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THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE

The Doctrines of the Imputation of Sin to Christ and the Imputation of His Righteousness to His People: Clearly Stated, Explained, and Improved

by John Brine

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*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 26

THE DOCTRINES OF THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO CHRIST, AND THE IMPUTATION OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO HIS PEOPLE: CLEARLY STATED, EXPLAINED, AND IMPROVED,

**IN A SERMON PREACHED TO THE SOCIETY,
WHO SUPPORT THE WEDNESDAY EVENING- LECTURE,
IN GREAT-EAST-CHEAP. DECEMBER 29TH, 1756.**

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2CO. 5:21.

**For He hath made Him to be Sin for us; who knew no Sin: That we
might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.**

IN Consequence of our Apostacy from God, the Depravation of our Nature, thereupon, and of that personal Guilt, which we have contracted: We cannot, according to the Tenor of the Law, be admitted to Fellowship with our Maker either here, or hereafter, without Satisfaction for our Violation of it, as through the Corruption of our Nature we desire it not. Of which important Doctrine the Apostle treats, in some of the preceding Verses. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their Trespasses to them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation, or, the Gospel of Peace*, which Christ gave Commission to his Apostles and Ministers to preach. In the Words of my Text, we are informed, how this Reconciliation was effected and brought about. I suppose, that every intelligent Reader will easily observe, that they consist of three distinct Branches — Christ *knew no Sin* — *He hath made Him to*

be Sin for us — That we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.
I shall consider the Words in the Order I have now mentioned them.

I. Christ knew no Sin. Sometimes, Sin is put for our natural Depravity. Thus it is to be understood, in several Verses of the seventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*: *But Sin, that it might appear Sin, working Death in me, by that which is good, that Sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful* (Rom. 7:13.). *Now then it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me* (ver, 17.). The Apostle means the same Thing, by Sin, by *Evil*, by *the Law of Sin*, and by *the Flesh*. viz. That corrupt Fountain, Principle, or Spring of Action, from which all our criminal Acts proceed. Again, Sin designs illegal Acts: *Whosoever committeth Sin, transgresseth also the Law; for Sin is the Transgression of the Law* (1Jo. 4: 4.). In this Definition of Sin criminal Actions are intended. Christ knew no Sin, in either Sense mentioned, neither as a Principle, nor Act. Knowledge, sometimes means Approbation: *The Lord knoweth the Way of the Righteous*. The Import of which is, he approves thereof. In this Sense the Blessed Jesus knew no Sin. It was the Object of his utmost and invariable Detestation. *He loved Righteousness, and hated Wickedness* (Psa. 45: 7.). And, by Knowledge, Experience is meant. Thus I think we are to understand it, in these Words: *For I know, that in me, (that is, in my Flesh) dwelleth no good thing* (Rom. 7:18.). The Apostle expresses his Experience by the Phrase *I know*, in this Part of the Verse, as he does by the Phrase *I find*, in the following Branch of it. The Holy Jesus knew no Sin, in this Sense. He had not the least Experience of Evil in him, For, *He was harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners* (Heb. 7:26.). *A Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot* (1Pe. 1:19.). No moral Taint or Imperfection attended him: And his Conduct was absolutely perfect. *He did no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth* (Chap. 11:21.).

I would offer to Consideration three Particulars, to show, that it was impossible, that Christ should know Sin, in either Sense now mentioned.

1. His miraculous Conception in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin. Christ not being conceived in a natural, but supernatural Manner, he did not partake of our natural Corruption. It was impossible he should, because he was the supernatural Production of the holy Spirit. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee: Therefore also, that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee* (Luk. 1:35.). This was an absolutely new Thing, the like was never before, nor ever will

be. *Behold a new Thing do I create, a woman shall compass a Man, i.e. a male Child by Conception, through the Agency of the divine Spirit. To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given.* This was plainly a *new Creation*. The human Nature of our Lord being produced by the Exertion of the Power of the Spirit of God, no moral Taint or Impunity could attend it. For, the holy Spirit could not give Subsistence unto as unholy Nature.

