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**Sermon Preached
to the Lords upon
Easter-day, at the
Communion**

John Donne





Sermon Preached to the Lords upon Easter-day, at the Communion

Author(s): Donne, John (1572-1631)

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Description: Most people who know the name “John Donne” remember the man for his poetry. During his lifetime, however, Donne had achieved fame for his sermons, and he expected they would remain his claim to fame as the centuries passed. Donne’s 1619 Easter sermon would later become one of his greatest achievements in spite of the fact that he had to give it on very short notice. At the time, King James I was ill enough that many feared for his life. When Donne delivered his sermon to the English nobility, his message about the inevitability of death fell on sympathetic ears. The sermon may remind readers of Donne’s poetry of one of the poet’s best-known sonnets, “Death Be Not Proud.”

Kathleen O’Bannon
CCEL Staff

Subjects: Christian Denominations
Protestantism
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Anglican Communion
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John Donne

Preached to the LL. upon Easter-Day, at the Communion,

The King being then dangerously sick at New-Market

"Sermon XXVII", *LXXX Sermons*.

Preached March 28, 1619.

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LXXX Sermons preached by that learned and reverend divine Iohn Donne, Dr. in Divinity, late Deane of the Cathedrall Church of S. Pauls London (London: Printed for Richard Royston, in Ivie-Lane, and Richard Marriot, 1640) 267-74.

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Psal. 89:48.

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?

At first, God gave the judgement of death upon man, when he should transgresse, absolutely, *Morte morieris*, Thou shalt surely dye: The woman in her Dialogue with the Serpent, she mollifies it, *Ne fortè moriamur*, perchance, if we eate, we may die; and then the Devill is as peremptory on the other side, *Nequaquam moriemini*, do what you will, surely you shall not die; And now God in this Text comes to his reply, *Quis est homo*, shall they not die? Give me but one instance, but one exception to this rule, *What man is hee that liveth, and shall not see death?* Let no man, no woman, no devill offer a *Ne fortè*, (perchance we may dye) much lesse a *Nequaquam*, (surely we shall not dye) except he be provided of an answer to this question, except he can give an instance against this generall, except he can produce that mans name, and history, that hath lived, and shall not see death. Wee are all conceived in close Prison; in our Mothers wombes, we are close Prisoners all; when we are borne, we are borne but to the liberty of the house; Prisoners still, though within larger walls; and then all our life is but a going out to the place of Execution, to death. Now was there ever any man seen to sleep in the Cart, between New-gate, and Tyborne? between the Prison, and the place of Execution, does any man sleep? And we sleep all the way; from the womb to the grave we are never thoroughly awake; but passe on with such dreames, and imaginations as these, I may live as well, as another, and why should I dye, rather than another? but awake, and tell me, sayes this Text, *Quis homo?* who is that other that thou talkest of? *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*

In these words, we shall first, for our generall humiliation, consider the unanswerableness of this question, There is no man that lives, and shall not see death. Secondly, we shall

see, how that modification of Eve may stand, *fortè moriemur*, how there may be a probable answer made to this question, that it is like enough, that there are some men that live, and shall not see death: And thirdly, we shall finde that truly spoken, which the Devill spake deceitfully then, we shall finde the *Nequaquam* verified, we shall finde a direct, and full answer to this question; we shall finde a man that lives, and shall not see death, our Lord, and Saviour Christ Jesus, of whom both S. *Augustine*, and S. *Hierome*, doe take this question to be principally asked, and this Text to be principally intended. Aske me this question then, of all the sons of men, generally guilty of originall sin, *Quis homo*, and I am speechlesse, I can make no answer; Aske me this question of those men, which shall be alive upon earth at the last day, when Christ comes to judgement, *Quis homo*, and I can make a probable answer; *fortè moriemur*, perchance they shall die; It is a problematicall matter, and we say nothing too peremptorily. Aske me this question without relation to originall sin, *Quis homo*, and then I will answer directly, fully, confidently, *Ecce homo*, there was a man that lived, and was not subject to death by the law, neither did he actually die so, but that he fulfilled the rest of this verse; *Eruit animam de inferno*, by his owne power, he delivered his soule from the hand of the grave. >From the first, this lesson rises, Generall doctrines must be generally delivered, All men must die: From the second, this lesson, Collaterall and unrevealed doctrines must be soberly delivered, How shall we be changed at the last day, we know not so clearly: From the third, this lesson arises, Conditionall Doctrines must be conditionally delivered, If we be dead with him, we shall be raised with him.

