

CHRIST ALONE EXALTEDⁱ

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

SERMON 1

CHRIST THE ONLY WAY Part 1.

“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

In the 33rd verse of the previous chapter, we see Christ explaining the sad and gloomy news, which he well knew would go deeply to the hearts of his disciples; namely, his departure from them; “Little children, yet a little while you shall seek me, but shall not find me.” (John 13:33) Peter, on hearing this, asks him where are you going? He tells him, that where he is going Peter cannot follow him now, but afterwards he will. Now, knowing how sadly this went to the hearts of his disciples, Christ labored to raise them up, and to establish them against the depression that this sad news might occasion; and that is the beginning of this chapter, “Let not your hearts be troubled;” (John 14:1) In doing this he seeks to encourage them in their spirits first, by telling them about the immediate benefits of that departure of his. It was the purpose of God, that as all things should be done effectually by Christ, so the communication of all these things to our spirits, should be by the Spirit of Christ. Now Christ tells them expressly, “That except he goes away, the Comforter cannot come to them;” (John 16:7) he, that must communicate those things to their spirits, namely, the Comforter, cannot come unto them until Christ has departed. But, secondly, he does not stop with that; he encourages them with another argument; “I go to prepare a place;” and he tells them the place where that place is; “In my Father's house are many mansions.” (John 14:2) In order that they do not doubt, he tells them, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” And because he wants to speak about these things as clearly as possible, he tells them, “You know where I go, and the way you know.” (John 14:4) Now Thomas comes in with an objection; “We know not where you go, and how can we know the way?” (John 14:5) Christ answers him, in the words of the text, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me.” (John 14:6) I will not

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.

go into a lot of details about the coherence and details of this text: the main point is briefly this; Christ is our way and there is no coming to the Father but by him. Let me tell you, that in dealing with this truth, as it is generally taught, I know that it is for the most part received. However, when we come to deal with the particular parts that make up the full truth of this doctrine every person will not, nor indeed cannot receive it. So that, at the very least you may see the clear truth in the heart of this general doctrine; (for, beloved, you must know there is hidden manna, in this very pot) I say, so that you may both see it, and taste the sweetness of it, let us consider; First, in what way may Christ be said to be “the way to the Father.” Secondly, what kind of way he is. Thirdly, from where does he become this way. Fourthly, what use we may make of it. First: In what sense Christ is said to be our way, that there is “no coming to the Father but by him.” We all know beloved, that every highway, or pathway, of necessity includes two terms: from where and to where; when a man enters into a way, he leaves the place where he was, and goes to the place where he was not. Christ being our way, the phrase imports thus much to us, that by Christ we pass from a state and condition wherein we were to a state and condition wherein we were not; the last term is expressed in the text, “He is the way to the Father;” the first term must be implied. To come to him, you must leave some condition where we were before. Be patient with the expression, till I explain the thing to you. The state, **from** which Christ is our way to the Father, is twofold; first, a state of sin; and secondly, a state of wrath. The state where Christ is the way **to**, is, indeed, expressed here to be to the Father; the meaning is, to the grace of the Father, and to the glory of the Father. In summary Christ is our way, from a state of sin and wrath, to a state of grace and glory, that there is no coming from the one to the other, but by Christ. In order that we may know the depth and richness of this truth we must go into details. This indeed has much value in, to make the soul sweet with the admirable sweetness and excellency of it. No music can please the ears as this truth may, when it is truly and thoroughly looked into; no, nor rejoice the heart neither. For Beloved, I must tell you that when your soul once finds this real truth, it cannot help but to say, I have found a ransom. First of all, Christ is a way from a state of sinfulness. Now what mystery is there in this, more than ordinary, will you say? Beloved, it is certainly true, there is nothing in Christ, there is nothing comes from Christ, but it is in a mystery; the gospel seems to be clear, and so it is, to those whose eyes Christ opens, but certainly it is hidden from some persons, those that shall perish. “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 to babes; even so, O Father, because it pleased you.” (Matthew 11:25) But what is hidden in this? There is a two-fold consideration of sinfulness, from which Christ is our way in a special manner. There is first that which we commonly call the guilt of sin, which indeed is the fault, or a person’s being faulty, as he is a transgressor. There is, secondly, the power or dominion of sin. Christ is the way from both these. First of all, Christ is the way from the guilt of sin; for a man to be rid of the guilt of sin means that, upon trial he is to be acquitted from the charge of sin that is laid to him, and to be freed from it; or for a person, being judged, to be pronounced actually an innocent and a just person, as having no sin to be charged upon him; this is to be free from the guilt of sin. A man is not free from a fault, as long as the fault is laid to his charge; he is then free from the fault, when it is not charged upon him. All the powers of the world united are not able to pronounce a person faultless and an innocent person, but only the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the way by which a poor sinner, even in this world, may be pronounced an innocent person; even in this world, I say; and

