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THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE

The Believer's Triumph Over Death:

by John Brine

(London: Aaron Ward, 1735)

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth
— Psa. 60: 4*



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SERMON 4

THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

CONSIDERED IN A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE
OF MR. HUGH LLOYD, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
FEB. 11, 1735

Published at the REQUEST of some who heard it.

*Mortuus Christus sed in morte mors
Mortua, quia Vita Mortua occidit
Mortem Plenitudo Vitae deglutivit
Mortem: Absorpta est Mors in Christi Corpore.
Mors non Vitam rapit, sed reformat.
Augustin. in Joan. Prudentius.*

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1CO. 15:55, 56, 57.

O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE Infinitely wise God, at whose Disposal all Persons are, has been pleased to take from this Society a Member of long Standing and Usefulness. This mournful Providence I am desired by his surviving Relatives to Improve; for which Purpose I have made choice of these Words.

IN this Chapter the Apostle largely treats of the Resurrection of the Dead, and fully proves it by many irrefragable Arguments. This Doctrine cannot be disputed whatever Difficulties may seem to attend it, without giving up the whole Christian Religion; *for if there be no Resurrection the Dead Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith also is vain;* (1Co. 15:13, 14.) says the Apostle. The Earth

is but a refining Place to the Bodies of the Saints, they will be raised from thence with unspeakable Advantage, free from Corruption and Death, spiritual and glorious; and therefore there is sufficient Foundation for this holy Triumph of the Apostle over Death, that formidable Enemy, and the devouring Grave. 'Tis thought by Interpreters, that this is a Quotation of the *Septuagint's* Version of those Words in the Prophecy of *Hosea*; *O Death! I will be thy Plague; O Grave! I will be thy Destruction*; but with a small Variation which affects not the Sense. The Apostle makes use of a Metaphor, taken either from Spurs and Pricks by which Oxen are driven, or rather from the Stings of Wasps and the like Creatures; from which if you take the Sting they are the same, but are not able to hurt.^{fl} Thus the Sting being taken from Death, it can do no Injury to Men. *In speaking to the words I shall endeavor to do these Things.*

First, SHEW that Sin is the Sting of Death.

Secondly, THAT the Law is the Strength of Sin.

Thirdly, THAT Sin, which is Death's Sting, is taken away.

Fourthly, DEMONSTRATE that the Saints Victory over Sin, Death and the Grave, is the free Gift of God.

Fifthly, THAT this Conquest is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, OBSERVE that we are under Obligation to praise God on this Account.

First, *I AM to show, That Sin is the Sting of Death.*

MAN consists of two Parts, Soul and Body, Spirit and Matter: These are widely different in their Nature. The Soul is immaterial, it is not made up of Parts, is invisible, not subject to Corruption and Mortality.

THE Body is indeed a most curious Frame, in the Formation of which the infinite Wisdom of God is wonderfully discovered; but its Original is Dust, and to that it naturally tends, as appears from God's Threatening to our first Parents after the Fall; *Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return* (Gen. 3:19.). In Man these two Parts, though so very distant in their Nature, are most nearly united, the Dissolution of which Union is natural Death; 'tis of that the Apostle here speaks.

SIN is any Want of Conformity to, or Transgression of the Law of God, is evident from the Apostle's Account of it; *whosoever sinneth transgresseth also the Law, for Sin is the Transgression of the Law* (1Jo. 3: 4.). It was Sin that subjected the human Nature to Mortality and Death; for *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men, ἐπὶ ᾧ*, in whom all have sinned (Rom. 5:12.).

THE Bands and Ligaments which keep the Soul and Body together would never have been dissolved, if Sin had not rent them asunder; that is the meritorious Cause of Death. Hence, says the Apostle, *the Wages of Sin is Death* (Rom. 6:23.); it is the Sting of it also, Death receives all its Poison and Venom from this evil Root; that is it which arms it with Terror and renders it formidable; when Death approaches, and Guilt attends it, what inexpressible Horror and Anguish doth it raise in the Minds of Men! Which Disquietude is but the small Beginning, of an eternal Spring of Sorrow and Distress. That Sin is the Sting of Death thus appears.