First then, for the generality, Those other degrees of punishment, which God inflicted upon *Adam*, and *Eve*, and in them upon us, were as absolutely, and illimitedly pronounced, as this of death, and yet we see, they are many wayes extended, or contracted; To man it was said, *In sudore vultus, In the sweat of thy browes, thou shalt eate thy bread*, and how many men never sweat, till they sweat with eating? To the woman it was said, *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*: and how many women have no desire to their husbands, how many over-rule them? Hunger, and thirst, and wearinesse, and sicknesse are denounced upon all, and yet if you ask me *Quis homo*? What is the man that hungers and thirsts not, that labours not, that sickens not? I can tell you of many, that never felt any of these; but contract the question to that one of death, *Quis homo*? What man is he that shall not taste death? And I know none. Whether we consider the Summer Solstice, when the day is sixteen houres, and the night but eight, or the Winter Solstice, when the night is sixteen houres, and the day but eight, still all is but twenty foure houres, and still the evening and the morning make but a day: The Patriarchs in the old Testament had their Summer day, long lives; we are in the Winter, short lived; but *Quis homo*? Which of them, or us come not to our night in death? If we consider violent deaths, casuall deaths, it is almost a scornfull thing to see, with what wantonnesse, and sportfulnesse, death playes with us; We have seen a man Canon proove in the time of War, and slain with his own Pistoll in the

time of peace: We have seen a man recovered after his drowning, and live to hang himself. But for that one kinde of death, which is generall, (though nothing be in truth more against nature then dissolution, and corruption, which is death) we are come to call that death, naturall death, then which, indeed, nothing is more unnaturall; The generality makes it naturall; *Moses* sayes, that Mans age is seventy, and eighty is labour and pain; ¹ and yet himselfe was more then eighty, and in a good state, and habitude when he said so. No length, no strength enables us to answer this *Quis homo? What man? &c.*

Take a flat Map, a Globe *in plano*, and here is East, and there is West, as far asunder as two points can be put: but reduce this flat Map to roundnesse, which is the true form, and then East and West touch one another, and are all one: So consider mans life aright, to be a Circle, *Pulvis es, & in pulverem reverteris, Dust thou art, and to dust thou must return;* *Nudus egressus, Nudus revertar,* ² *Naked I came, and naked I must go;* In this, the circle, the two points meet, the womb and the grave are but one point, they make but one station, there is but a step from that to this. This brought in that custome amongst the Greek Emperours, that ever at the day of their Coronation, they were presented with severall sorts of Marble, that they might then bespeak their Tombe. And this brought in that Custome into the Primitive Church, that they called the Martyrs dayes, wherein they suffered, *Natalitia Martyrum*, their birth dayes; birth, and death is all one.

Their death was a birth to them into another life, into the glory of God; It ended one Circle, and created another; for immortality, and eternity is a Circle too; not a Circle where two points meet, but a Circle made at once; This life is a Circle, made with a Compassee, that passes from point to point; That life is a Circle stamped with a print, an endlesse, and perfect Circle, as soone as it begins. Of this Circle, the Mathematician is our great and good God; The other Circle we make up our selves; we bring the Cradle, and Grave together by a course of nature. Every man does; *Mi Gheber*, sayes the Originall; It is not *Ishe*, which is the first name of man, in the Scriptures, and signifies nothing but a *sound*, a voyce, a word; a Musicall ayre dyes, and evaporates, what wonder if man, that is but *Ishe*, a *sound*, dye too? It is not *Adam*, which is another name of man, and signifies nothing but *red earth*; Let it be earth red with blood, (with that murder which we have done upon our selves) let it be earth red with blushing, (so the word is used in the Originall) with a conscience of our own infirmity, what wonder if man, that is but *Adam*, guilty of this self-murder in himself, guilty of this in-borne frailty in himself, dye too? It is not *Enos*, which is also a third name of man, and signifies nothing but a *wretched and miserable creature*; what wonder if man, that is but earth, that is a burden to his Neighbours, to his friends, to his kindred, to himselfe, to whom all others, and to whom himself desires death, what wonder if he dye? But this question is

1 [Psal. 90:10.](#)