2. The human Nature of Christ was replete with all the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit. *The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him* (Isa. 61: 1.). And the Father *gave not the Spirit by measure unto him*. The Super-addition of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit unto the Purity of Christ's Nature, rendered it impossible that he should know sin. He having all the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit in their utmost Plenitude and Perfection, superadded unto the Purity of his Nature, nothing of Evil could possibly take Place in him: Such as the holy Spirit formed him, in the Virgin's Womb, such he infallibly preserved him, by his continual Presence with him, in the Fulness of all his Gifts and Graces.

3. The human nature of Christ hath its Subsistence in his Divine Person. That Individuum of our Nature which was miraculously produced by the Power of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God took into a personal Union with himself. He assumed it to be his *own* in a *peculiar* Manner, that it might be at his Disposal, and always under the Direction of his divine Will. The human Will, and the divine Will of our Savior are, and eternally will be distinct; but his Will as Man is in absolute Subjection to, and in all Instances, acts under the Direction of his divine Will. And, therefore, it is not possible that he should ever know Sin. Moral evil can never take place in a Nature which is ineffably united with the Person of the Son of God.

These Things clearly evince the Falsehood of the *Abomination* of the *Socinians*, who *impiously* imagine, that Christ might have sinned, and, consequently, that the Design of our Salvation by him might have been entirely ruined. Than which, nothing more false and dishonorable to God, can depraved Reason devise. We grant, that the Will of the most holy Creature, is in itself mutable, and, therefore, if left unto itself, it may make an unfit and unwise Choice: But, since the human Nature of Christ is the Workmanship of the Holy Spirit, and is replenished with all his supernatural Gifts and Graces, and also is in Union with the eternal Son of God, and, therefore, his human Will acts in all Things under the Direction of his divine Will; it is absolutely impossible that his human Will, at any Time, or in any Instance, should make an unfit and unwise Choice. The

supernatural production of our Lord, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, is a clear Proof of the Purity of his Nature, in his Formation. And the superaddition of his Gifts and Graces, and the Subsistence of that holy Nature, in the Person of the Son of God, certainly raise it above a Possibility of Defilement and unfit Acting, for evermore.

I would make two Observations on these Particulars, before I proceed farther.

(1) *Adam* was not a Head to Christ. Our blessed Lord was not a Member of him, included in him, nor represented by him, in his public Capacity. He was the Representative of all his natural Descendants; but his Headship was not, nor could be of larger Extent; the holy Jesus not being so, he did represent him. The *first* Man could not be a Head to *the second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven*. It would be the highest Incongruity imaginable to conceive, that *Adam* was a Head to one who is so much his Superior in all Respects In Gifts, Graces, and in Nearness of Union with God. It was not possible that he, who is personally united with the eternal Son of God, should be a Member of, and be represented by *Adam*. And, therefore, our Lord had no Concern in his Guilt, as a Member of his. Which is the Case of all his natural Descendants. Original Guilt becomes theirs, in Consequence of their Relation to *Adam*, as a Representative to them. For which Reason it is imputed to them. It is not the divine Act of the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin that makes it ours; but because it is ours, in Consequence of our Relation to him as a Head, therefore it is imputed to us.

(2) Christ was not, nor could become Subject of the natural Consequence of *Adam's* first Sin By which Consequence, I understand, the Depravation of our Nature. That immediately followed, in *Adam*, as the natural Effect of his Transgression. And, it takes Place in us, because his Act of Offence was ours, though not committed by us; but by him; as our Representative. That Act of Sin being legally ours, we share with him, in the natural Consequence of it: Or, we derive Depravity from him, on Account of becoming guilty with him. This sad Effect does not follow upon the Imputation of his Sin, as the Cause thereof; but It follows upon his Sin being *legally*, ours, he acting therein, as our Representative Head, and no otherwise. Now Christ not being concerned in original Guilt, by Virtue of Union with him, as a Head, the natural Consequence of that Guilt could not take Place in him, as it does in us, by Reason it is ours, as we are Members of him. Thus the holy Jesus was separate from Sinners, and it