be acquitted and discharged from the fault and guilt of his sin. It is impossible for the law to do it; the apostle speaks of this expressly, “the law of the spirit of life in Christ has freed me from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2) Here it is up to Christ to free from the guilt of sin. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,” for sin condemned sin in the flesh. The law, says the scripture, could not do it; not that the law could not pronounce innocence where innocence was; not that the law could not condemn sin, where it is condemnable by its authority; the law can do this, if it can find subjects whereupon to do it. But the law grounded upon these terms, as it finds a person himself without fault; so, it pronounces sentence upon him; if it finds a fault in his person, then it charges this fault upon the person alone, as scripture shows, “Cursed is every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” So, then your faulty nature means that you cannot be absolutely freed from the work of the law. Whatever it speaks it speaks in a faulty way which makes you guilty. In no way can the heart of a man acquit him as being an innocent person, it is not able to take away his sinfulness, namely, the guilt of his own sin. “If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.” “If a man say he has no sin, he is a liar,” as John tells us, “and the truth is not in him.” (1 John 1:8) If the heart should say to any man that he is innocent it is telling a lie. If angels should exert all their effort and even be annihilated to make one poor sinner innocent it is of no avail. Their very being is too poor a price, of too little value to take away the sins of the world. Beloved, let us look at this in more detail, it is not man’s righteousness, what he does, even if assisted by the Spirit of God in how it is done, that can pronounce him innocent, that can make him faultless and guiltless. You all know that the payment of the last half year’s rent is no payment for the first half of this year’s rent, nor is it of any use for the non-payment of that which was due before; even if that had been paid before, for what is due now must be paid now. Suppose a man could perform a righteous action without blame, what satisfaction is this for former transgressions? No, beloved, let me tell you, everything we do is menstruous-ness, as the prophet Isaiah speaks, even man’s best righteous acts, for all our righteousness is a menstruous cloth; (Isaiah 64:6) but as for Christ, that blessed Savior, he is able to “save to the uttermost them that come to God by him;” not only to save them in respect of glory hereafter, but also to save them in respect of sinfulness here; to snatch them as a fire-brand out of the fire of their own sin, to deliver them from their own transgression. Christ, I say, is the way, the absolute and complete way, to cleanse every soul that comes to God by him, from all filthiness. The person to whom Christ is the way, stands in the sight of God as having no fault at all in themselves. Beloved, here we have two contradictions: for a person to be considered a faulty person, and yet that person at the same time to be considered a just or an innocent person. If a person is faulty, they are not innocent; if they are innocent, they cannot be faulty. The gospel makes it perfectly clear that Christ justifies the ungodly. If Christ himself justifies them, then there can be no fault put to their account. Take note of this for your life and joy consists in this. It shows, I say, the Lord Jesus freely offering himself to people considered as ungodly persons receiving him. As soon as he is received by you, you are instantly justified by him. In this being justified you are discharged from all the faults that may be laid to your charge. There is not one sin you commit, after you receive Christ, that God can charge upon your person.² A man would think,

² That is, to condemnation; because all have been charged on Christ, and he has made satisfaction for them; and besides, in this manifestative justification the Doctor is speaking of, there is an open and full discharge from all sin. Gill.

that there would be no need to spend much time on such an obvious truth, one that is so clearly at the heart of the gospel.

