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## THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE

### The Imputation of Christ's active Obedience to his People, and the Merit of it Demonstrated:

*by John Brine*

*(London: John Ward, 1759)*

*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 29

## THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE TO HIS PEOPLE, AND THE MERIT OF IT DEMONSTRATED,

**IN A SERMON, PREACHED TO THE SOCIETY,  
WHO SUPPORT THE WEDNESDAY EVENING-LECTURE,  
IN GREAT - EAST - CHEAP DECEMBER 27, 1758.**

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### ROM. 4: 6.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works.

IN my annual Discourse, at this Time, two Years since, I endeavored to state, explain, and improve the important Doctrines of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People. My Intention in the Choice of these Words, for the Subject of the present Discourse, is to defend the precious Truth of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, or active Obedience; and to prove the Blessedness of those, unto whom it is imputed, or their Title to Felicity, in Consequence thereof.

In my former Discourse, I shewed what Righteousness is, and the Nature of Imputation; and, therefore, it is not necessary to enlarge on either, in this Discourse.

The Place to which the Apostle in the Text refers is Psal. 32: 1. 2, *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is covered. Blessed is the*

*Man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile.* It is proper to explain the Phrase, *without Works*: Or, in what Sense, that Righteousness, which is imputed, is *without Works*. To say, as some do, that it is without perfect Works; but it consists of good Works, which are done by us, cannot be the Import of the Phrase. For, it cannot with any Propriety and Truth be said, that, our Righteousness, or holy Obedience, is without Works, because it consists of Acts performed by us, which are holy, though not perfectly so. And to affirm, as some others do, that Works wrought before Regeneration, are intended; but not those good Works, which Believers perform, are to be excluded, is liable to the same Objection as the former Sense is. For, it cannot with Truth be said, that the holy Obedience of the Saints, is *without Works*, because it consists of those good Works, unto which they *are created of God in Christ Jesus*. Nor can the Meaning be, *Though Works are not yet present; but a Mind free from Guile.* i.e. *Sincere in the Study or Desire of Piety*, as Grotius will have it<sup>f1</sup>. For, though a Course of future Obedience is not included therein, yet, it implies Love to God, Trust in him, an Abhorrence of Sin, and a Desire to obey and honor the Lord, which are holy internal Acts, and are properly denominated good Works. This, therefore, is not a Righteousness *without Works*, because it consists of internal Acts, which are good and holy, though not inclusive of a Course of Obedience, in our future Conduct. Consequently, this Sense is not to be admitted any more than either of the former. Wherefore, we must conclude, that the true Meaning of the Phrase, *without Works*, is this, *Without any Works of ours, either, before, or after Regeneration*. That the Righteousness of another, and not our own is imputed to us for our Justification. The Phrase is not capable of any other Construction. The Righteousness which is imputed, is Christ's. ***Two Things in general, are expressed in the Text.***

**I.** God imputeth Righteousness, without Works, to some.

**II.** They are blessed: Or have a Right to Happiness, on that Ground.

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***Before I enter upon the Demonstration of the two grand Points, contained, in my Text,*** I would advance, some Propositions, relating to both, which I apprehend, will very much conduce unto a right Understanding of them, and enable us to refute some Objections, which are raised against them. Some deny the Imputation of the active

Obedience of Christ who allow the Truth of Satisfaction for Sin by his Death. Others, though I hope not many, who grant the Truth of the Imputation of his Righteousness, yet, they deny the *real* and *proper* Merit of it.

***The Propositions, which I would advance, are the following.***

**Prop. 1.** *Christ's sufferings, and his Obedience are not the same; but distinct.*

**Prop. 2.** *Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law is not Righteousness.*

**Prop. 3.** *Righteousness is a Conformity to the Law, in the Disposition of the Mind, and Acts internal and external, which agree therewith.*

**Prop. 4.** *Pardon of Sin does not constitute a Delinquent justice.*

**Prop. 5.** *The infinite Dignity of the Person of Christ puts an immense Value, on his Obedience, as it does, on his Death. If he did not merit by his Obedience, he did not merit by his Death. I shall afterwards, somewhat enlarge on this Point.*

There Propositions seem to me clear and indisputable. Now I will endeavor to demonstrate both the important Truths expressed in my Text.