was not possible, that he should participate with them, in that which is the natural Consequence of Sin, *viz.* Moral Defilement and Impurity. Unless the human Nature of our blessed Lord had been thus *infallibly* preserved from all moral Evil, both in Principle and Act, our whole Salvation would have been uncertain and precarious. For, if the holy Jesus had been under a Possibility of Defilement, and of acting illegally, in any Instance, the Design of our Salvation by him might possibly have been defeated, to the eternal Reproach of the Perfections of God, and the everlasting Ruin of the Church. The Thought of which must surely be shocking to every pious Mind! That which Christ knew not, nor could know, he was made.

II. *He hath made him to be Sin for us.* There are three Things to be considered in this important Subject: *Whose Act this was — The Act itself — And, on whose Account, or, for whom Christ was made Sin. For us.*

1. This was not the Act of any Creature, angelic or human: but the Act of the divine Father. *We pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be Sin for us.* i.e. He to whom the Apostle prays the *Corinthians* to be reconciled, made him to be Sin for us. It would have been daring and impious Insolence, in any Creature, to will that the Son of God should be made Sin. God only had a Right to resolve upon it. and he alone could place it to his Account. This was the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom, and the Determination of his *sovereign* Pleasure, In forming the Plan of our Reconciliation; he willed not to impute our Trespasses to us, and decreed to impute them unto Christ, in order to his making Atonement for them. And according unto this his sovereign Decree: *He laid on him, or made to meet in him, the Iniquities of us all.* The Foundation of this Procedure was in federal Agreement between the Father and Christ. Which is clearly expressed in a blessed divine Context by the inspired Writer to the *Hebrews*: *Wherefore, when he cometh into the World, he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not; but a Body hast thou prepared me. In Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices for Sin thou hadst no Pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and Offering, and burnt Offerings, and Offerings for Sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst Pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law: Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy Will O God; he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are Sanctified, through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.* (Heb. 10: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.)

In these Words it evidently appears, that it was the Will of the Father, that Christ should become an Offering for Sin; unto which he freely and fully consented. This Paction, or federal Agreement, was the Ground on which the Father made him to be Sin for us. And, therefore, wonderful as it is, there is not the least Injustice therein.

The divine Decree, to impute Sin to Christ, was an Act of *absolute* Sovereignty, and asore from the *mere* Pleasure of God, with a View to the Glory of his Perfections, in our Remission and Salvation. But the Act *itself*, of imputing our Guilt to him, hath for its Foundation, the free and full Consent of Christ to bear it, in compliance with the Will of the Father that he should. So that the Charge of our Crimes to him, comports with Justice, and no Injury was done to Christ in that Act. The Sovereignty of the Decree of the Imputation of Sin to him is a most clear Proof that God only could make him to be Sin for us. For, if it had been possible to any created Mind, to have devised this Method of the Expiation of Sin, which it was not, no Creature could have been invested with a Right to will and move for the Imputation of it unto the innocent Jesus. As the Contrivance of this *adorable* Transaction was proper to infinite Wisdom: So it was *peculiar* to divine Sovereignty to resolve upon it. This Act, therefore, of making Christ to be Sin for us, was God's own, and not the Act of any Creature whatsoever.

2. The Act of making him to be Sin: Or how he was made Sin for us, is to be considered. I would do this negatively, and positively.

(1.) Negatively. It was not *inherently*: That was absolutely impossible. For, that would have been contrary to the infinite Purity of God, and ruinous to his Design of our Salvation by Christ. Besides, as has been before shown, the miraculous Conception of our Lord, and the Super-addition of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit unto the Purity of his Nature, and the Subsistence of his human Nature, in his divine Person, rendered it impossible that any moral Taint, or Impurity, should ever take Place in him. This Act, therefore, of making him to be Sin, effected no internal Change in him. His Nature remained pure and spotless notwithstanding. And all his Actions corresponded with the sinless Perfection of his Nature.