2 [Iob 1.](#)

framed upon none of these names; Not *Ishe*, not *Adam*, not *Enos*; but it is *Mi Gheber*, *Quis vir*; which is the word alwayes signifying a man accomplished in all excellencies, a man accompanied with all advantages; fame, and good opinion justly conceived, keeps him from being *Ishe*, a meere sound, standing onely upon popular acclamation; Innocency and integrity keeps him from being *Adam*, red earth, from bleeding, or blushing at any thing hee hath done; That holy and Religious Art of Arts, which *S. Paul* professed, *That he knew how to want, and how to abound*, keeps him from being *Enos*, miserable or wretched in any fortune; Hee is *Gheber*, a great Man, and a good Man, a happy Man, and a holy Man, and yet *Mi Gheber*, *Quis homo*, this man must see death.

And therefore we will carry this question a little higher, from *Quis homo*, to *Quis deorum*, Which of the gods have not seene death? Aske it of those, who are Gods by participation of Gods power, of those of whom God saies, *Ego dixi, dii estis*, and God answers for them, and of them, and to them, *You shall dye like men*; Aske it of those gods, who are gods by imputation, whom Creatures have created, whom Men have made gods, the gods of the Heathen, and do we not know, where all these gods dyed? Sometimes divers places dispute, who hath their tombes; but do not they deny their godhead in confessing their tombes? doe they not all answer, that they cannot answer this text, *Mi Gheber*, *Quis homo*, What man, *Quis deorum*, What god of mans making hath not seen death? As *Iustin Martyr* asks that question, Why should I pray to *Apollo* or *Esculapius* for health, *Qui apud Chironem medicinam didicerunt*, when I know who taught them all that they knew? so why should I looke for Immortality from such or such a god, whose grave I finde for a witnesse, that he himselfe is dead? Nay, carry this question higher then so, from this *Quis homo*, to *quid homo*, what is there in the nature and essence of Man, free from death? The whole man is not, for the dissolution of body and soule is death. The body is not; I shall as soon finde an immortall Rose, an eternall Flower, as an immortall body. And for the Immortality of the Soule, It is safelier said to be immortall, by preservation, then immortall by nature; That God keeps it from dying, then, that it cannot dye. We magnifie God in an humble and faithfull acknowledgment of the immortality of our soules, but if we aske, *quid homo*, what is there in the nature of Man, that should keepe him from death, even in that point, the question is not easily answered.

It is every mans case then; every man dyes; and though it may perchance be but a meere Hebraisme to say, that every man shall *see death*, perchance it amounts to no more, but to that phrase, *Gustare mortem*, *To taste death*, yet thus much may be implied in it too, That as every man must dye, so every man may see, that he must dye; as it cannot be avoided, so it may be understood. A beast dyes, but he does not see death; *S. Basil* sayes, he saw an Oxe weepe for the death of his yoke-fellow;³ but *S. Basil* might mistake the occasion of that Oxes teares. Many men dye too, and yet doe not see death; The approaches of death amaze them,

3 Basil orat. de Morte.

and stupifie them; they feele no colluctation with Powers, and Principalities, upon their death bed; that is true; they feele no terrors in their consciences, no apprehensions of Judgement, upon their death bed; that is true; and this we call going away like a Lambe. But the Lambe of God had a sorrowfull sense of death; His soule was heavy unto death, and he had an apprehension, that his Father had forsaken him; And in this text, the Chalde Paraphrase expresses it thus, *Videbit Angelum mortis*, he shall see a Messenger, a forerunner, a power of Death, an executioner of Death, he shall see something with horror, though not such as shall shake his morall, or his Christian constancy.