***I. God imputeth Righteousness without Works to some.***

That is to say, the active Obedience of Christ, without any of their own Works, for their Justification. ***I shall propose various Arguments to Consideration, in order to demonstrate this Point.***

**Arg. 1.** The Gospel reveals a Righteousness for the Justification of Sinners. *For therein is revealed the Righteousness of God, from Faith to Faith* (Rom. 1:17.). *But now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets* (Rom. 3:21). That this Righteousness is for the Justification of Sinners, it is most clear, from the Context *Now we know, that what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, who are under the Law: That every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight: For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin* (V. 19, 20.). That which cannot possibly be by the Deeds of the Law, certainly is effected, by that Righteousness of God,

without the Law, which is manifested; being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. And that is the Justification of Sinners. Now as the Sufferings of Christ, and his Obedience, are not the same; but distinct. According to the First Proposition. And as his Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness, as the second Proposition expresses. This Righteousness cannot be understood of his Death; but it must intend his Conformity to the Law, in his Disposition and Conduct: Or his active Obedience, according to the third Proposition. And therefore, his active Obedience is imputed to his People, in order to their Justification, in the Sight of God. I will venture to affirm, that this Argument cannot be everted, without proving that Christ's Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, is his Righteousness: Or that his Righteousness, is not revealed in the Gospel, in order to the Justification of Sinners.

**Arg. 2.** Redemption and Righteousness are not the same, but distinct Benefits. The latter is not included in the former, nor the former in the latter. Redemption is the Remission of our Sins. *In whom we have Redemption, through his Blood the Forgiveness of Sins.* Christ's suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, which is the procuring Cause of Pardon, was not Righteousness. Nor, is a Discharge from Guilt, which is the Effect of Christ's Death, as a meritorious Cause, Righteousness. Now, as neither the Cause of Pardon, nor Pardon itself is Righteousness; that must be a Benefit distinct from Redemption, and not included therein. It would be as agreeable to Truth, to say, that Christ's Obedience to the Law's Precepts, was suffering its penal Sanction, as it would be, to affirm, that his enduring the Penalty of the Law, was that Obedience, which it required; which I suppose no one will maintain. And therefore, Redemption and Righteousness are Benefits properly distinct, though inseparably connected. And, the Apostle most clearly represents them, as such, in his Enumeration of those Blessings, which Christ is of God made to us, *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption* (1Co. 1:30.). Consequently, they ought not to be blended, or confounded together; but considered, as Things really distinct; which it is most evident they are in their own Nature. For, as Obedience includes not suffering Penalty: So suffering Punishment includes not Righteousness.

**Arg. 3.** Christ is *made Righteousness unto us.* From what hath been argued above, it is apparent, that in his being made Redemption he is not made Righteousness. For, as the former is not inclusive of the latter.

Christ in being made the former, he is not made the latter. He is made the latter unto us, as well as the former. And therefore, his active Obedience, and not his Death, is that which is of God imputed to us, as our justifying Righteousness. If his suffering the penal Sanction of the *Law*, was not Righteousness, it cannot with any Propriety be said, he is made Righteousness to us, by placing his Sufferings and Death to our Account But his Conformity, or Obedience to the *Law*, was his Righteousness, and not his suffering Death; and therefore, he is not made Righteousness to us, by reckoning his Death, or what he suffered, unto us; but by imputing that to us, which was his Righteousness, *viz.* His Obedience to the preceptive Part of the Law As an innocent Person cannot be made Sin, any otherwise than by the Sin of others being charged to him: So, such who are guilty, can no otherwise be made righteous, through, or by another than by the Imputation of his Righteousness to them. Now Non-imputation of Sin is a negative Act, the Imputation of Righteousness is a positive one. And the Act negative, does not include the Act positive. Whence it follows, according to Proposition the Fourth, that the Pardon, or Non-imputation of Sin, does not constitute us Just. For, that negative Act respects Sin only, and not Righteousness, and therefore, it cannot make us righteous. Consequently if Christ, is made Righteousness to us, it must be by the Imputation of his Righteousness, or active Obedience to us, which was the Point to be proved.