(2.) I am to show in a positive Sense, how Christ was made Sin. And He was made Sin in the same manner, as we are made the Righteousness of God in Him. Which is *imputatively*. *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord*

imputeth Righteousness without Works. Imputation is, *reckoning accounting or placing to Account*, and *esteeming thereupon*. The Act of Imputation, therefore, whether, of Sin, or Righteousness, makes no internal Change in the Object of the Act. For it is not a transient Act; but it is an inward Act of the Mind, which cannot produce a physical Change, in the Object upon whom it passes. And, consequently, the Imputation of Sin to Christ, was not, nor could be productive of any internal Change in him. Notwithstanding the placing to his Account, in the divine Mind, our Guilt, or criminal Actions, he remained, innocent, pure, and spotless in himself. This one thing being duly attended unto, will enable us to answer various of the trifling Objections, which are raised against the Doctrine of the Imputation of our Sins to him, beyond any solid Reply. Some have objected, that if Sin itself was imputed to Christ, he must have been defiled by it. But that is a great Mistake: For Sin, *as imputed*, defiles not. If it did, the Imputation of it, would be impossible with God, not only with respect to Christ; but also, Sinners themselves; because infinite Purity, cannot put forth any Act which would render the Object of that Act morally impure. If the Imputation of Sin to the guilty Creature does not pollute him, which is a certain Truth: How should the Imputation of it to the Holy Jesus, defile him? Imputation is not *Transfusion*. In the latter a Person becomes the Subject of that which is transfused. But in the former, no one becomes the Subject of that which is imputed, by *the Act of Imputation*. And therefore, though the Transfusion of Sin, if that could be, which it cannot, would necessarily defile: The Imputation of it, does not pollute the Object of that Act. And, consequently, the Imputation of Sin to the Blessed Jesus did not, nor could pollute his holy Nature.

This Doctrine contains no false, or mistaken Idea in it, on the Part of the Father, who imputed Sin to Christ; nor on the Part of Christ, to whom it was imputed. Not on the Part of the Father; for, he did not consider our criminal Actions, which he placed to the Account of Christ, as his Acts, or perpetrated by him; but as our Acts, or committed by us: So that his Judgment in this Affair was according to Truth and Fact. Nor, does this Doctrine on the Part of Christ, include any mistaken Conception in it: For, it does not suppose, that he had any Consciousness of the Perpetration of those criminal Actions, which were imputed to him: Or, that under the Charge of them to him, he considered and esteemed them Acts, which he himself had committed. Wherefore, this Doctrine is attended with no dangerous Consequence, relating to Christ, nor is any Thing contrary to Truth, supposed therein, respecting Sin, which he was made for us.

Besides, if Guilt was not charged on Christ, his Sufferings could not be of a penal nature. For, Penalty, is suffering under a Charge of Offence, and without a just Imputation of Guilt, Punishment cannot, in Equity be inflicted, on any Subject. It is a most unrighteous thing to punish any one considered, as innocent. And, therefore, if it was not possible with God, to impute Sin to the innocent Jesus, neither could he inflict Punishment on him. And, if Christ did not endure *proper* Punishment, his Sufferings were not, nor could be satisfactory to the Law, and Justice of God for our Sins. And it is in vain to hope for Salvation, through his Sufferings and Death. Of such Necessity and Importance, is the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ.

3. He was made Sin *for us*. Not for all the Individuals of Mankind. The latter Branch of the Text interprets this. Christ was made Sin for those, and only those, who are made the Righteousness of God in him.