1. IT is that which makes Death a Curse: In it self it is not so, when it is inflicted with relation to Guilt contracted, as the proper procuring Cause thereof, it is a penal Evil, and a dreadful Curse; but without respect to Sin imputed, it has nothing really injurious in it. Our Lord, in his Crucifixion and Death, was made a Curse, as the Apostle asserts; *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us* (Gal. 3:13.) . But then this was as he stood in the Sinners Place, and bore the Guilt of his People. The Saints are not exempted from the Stroke of that Enemy: *What Man is he that liveth and shall not see Death? Shall he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave* (Psa. 89:48.)? Notwithstanding they are secure from Curse, to them it is not a Token of divine Vengeance and Wrath, *all things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things, present, or things to come, all are theirs, for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's* (1Co. 3:21, 22, 23.); it is to them an unspeakable Advantage and glorious Privilege.

2. SIN deprives Men of Happiness after Death is executed upon them, It Is that which secludes them from the Presence of God, the Company of blessed Angels and glorified Saints; this is the Bar which eternally keeps the Gates of Heaven shut against them, and for ever prevents their Admission into that Place of perfect and everlasting Bliss, which Christ himself plainly teaches us; *many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out*

Devils? and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity(Mat. 7:22, 23.).

3. THIS is the Weight that sinks them into Hell, that Place of inconceivable Horror and Torment, *where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched* (Mar. 9:44.). It is Sin that causes God to sentence Men to those Regions of Blackness and Despair in which *there will be wailing and gnashing of Teeth* (Mat. 13:42.). And that it is which will for ever hinder their Release from thence.

4. SIN draws down upon them the Vengeance of God. All Threatenings of divine Displeasure immediately refer to the commission of Sin; 'tis that which incurs the Anger of God, and for that only is his Fury poured forth upon any of his Creatures; *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance; but it will be solely on such that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power* (2Th. 1: 7, 8, 9.). The Apostle, after the mention of various Sins, acquaints us, that *for those things sake the Wrath of God cometh on the Children of disobedience.* (Col. 3: 6.) There is an awful Cup of Anger in God's Hand for Sinners, but it is of their own filling up; *they treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath* (Rom. 2: 5.). It is the Guilt that Men contract, which exposes them to the fierce Resentments of an angry God. And therefore, What a dreadful Sting is Sin? which is attended with such Consequences.

Secondly, THE Strength of Sin is the Law, which, as I conceive, includes in it all those Duties that God hath enjoined upon us in his Word; every Branch of Holiness is referable to the Law, and comes within the Compass of it. The Law is to be considered either as it is in the Hand of God, thus it is a Covenant of Works, and has a Curse annexed to the Breach of it; or as it is in the Hand of the Mediator, thus it is not a Covenant of Works, but a Rule of Obedience; in which Sense the Saints are under it, *being, not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ* (1Co. 9:21.). It is in the former View that we are to take it here, *the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just, and good* (Rom. 7:12.); and therefore it doth not encourage Evil, or communicate Vigor and Strength to the Lusts of Men; yet in some Sense it is the Strength of Sin.

1. IT is an Occasion to it: The Heart of Man is full of impure and unlawful Desires, these are strictly forbid and restrained by the Law; but Concupiscence in Men is like to a Torrent of Water, that rises and swells till it bears away all Opposition which is made to its Flow; or the Fire, which grows the more vehement when it is pent up by the cold ambient Air. Thus the Law is an accidental Cause or Occasion of Sin; but not properly, for it is wholly repugnant to all Evil; in this Sense some think, it may be called the Strength of Sin. *Parcus* observes, that “Sin is irritated by the Law, and becomes the more sinful; the Fault is not the Law’s, which forbids, reproveth, and condemns Sin; but it is the Fault of our vicious Nature, which with the greater Violence is carried after that that is forbid, as an unruly Horse leapeth, and is the more head-strong in that he is the more held in by sharp Bits^{r2}.”

2. THE condemnatory Power of Sin is lodged in the Law: Hence every Sin subjects us to its Curse; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them* (Gal. 3:10). This condemning Power of Sin is universal, it is extended to all Men without Exception, considered in themselves; Persons of every Rank are obnoxious to it, the Great and Noble as well as the Mean and Low, the Rich no less than the Poor. This Power of Sin to condemn is not to be disputed, for it is supported by the Authority of God the supreme Judge, it is his awful Voice that pronounces the Curse, nor is it a Power that is unjustly exercised; *it is a righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation* (2Th. 1: 6.), to such as sin against him. The Condemnation of a Sinner is equitable, because he acts in direct Opposition to the revealed Will of God; no Exemption can possibly be obtained from it but by the free Grace of God through Christ, which the Psalmist strongly expresses; *none can by any Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ransom for him; for the Redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever* (Psa. 49: 5, 6.).