**Arg. 4.** The Apostle opposes Christ's Obedience, and not his Death to the Disobedience of Adam. *But not as the Offence so also is the free Gift. For if through the Offence of one many be dead; much more the Grace of God, and the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many. And not as it ,was by one that sinned so is the Gift: For the Judgment was by one to Condemnation: But the free Gift is of many Offences unto Justification. For if by one Man's Offence Death reigned by one: Much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the Offence of one, Judgement came upon all Men to Condemnation: Even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life. For as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners: So by the Obedience of one shall many be made Righteous* (Rom. 5:15, 16, 17, 18, 19.).

The important Truth, in whose Demonstration I am now engaged, is abundantly established in this Context. The Things which are therein

opposed, are Opposites, or direct Contraries. Adam's Offence, and Christ's Death are not Opposites. To be made Sinners, and to be pardoned, are not Opposites. To be obnoxious to Death on Account of Sin, and to be freed from that Obnoxiousness, by Remission, are not Opposites. Besides, Christ's Death, was not his Righteousness, as has been before observed; but his Conformity to the Commands of the Law, was his Righteousness: Or, his active Obedience, and not his Suffering the Penalty of the *Law*, was his Righteousness. *The free Gift, the Gift by Grace*, is not the Death of Christ; but his Righteousness, or active Obedience. For it is the *Gift of Righteousness*, and it is expressly declared to be his Obedience. The direct Contrary of Adam's Disobedience, which Christ's Sufferings and Death were not. From hence, therefore, it is manifest, that the active Obedience of Christ, is that which the Apostle opposes to Adam's Offence and not his Death. Consequently, his active Obedience is the Cause of our Justification, as Adam's Offence was the Cause of our Condemnation.

**Arg. 5.** The Apostle desired to have the Righteousness of Christ. *And be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith* ((Php. 3: 9.)). The Apostle's own Righteousness, which he renounced, was his Obedience to the Law's Precepts. And. that Righteousness, which he opposes to his own, and desired to have, must be Christ's absolutely perfect Obedience, which he yielded to the Law. As it was Righteousness properly understood, though imperfect which he renounced: So It was Righteousness in a proper Sense, which he was desirous of having, and that must be Christ's Obedience, and not his Death. The Reason is clear, which is this: The Suffering of a penal Death, is no Part of that Righteousness, which is required, in the Law. If it was, an innocent Creature, could not fulfil the Righteousness of the *Law*, without suffering Death, as a penal Evil. The Supposition whereof, is so apparently absurd, that I conceive, none will admit of it. If, therefore, that Righteousness, which the Apostle desired to have, was the Righteousness of Christ, it must be his active Obedience, and not his Death; because that is no Part of Righteousness required by the Law.

**Arg. 6.** The Saints are clothed with a Robe of Righteousness, as well as stripped of their filthy Garments. *Take away the filthy Garments from him. And I will clothe thee with change of Raiment* (Zec. 3: 4.). The former, is the Removal of Guilt, or Pardon of Sin. The latter, is another Thing distinct therefrom. It is investing with a Garment, that is pure and spotless.

Such the Righteousness of Christ, only is, for Spots and Imperfections, attend the best Obedience, even of those, who are most holy here. This Change of Raiment, therefore, cannot be understood of the personal Obedience of the Saints. But it must be interpreted of the sinless Obedience of Christ. Which is comparable to *fine Linen, clean and white, and is the Righteousness of Saints* (Rev. 19: 8.). Wherein they appear, with Acceptance, before God. This is the solid Ground of their spiritual Joy and Exultation. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God: For he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation: He hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness* Isa. 61:10.). The penal Sufferings of Christ, are not a Righteousness, that is most clear; because, suffering Penalty, is no Part of that Righteousness, which is required, in the Law. If, therefore, that Robe of Righteousness, wherewith Believers are covered, is the Righteousness of Christ, and not their own, it must intend his active Obedience to the Law, and not his suffering the Penalty of it. For, that which is not included, in that Righteousness, which the Law requires, cannot be a Robe of Righteousness. Death penal, is no Branch of that Righteousness. It is no other, than the Evil of Suffering, which the Law threatens, for the want of Righteousness. And, therefore, Christ's active Obedience most certainly is, that Robe of Righteousness, where-with, the People of God, are clothed. And, wherein, they are justified, or accounted righteous, in his Sight.