Now as Men *universally* are not made the Righteousness of God in Christ: So he was not made Sin for Men *universally*, The Extent of there two Things is exactly the same. Such, who remain dead in Sin, and go out of this World under the Dominion and Power of it, surely none can think are made the Righteousness of God in Christ; and there is no Reason to conceive, that he was made Sin for any of them. He bore the Guilt of no others than those to whom he is a Head, who are his Body, and for whom he became a Surety. For, that was the Foundation on which Sin was imputed to him: And, therefore, the Sins of such Persons only were imputed to him, who are related to him as Members. They are *the Church which he loved, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing* (Eph. 5:27.). The End of his being made Sin for us, was,

III. *That we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* The Things to be considered in this Branch of my Subject are the following Righteousness — That this is the Righteousness of God How we are made the Righteousness of God And our being made the Righteousness of God in Christ.

1. I would show what Righteousness is. And it consists of two distinct Branches.

(1) Purity of Nature. The Lord *requires Truth in the inward Part*. The Law extends to the Mind. All its Dispositions and Acts must be perfectly holy.

The eternal Rule of Righteousness allows of no internal Impurity, any more than it does of external unholy Acts. All vain Imaginations, all disorderly Thoughts, all irregular Desires and all evil Tendencies, in the Affections, are condemned by it. Righteousness, therefore, includes in it Holiness of Heart, and such Holiness as is answerable to the Requirement of the Law, *viz.* absolutely perfect and sinless.

(2) Obedience to all the Precepts of the Law, in Conduct, is the other Branch of Righteousness. If any Act is done which the Law prohibits, or if any Defect and Imperfection attends those Actions, which it prescribes, Righteousness is wanting. For, if there is not a complete Conformity to the Law, in Heart and Life, or in all Acts, internal and external, both with Respect to the Matter and Manner of those Acts, the Lawgiver must necessarily, if his Judgment is according to Truth, esteem that Obedience imperfect, and not answerable to the Rule of Action. And, therefore, not such as will justify in his Sight. The Holiness of Christ's Nature, and his sinless Obedience in Life, are the two essential Branches of that Righteousness which is required in the Law: And both are equally necessary unto our being constituted righteous in him; who is *the Lord our Righteousness*.

2. That Righteousness, which we are made, is the Righteousness of God.

(1) This may be understood of God the Father. For, this Righteousness is the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom. How guilty Men should be just with God, no created Understanding could determine. None but God. himself could resolve how this should be. And it is the Effect of his sovereign Goodwill and Pleasure Christ's Headship to us: Our Relation to him as Members: His Subjection to the Covenant of Works on our Account, are Effects of the Love of God to us, and the Result of his gracious Decree, concerning us. Besides, the Father accepts of this Righteousness for us, and graciously imputes it unto us. And, therefore, this Righteousness is his free Gift. For which Reason it is called *the Gift of Righteousness*.

(2) Christ, whose this Righteousness is, he as truly and properly God. He is *the mighty God* (Isa. 9: 6.). *Over all, God blessed for ever* (Rom. 9: 5.). *In the Form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God* (Php. 2: 6.). He who is our Righteousness, is Jehovah. This is therefore the Righteousness of a divine Person; but not his *divine* Righteousness. The human Nature of Christ is the immediate Subject of it. For, it is the

Holiness and Obedience of that Nature, unto the Law, under which, as Man, he was made. As his human Nature hath its Subsistence in his divine Person; it is the Righteousness of God, as his Blood is the Blood of God. The Dignity of his Person is the Ground and Measure of the Merit and Value of both; his Person is infinite in Dignity, and that gives infinite Worth and Merit to his Obedience. And, therefore, it is properly deserving of all that Grace and Glory, which are and will be communicated to the Elect of God, even unto Eternity. And it is through this Righteousness that Grace will reign unto eternal Life. This is the Righteousness of the Mediator; but it is not his mediatorial Righteousness. For, that comprises the full Execution and faithful Discharge of the whole Will of God in his mediatorial Capacity, which is of far longer Extent than the Requirements of the Covenant of Works from us. This is that perfect Holiness and sinless Obedience, which that Covenant demands of us. Hence it is evident that though this Righteousness is included in his mediatorial Righteousness, yet it is not that Righteousness itself. These Things clear the Doctrine of the imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, from several Objections which are brought against it.