SOME useful Observations may be drawn from hence.

1. THAT it is impossible to attain Happiness by the Works of the Law: There is not any Law given which doth not furnish Sin with a Curse; all Men are corrupt, and unable perfectly to obey divine Precepts, and of Consequence none can be justified by the Law. It is certain that that Law which condemns Sin, will never justify a Sinner, as so considered; but all Persons are sinful, and *therefore by the Deeds of the Law* (νόμου, a Law

without the Particle, *i.e.* any divine Law whatever) *there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin* (Rom. 6:20.).

2. THE Law cannot subdue and conquer Sin, it justly condemns every Sin, but its Office is not to subdue it; the Grace of God alone can do this. So long as a Man is under the Law as a Covenant of Works, Sin retains its Tyranny and Dominion in the Heart; it is not the most dreadful Denunciation of Wrath against Evil, that will influence a Sinner to hate it; nothing less than a Discovery of free and sovereign Grace, which is gloriously displayed in the Pardon of Sin through Christ, can produce an Abhorrence of it: Hence, says the Apostle, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace* (Rom. 6:14.).

3. THE Law is of Service to convince us of Sin, and inform us of its Consequences: To this End the Spirit of God makes Use of it, he impresses its Precepts upon the Mind, and presents its Threats to the View of a Sinner, to acquaint him with his Sinfulness and Misery upon which he dies. This Effect it produced in the Apostle, as he declares; *I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came Sin revived and I died* (Rom. 7: 9.). Its Nature is to wound but not to heal; the Curses of it are as so many Arrows fixed in the Heart of a Sinner, which deeply pierce it, nor can any thing heal it but the *Name of Christ, which is as Ointment poured forth*(Son. 1: 3.) .

Thirdly, The Sting of Death is taken from it: *O Death, where is thy Sting?* this Mode of Expression strongly implies, that it is taken away. Here I shall observe,

1. The Person by whom it is removed, and that is Christ: It was predicted of him, that *he should finish Transgression, and make an end of Sin* (Dan. 9:24.). Agreeable to which Old Testament-Prediction, the Gospel assures us, that *he has by himself purged away our Sins* (Heb. 1: 3.). *John* the Baptist with Wonder beheld and spake of him as *the Lamb of God, that took away the Sin of the World* (Joh. 1:29.). Sin was such a Burden that none but himself could stand under, it would have sunk any mere Creature into eternal Ruin; if all created Power had centred in one Subject, yet this Man, or Angel, furnished with all this Strength, would have been infinitely unequal to that Load of Guilt which Christ bore.

2. ALL Sin is taken away, no part of Death's Sting is left remaining: The whole Guilt which the Elect of God contract was imputed to Christ; *all*

we, like Sheep, bare gone astray, we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all (Isa. 3: 6.); and therefore they are entirely acquitted by divine Justice, no Charge can be justly exhibited against them, and if any is, it will prove invalid, as is most evident from that bold Challenge of the Apostle; *Who shall say any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies, Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again* (Rom. 8:33, 34.). Numerous Offenses they commit against God, their Number vastly exceeds their Observation, and yet they are conscious of so large a Multitude, that at some times they very much hesitate concerning the Remission of them; but they are perfectly cleansed from all their Stains and Spots, by Christ's Blood, for *the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all Sin* (1Jo. 1: 7.); none is to be found upon them as Persons justified, so considered, they are as clear from Guilt as if they had never contracted any, which is very manifest from these Words; *In those Days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the Iniquity of Israel Shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve* (Jer. 1:20.). All their Crimes are carried at the greater Distance from their Persons; hence are those Words of the Church; *as far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our Transgressions from us* (Psa. 103:12.).

3. SIN is taken out of God's Sight; it must be allowed in some Sense, that God sees no Sin in his People, since it is plainly declared in the divine Word; *he hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel* (Num. 23:21.). This is not inconsistent with his Omniscience, for we do not assert that the Sins of God's People are hid from the Eye of his Knowledge; he is certainly acquainted with every Transgression that any of his commit, and hates Evil in them no less than in others; but it is the Eye of his Justice that is intended, which beholds them as *all fair and without Spot* (Son. 4: 7.), as washed in Christ's Blood, and clothed with his most perfect Righteousness.