**Arg. 7.** Christ came under the Law for our Sakes, in the Character of our Surety; and, therefore, he obeyed it for us, as well as suffered its Curse, on our Accounts. *By so much was Jesus made the Surety of a better Testament* (Heb. 7:22.). His Sponson, or Undertaking, in the Covenant of Grace, was the Ground of his coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. And, without that, he had never been in Subjection to the first Covenant. *He was made of a Woman, and made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law* (Gal. 4: 4, 5.). By a sovereign Appointment of God, with his own Consent, as our Surety, he was made under the Law, in order to redeem us from it. Now what he acted, in that Character, as well as what he suffered, therein, was for us, and is placed to our Account. Since, therefore, he yielded Obedience to the Law, in the Character of our Surety, as he suffered its Curse, in that Character, his active Obedience, was for us, no less than his Death. And it is placed to our Account, or imputed to us. The Reason is the same, for the Imputation of what he did, as for the Imputation of what he suffered, *viz.* His coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, as our Surety. And,



therefore, his fulfilling the Righteousness of the Law, was for us, and is reckoned to us, as his Suffering its penal Sanction was for us, and is reckoned unto us. Consequently, his active Obedience is ours, and was yielded by him for us, with a View to our Justification.

**Arg. 8.** We are made righteous by the Obedience of Christ. *As by the Disobedience of one many were made Sinners: So by the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* The Things spoken of are Opposites, and their Effects are direct Contraries. Now, the Opposite of Disobedience, is not suffering Punishment, or a penal Death. But Obedience to the Commands of the Law is the Opposite of Disobedience. And, therefore, it is not Christ's Sufferings and Death, which the Apostle opposes to Adam's Disobedience; but his active Obedience to the Law's Precepts. The Effect of Adam's Disobedience, is Guiltiness, or we are made Sinners, *i.e.* guilty thereby. And the Effect of Christ's Obedience is the contrary to that of Adam's Disobedience, we are made righteous, or constituted such, by that, and not by what he suffered for us. Hence, we must conclude, that the active Obedience of our Blessed Savior, is imputed to us, in order to our Justification, before God.

**Arg. 9.** Lastly, It is evident from the Nature of Things, that Christ's active Obedience, and not his Death, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness. I argue thus: In our Justification, God, either considers us righteous, or not so. The latter is most plainly absurd. For, to justify, is to reckon, or declare a Person righteous; that is to say, not destitute of that Righteousness, which that Law requires, unto which Respect is had, in the Act of Justification. And, therefore, God cannot justify us, without considering us righteous. Now, if God, in our Justification, does consider us righteous: Either we are righteous, or we are not. If in Fact, we are not righteous: Then, God in justifying us, forms not his Judgment concerning us, according to Truth; which, with him, is absolutely impossible. Both these Things, consequently, must be true, *viz.* That God considers us righteous, and that we are made so. Christ's Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness. We cannot be made righteous, by that which is not Righteousness. Nor can God, account us righteous, on the Foundation of that which is not Righteousness. The Death of Christ properly atoned for our Guilt, and procured our Pardon; but it did not, it could not supply our want of Obedience, or Conformity to the Law's Precepts. It is impossible his Death should supply the want of that, which it doth not include; it does not include Righteousness, for which Reason it

cannot supply our Want of Righteousness. And, therefore, it is not by his Death, but by his active Obedience, that we are constituted just. Besides, according to the Fourth Proposition, Pardon of Sin does not constitute a Delinquent just. Remission of Sin, or a Discharge from Guilt, is obtained by the Death of Christ; but as Pardon does not include Righteousness, it cannot make us righteous. And, if Pardon does not make us righteous, God cannot esteem us righteous, on the Ground of Pardon. In Justification, he does reckon us righteous. Righteousness, therefore, must be imputed to us. And, as Christ's Death was not Righteousness, it cannot be that Righteousness, which is imputed to us, and, whereby we are made righteous, it undoubtedly, is his active Obedience, or Conformity to the Precepts of the Law. These Arguments, I apprehend, most clearly demonstrate the important Truth, of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, or active Obedience, and the Necessity of it, in order to our justification.