So that this *Videbunt*, *They shall see*, implies also a *Viderunt*, they have seene, that is, they have used to see death, to observe a death in the decay of themselves, and of every creature, and of the whole Worlde. Almost fourteene hundred yeares ago, S. *Cyprian* writing against *Demetrianus*, who imputed all the warres, and deaths, and unseasonablenesses of that time, to the contempt, and irreligion of the Christians, that they were the cause of all those ils, because they would not worship their Gods, *Cyprian* imputes all those distempers to the age of the whole World; *Canos videmus in pueris*, saies hee, Wee see children borne gray-headed; *Capilli deficiunt, antequam crescant*, Their haire is changed, before it be growne. *Nec aetas in senectute desinit, sed incipit a senectute*, Wee doe not dye with age, but wee are borne old. Many of us have seene Death in our particular selves; in many of those steps, in which the morall Man expresses it; Wee have seene *Mortem infantiae, pueritiam*,⁴ The death of infancy in youth; and *Pueritiae, adolescentiam*, and the death of youth in our middle age; And at last we shall see *Mortem senectutis, mortem ipsam*, the death of age in death it selfe. But yet after that, a step farther then that Morall man went, *Mortem mortis in morte Iesu*, We shall see the death of Death it self in the death of Christ. As we could not be cloathed at first, in Paradise, till some Creatures were dead, (for we were cloathed in beasts skins) so we cannot be cloathed in Heaven, but in his garment who dyed for us.

This *Videbunt*, this future sight of Death implies a *viderunt*, they have seene, they have studied Death in every Booke, in every Creature; and it implies a *Vident*, they doe presently see death in every object, They see the houre-glasse running to the death of the houre; They see the death of some prophane thoughts in themselves, by the entrance of some Religious thought of compunction, and conversion to God; and then they see the death of that Religious thought, by an inundation of new prophane thoughts, that overflow those. As Christ sayes, that as often as wee eate the Sacramentall Bread, we should remember his Death, so as often, as we eate ordinary bread, we may remember our death;⁵ for even hunger and thirst, are diseases; they are *Mors quotidiana*,⁶ a daily death, and if they lasted long, would kill us. In

4 Seneca.

5 Bern.

6 Aug.

every object and subject, we all have, and doe, and shall see death; not to our comfort as an end of misery, not onely as such a misery in it selfe, as the Philosopher takes it to be, *Mors omnium miseriarum*, That Death is the death of all miserie, because it destroyes and dissolves our beeing; but as it is *Stipendium peccati*, *The reward of sin*; That as Solomon sayes, *Indignatio Regis nuncius mortis*,⁷ *The wrath of the King, is as a messenger of Death*, so *Mors nuncius indignationis Regis*, We see in Death a testimony, that our Heavenly King is angry; for, but for his indignation against our sinnes, we should not dye. And this death, as it is *Malum*, ill, (for if ye weigh it in the Philosophers balance, it is an annihilation of our present beeing, and if ye weigh it in the Divine Balance, it is a seale of Gods anger against sin) so this death is generall; of this, this question there is no answer, *Quis homo*, What man, &c.

We passe then from the *Morte moriemini*, to the *fortè moriemini*, from the generality and the unescapableness of death, from this question, as it admits no answer, to the *Forte moriemini*, perchance we shall dye; that is, to the question as it may admit a probable answer. Of which, we said at first, that in such questions, nothing becomes a Christian better than sobriety; to make a true difference betweene problematicall, and dogmaticall points, betweene upper buildings, and foundations, betweene collaterall doctrines, and Doctrines in the right line: for fundamentall things, *Sine haesitatione credantur*,⁸ They must be beleaved without disputing; there is no more to be done for them, but beleaving; for things that are not so, we are to weigh them in two balances, in the balance of Analogy, and in the balance of scandall: we must hold them so, as may be analogall, proportionable, agreeable to the Articles of our Faith, and we must hold them so, as our brother be not justly offended, nor scandalized by them; wee must weigh them with faith, for our own strength, and we must weigh them with charity, for others weaknesse. Certainly nothing endangers a Church more, then to draw indifferent things to be necessary; I meane of a primary necessity, of a necessity to be beleaved *De fide*, not a secondary necessity, a necessity to be performed and practised for obedience: Without doubt, the Roman Church repents now, and sees now that she should better have preserved her selfe, if they had not denied so many particular things, which were indifferently and problematically disputed before, to be had necessarily *De fide*, in the Councell of Trent.