I AM tempted to think, that some who have objected to the Removal of all Sin out of God's Sight, must have wilfully mistaken the Intention of such as affirm and vindicate it, with an ungenerous Design to calumniate and traduce them, because it is expressly asserted in the holy Scriptures, and doubtless is inseparable from a perfect Justification of the Saints, through Christ.

Fourthly, GOD gives his People Victory over Sin, Death, and the Grave: Here I shall consider,

1st, The Conquest they have over these Enemies;

2dly, Observe, That it is the Gift of God.

1st. THE Saints are Conquerors over all their Adversaries, as the Apostle most clearly teaches us in those exulting Words of his; *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword: (As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the Day long, we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter:)* Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35, 36, 37, 38, 39.)

1. BELIEVERS are Victors over Sin, the most formidable Adversary of their Souls; this bore the Sway in their Hearts, before Conversion it exercised Rule and Dominion over them; it subjected them to the Maledictions of the Law, and exposed them to the Anger of God, as in themselves; that is it which rendered them deserving of eternal Death: But this cruel Enemy is conquered, condemned and destroyed.

(1.) THEY are Conquerors over Sin as a usurping Tyrant, its destructive Reign in their Hearts is taken away by omnipotent Grace, the Spirit of God dethrones it in Regeneration; it is true, the Being of it is continued in Believers, till Death; but it is deprived of its reigning Power, for Grace reigns in the Soul in Opposition to Sin; that *as Sin hath reigned unto Death, even so might Grace reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord; nor will it ever regain that Power which before it possessed, how violently soever it may rage and swell; so long as the Saints are under Grace they are secure from the Reign of Sin, which is the evident Import of these Words; Sin Shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace* (Rom. 6:14.).

(2.) THEY are above the Reach of its condemning Power: Hence, says the Apostle, *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;* from this they are redeemed by Christ's Blood, and until that loses its Virtue, or becomes of little Worth in God's Account, the Saints

shall be secured from all Condemnation and Curse; which it never will do: *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us* (Gal. 3:13.).

(3.) THEY are raised above all Danger of lying under the Consequences of Sin after Death; something of which you have heard Since Sin itself is expiated there is no ground to fear its fatal Effects for Justification from it secures from all the penal Evils that attend it; as appears by these Words, *being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him* (Rom. 5:10.). Divine Anger is not poured down upon any but for Sin, those therefore to whom it is not imputed, have an eternal Security from God's Displeasure.

2. THE Saints have Victory over Death by Christ; they are not exempted from its Stroke, but must submit unto it. Persons of the greatest Usefulness in the Church, when they have done their Generation-Work, must lie down in the silent Dust; *our Fathers, where are they, and the Prophets, do they live for ever* (Zechariah.) But, blessed be God, Death hath lost its Terror, 'tis deprived of its Sting, it cannot draw after it any hurtful Consequences, which when the Believer views by Faith, he is not terrified at its nearest Approach; no melancholy Apprehensions arise in his Mind, nor would he have this Enemy slacken its Pace, and delay to give the fatal Blow. Thus doth he bespeak this King of Terrors: I am sensible 'tis in vain to think of withstanding thy Arrest, I am certain that my Soul must be rent asunder from my Body, and enter into an unknown World, and that my fleshly Tabernacle must be dissolved and crumbled into Dust; the Thought of which strikes me with no manner of Dread, for I am comfortably persuaded, that I shall only die to eternally live in the immediate Presence of my heavenly Father and gracious Redeemer, which is a Happiness that infinitely exceeds my most extended Ideas; and that my Body shall certainly be delivered from thy Power, be raised immortal, and never feel the Weight of thy cold Hand any more. I therefore welcome thee as my Friend, and wish not thy Departure: The chillness of my Blood, the lowness of my Pulse, and dimness of my Eyes, are not in the least disagreeable to me. He looks upon this Enemy Death with a pleasant Countenance, and joyfully receives it with open Arms. To see a Believer thus depart, is, in my Opinion, the most glorious Prospect that can be beheld on this side Eternity.

3. The People of God are Conquerors over the Grave the Earth Is to be a Receptacle for the Bodies of the Saints till the Time of the Resurrection.