3. The Act of making us Righteousness, is to be considered. This is not *inherently*, but *imputatively*. *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works* (Rom. 4: 5.). It is not the Transfusion of Christ's Righteousness into us For that is impossible. We do not become the Subjects of it. As he did not become the Subject of Sin, by being made Sin for us: So we do not become the Subjects of Righteousness, by being made the Righteousness of God in him. Sin which Christ was made was not inherent in him: And Righteousness which we are made, is not inherent in us. Sin is ours subjectively, and not Christ's. And Righteousness is his subjectively, and not ours. The Imputation of Sin to him, effected no internal Change in him: Nor does the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, produce any internal Change in us. A due Consideration of the Nature of the Act of Imputation, will enable us to see this clearly. Imputation is an internal Act of the Mind, whether it be of Sin or Righteousness, and, therefore, it cannot be productive of any inherent Change in the Object upon whom it passes. As Christ was not made sinful, by the Imputation of our Sins to him: So we are not made holy, or internally righteous, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. For, as the Imputation of Sin to him did not defile him: So the Imputation of Righteousness to us does not sanctify us. The Reason of which is clear, Imputation is not a Transfusion of that which is

imputed, whether it be Sin or Righteousness; but it is reckoning, accounting, or placing to Account, and esteeming thereupon, as was before observed. The Object of this Act, therefore, must still be inherently the same as before, notwithstanding that Act passing on him, because it is not a transient; but an internal Act, which cannot produce a physical Change, in its Object. It is certainly true, that as God makes Christ Righteousness to us: So he also makes him Sanctification unto us; but not in the same Way. He makes him Righteousness to us, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to our Persons: He makes him Sanctification to us, by a Conveyance of Grace from him, into our Souls. So that his Grace, which is conveyed into our Hearts from him, becomes ours subjectively; but his Righteousness, which is imputed to us, does not so become ours. It is still in him, as its proper Subject, and not in us. And in the divine Imputation of this Righteousness to us, it is not supposed, that God accounts it our personal Righteousness, or wrought out by us; but it is freely granted, and constantly asserted, that he esteems it, as it really is Christ's Righteousness, or wrought out by him: Nor, is It thought, that God considers this Righteousness as ours subjectively, or inherent in us; but that he reckons it to be the Righteousness of Christ subjectively, as it truly is. He accounts it ours, no otherwise than by free Gift, and gracious Imputation. And, therefore, this Doctrine contains in It nothing absurd, or any false and mistaken Conception, concerning God, Christ, or us.

4. It is in Christ that we are made the Righteousness of God:

(1.) We are in Christ: Or a Union between him and us subsists. The Act of Election terminated on our Persons in him. For we were chosen in him. In that gracious Decree, God willed him to be a Head to the Church, and appointed the Church to be his Body: Which Act of the divine Will, constituted a real Union between Christ, and the Church. And, the everlasting Covenant was made with him, considered as the Church's Head, which the *Assembly of Divines* well express: *The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, as Head, and with the Elect in him, as his Seed.* And, therefore, all the Blessings promised and granted, in that Covenant, were given to us in him. *We were blessed with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places in Christ* (Eph. 1: 3.). And that Grace according to which, we are saved and called with an holy Calling, *was given us in Christ, before the World began* (2Ti. 1: 9.). Which necessarily supposes the Subsistence of a real Union between Christ, as Head, and us, as Members of him.

