; this is bringing a price to Christ; but you must come without money, and without price; and what is this to come without money and without price? {Rev.3:18} It is nothing but to take the offer of Christ, these waters of life, to take them merely and simply as a gift brought, and this is a sure mercy indeed; these are the sure mercies of David, when a man receives the things of Christ, only because Christ gives them; not in regard to any action of ours, as the ground of 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. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." {Jn.7:37} Christ speaks there thus to his people, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely;" {Hos.14:4;} that is, I will love them for mine own sake. The Apostle speaks excellently concerning this free grace of God bestowed in Christ upon them; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." {Rom.3:23,24} Mark brethren, first he takes off all creatures, and all that a creature can do, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" and then he shows how we should partake of Justification, namely, freely through Christ. The Apostle speaks at large concerning the participation of Christ, to be our Christ of mere free gift, where he makes a large comparison of our participation of sin from Adam, and of our participation of life from Christ; and still in every passage, speaking of participating of life from and by Christ, he comes in with these expressions of gift, and that it comes freely. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." {Rom.5:15} There is grace, and the gift by grace; so running in this expression in the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, where he saith, "for if by one man's offence 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 it, that we partake of life in Christ, and by Christ; and it runs altogether upon this strain, 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 of free gift. "But God," saith he, "who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Mark how he goes on; "for by grace are ye 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, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Still he runs upon 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 whereof to boast. So likewise speaking of Abraham, "for if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory;" {Rom.4:2;} and thus we should have to glory, if we should have the least hand in the participating of Christ; therefore God would give Christ freely unto his creature; because man should have no stroke in participating of him, that so it might be to the praise of the glory of his grace; that we should not glory; yea, "that no flesh should glory in his presence." "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." {Rom.11:6} And therefore the same Apostle tells us that from this grace "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." {Eph.3:12} In regard that Christ is given unto men to be a way unto the Father, and merely of free gift, hence it is that we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. 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 were one condition, and the least failing in that condition, God might take advantage upon that default, and so possibly we might miscarry; and we being jealous and privy to it, that there are faults in all we do, we should be "subject all our lives to bondage," {as saith the Apostle,} and should fear that God will take advantage of all that which is undone on our part; and so not fulfill what he hath promised on his part. But seeing we have Christ bestowed as free gift of the Father, "we come with boldness and access to the throne of grace." To establish, or a little more to clear this, look in Hebrews 10:18-20. "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath 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 into the closure of all the Scriptures, and you shall find there can be nothing imagined more free; nay, so free, as the participating of Christ to be the way to the Father; nothing so free as this. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, {mark the expression,} let him take the water of life freely." {Rev.22:17} Hast thou but a mind to Christ? Come and take the water of life freely; it is thine, it is given to thee; there is nothing looked for from thee to take thy portion in Christ; thine he is as well as any person under Heaven; therefore, you shall find our Saviour exceedingly complain of this, as a great fault, "you will not come to me, that you might have life." Yet, "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" {Jn.6:37;} upon no terms. Thou mayest object a thousand things, that if thou shouldst come and conclude Christ is thy Christ, he will reject thee, and that it will be but presumption; but, in so doing, thou rejectest thyself, and

forsakest thy own mercy; but Christ saith, whosoever he be, what person soever, "I will in no wise cast him off, if he come unto me."

Secondly, as Christ is a free way, made over to men by free gift, without any thing in man to partake of this Christ, so he is a safe way to those that do take him; I say, Christ is a safe way, a secure way; here is no danger of miscarriage 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 miscarry; but there is no way that a soul can possibly miscarry, that takes Christ for his way. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," {saith Christ, Lk.22:31, speaking to Peter,} "but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" nay, he undertakes so, for them that come to him, "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them." 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. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." {Jn.16:13} The Spirit will not take a believer and lead him by the hand, and set him into the way, {as a friend doth, 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 conduit to the very harbour and haven itself. It is a privilege of this nation, that merchants may have a convoy, a navy royal, it may be to go out with them, but it will hardly come in with them; therefore there is not absolute security in this convoy; but he that takes Christ, he hath the Spirit to go in and out before him; to go forth, to come back, to be all the way with him; nay, he hath given Himself to be his protector. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." {Heb.13:5} In all other ways there may be danger, in respect of rubs, in respect of difficulties or troubles that may arise in them; but, do but look in Isaiah and you shall see what safety there is in this way of Christ, unto those that make choice of him, in respect of any danger that may lie in the way, as the prophet tells us that "an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein;" and verse 9, {mark the security} "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there;" no lion, no ravenous beast, nothing to make them miscarry. If a man haply travel through a wilderness, there may be bears and lions; as in New England, and in other foreign parts, they lie open to many dangers; so let a man choose righteousness; I mean his own righteousness, as his way to heaven; Oh; what a world of danger lies here! Satan hath 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, Christ.