Hence *Job* says, *I know that thou wilt bring me to Death, and to the House appointed for all living* (Job. 30:23.). But they shall be raised from thence by the almighty Power of God; their Dust is securely kept by the watchful Eye of God upon it, he will collect its *scattered* Particles, and frame their Bodies spiritual and immortal, make them capable of eternal Duration; the Lord will *change this vile Body that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to subdue all Things to himself* (Php. 3:21.). Then will Death be swallowed up in Victory. Thus it appears that the Saints are Conquerors over all their spiritual Adversaries, and have sufficient Reason to triumph in the View of Death.

2dly, THIS Victory is not obtained by them, but it is the free Gift of God; which is very evident from these Things.

1. GOD'S Will to remit Sin is voluntary, free, and sovereign; it was not influenced by any external Motive, his Determination to forgive the Offenses of his People arises wholly from his good Pleasure, nothing in them Induces him to it; neither is the divine Will moved to this gracious Act by Christ's Death. God did not first will that his Son should die, and then resolve to pardon Sin; but, or, the contrary, he first determined not to impute Sin to his Elect, and then fixed upon the Death of Christ as the only Way in which the Honour of his Law, and the Glory of his Justice might be secured in their Discharge; divine Favour is not the Effect, but the Cause of Christ's Suffering for us, as he himself hath taught us; *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life* (Joh. 3:16.).

2. It was infinite Love that gave Christ for us, our Forgiveness is the Purchase of a Redeemer's Blood; taken in that View it is an Act of Justice; *whom God hath let forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time his Righteousness:*

That he might be just, i.e. appear to be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:25, 26.). It is also an Act of free, rich, and glorious Grace, the Price that is paid for our Redemption is so far from being incompatible with the Freeness of it, that it is a greater Illustration thereof than if we had been pardoned without any Satisfaction by a Surety, because free Love provided the Sponsor, and paid the Debt for us. It is a

Commendation of divine Goodness towards us, *in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us* (Rom. 5: 8.). To us our Salvation is altogether as free as if both Law and Justice had been wholly neglected in the Affair. In Christ *we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of God's Grace* (Eph. 1: 7.).

3. GOD justifies us in a Way of free Grace; *being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life* (Tit. 3: 7.), the Righteousness of Christ is our Title to everlasting Life, 'tis that only can secure us from the second Death. This is the free Gift of God to us, and is an Instance of infinite Love; *God justifies us freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus:* (Rom. 3:24)

4. HEAVEN and eternal Glory is his gracious Donation; we are wholly unable to do anything which may procure us a Right to future Happiness, if we must be kept from Heaven till we recommend our Persons to the divine Regard by the Observance of the Law, we shall never come there. The Crown of Glory designed for the Saints is not won by them, but freely given to them. *As Death is the Wages of Sin so eternal Life is the Gift, χάρισμα*, the free Gift of God, *through the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 6:23.), the Saints will live and reign with him for ever, as Conquerors over Sin, Death, and the Grave; but not by Virtue of what they have done: All their Felicity springs merely from unmerited Goodness. Hence are those Words of our Lord, *Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom* (Luk. 12:32.)

Fifthly, *WE have this Conquest through Christ, he only fought our Battle, and slew our Enemies.* As this Victory is a free Gift of immense Favour, it is the Purchase of Blood, the way in which Christ obtained it is really surprising.

1. He took Sin upon him, all the Sins of all the Elect of God were amassed together, and laid upon him, *all we like Sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all* (Isa. 53: 6.). In himself he was pure and innocent, free from any Stain or Pollution; *he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* (1Pe. 2:22.); that of all things was most hateful to him, and yet, in order to condemn, conquer, and destroy it, he must bear it. This was a Weight which would have sunk an Angel into the lower Hell, Christ alone could stand under, and carry it into an eternal Oblivion.

2. In him Sin was *condemned, for what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh* (Rom. 8: 3.). The whole Curse demerited by it, was inflicted on it in the Believers Surety; the fierce Threatenings of the Law are pardoned, not in vain though Sinners are pardoned, for they were all poured down upon Christ, as bearing the Guilt of his People. Oh! amazing indeed! that the most holy and blessed Person, he from whom all Blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal flow, should be made Sin and a Curse.

