

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**THE REV . JOHN NEWTON**

LATE RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF  
ST. MARY WOOLNOTH AND ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH-HAW,  
LOMBARD STREET, LONDON.

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CONTAINING  
AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE, &C., LETTERS ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, CARDIPHONIA,  
DISCOURSES INTENDED FOR THE PULPIT,  
SERMONS PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF OLNEY,  
A REVIEW OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, OLNEY HYMNS, POEMS,  
MESSIAH, OCCASIONAL SERMONS, AND TRACTS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
**MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, &c.**

BY THE REV. R. CECIL, A. M.

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**COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.**

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# SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF OLNEY.  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

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TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF OLNEY.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I HAVE principally two motives for publishing these Discourses. The one is, to exhibit a specimen of the doctrine that is taught and most surely believed amongst us, to satisfy those who desire information, and to stop, if possible, the mouth of Slander. I cheerfully submit them to examination, in full confidence that they contain nothing of moment which is not agreeable to the general strain of the word of God, and to the principles of the church whereof I am a minister, as specified in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies. And that what I now print is to the same purport with the usual course of my preaching, I doubt not but all who stately hear me, will do me the justice to acknowledge.

My other motive is, a desire of promoting your edification. It is my comfort that many of you live by the truths of the gospel, and highly prize them. You will not, therefore, be unwilling to view the substance of what you once heard with acceptance. But it is to be feared, that the far greater part of the congregation have need to have the things pertaining to their peace pressed upon them again and again, for a different reason; not because they know them, and therefore love to have them brought to their remembrance, but because they have hitherto heard them without effect. For the sake of both, therefore, I am willing to leave an abiding testimony amongst you. I hereby take each of your consciences to witness, that I am clear of your blood; and that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

In the choice of the subjects I have selected for publication, I have not been solicitous to comprise a succinct scheme of gospel-doctrine, but have given the preference to such topics, which the peculiar circumstances of the times, and of my hearers, make me desirous might be had in continual remembrance.

The exposition of the third commandment, which was first delivered in your hearing, I afterwards preached (nearer the form in which it now appears) at London; and as it led me to touch on some particulars of a very public and interesting concern, I have given it a place in this volume. And I shall think myself happy indeed, if it may please God to give weight to the

testimony of so obscure a person, with respect to a grievance under which the nation groans.

As long discourses are in many respects inconvenient, I have chosen to publish no more than a brief summary of what you heard more at large from the pulpit. And as I aim to speak plain truths to a plain people, I have purposely avoided any studied ornaments in point of expression, being desirous to accommodate myself to the apprehensions of the most ignorant.

May it please the God of all grace to accompany my feeble endeavours to promote the knowledge of his truth with the powerful influence of his Holy Spirit! And I earnestly entreat all who know how to draw near to a throne of grace by Jesus Christ, to strive mightily in prayer for me, that I may stand fast in the faith, and increase in the knowledge of Jesus the Saviour, and that, for his sake, I may labour, without fear of fainting, in the service to which he has been pleased to call me. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

I am your affectionate friend, and servant in the gospel of Christ,

JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, January 20, 1767.

## SERMON VII.

### OF THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* MATTH. xi. 27.

WE have spoken something of the dignity and excellence of that Mighty One on whom our help is laid; and are now to consider,

II. The covenant-authority he is intrusted with to manage the great concerns of man's salvation. He is not only infinitely sufficient, but divinely appointed for this great work.

Of this covenant there is express mention in many parts of scripture, to some of which I have referred in the note.<sup>1</sup> It is styled the covenant of peace, the everlasting, ordered, and sure covenant. The power and efficacy of this covenant respected the future incarnation of our Saviour. He asserted his right, while in the form of a servant, in the words of my text; and to the same purpose are the words of John the Baptist: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath delivered all things into his hands," John iii. 35. But the full manifestation of it was deferred to the time of his resurrection, when, and by which, he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. i. 4. Hence, before he left his disciples, he assured them, "All power is committed to me in heaven and in earth," Matth. xxviii. 18.