*Socinus* strenuously contends against this Doctrine, and it is a Point, whereon he hath much labored. He argues thus: *Making Satisfaction for our Sins, and obeying the Law for us, cannot consist together: One, or the other is vain and unnecessary. Because, Satisfaction, by suffering Punishment, manifestly shews, that he for whom Satisfaction is made, is not reckoned innocent. For where Innocence is, that is no Offence, there is no Punishment. And to satisfy by doing of those Things which another ought to have done, really causes, that he for whom they are done, should be accounted innocent, and be esteemed, never to have committed any Offence. And, that one or the other is vain and unnecessary, this demonstrates: What, if any one is reckoned to have done all those Things which he ought to have done, all his Sins are already blotted out. For how can he be thought to have sinned even in the least, or be accounted guilty, who hath done all Things, which he ought to have done. Likewise, if any one should be reckoned to have suffered the whole Punishment due to his Sins, his Sins truly are blotted out*<sup>f2</sup>. *Socinus* believed neither the one, nor the other. This Reasoning of his, may at first View seem plausible. Some who have been most remote from his Opinion, concerning the Doctrine of Satisfaction, have been so far missed by it, as to conclude, that there is no Necessity of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience, in order to our Justification; that his Sufferings and Death are sufficient to that End. But there is nothing solid in it. Which thus appears: We are under Obligation to obey the Law, as Creatures: And we are under Obligation to suffer its Curse, as Sinners. Adam, in his innocent State, was under the former

Obligation only: His Violation of the Law, brought him under the latter Obligation. His coming under the latter, did not dissolve the former Obligation: Or his Sin did not free him from an Obligation to Obedience, that still remained upon him. Now, Christ's satisfying the Law, by obeying its Precepts, only respects us as Creatures, from whom Obedience is due, as a Condition of Life, and not as Sinners; and, therefore, his Obedience, cannot free us from that Obligation, under which we are, as we are guilty. And, his satisfying the Law, by suffering its Penalty, regards us not as Creatures; but as Criminals and therefore, it frees us not from that Obligation, under which we are, as Creatures simply considered, *viz.* Of yielding Obedience to the Law, in order to the Enjoyment of Happiness. Hereby, the Consistency, and the Necessity, of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings for us, are clearly evinced. Our being acquitted of Guilt, by Virtue of his Death, does not suppose, that we have obeyed the Law, or have the Innocency of Righteousness. This only is supposed therein, that we are freed from an Obligation to suffer that Punishment, which is demerited by our Guilt. And our being constituted, and reckoned righteous, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, does not suppose, that we have not transgressed the Law, or that God, upon that Imputation of his Righteousness reckons us, not to have sinned. That can be true on no other Principle than this, *viz.* It being the Divine Will to impute the Obedience of Christ to us for our Justification, God is regardless of that Part which we ourselves act; or that he does not take it into his Consideration, which is most: certainly false, as it is most manifestly absurd.

**II. *Those to whom the Righteousness of Christ is imputed are blessed: Or have a Title to Felicity in Consequence thereof. That being justified by his Grace, we might be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life*** (Tit. 3: 7.). The Reason whereof is: ***The Righteousness, or active Obedience of Christ merits Grace and Glory: Or, those Blessings which are bestowed upon us in Time, and which we shall enjoy, in Eternity.*** The Terms Merit, meriting, and merited, are not expressly mentioned in Scripture. But that is no just Objection against the Use of them. The Term Incarnation is not used in Scripture. But what is intended by it, is therein declared, *viz.* That the Son of God was *made Flesh, made of Woman*: He, therefore, was incarnate, or became Man, by the Assumption of human Nature. The Term Satisfaction is not used in Scripture, about the Sufferings and Death of Christ. But the Ideas included therein, are very dearly expressed. And this Phrase, or Expression, the personal Union of

the Divine and Human Natures in Christ, is not expressly mentioned in Scripture. But the important Truth, intended, by that Phrase, is therein taught. And other Instances of the like Nature might be produced.