3. HE bore the Wrath of God against Sin; What a Cup of Anger must the Sins of the Elect fill up! This was put into Christ's Hand by his Father, he readily received it, and freely drank it. God acted towards Christ as one chargeable with Guilt, having his People's upon him; Sin could not be imputed to him without his undergoing the whole Penalty demerited by it: As God did not withhold his Son from suffering for the Guilty, he did not make him any Abatement of what Law or Justice might have demanded of the Persons in whose Place and Room he stood; *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all* (Rom. 8:32.). The Father withdrew from him when on the Cross, which caused him to say, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* (Psa. 22: 1.)? The thick Cloud of our Sins interposed between God and Christ, and hid his smiling Countenance from him; God smote and wounded him with the Sword of Sin-avenging Justice; *awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, smite the Shepherd* (Zec. 8: 7.), was the awful Language of God. Christ suffered from the Hands of Men and Devils, but infinitely more from the Hand of his Father; *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief* (Isa. 53:10.); his inconceivable Wrath flowed into the Soul of Christ, and most deeply affected him.

4. HE submitted to Death, the painful and ignominious Death of the Cross: Hence the Apostle speaks of it in this emphatical manner, *he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross*. Sin subjected us to Death, according to the Law, and therefore it was necessary that Christ, in making Satisfaction for our Offenses, should suffer this Part of the Penalty due thereto.

5. CHRIST was laid in the Grave, his Body was committed to the Ground; *he made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich, in his Death* (Isa. 53: 9.); but it was preserved from Corruption there; *his Soul was not left in Hell, nor did this Holy One see Corruption* (Psa. 16:10.). He who

had a proper Right to Heaven, was for a time shut up in the dark Confines of the Earth, and encompassed with Dust. 'Tis true, it was not for a long Continuance, because it was impossible he should be retained under the Power of Death.

WE have taken a short View of Christ in his Sufferings, or as submitting to the Enemies which he undertook to conquer. Let us now behold him in his Triumph over them all.

1st, HE rose from the dead as a complete Victory over Sin, Death, and the Grave. By dying he was the Death of Sin, and overcame Satan that had the executive Power of it; had he not fully satisfied for the Sins of his People, he would have been held by the Bands of Death; but God being perfectly reconciled, and having no farther Demand to make, dispatched a Messenger of Justice from Heaven to honorably set free the imprisoned Body of Jesus: A shining Seraph descends at the Command of God, and rolls away the Stone from the Mouth of the Sepulchre in which our Lord was interred (Mat. 28: 2.). An evident Proof was this, that he had finished our Redemption. As the Battle he sought was none of his own, but his People's, the Victory he has gained is theirs; they were considered in him in his triumphant Resurrection from the Dead, *they were raised up together* (Eph. 2: 6.), and are as secure from a Charge of Sin and everlasting Death as Christ himself is, who as he is raised from the Dead, dieth no more, Death *hath no more Dominion over him* (Rom. 6: 9.). And because he lives, the Saints shall live also.

2nd, HE is ascended in Triumph to Heaven, *having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a Shew of them openly, and triumphed over them* (Col. 2:25.). Satan and all the infernal Spirits were led captive by him in his Ascension to Glory, *thou hast led Captivity captive*, and this as the Representative of his People. So that they may be assured of a perfect Deliverance from Sin, and that Satan cannot destroy them; *as a roaring Lion he walketh about seeking whom he may devour* (1Pe. 5: 8.); but we may depend upon it, that he will never be permitted to devour those on whose Account Christ engaged with, and conquered him.

3rd, CHRIST sits at the Right Hand of God: *When he had by himself purged away our Sins, he for ever sat down at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high* (Heb. 1: 3.). The Father thus glorified the Son upon his completing the Work that he undertook. And this Honor is conferred upon him as the Head of his Saints, for *they are raised up together, and made to*

sit together in heavenly Places, in Christ (Eph. 2: 6.). He is gone to Heaven as their *Forerunner*, and they shall as certainly follow him as they are now set down in him; 'tis his Will that they should, nor can the Father in Justice deny it; *Father, I will that they also who thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me for thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World* (Joh. 17:24.). Thus it is evident, that the Believers Conquest over Sin, Death, and the Grave, was obtained by Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, *WE are under the greatest Obligation to praise God for this Victory which may include these Things.*

1. AN hearty Acknowledgment that we were utterly unable to conquer these our potent Enemies. It was absolutely out of our Power to defend ourselves from the fatal Consequences of Sin, that would have involved us into the blackest Horror and Despair, and have drew down upon us the infinite Anger of God. Nor were we capable to withstand and conquer Death, that terrible Adversary. Unless we are sensible of our Inability to succor ourselves, the Victory we enjoy will not be properly valued by us, we shall not ascribe that Glory to God for it, which it demands at our Hand.