Beloved, I know that tender hearts often stumble over this doctrine. Be patient while I explain this more clearly by the scriptures. Scriptures that are written in such large letters that even those running can read them at a glance. **Psalm 51**: “Wash me” says David, with what result? “I shall be whiter than snow.” Snow, you know, has no spot at all, no fault, no blemish. David shall be even purer. He will be less blamable, less faulty and have less spottiness in him, than is in the very snow itself. **Solomon’s Song 4:7**: Here you find Christ speaking strange and very admirable language to his church: “You are fair my love,” says Christ, “You have no spot in you at all.” I am quoting the very words of the text; therefore, let none complain least they be found fighting against God; “she has no spot in her.” **Isaiah 53**: Here he speaks admirably concerning the effectualness of Christ’s death, he tells us, “That the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all;” That is your iniquities, my iniquities; our forefathers iniquities, so our future generations iniquities; the iniquities of us all the Lord has laid upon Christ; they cannot lie upon Christ, and us at the same time. If they be accounted to the charge of Christ, they are not accounted to the charge of the person that has receive the same Christ. The text clearly states that “the Lord has laid them upon him,” But we may ask what iniquity was laid upon Christ? Does he put some iniquity to our account and only some to Christ? Ezekiel 36 gives us the answer. **Ezekiel 36:25**: Here you see the extent of iniquities that God has laid upon Christ; that he takes away from the sinner. I mean the sinner justified by Christ that received him. In this verse you find the new covenant clearly repeated; not according to the covenant God made with our fathers. The first words of the covenant are these; “I will sprinkle you with Clean water, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you,” from all your filthiness; small sins, as some will call them; great sins, turbulent sins, scandalous sins, any sins, any filthiness; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. **Ezekiel 16:6**: This is a notable chapter indeed, opening up the unsearchable riches of the love of Christ to men; I “saw you polluted in your own blood,” said he; such blood “that no eye could pity you, or do any good to you.” So, we see that no creature pitied him, but did God feel the same way? No. “When I saw you polluted in your blood, I said unto you, live; yes, when I saw you polluted in your blood, I said unto you live; when I passed by you, your time was the time of love,” God said: “I spread my skirt over you and covered your nakedness.” Please take notice, I ask you, not a scanty skirt to cover some of this blood and filth, but a broad skirt, a large skirt, a white raiment, as Christ calls it himself in the Revelation; “I counsel you to buy of me white raiment, that your nakedness may not appear.” It seems there is such a covering of Christ that he casts upon a person, while he is considered in his blood, that covers his nakedness, that none of it appears again. Yet we find, a little further in Ezekiel 16 something different. After she was in covenant, she was dyed in deep water: “yes I thoroughly washed away your blood;” and this was added, that no man might make unnecessary objections. Some may say, It is true, God casts a covering over our sinfulness, but it is our sinfulness still; it is covered only. I say no, The Lord says, I have washed it away; “then washed I you with water.”

However, some people will say that these passages are obscure and mystical; you cannot base your teaching on these. No, they say, believers are not faultless, their sin has not been taken away by Christ. In order, therefore, to get a clearer understanding of the gospel notice what the apostle says

in **Ephesians 5:27**. Christ “purges and sanctifies his church that he might present it to himself not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it may be holy, and without blame.” The words are in the present tense. It is not just in glory that we shall be without spot, even now we shall be without blemish, we shall be without spot and wrinkle so that he might now present us to himself. **II Corinthians 5:21**: In this verse you see the truth spoken of in a more emphatic way. The Apostle expands on this doctrine in a mighty way; “He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Both terms are expressed in the abstract; he was made sin for us; here you see plainly, our sins are to be translated to Christ; that God reckons Christ the very sinner; no, God reckons all our sins to be his, and makes him to be sin for us; and what is the fruit of this?³ We are thereby made the righteousness of God in him. If we are righteousness, how can our sinfulness be charged upon us? He tells us expressly, in **I John 1:7**, “That the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin;” the blood of Christ does cleanse us; he does not say, the blood of Christ shall cleanse us from all sin; but he says, for the present time, the blood of Christ does cleanse us from all sin. John the Baptist has this to say upon this subject: “Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world.” He takes them away. How does he take them away, and yet leave them behind, and yet charge them upon the person that does believe? The person must be discharged, or else how can they be taken away. This is the main thing foreshadowed in that notable sacrifice of the scape-goat. **Leviticus 16:21**: The high-priest must lay his hand upon the head of the goat to be carried away into the wilderness; the text says, “it was the laying the sins of the people, and that when they were laid upon him, he goes into the wilderness.” If he were to go into the wilderness but leave their sins behind him, then this service was for nothing. The whole point was that he was to carry them away upon himself. Just so. Christ, as the scape-goat, has our sins laid upon his back, and he carries them away. **Psalms 103:12**: Therefore, it is said, “that God removes our sins from us, as far as the East is from the West; he casts our sins into the bottom of the sea.”

Besides all these texts of scripture, I might produce multitudes more, if it was needful for this purpose; but, I think, there can be nothing in the world more clear than this truth, that Christ is such a way to a poor believing soul that he has received, that he might take and carry away all the sins of such a person; that he is no longer to be reckoned as having sins upon him. But some will object, do not those that receive Christ actually commit sin? I answer, yes, they do commit sin, and the truth is, they can do nothing but commit sin. If a person that is a believer has anything in the world, he has received this, that if he does anything that is good, it is the Spirit of God that does it, not he; therefore, he himself does nothing but sin, his soul is a fountain of sin.