Taking then this Text for a probleme, *Quis homo, What man lives, and shall not see Death?* we answer, It may be that those Men, whom Christ shal find upon the earth alive, at his returne to Judge the World, shall dye then, and it may be they shall but be changed, and not dye. That Christ shall judge quick and dead, is a fundamentall thing; we heare it in S. Peters Sermon, to *Cornelius* and his company,⁹ and we say it every day in the Creed, *Hee*

7 [Prov. 16:14.](#)

8 [Aug.](#)

9 [Acts 10:42.](#)

shall judge the quick and the dead. But though we doe not take the quick and the dead, as *Augustine* and *Chrysostome* doe, for the Righteous which lived in faith, and the unrighteous, which were dead in sinne, Though wee doe not take the quick and the dead, as *Ruffinus* and others doe, for the soule and the body, (He shall judge the soule, which was alwaies alive, and he shall the body, which was dead for a time) though we take the words (as becomes us best) literally, yet the letter does not conclude, but that they, whom Christ shall finde alive upon earth, shall have a present and sudden dissolution, and a present and sudden re-union of body and soul again. *Saint Paul* sayes, *Behold I shew you a mystery*; ¹⁰ Therefore it is not a cleare case, and presently, and peremptorily determined; but what is it? *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*. But whether this sleeping be spoke of death it self, and exclude that, that we shall not die, or whether this sleep be spoke of a rest in the grave, and exclude that, we shall not be buried, and remain in death, that may be a mystery still. *S. Paul* sayes too, *The dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the ayre*. ¹¹ But whether that may not still be true, that *S. Augustine* sayes, that there shall be *Mors in raptu*, An instant and sudden dis-union, and re-union of body and soul, which is death, who can tell? So on the other side, when it is said to him, in whom all we were, to *Adam, Pulvis es*, ¹² *Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return*, when it is said, *In Adam all die*, ¹³ when it is said, *Death passed upon all men, for all have sinned*, ¹⁴ Why may not all those sentences of Scripture, which imply a necessity of dying, admit that restriction, *Nisi dies judicii naturae cursum immutet*, ¹⁵ We shall all die, except those, in whom the comming of Christ shall change the course of Nature.

Consider the Scriptures then, and we shall be absolutely concluded neither way; Consider Authority, and we shall finde the Fathers for the most part one way, and the Schoole for the most part another; Take later men, and all those in the Romane Church; Then *Cajetan* thinks, that they shall not die, and *Catharin* is so peremptory, that they shall, as that he sayes of the other opinion, *Falsam esse confidenter asserimus, & contra Scripturas satis manifestas, & omnino sine ratione*; It is false, and against Scriptures, and reason, saith he; Take later men, and all those in the reformed Church; and *Calvin* sayes, *Quia aboletur prior natura, censetur species mortis, sed non migrabit anima à corpore*: *S. Paul* calls it death, because it is a destruction of the former Beeing; but it is not truly death, saith *Calvin*; and *Luther* saith,

10 1 Cor. 15:51.

11 1 Thes. 4.

12 Gen. 3:19.

13 1 Cor. 15:22.

14 Rom. 5:12.

15 Pet. Mar.

That S. Pauls purpose in that place is only to shew the suddenesse of Christs comming to Judgement, *Non autem inficiatur omnes morituros; nam dormire, est sepeliri*: But S. Paul doth not deny, but that all shall die; for that sleeping which he speaks of, is buriall; and all shall die, though all shall not be buried, saith *Luther*.

Take then that which is certain; It is certain, a judgement thou must passe; If thy close and cautelous proceeding have saved thee from all informations in the Exchequer, thy clearnesse of thy title from all Courts at Common Law, thy moderation from the Chancery, and Star-Chamber, If heighth of thy place, and Authority, have saved thee, even from the tongues of men, so that ill men dare not slander thy actions, nor good men dare not discover thy actions, no not to thy self, All those judgements, and all the judgements of the world, are but interlocutory judgements; There is a finall judgement, *In judicantes & judicatos*, against Prisoners and Judges too, where all shalbe judged again; *Datum est omne judicium*,¹⁶ All judgement is given to the Son of man, and upon all the sons of men must his judgement passe. A judgement is certain, and the uncertainty of this judgement is certain too; perchance God will put off thy judgement; thou shalt not die yet; but who knows whether God in his mercy, do put off this judgement, till these good motions which his blessed Spirit inspires into thee now, may take roote, and receive growth, and bring forth fruit, or whether he put it off, for a heavier judgement, to let thee see, by thy departing from these good motions, and returning to thy former sins, after a remorse conceived against those sins, that thou art inexcusable even to thy self, and thy condemnation is just, even to thine own conscience. So perchance God will bring this judgement upon thee now; now thou maist die; but whether God will bring that judgement upon thee now, in mercy, whilst his Graces, in his Ordinance of preaching, work some tendernesse in thee, and give thee some preparation, some fitnessse, some courage to say, *Veni Domine Iesu, Come Lord Iesu*, come quickly, come now, or whether he will come now in judgement, because all this can work no tendernesse in thee, who can tell?