*I hope ever to contend for the Merit of a dear Redeemer, in his Obedience, as well as in his Sufferings. if the former was not meritorious, the latter was not. Merit is two-fold. There is Merit of Paction; and there is Merit of Condignity.*

**First**, There is Merit of *Paction*, in Christ's Obedience. A Covenant was entered into between God the Father and our blessed Savior. In that Compact, the Father required him to do and suffer all that was necessary to the Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation of his People. Christ on his Part, engaged therein, to perform and endure all that was required of him, as our Surety. And the Father promised to him, on that Condition that he should *see his Seed*. That he should have such a Prospect of them, as would be to his utmost Satisfaction, *i.e.* Pardoned, justified, sanctified, and eternally glorified. In a Word, that he should see them, as happy, as his intense Love to their Persons, causes him, to desire they, may be. And therefore, there is no Blessing which they do, or will receive, that is not comprised in this Promise of the Father. Now, as Christ hath punctually accomplished all that he undertook in this Covenant: Or finished the Whole of that Work; which he gave him to do. From thence arises a Right to him, to claim and demand of the Father, in their Behalf, the Fulfillment of his Promises respecting them. Nor, can the Father, in Justice, fail of performing those Promises. And therefore, it is most clear, that Merit of *Paction*, attends the Obedience and Sufferings of our Redeemer. And this agrees with what the Apostle expresses in these Words: *Now to him that worketh is the Reward, not reckoned of Grace; but of Debt*. In as much as Christ hath worked, there springs from the Work which he hath done, a Right to all the Benefits, promised on that Condition. And that is what we understand by Merit, *ex Pacto*.

In order to disprove what is here pleaded for, it must be shown, either, that no Promise of eternal Life, was made to Christ, for his People, on Condition, of his Obedience and Death; or, that he did not obey and suffer as he was required.

**Secondly**. There is Merit of *Condignity*. That is *real* and *proper*. It is an *intrinsic* Worth and Value, which is intended by it. *I hope to make it evident, that Merit, in this strictly proper Sense, attends the Obedience*

*of Christ. And, that, that Merit is infinite, or answerable to the Dignity of his Person. The Requisites of Merit, thus strictly taken, are the following:* That the Work done is not due — That it is performed by Power underived. That it is absolutely perfect That it is proportionate to the Reward — And, that the Reward is due of Justice: Or, that it is Justice, which assigns the Reward to the Work done, because of that intrinsic Worth, which therein is.

**1.** Obedience to the Law was not due from Christ. The Law is here to be considered as a Covenant. Wherein Obedience is prescribed, as a proper Condition of obtaining Life, and not as a Law simply. The Will of God is, and eternally will be a Law, to Angels and Saints. But the Saints are not even now, in Subjection to the Law, as a Covenant. For, they *are not under the Law, but under Grace* (Rom. 6:14.). Christ as Man, is and ever will be in Subjection to the Divine Will. But he did not, he could not with Men come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. For, he was not *seminally in Adam*, as a *natural Descendant* of his. Nor, was *Adam* a Head and Representative to him. And, therefore, he did not, with Mankind, come within the Compass of the Covenant of Works, which was made with *Adam*, as the Head of all his natural Descendants. Besides, Christ is God, as well as Man, and the Divine Nature, and the human Nature, are united in his Person, as Mediator.

As God, he is *Lord of the Sabbath*, and of the Law itself by which the Observation of it, is enjoined. Now, though his human Nature was the immediate Subject of the Law, and of that Obedience, which he yielded unto it. That Nature being united with his Divine Person: In that Nature his Person, as Mediator, came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, and yielded Obedience unto it. Thus he who was Lord of the Law, and from whom Obedience to it, as such, was not, nor could become due, for our Sakes, came under Subjection to it, and obeyed its Precepts. The Law hath Power over a Man, yea every Man. But it could never have Power over God-Man, without a special Divine Constitution. The Obedience of Christ, therefore, who is God-man, was not due. And this is the first Requisite of *real, proper* Merit.

And it is a solid Answer, unto what *Socinus* objects, against Christ's obeying the Law for us, viz. *That Obedience was due from him; and, therefore, his Obedience could not be for us, nor can be imputed to us.* Here is a Person found, from whom Obedience to the Covenant of Works,

could not possibly become due, upon his own Account. That Obedience, therefore, was intended for us, and is graciously imputed unto us.