(2.) This federal, or as some have called it, this *Fountain-Union*, is the Foundation of the Imputation of our Guilt to Christ and of the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. Because, we are *mystically* one with him, our Sin was imputed to him, and for that Reason, his Righteousness is imputed to us. Because, we were federally, *in the first Adam*, as a Head to us, therefore, is his Act of Disobedience, charged on us: *And*, because we were federally in the *second Adam*, as a Head to us, therefore, is his Obedience placed to our Account. And as we were in *Adam prior* to the Imputation of his Offence to us: So we were in Christ *prior* to the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. I lament, I greatly lament, that some even among ourselves, seem to suppose, (though I think they have no ill-meaning) that the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, is prior to any real Union with him, which Is a great Mistake. They do this lest they should give Countenance, to what has been called *Antinomianism*, viz. *Union with Christ from Everlasting*. But the Truth is, a Denial of this everlasting federal Union, between Christ and his People, leaves no Ground for the Imputation of their Sins to him, nor, the Imputation of his Righteousness to them. The divine Decree to impute our Sins to Christ, and to impute his Righteousness to us, was an Act of *mere* Sovereignty; but the Acts of the Imputation of our Sin to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, proceed on a fit and just Ground, which God in infinite Wisdom, fixed on, and that is a mystical Union between him and us, whereby it became proper and condecant, that he should bear our Guilt, and that his Obedience should be reckoned, or imputed to us. So that, the Act of Imputation, in neither Instance, is to be considered, as *merely* sovereign; but as righteous and just. And, therefore, a *real Union* between Christ and us must have subsisted, antecedent to the Imputation of our Sin to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to us.

Three Observations will close this Discourse.

Observ 1. *We ought to adore the Wisdom, Purity, Sovereignty, and Grace of God, which are herein discovered.* What a Display of divine Wisdom is there in these Things! They are the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery: His hidden Wisdom. That Mystery which was hid in God.* No created Mind, how *capacious soever* could possibly have resolved how our Guilt might be expiated, fully atoned for, and our Persons constituted righteous: The Law *magnified*, and every divine Perfection shine forth, in its brighter Lustre, in our certain and complete Salvation. Upon a due

Consideration of the Constitution of Christ's Person: The transferring of our Guilt to him: His Subjection to the Covenant of Works: His Obedience to it, and the infinite Merit of his Obedience, arising from the infinite Dignity of his Person, and that just Ground, whereon, his Obedience becomes ours, and, therefore, is imputed to us: Surely, we can't but say as the Apostle does, in a Way of holy Adoration: *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out.* Again, the Purity of God is clearly seen herein. Sin is not connived at, or spared: Nor, are any Allowances made for our moral Imperfections and Defects, in the Way of our Pardon and Salvation. Neither are our Persons justified, without a Righteousness perfectly commensurate to the extensive Requirements of the Law. And all spiritual Blessings are communicated to us on such a Foundation as is honorable to divine Justice, as well as it is to the Praise of the Glory of divine Grace. The infinite Holiness of God hath not, in any Thing, nor can have so illustrious a Shine, as it hath in making Christ to be sin for us, and in making us the Righteousness of God in him.

Besides, the Sovereignty of God most manifestly appears in this whole Procedure. The supernatural Conception of Christ as Man, that he might not have any evil Taint, was the sovereign Appointment of God. The Ordination of his human Nature, unto a Subsistence in his divine Person, was a sovereign Decree. Yea, it was one of the highest Acts of Sovereignty that God ever did, or will put forth. The Decree, that the holy Spirit, in all his supernatural Gifts and Graces should reside in the human Nature of Christ, was a sovereign one. The Determination, that a Nature so dignified, and raised above the Condition of a mere Creature, by an ineffable Union with the eternal Son of God, should bear Sin, and become subject to the Covenant of Works, on our Account, was entirely owing to the sovereign Pleasure of God. And it was divine Sovereignty which fixed on the Persons whose Guilt he should bear, and for whom he should obey the Law. Than which, nothing can be more evident. For, both are the Effects of absolute Pleasure. And, therefore, it was free with God, to resolve on whose Account he should be made Sin: And to whom he should be made Righteousness. There are such Acts of Favour, as none have a Right to claim, and, consequently, God was at full Liberty to determine by a sovereign Act of his Will, whose Guilt he should bear, and who should be made righteous in him. Thus divine Sovereignty is the Basis of both these Things; thereupon they entirely rest, and into it they must be absolutely resolved, as the original Cause thereof.