But then, you will say, if he does sin, surely God must charge that sin to his account as it is found in him. Truly must he not be reckoned a sinner because he sins? I answer, no; though he does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned a sinner, but his sins are reckoned to be taken away from him.⁴ A man

³ That is, by imputation; not as the author and committer of sin; and, in the same way, God reckons our sins to be Christ's; not as committed by him, but are imputed to him. Gill.

⁴ Not that the believer who has received Christ, ceases to be a sinner in himself; for the Doctor affirms, in this same paragraph, that he commits sin, and does nothing but sin; and much less that he ceased to be a sinner before he was a believer or from the death of Christ, as D. W. in his “Gospel Truth, &c,” falsely ascribes to him, on account of this passage; but the sense is that a believer having received Christ is not reckoned as a sinner in the sight of God, and in the eye of justice, and as considered in Christ, all his sins being charged to him, and expiated and atoned for by his

borrowed a hundred pounds; some man will say, does he not owe these hundred pounds, seeing he borrowed it? I say, not in the case where another has paid the hundred pounds for him. A man does sin against God, God reckons not his sin to be his, he reckons it Christ's; therefore, he cannot reckon it as his. If the Lord did lay the iniquity of men upon Christ (as I said before,) then how can he lay it upon their persons? You have sinned but supposing that you have received Christ, then Christ takes your sin away. And as God does put the sin to Christ's account and charges sin upon him, so, if you agree with God, you must also reckon this sin of yours to have been put upon Christ; his back has borne it, he has carried it away.

I can only imagine what people may raise as objections. Because of this I will endeavor to make this truth as clear as the day to you. Do but consider with yourselves what Christ came into the world for, if not to take away the sins of the world? He need never to have died, but to take away the sins of the world. Did he come to take them away, and did he leave them behind him? Then he lost his labor. Did he not leave them behind him? Then his person is discharged of them from whom he has taken them; but if the person be not discharged of them, he is not a justified person in himself. You cannot account his person justified while you account his sin to him. It is a contradiction to say, that a man is innocent, yet guilty. Beloved, then here is a point of exceeding usefulness to souls, if they can but accept it, and receive it. All the difficulty lies in whether we can apply Christ's work to ourselves, whether I may say, Christ is my way, having taken this guilt away, that there can be none of it that can be charged to my account. I say, if you did receive Christ, if you did nothing else but started upon this way, as soon as you started in this way you have changed from the condition you were in.

A person receiving Christ! What does that mean? To receive him, is to come to him; "he that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." However, you may say that many think there is such a kind of sinfulness that is a barrier to them; that though they would come to Christ, yet there is not a way open for them to take him. Beloved, there is no way of sinfulness to stop you from coming to Christ. If you have a desire to come to him, and, against all objections to commit yourself with joy into the arms of Christ, for the remission of all your sinfulness; Christ himself (which I tremble to express; though it be with indignation) should be a liar, if you come to him, and he turns you away. "Every one that will," says he, "let him come and drink of the water of life freely."

You will find, beloved, that Christ's great complaint was this: "he came to his own, and his own received him not;" and to the Scribes and Pharisees, "You will not come to me, that you might have life." The truth is that men love to establish their own righteousness in order to bring themselves to Christ; it is a presumptuous and licentious doctrine, that Christ may be their Christ, and that they can receive him in this way. They are not just ungodly as enemies; but they do extreme damage to the faith of Jesus Christ, to the exceeding bounty of that grace of his, who saves from sin, without respect of anything in the creature, that he himself might have the praise of the glory of his grace. The covenant, concerning the blotting out of transgressions, is a free covenant;

sacrifice; as also, seeing such a one has received, with Christ, a discharge from all his sins into his own conscience, he should reckon himself, and his sins, as God does, who reckons them to Christ, and not to him. Gill.

“not for your sake do I this, be it known unto you,” says the Lord, “for you are a stubborn and stiff-necked people; but for my own sake do I this.” All this grace to acquit your soul, here and hereafter, comes out of the tenderness and compassion of God himself; and he has no other motive in the world, but simply, and only, his own affection, his desire is to the deliverance of a poor wretch from iniquity, and discharge of sin, from that load which otherwise would grind and crush him to powder; I say, his own tenderness and compassion are the motive. God neither looks to anything in the creature to cause him to show kindness, nor yet anything in the creature to stop him; neither righteousness in men that persuades God to pardon sin; nor unrighteousness in men that hinders him from giving this pardon, and acquitting them from their transgressions; it is only and simply for his own sake he does it for men.