Thou hearest the word of God preached, as thou hearest an Oration, with some gladnesse in thy self, if thou canst heare him, and never be moved by his Oratory; thou thinkest it a degree of wisdom, to be above perswasion; and when thou art told, that he that feares God, feares nothing else, thou thinkest thy self more valiant then so, if thou feare not God neither; Whether or why God defers, or hastens the judgement, we know not; This is certain, this all S. Pauls places collineate to, this all the Fathers, and all the Schoole, all the *Cajetans*, and all the *Catharins*, all the *Luthers*, and all the *Calvins* agree in, *A judgement must be*, and it must be *In ictu oculi, In the twinkling of an eye*, and *Fur in nocte, A thiefe in the night*. Make the question, *Quis homo?* What man is he that liveth, and shall not passe this judgement? or, what man is he that liveth, and knowes when this judgement shall be? So it is a *Nemo*

16 John 5.

scit, A question without an answer; but as it, as in the text, *Quis homo?* Who liveth, and shall not die? so it is a problematicall matter; and in such things as are problematicall, if thou love the peace of Sion, be not too inquisitive to know, nor too vehement, when thou thinkest thou doest know it.

Come then to ask this question, not problematically, (as it is contracted to them that shall live in the last dayes) nor peremptorily of man, (as he is subject to originall sin) but at large, so, as the question may include Christ himself, and then to that *Quis homo?* What man is he? We answer directly, here is the man that shall not see death; And of him principally, and literally, S. *Augustine* (as we said before) takes this question to be framed; *Vt quaeras, dictum, non ut desperes*, saith he, this question is moved, to move thee to seek out, and to have thy recourse to that man which is the Lord of Life, not to make thee despaire, that there is no such man, in whose self, and in whom, for all us, there is Redemption from death; For, sayes he, this question is an exception to that which was said before the text; which is, *Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* Consider it better, sayes the Holy Ghost, here, and it will not prove so; Man is not made in vain at first, though he doe die now; for, *Perditio tua ex te*, This death proceeds from man himself; and *Quare moriemini domus Israel? Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* God made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living;¹⁷ The Wise man sayes it, and the true God swears it, *As I live saith the Lord, I would not the death of a sinner*. God did not create man in vain then, though he die; not in vain, for since he will needs die, God receives glory even by his death, in the execution of his justice; not in vaine neither, because though he be dead, God hath provided him a Redeemer from death, in his mercy; Man is not created in vain at all; nor all men, so neare vanity as to die; for here is one man, God and Man Christ Jesus, which liveth, and shall not see death. And conformable to S. *Augustines* purpose, speaks S. *Hierome* too, *Scio quòd nullus homo carneus evadet, sed novi Deum sub velamento carnis latentem*; I know there is no man but shall die; but I know where there is a God clothed in mans flesh, and that person cannot die.

But did not Christ die then? Shall we joyne with any of those Heretiques, which brought Christ upon the stage to play a part, and say he was born, or lived, or dyed, *In phantasmate*, In apparance only, and representation; God forbid; so all men were created in vain indeed, if we had not in him a regeneration in his true death. Where is the contract between him, and his Father, that *Oportuit pati, All this Christ ought to suffer, and so enter into glory*: Is that contract void, and of none effect? Must he not die? Where is the ratification of that contract in all the Prophets? Where is *Esays Vere languores nostros tulit, Surely he hath born our sorrows; and, he made his grave with the wicked in his death*;¹⁸ Is the ratification of the

17 Sap. 1:13.

18 Esay 53:4, 9.

Prophets cancelled? Shall he not, must he not die? Where is the consummation, and the testification of all this? Where is the Gospell, *Consummatum est?* And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost? Is that fabulous? Did he not die? How stands the validity of that contract, Christ must die; the dignity of those Prophecies, Christ will die; the truth of the Gospell, Christ did die, with this answer to this question, Here is a man that liveth and shall not see death? Very well; For though Christ Jesus did truly die, so as was contracted, so as was prophecied, so as was related, yet hee did not die so, as was intended in this question, so as other naturall men do die.