Farther, the Grace of God shines most gloriously in these Things. Infinite Love to our Persons is discovered in the Transfer of our Guilt from us, and in the Imputation of it to Christ, in order to his suffering the Penalty it demerits, that we might be pardoned and saved. That Redemption which we have through him, the Forgiveness of Sins, is according to the Riches of divine Grace. And the Decree, that he should come under the Covenant of Works, on our Account, and obey it for us, that we might be constituted righteous: justified in the Sight of God, and *be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life*, is an amazing Purpose of Kindness and Mercy.

Observ. 2. *These important Truths are a most solid Ground of strong Consolation.* It is the Will of God, that the Heirs of Promise, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before them, might enjoy such Consolation. Sin, in its Guilt, being transferred from us, and imputed to Christ, and atoned for by him, is a firm Foundation of spiritual Peace and Joy. *We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. by whom we have now received the Atonement* (Rom. 5:10.). Permit me to say it, (I shall express no ill Meaning) let not the Saints be afraid of Sin, *in its Guilt*. I do not say, fear not to commit Sin, no, God forbid, that they ought to fear above all Things. But fear not Sin *in the Guilt of it*. They sometimes have very terrifying Apprehensions, under a Sense of Guilt contracted, and are afraid to hope for Pardon, on Account of the heinous Nature, and the Aggravations of their Guilt. But they have no just Reason for it. Because Christ hath *finished their Transgression, and made an End of their Sin*, as to its Guilt. And, therefore, they have no Cause to fear it, in its Guilt, Christ having put it away by the Sacrifice of himself. We ought eternally to fear Sin, in the *Love, Prevalence and Power* of it, for, therein, it will certainly be ruinous for evermore. But Terrors of Conscience, occasioned by the Guilt of Sin, in those who are freed from the *Dominion and Power* of it, are groundless, because that is fully expiated, by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, who was made Sin. Again, Believers being made the Righteousness of God in Christ, they have just Cause of Triumph. And may say with holy Exultation: *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again* (Rom. 8:34, 35.). Whose Resurrection is a full Proof of their Justification. For, *He was delivered for their Offences: And raised again for their Justification* (Rom. 4:25.). The Righteousness, which they are made, is an everlasting one, and everlasting Salvation is inseparably connected with it. Their joyful language, even under the deeper Sense of their Guilt, Imperfections and Unworthiness, in

themselves, should be this: *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, because he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, and covered me with the Robe of Righteousness.* (Isa. 61:10.).

Observ. 3. These are Doctrines according to Godliness. It is a very gross Mistake to imagine, that these Principles are calculated to encourage Negligence, Sloth, or Evil. On the contrary, they are calculated to promote an Abhorrence of Sin, and a cordial Approbation of Righteousness, and true Holiness. What stronger Motive to forsake Sin can be thought of than Christ's bearing it, and his suffering the Penalty which it demerits? Wherein, divine Indignation against our Crimes was discovered to the *utmost*. And as his being made Righteousness to us, does not *dissolve* our Obligation to Obedience: So it is a most powerful Incitement unto it, in a Way of Gratitude for that eminent Favour. That our corrupt Nature may abuse these, and other evangelical Truths, is granted. As it may also abuse the Law. For, *Sin will take Occasion by the Commandment to work in us all Manner of Concupiscence.* But the Law is not *culpable*, and *blame-worthy*, on that Account. And the same evil Principle may abuse the Gospel, and turn the Doctrine of the Grace of God, into *Lasciviousness*. But the Gospel is not *culpable*, nor ought any *Blame* to be charged on it, for that Reason. Our Opinion of the Nature and Tendency of Doctrines, is not by any Means to be formed from that Use, which our depraved Minds are inclined to make thereof. If that may be allowed, we shall be led to entertain *unworthy* Conceptions of *legal* as well as of evangelical Truths. For, there is nothing, which the Flesh in us, will not pervert and abuse, unto the Gratification of its cursed Desires. If we have a *real* Acquaintance with the Nature of these most *precious* Truths, and act under their *genuine* Influence, we shall *deny all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and shall live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present World* (Tit. 2:12.).