2. THAT we were as unworthy of God's giving us this Victory, as we are unable to obtain for ourselves we deserve nothing but Wrath from God, because our Hearts are impure, full of Sin and Enmity to him; our Conduct is disagreeable to his Law, we have been guilty of many open and direct Breaches of it; in no Action are we perfectly conformable to it, *in many things we offend all* (Jam. 3: 2.). If therefore he should treat us according to our Demerit, we must eternally lie under his awful but righteous Vengeance.

3. TO admire and adore his free Love, which gives us this Victory. God is resolved upon the Honour of his Grace, he will not suffer its Glory to be lessened or eclipsed, his grand Design in saving Sinners, is to exalt it to the highest Pitch; it is *to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace* (Eph. 1: 5.). Nor will he ever raise a Soul to Heaven who will not readily allow it to be an Act of unmerited Goodness, all boasting is as effectually prevented in his People, as their Happiness is eternally secured.

4. TO readily allow that the Whole of this Victory is from God. The Design was formed by him in his everlasting Counsels, and the Method of

gaining it is entirely his Contrivance; no Creature could ever have thought of the Way in which it is accomplished, his Power was exerted to effect it; all created Strength would have proved infinitely unequal to it. To imagine a Creature might contribute to it, Is a base Detraction from divine Honour.

5. To live as those who have a true Sense of the Conquest obtained, which is to act to the Glory of God, who saved us when sinking into eternal Ruin, delivered us out of the Hands of our Enemies, and placed us far above their Reach, we are certainly under *Obligation, whether we live to the Lord, or whether we die to die to the Lord* (Rom. 14: 8.). This is the Judgment which we ought to form, that *if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them* (2Co. 5:14, 15.).

Lastly. SINCE Christ is the Person Who wrought this Victory for us, let him share in our Praises; Can the Saints refuse him this Honour? when they consider what a Load of Guilt he bore, and dolorous Sufferings he went through; that he was made Sin and a Curse, lay under his Father's Vengeance, and suffered Death for them; I say, Can they refuse him this Honor? Surely, no.

I beg leave to observe here, that the Person whose Death occasioned this Discourse, discovered a just Sense of his own Unworthiness, and Christ's great Goodness. In his last Affliction, a few Days before his Departure, he said to me, and a Friend who went with me to visit him, *That he had sometimes thought he could endure any Sufferings for Christ, or Death it self; but that he found his Heart to be deceitful above all things. That under sharp Pains he could not forbear to complain, yet, says he, not of God, but to God.* Under the exquisite Pain that attended him, as I am informed, many sweet Expressions dropt from him, such as these:

It is appointed for Men once to die, but what is Death, or the Sufferings of this Life, to the Torments of Hell, blessed be God, for Christ, I am delivered from. At other Times he expressed himself thus: *What are the Afflictions that I bear, to the Sufferings of my dear Redeemer?* and declared the Steadiness of his Faith in God, as his God, to his Daughter, in these Words: *God has been a God and Father to me all my Days, and I am satisfied he will be a God and Father to you and yours.*

IT has been observed by some Friends among whom he used to exercise his Gift in Prayer, that of late *he has improved in Fervency, and Spirituality in that religious Duty.*

I MAKE no doubt but that as he is removed from the Church Militant on Earth, he is taken to the Church Triumphant in Heaven, and is now perpetually engaged in the Celebration of the Redeemer's Praise, with the rest of the Saints above who thus express their Gratitude to him for Redemption from Sin. *Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*



FOOTNOTES

- ^{ft1} Haec ex Ose, 13, 14. petita sunt, & quidem ex Versione 70. Cure inversione Vocum, *νῆχος* & *χέντρον* 70 sic, *πί δίχη σου*, etc. sensu eodem qui hic est, verbis paululum mutatis. Metaphora est, sive a stimulis, quibus aguntur boves; vel potius ab Aculeis Vesparum aut similium Bestiarum, quibus si demas Aculeum, sunt illae quidem, sed nocere non possunt, *Vid. Poli synopsis*, in loc.
- ^{ft2} Peccatum per legem irritatur, & fit magis peccans; non culpa Legis, quae peccatum prohibet, arguit, damnat; fed. culpa Naturae vitiosae, quae majore impetu fertur in vetitum: Sicut Equus effrenis magis exultat & est refractarius quo magis constringitur Lupatis. *Pare.* in loc.