Thus, you have seen the first particular that I have endeavored to clear from all misrepresenting’s and objections that may be laid upon it. In one word, beloved, mistake me not, I am far from imagining any believer is freed from acts of sin; he is freed only from the charge of sin; that is, from being a subject to be charged with sin; all his sins are charged upon Christ, he being made sin for him; yet Christ is not an actual sinner; but Christ is all the sinners in the world by imputation; and through this imputation all our sins are so done away from us, that we stand as Christ’s own person did stand, and do stand in the sight of God.⁵ Now, had not Christ made a full satisfaction to the Father, he himself must have perished under those sins that he bore; but in that he went through the thing, and paid the full price, as he carried them away from us, so he laid them down from himself. So that now Christ is freed from sin, and we are freed from sin in him; he was freed from sin imputed unto him and laid upon him, when he suffered; we were freed from sin as he takes it off from our shoulders, and has carried it away. “Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden.” That is, with sin. And what is the next passage? “And I will give you rest.” As long as the burden is upon the shoulders, so long there is no rest. Therefore, this does necessarily mean that Christ must take away the burden, so that we may have rest.

Secondly, Christ is not only the way from the guilt of sin, but he is the way from the power of sin. There is a threefold power of sin; there is first, a reigning power; and secondly, a tyrannizing power; and thirdly, a bustling or beating power of sin; and they are all three of them distinct. Christ is a way from all these in believers; from the reigning power of it; so, the Apostle speaks expressly, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14) Grace there is Christ himself. “His servants you are, to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of righteousness unto life; but thanks be to God, you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” The meaning is this; while we are under the law, and had no better means of help, sin reigned in us, the law cannot hold back sin; but when we come under grace by Christ, the dominion of the law, or rather the dominion of sin, which the law cannot

⁵ This shows what is the Doctor’s true sense in a former passage, where he says Christ is “the very sinner;” that is, by imputation, as here explained, and not an actual sinner. One would be tempted to think, at first reading this clause, that the Doctor was for universal redemption, when he says, that Christ is “all the sinners in the world” by imputation; and, perhaps, such expressions as these with some others that will be observed hereafter, made the learned Hoornbeck conclude, that he held the doctrine of universal redemption; but his sense is not, that Christ personated all the sinners in the world, or had all the sins of every individual person laid on him; but that he was all those sinners in the world, or represented them, whose sins were imputed to him; and these, as he often says in his sermons on Isaiah 53:6, were the iniquities of the Lord’s people, of the church, and of the elect. Gill.

restrain, is captivated and subjected by Christ; “I will subdue your iniquities,” as it is spoken by the prophet Micah. We are discharged from the fault and guilt of sin, that is, absolutely at once; (Acts 13:39;) but the power of reigning power of sin is only taken away by degrees; the sinfulness of sin is left upon the believer, but the power and resistance of sin continues with us; but still Christ breaks through, and makes a way, I Corinthians 10:13, where you have this admirable expression, “No temptation has happened unto you, but such as is common to men; God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation make a way that you may be able to bear it.”

There is a tyrannizing power of sin; that is, we do not choose to sin, we would live and choose differently; but when sin has gotten a present power over the soul, and in spite of all the spirit can do, it will keep us under its power. This, I say, is the tyranny of sin; and this was the case of the apostle Paul in Romans, chapter 7 saying, “when I would do good, evil is present with me;” I find “a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin;” so that “the good I would do, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that do I.” In regard of which he makes a bitter complaint; but mark the end of it all, “but thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here you see that though sin has power over the spirit of a person, yet through the Lord Jesus Christ this power is lessened.