For first, Christ dyed because he would dye; other men admitted to the dignity of Martyrdome, are willing to dye; but they dye by the torments of the Executioners, they cannot bid their soules goe out, and say, now I will dye. And this was Christs case: It was not only, *I lay down my life for my sheep*,¹⁹ but he sayes also, *No man can take away my soule*; And, *I have power to lay it down*; And *De facto*, he did lay it down, he did dye, before the torments could have extorted his soule from him; Many crucified men lived many dayes upon the Crosse; The thieves were alive, long after Christ was dead; and therefore Pilate wondred, that he was already dead.²⁰ His soule did not leave his body by force, but because he would, and when he would, and how he would;²¹ Thus far then first, this is an answer to this question, *Quis homo?* Christ did not die naturally, nor violently, as all others doe, but only voluntarily.

Again, the penalty of death appertaining only to them, who were derived from *Adam* by carnall, and sinfull generation, Christ Jesus being conceived miraculously of a Virgin, by the over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost, was not subject to the Law of death; and therefore in his person, it is a true answer to this *Quis homo?* Here is a man, that shall not see death, that is, he need not see death, he hath not incurred Gods displeasure, he is not involved in a general rebellion, and therefore is not involved in the generall mortality, not included in the generall penalty. He needed not have dyed by the rigour of any Law, all we must; he could not dye by the malice, or force of any Executioner, all we must; at least by natures generall Executioners, Age, and Sicknesse; And then, when out of his own pleasure, and to advance our salvation, he would dye, yet he dyed so, as that though there were a dis-union of body and soule, (which is truly death) yet there remained a Nobler, and faster union, then that of body and soule, the Hypostaticall Union of the God-head, not onely to his soule, but to his body too; so that even in his death, both parts were still, not onely inhabited by, but united to the Godhead it selfe; and in respect of that inseparable Union, we may answer to this question, *Quis homo?* Here is a man that shall not see death, that is, he shall see no

19 [John 10:15.](#)

20 [Mar. 15:44.](#)

21 August.

separation of that, which is incomparably, and incomprehensibly, a better soule than his soule, the God-head shall not be separated from his body.

But, that which is indeed the most direct, and literall answer, to this question, is, That whereas the death in this Text, is intended of such a death, as hath Dominion over us, and from which we have no power to raise our selves, we may truly, and fully answer to his *Quis homo?* here is a man, that shall never see death so, but that he shall even in the jawes, and teeth of death, and in the bowels and wombe of the grave, and in the sink, and furnace of hell it selfe, retaine an Almighty power, and an effectuall purpose, to deliver his soule from death, by a glorious, a victorious, and a Triumphant Resurrection: So it is true, Christ Jesus dyed, else none of us could live; but yet hee dyed not so, as is intended in this question; Not by the necessity of any Law, not by the violence of any Executioner, not by the separation of his best soule, (if we may so call it) the God-head, nor by such a separation of his naturall, and humane soule, as that he would not, or could not, or did not resume it againe.

If then this question had beene asked of Angels at first, *Quis Angelus?* what Angel is that, that stands, and shall not fall? though as many of those Angels, as were disposed to that answer, *Erimus similes Altissimo*, We will be like God, and stand of our selves, without any dependance upon him, did fall, yet otherwise they might have answered the question fairly, All we may stand, if we will; If this question had been asked of *Adam* in Paradise, *Quis homo?* though when he harkned to her, who had harkned to that voyce, *Eritis sicut Dii*, *You shall be as Gods*, he fell too, yet otherwise, he might have answered the question fairly so, I may live, and not dye, if I will; so, if this question be asked of us now, as the question implies the generall penalty, as it considers us onely as the sons of *Adam*, we have no other answer, but that by *Adam* sin entred upon all, and death by sin upon all; as it implies the state of them onely, whom Christ at his second comming shall finde upon earth, wee have no other answer but a modest, *non liquet*, we are not sure, whether we shall dye then, or no; wee are onely sure, it shall be so, as most conduces to our good, and Gods glory; but as the question implies us to be members of our Head, Christ Jesus, as it was a true answer in him, it is true in every one of us, adopted in him, Here is a man that liveth, and shall not see death.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, sayes *Solomon*,²² in another sense; and in this sense too, If my tongue, suggested by my heart, and by my heart rooted in faith, can say, *Non moriar, non moriar*; If I can say, (and my conscience doe not tell me, that I belye mine owne state) if I can say, That the blood of my Saviour runs in my veines, That the breath of his Spirit quickens all my purposes, that all my deaths have their Resurrection, all my sins their remorse, all my rebellions their reconciliations, I will harken no more after this question, as it is intended *de morte naturali*, of a naturall death, I know I must die that death, what care I? nor *de morte spirituali*, the death of sin, I know I doe, and shall die so;