Thirdly, as Christ is a safe way, so he is a lightsome way; Christ, I say, is a lightsome way to the Father. Solomon tells us, "truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." It is a great heaviness and bitterness to the spirit of a traveler to be benighted; to be overtaken with darkness is very uncomfortable; therefore, when we come to the summer seasons, they are the best seasons for travelers, because lightsome 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, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." {Jn.14:26} "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." {Jn.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, other ways are the bow; all other ways are compasses about; nay, they are labyrinths, in which men lose themselves, after they are wearied with toil; Christ is a near way to the Father. "He is near that justifieth me;" who shall condemn me? {Isa.50:8} But more especially observe how near a way Christ is to the Father; you have it excellently described in Romans. "But the righteousness which is of faith, {that is, of Christ,} speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine 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 saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach." {10:6-8} Mark, when a man chooses Christ for his way to the Father, there needs no clambering up to heaven

to fetch down Christ, nor digging to the bottom of the deep to fetch 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 nigh unto thee, even in thy heart." Therefore, the Apostle tells us, "but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." {Eph.2:13} Just as if there were such a course taken, that the Indies {whence are all treasures} should be brought and set at the suburbs of London; just so doth Christ bring the Father unto men, and becomes such a way, as that there is but one step, from the lowest condition of sinfulness to the highest 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 the first thing Christ preached, was this, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What is that? It is present. You have heard much, I suppose, of your northern passage to the Indies; a great deal of time hath been spent to find such a cut, that 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;" 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 near hath Christ made the way unto the Father? This near, "he that believeth, shall be saved." Let me be bold to tell you that 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.<sup>3</sup> "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." Such a near way is Christ!

Yet still people will be caviling, where are good works all this while? What, justified by faith alone! Saved by Christ alone! Let me tell you, if Christ be the way, works are not the way, except they be Christ.<sup>4</sup> But must not we work? Yea, but for other purposes; the Lord hath propounded other ends for which we are to work. "For ye are bought with a price; {that is accomplished,} therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." {I Cor.6:20} "Being delivered {our safety is past} out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." {Lk.1:74,75} Do we serve towards deliverance? Then deliverance is not before serving; but saith Zachariah, "Being delivered - we serve." First, we are delivered from wrath, before we step a step into any duties whatsoever; for we do not the duty to be delivered, but we do the duty because we are delivered.

And seeing all things are settled by Christ for us, of free gift, all we do is for Christ himself; I say, all that we do, we do for Christ, not for ourselves.<sup>5</sup> If we do it for ourselves, we do but labour in vain. Suppose we could compass never so much good by doing, it is but labour in vain, it was compassed beforehand for us. If a man will run a hundred miles for money, if that money be proffered to him before he step out of his house, at his door, his journey is in vain; seeing he might have had it before he stepped out of his door; and that which was the end of his journey, might have been attained without troubling himself at all. Christ comes and brings Justification, Loving-kindness and Salvation, he lays them down, presents them, delivers them to the heart; when we are ungodly, he enters into Covenant, that we should become his. What need then all this travel for life and salvation, seeing it is here already?

Objection: But, seeing we get nothing by it, this is a discouragement for men to work, may some say.

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<sup>3</sup> {Note: 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. Gill}

<sup>4</sup> {Note: 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. Gill}

<sup>5</sup> {Note: Not to obtain righteousness, life, and salvation to ourselves, but for the honour and glory of Christ alone. Gill}

Answer: It is true, it is a discouragement to all selfish men to work; and whether a man work or work not at all, it is all one, if it be but for himself; for if a man work never so much, and if he be wholly selfish for himself, God rejects it; but when a man will work for Christ, that hath a touch of the loving-kindness of Christ, and therefore stands ready to speak forth the praise of the glory of his grace that hath so freely saved him; for such man to work, is as welcome to him for Christ's sake, as if he were to work for his own salvation. You have many ingenuous spirits in the world who will be more free to serve a friend that hath already raised them, than others will be to serve a master, that they may be raised. There is a service of thankfulness, which usually is more cordial, more sedulous, than all mercenary services that are forced. This is the true service of a believer in serving Christ; his eye is to the glory of Christ, in regard of what Christ hath done already for him; and not in expectation of anything Christ hath to do, which he hath not 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; and being thus completed by Christ, not to be mended by the creature, having nothing to do for himself, all he doth, he doth 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 labour and bitterness saved; thus you may be encouraged to receive Christ for your way. These are some remarkable considerations in Christ, wherein he is our way, wherein we may receive him, wherein is abundance of comfort; but the time hath out-stripped me.