Yet thirdly, it is lessened in stages; for the agitating power of sin, namely, though it cannot be welcomed, yet it will be troublesome to the soul. Now Christ is the way, by degrees, also, from this trouble of sin; for by degrees he crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, and brings down the power of it by treading down Satan, that is the encourager of sin, to make it so troublesome; by overcoming the world, that administers occasion of this troublesomeness. “Fear not,” said Christ, “I have overcome the world.” But still, I say, he does this by degrees, and so he does it by degrees, that sometimes he lets the work come to a standstill; and sometimes the tyranny shall be over the spirit, and the spirit shall be under that tyranny a good while; sometimes the spirit shall be under the troublesomeness of sin, and be constantly exercised with it. But you must know that it is neither the tyranny, nor the troublesomeness of sin in a believer, that does eclipse the beauty of Christ, or the favor of God to the soul. Our standing is not founded upon the subduing of our sins, but upon that foundation that never fails, and that is Christ himself; upon his faithfulness and truth. Men think they are consumed, when they are troubled with sin; why? Because of their transgression. But notice what the Lord says; “I, the Lord, change not; therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” It is not, you change not, therefore you are not consumed; but I change not; I have loved you freely, I will love you freely, I cannot alter; “whom he loves, he loves unto the end;” and this is in respect to his unchangeableness. Both the outward and inward man suffers low points and high points in the business of sanctification; yet this is certainly true, that believers are kept by the mighty “power of God, through faith, unto salvation.” They are kept in holiness, sincerity, simplicity of heart; but all this has nothing to do with the peace of his soul, and the salvation and justification thereof.⁶ Christ is the one that justifies the ungodly; Christ is the one that is the Peacemaker; and as Christ is the peacemaker, so all this peace depends upon Christ

⁶ That is, to make peace with God for his soul, since Christ is the Peace-maker, Savior, and Justifier; otherwise to be kept in these things contributes to spiritual peace of mind, under the influence of divine grace and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Gill

alone. Beloved, if you will get your peace from anything in the world but Christ, you will get it from where it does not exist. "This people," says the prophet Jeremiah, "have committed two evils." What are they? "They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jerimiah 2:13) What is that fountain of living waters? Christ is the fountain of peace and life; and men forsake that peace that is to be had in Christ, when they would have peace out of righteousness of their own, out of their great enlargements, out of humiliations. These are broken cisterns, and what peace is there in them? Is there not sinfulness in them? Who can say, I have washed my hands? If there be sinfulness in them, where then is their peace? Sin speaks nothing but war to the soul. Let me tell you, beloved, you that look after peace from the subduing of your sins; what peace can it afford you, in case there be any shortcoming in the matter of the subduing of your sins? There can be no peace! Suppose God had nothing in the world to charge upon you; but only that sinfulness in the very subduing of your corruptions; what peace could you have? What else but sin could God find in us? Suppose your eyes were enlightened to see yourselves, how much filthiness there is in all your wrestling's; I say, how much defects and infirmities might you see? Could you do anything other than hate yourself for these infirmities and defects of your best performances, seeing the wages of sin is death? Where can help be found then? Nowhere but in Christ, none but Christ will do. While your acts, in respect of filthiness, proclaim nothing but war, Christ alone, and his blood, proclaim nothing but peace.

Men think that the subduing of their sins depends upon themselves. I set you on the correct path when I speak of the power of Christ subduing sin. If our sins can be subdued, then we may have peace; and if they cannot be subdued, then we can have no peace. Get peace where it is to be had; only the subduing of sin can lead to peace; let Christ have that which is his due; for it is he alone that can bring peace.⁷ It remains, we should speak further, that as Christ is a way from sin, both in respect of fault and power, so he is a way from wrath; and he is a way to the grace and glory of the Father, and what kind of way he is. But the searching into every corner of this truth, for the sitting of it, has brought me exceedingly back beyond my expectation. I shall have further occasion in the afternoon to speak of it.

⁷ The original sentence reads as follows: "Fetch peace where it is to be had; let subduing of sin alone for peace; let Christ have that which is his due; for it is he alone that speaks peace." Gills comments as follows: Let it be observed, that the Doctor is speaking not of subduing sin, as it is an act of God's grace, and owing to the power of Christ, who has made an end of it, and so made peace; on this subduing of sin peace depends, {Mic.7:18, Deut.9:24} but of men's subduing sin, by their own power and strength, and in order to make peace with God; whereas subduing sin, or mortifying the deeds of the body, believers are concerned for, is not of themselves, and done in their own strength, but through the Spirit, Power and Grace of God; and not to make peace with him, but to show their dislike of sin, their gratitude to God, and that they are debtors to him, to live after the spirit, {Rom.8:12,13,} wherefore subduing of sin is to be let alone for the end mentioned, in order to peace with God, that Christ might have his due and glory, who has both made and speaks peace; otherwise subduing of sin, or the weakening the power of it, by the Spirit and Grace of God, is the concern of every believer, and is wished for by him, and makes for the tranquility of his mind. Gill.

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 that 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. In their unedited form his 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://crispchristoloneexalted.com>. Please add “This version by Richard C. Schadle” when quoting from this version.