22 [Prov. 18:21](#).

why despaire I? but I will finde out another death, *mortem raptus*, a death of rapture, and of extasie, that death which S. Paul died more then once,²³ The death which S. Gregory speaks of, *Divina contemplatio quoddam sepulchrum animae*, The contemplation of God, and heaven, is a kinde of buriall, and Sepulchre, and rest of the soule; and in this death of rapture, and extasie, in this death of the Contemplation of my interest in my Saviour, I shall finde my self, and all my sins enterred, and entombed in his wounds, and like a Lily in Paradise, out of red earth, I shall see my soule rise out of his blade, in a candor, and in an innocence, contracted there, acceptable in the sight of his Father.

Though I have been dead, in the delight of sin, so that that of S. Paul, *That a Widow that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth*,²⁴ be true of my soule, that so, *viduatur, gratiâ mortuâ*, when Christ is dead, not for the soule, but in the soule, that the soule hath no sense of Christ, *Viduatur anima*, the soul is a Widow, and no Dowager, she hath lost her husband, and hath nothing from him; yea though *I have made a Covenant with death, and have been at an agreement with hell*,²⁵ and in a vain confidence have said to my self, *that when the overflowing scourge shall passe through, it shall not come to me*, yet God shall annull that covenant; he shall bring that scourge, that is, some medicinall correction upon me, and so give me a participation of all the stripes of his son; he shall give me a sweat, that is, some horrour, and religious feare, and so give me a participation of his Agony; he shall give me a diet, perchance want, and penury, and so a participation of his fasting; and if he draw blood, if he kill me, all this shall be but *Mors raptus*, a death of rapture towards him, into a heavenly, and assured Contemplation, that I have a part in all his passion, yea such an intire interest in his whole passion, as though all that he did, or suffered, had been done, and suffered for my soule alone; *Quasi moriens, & ecce vivo*:²⁶ some shew of death I shall have, for I shall sin; and some shew of death again, for I shall have a dissolution of this Tabernacle; *Sed ecce vivo*, still the Lord of life will keep me alive, and that with an *Ecce*, Behold, I live; that is, he will declare, and manifest my blessed state to me; I shall not sit in the shadow of death; no nor shall I not sit in darknesse; his gracious purpose shall evermore be upon me, and I shall ever discern that gracious purpose of his; I shall not die, nor I shall not doubt that I shall; If I be dead within doores, (If I have sinned in my heart) why, *Suscitavit in domo*, Christ gave a Resurrection to the Rulers daughter within doores, in the house;²⁷ If I be dead in the gate, (If I have sinned in the gates of my soul) in mine Eies, or Eares, or Hands, in actuall sins, why, *Suscitavit in porta*, Christ gave a Resurrection to the young man at the

23 [2 Cor. 12; Acts 9.](#)

24 [1 Tim. 5:6.](#)

25 [Esay 28:15.](#)

26 [2 Cor. 6:9.](#)

27 [Mat. 9:23.](#)

gate of *Naim*.²⁸ If I be dead in the grave, (in customary, and habituall sins) why, *Suscitavit in Sepulchro*, Christ gave a Resurrection to *Lazarus* in the grave too.²⁹ If God give me *mortem raptus*, a death of rapture, of extasie, of fervent Contemplation of Christ Jesus, a Transfusion, a Transplantation, a Transmigration, a Transmutation into him, (for good digestion brings alwaies assimilation, certainly, if I come to a true meditation upon Christ, I come to a conformity with Christ) this is principally that *Pretiosa mors Sanctorum*,³⁰ *Pretious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his Saints*, by which they are dead and buried, and risen again in Christ Jesus; pretious is that death, by which we apply that pretious blood to our selves, and grow strong enough by it, to meet *Dauids* question, *Quis homo?* what man? with Christs answer, *Ego homo*, I am the man, in whom whosoever abideth, shall not see death.

28 [Luke 7:11](#).

29 [John 11](#).

30 [Psal. 116:15](#).

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