**2.** Our blessed Savior yielded Obedience to the Law, by Power underived. He who yields Obedience to another, by Virtue of Ability received from him, cannot be said, in a strict and proper Sense to merit of him, by the Obedience, which he performs. And, therefore, no Creature can properly merit of God. But Christ obeyed the Law, by a Power resident in his own Person, and which was not derived from another. No, not from the Father, unto whom he yielded Obedience, as a Law-giver and Judge. Not, that his human Nature, was the Subject, of any Power underived. But his Divine Person possesses infinite Power underivative. And his human Nature was supported, both in what he did and suffered for us, by that Power, which he had in himself, as God. Christ, by the infinite Power of his Divine Person, raised himself from the State of the Dead: And by that Power, he, in his human Nature, obeyed the Law, and suffered its Curse. For, it was his Power, as God, which upheld his human Nature, in its Obedience and Sufferings. And, therefore, as this Ability, in his Person, was not communicated to him, by another, in order to capacitate him, to obey and suffer, his Obedience and Sufferings, in the most strict Sense, merit of Him, viz. of God, the Father, as a Law-giver, and Judge, at whose Requirement, he obeyed the Law, and suffered Death: And this is the second Requisite of Merit properly understood. Which it is impossible should attend the Obedience of any mere Creature whatsoever. But it is most unquestionably true of the Obedience of Christ, who is both God and Man. For, the Divine and human Natures, are inestably united in his Person. And his Divine Will, and his human Will, concurred, in the Obedience, which he yielded for us, unto the Covenant of Works. For which Reason that Obedience is to be considered, as the Obedience of his Person, though his human Nature only, was the immediate Subject of it.

**3.** Our dear Redeemer was perfectly conformable to the Law. In his Nature, he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners. Without Blemish and without Spot.* For, though he partook of Flesh, he was only, *in the Likeness of sinful Flesh.* No moral Taint, or Impurity attended him. He was absolute Purity and Perfection, in his Mind. That supreme Love to God, and that benevolent Disposition towards Men, which the Law requires, possessed the Soul of the blessed Jesus, and wholly influenced him, in all his Actions. So that, his Obedience was answerable in all Respects to the Law, which he undertook to fulfill for

us. No Defect, or Imperfection, attended it, either, materially, or circumstantially. It was absolutely complete, respecting, both its Matter and Manner. For, *He did no Sin: Nor was Guile found in his Mouth. He fulfilled all Righteousness.* And was as holy, in his Heart, and Conduct, as the Law required he should be, under which he was made, on our Account. Christ *always did those Things, which please the Father.* Infinite Purity itself, can have nothing to object to him, in his Temper, or Behaviour. This is the third Requisite, which is *essentially* necessary unto a *meritorious* Obedience: For, Merit can never attend Obedience, which is not absolutely perfect.

**4.** The Obedience of Christ is proportionate to the Reward, which is promised. That Reward is the Enjoyment of infinite Good. As Sin demerits the Loss of infinite Good, by Reason of the infinite Evil, that is in Sin, *objectively* considered: So, the Obedience of our Blessed Savior merits infinite Good, because of its immense value, *subjectively*, considered. There is an Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, because it is committed against an infinite Object. And there is an infinite Worth, in the Obedience of Christ, because of the Infinity of his Person. Such as the Person of Christ is, in Dignity; such is that Obedience which he yielded to the Law, for us, in its Desert. The former is infinite, and so is the latter. No greater Good is possible to be enjoyed, by a Creature, than the Righteousness of him, who is Jehovah, in the most strict and proper Sense, deserves. If the obediential Acts, of the Son of God, have a Value in them, above the obediential Acts, of a mere Creature, on Account, of the Greatness of his Person, that Value must be infinitely greater, answerable unto the infinite Majesty and Glory of his Person. And, therefore, in his Obedience, there is not only *real*; but also immense Merit, or Desert. And no Good transcending that Merit, can be communicated unto, and be enjoyed, by those, for whom Christ obeyed the Law, and to whose Account his Obedience is placed. The Covenant of Grace contains in it, no Blessing, but what Christ properly merited, by that Obedience which he yielded to the Covenant of Works.

