

## ABOUT TOBIAS CRISP

**TOBIAS CRISP** was born in London in 1600 into one of the wealthiest families in England. His father was Ellis Crisp, a rich merchant, was sometimes alderman and sheriff of the city of London. He was educated first at Eaton college, then Cambridge University, where he gained a B. A. degree, and then a M. A. degree at Balliol college, Oxford, from which he was also later awarded the D. D. degree. In 1627 he became rector at Brinkworth, Wiltshire, where he proved to be very popular because of his godly manner of life, his edifying method of preaching and his gracious hospitality. According to Benjamin Brook, “His doctrine being spiritual, evangelical, and particularly suited to the case of awakened sinners, greatly promoted their peace and comfort, his method being plain, familiar, and easy to be understood by persons of the meanest capacity, was particularly adapted to the condition of his hearers.” Volume 2, page 471. *Lives of the Puritans*. (London: James Black, 1813). During the civil wars Dr. Crisp aligned with the Puritan side of the ecclesiastical troubles and was, therefore, persecuted by royalist soldiers and forced to remove to London. After enduring the rigors of smallpox, Crisp died on February 27, 1643 and his remains were interred in the family vault in St. Mildred’s church, Bread Street, London.

Many writers have accused Crisp of Antinomianism but many others have also spoken in his defense. For example, **C. H. Spurgeon** observed, “Antinomianism was the term applied to the teaching of Dr. Tobias Crisp . . . He was called an Antinomian, but the term was misapplied.” Pages 123-124. *The Sword & The Trowel*. (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1887). Again **Spurgeon** said, “Never was there a sounder divine than Crisp, and never one who preached the gospel more fully to all under heaven.” Page 104. *The Reverend C. H. Spurgeon’s Anecdotes and Stories*, Oliver Creyton, Editor. (London: n.d.). **William Twisse**, the presiding officer at the Westminster Assembly, remarked that he had, “read Dr. Crisp’s Sermons, and could give no reason why they were opposed, but because so many were converted by his preaching; and, said he, so few by ours.” Pages 67 in John Rippon’s, *A Brief Memoir of the Life & Writings of John Gill*. (London: J. Bennett, 1838). The famous Scottish theologian, **John Brown of Haddington** said, “I look on Dr. Crisp, as by no means an Antinomian, but as a deeply convinced and holy divine, pressing after

gospel light.” Page 31. *Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Rev. James Hervey, A. M.* (London, 1822). **Augustus Toplady** spoke in Crisp’s defense calling him, “the holy and judicious Dr. Crisp” Page 370. *The Complete Works of Augustus Toplady*. 1 Volume Edition. (London, 1794). More recently in an article entitled, “Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant” **Mark W. Karlberg** stated, “The most important of those mistakenly labeled ‘Antinomian’ was Tobias Crisp (1600-1643) . . . Crisp more than most of his time, strove to develop in greater fullness and clarity the precise sense in which the Mosaic Covenant had to be considered as a covenant of works.” *The Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1, (Fall, 1980), Page 27.

As to the worthiness of Crisp’s sermons, **Thomas Cole**, the Principal of St. Mary’s Hall, Oxford, in 1656, said, “If I had only one hundred pounds in the world, and Dr. Crisp’s book could not be procured for less than fifty, I would give that sum rather than be without it; I have found more satisfaction in it, than in all the books in the world, except the Bible.” Pages vii. “Memoir of the Life of Tobias Crisp.” *Christ Alone Exalted*. 7th Edition. (London: John Bennett, 1832). The famous evangelical **James Hervey** encouraged the reading of Crisp’s sermons, saying in a letter, “Do not harbor any fear, Madam, concerning the propriety of your sending Dr. Crisp’s sermons to Mr. K\_\_. They are the very discourses which he wants. Especially, if he is inclined to distress of conscience, on account of his spiritual state. I know not any treatises more proper, or more excellently calculated, to administer solid consolation. They are, under the divine influence, one of my first counselors, and principle comforters. They often drop manna and balm upon my fainting and sickly graces. The LORD JESUS CHRIST grant that your Ladyship may experience the soul-cheering, conscience-healing, heart-reviving power of these precious doctrines.” Letter 43, Page 221. *Letters to the Right Honorable Lady Francis Shirley*. (London, 1782).