I humbly conceive, that it is the Design of the Apostle, to prove, that the Superiority of Christ, above *Adam*, is the Reason and Ground of the superabundant Merit of his Obedience, which he opposes to Adam's Disobedience. As Death is not merely a Consequence of Sin, but a proper Effect of it, as a procuring Cause: So, Life is not merely a Consequence of Christ's Obedience, but it is the proper Effect thereof, as a meritorious



Cause. Every Cause is an Antecedant; but every Antecedant, is not a Cause. And every Effect is a Consequence; but every Consequence is not the Effect of that, which went before it, or upon which it follows. For, one Thing may precede another, and yet not be a Cause of that which succeeds it. And one Thing may follow another, and yet not be the Effect of what went before it. This was the Intention of the Apostle, in comparing *Adam's* Disobedience, and Christ's Obedience together, to prove that *Adam's* Disobedience, was a procuring Cause of Death, it must, I think, be granted, that it is his Design, to prove, that Christ's Obedience is a proper meritorious Cause of Life.

Some Things may here very pertinently be observed, concerning *Adam* and Christ, of whom the Apostle speaks, as two Representatives.

In *Adam* there was a Fitness to be the Representative of all Mankind; because all Men were seminally in him, and were to spring from him. But there was not a Worthiness in him to stand, in that Capacity, by Reason of a Dignity, above Human, in his Person. Again, the Demerit of his Disobedience, did not arise from any Thing, in his Person; but from the Object, against whom he sinned, *viz.* God. That Demerit, therefore, was extrinsecal, or without him, and not intrinsecal, or within himself. Things are quite otherwise with Respect to Christ.

There was not only a Fitness in him to be a Representative to his People, as he is truly Man, perfectly holy, and born for, and given to them. But he being God, as well as Man, he was worthy to be a Head to the whole Number of the Elect.

Again, the Reason, or Ground of the Merit of his Obedience, is the Dignity of his Person. It arises not from the Object to whom he yielded Obedience, which the Demerit of *Adam's* Disobedience did; but from the infinite Greatness of his own Person. The Merit of Christ, therefore, was not extrinsecal, as *Adam's* Demerit was; but intrinsecal, or it arose from what he is in himself, *viz.* God, as well as Man. Infinitely, superior to *Adam*, therefore. Unto which, I apprehend, the Apostle hath Respect in these Words: *Much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ.* Two Things are clearly suggested, in the Context, *viz.* That the Obedience of Christ, may fitly stand for many, on Account of the infinite Dignity of his Person, above the Person of *Adam*, and that, for that Reason also, his Obedience, hath an intrinsic Value in it, deserving of eternal Life. This is



the fourth Requisite of Merit, strictly understood. That is to say, Merit of *Condignity*.

**5.** The Reward is due *in Justice*: Or, it is Justice which assigns the Reward to the Obedience of Christ, because of that intrinsic Worth, which is therein. It was an Act of Justice, in God, to appoint that *Adam's* Disobedience, should subject us to Death, because of the infinite Evil thereof, *objectively* considered. And it was, an Act of Justice in him to ordain, that the Obedience of Christ, should entitle us to Life; because of the infinite Worth thereof, *subjectively*, considered. The immortal Crown, of future Glory, is a *Crown of Righteousness*. And the Lord will give it, in the Character of a *righteous Judge*. Those, therefore, to whom, the active Obedience of Christ, is imputed, they most certainly, are blessed: Or have a Title to eternal Felicity, in Consequence thereof. For, that Obedience, properly merits everlasting Blessedness.

Perhaps, some weak Minds may object to this, that what is merited, is not freely given. Unto which, I answer thus: No Act of sovereign Grace, prejudices itself, or eclipses its own Glory. Now, Christ's Capacity to merit, by what he did, is founded in sovereign Grace. And it was sovereign Grace, which determined, to whom his Obedience should be imputed, in order to receive the Reward which is thereby merited. And, therefore, *Grace will reign through Righteousness, unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*



## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>ft1</sup> Etiam si Opera nondum adfint, quia in illo Psalmi Loco nulla sit Mentio Operum, sed Animi Dolo carentis, id est, sinceri in Studio Pietatis. In Loc.
- <sup>ft2</sup> Praelectiones Theologicae, Cap. 8.