The sum is, that our Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of his divine nature, and his voluntary undertaking in our flesh, to fulfil all righteousness for us, both as to obedience and satisfaction, is exalted in that nature wherein he suffered, to be the sovereign Judge and Lord of all, Phil. ii. 6, 11. He it is now with whom we have to do. The holy God, considered without respect to the covenant of grace, is a consuming fire to sinners; and we cannot stand before him. But now he reveals himself, he dwells as in his temple, in the man Christ Jesus. He has entrusted all his glory, and all grace in his hands: and to him we are to look, on him we are to depend, for all the blessings we need for time and eternity. For "all things are delivered to him of the Father." *All things is* a most comprehensive expression. We may distribute it as referring to all persons, all blessings, and all dispensations.

1. All persons are in his hands. Hence his sublime title, "King of Kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 16. He doth what he will among the armies of

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<sup>1</sup> Psal. lxxxix. 3. 19.; Prov. viii. 23.; Isaiah xlii. 1. 6. compared with Matth. xii. 18. 21; Isaiah xlix. 8.9.; Zech. vi. 13,

heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth, Dan. iv. 35. Thus Isaiah saw his glory, and spake of him, Isaiah vi. compared with John xii. 41.

1st, He is Lord over his enemies, and those that hate him. He rules them with a rod of iron, and so disposes their designs as to make them (though against their wills) the means and instruments of promoting his own purposes and glory, Psalm ii. 9. They are his servants, even when they rage most against him. He has a bridle in their mouths to check and turn them at his pleasure. He can and often does control them when they seem most sure of success, and always sets them bounds, which they cannot pass. So he showed his power over Pharaoh of old; that haughty king's resistance only gave occasion for a more glorious display of the greatness and goodness of the God of Israel. So he humbled the pride of Herod, and gave him up, in the midst of his guards, a prey to worms, Acts xii. 23. And thus, sooner or later, all his enemies are brought to lick the dust before him.

2dly, But especially he is Lord of his own people. By nature, indeed, they likewise are his enemies, but he knows them all by name. They have been in a peculiar manner given him by the Father (John xvii. 6.); he accounts them his portion, and he will not lose his own, John x. 15, 16. He knows where to find them, and when to call them; and when his time is come, one word or look from him can disarm them in a moment, and bring them humbly to his feet. How soon did he stop and change the persecuting Saul! Acts ix. When they are thus made willing in the day of his power, he takes them under his special care; and whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. He guides, and guards, and feeds, and strengthens them. He keeps them night and day, waters them every moment, and will not suffer any to pluck them out of his hand, nor will he himself leave them or forsake them, till he has done all that he has spoken to them of. He gives them likewise a new heart and gracious dispositions, suited to the honourable relation he has brought them into; so that they delight in his precepts, and yield him a cheerful, habitual, and universal obedience, from the constraining sense they have received of his inexpressible love.

2. All blessings are at his disposal. Is not this a welcome declaration to awakened souls? What is the blessing you want? Seek to Jesus, and you shall not be disappointed. Hear his gracious invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.—Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live," Is. lv. 1, 3. The promised blessings which he holds in his hands, are the very same that the awakened enlightened conscience must have, and can have only from him,

1st, Pardon. How needful, how valuable is the pardon of sin to those who know what sin is, what it deserves, and what a share they have in it! Such are incapable of taking comfort till they know how God may be reconciled and sin forgiven. These are the persons to whom Jesus says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved," Isa. xlv. 22. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Is. xliii. 25.

2dly, Righteousness. By believing in him sinners are not only pardoned, but justified. They are accepted in the beloved, and accounted righteous by his righteousness imputed to them, which we are assured is unto all and upon all that believe, without any difference or exception, Rom. iii. 22. Hence his people adore him, and glory in him by his name, *The Lord our Righteousness*. In him they possess a righteousness answerable to the demands of the holy law, have confidence and liberty of access to God at present, though conscious of innumerable deficiencies in themselves, and they shall stand with boldness before him in this righteousness, and not be ashamed in the great day of his appearance, when he shall come to judge the world.

3dly, Strength. The forgiveness of sin that is past would little avail, unless there was provision made for a continual supply of needful grace. Without this we shall quickly grow weary, yield to the force of surrounding temptations, till at length the latter end would be worse than the beginning. But now every sincere soul may be freed from this fear. The way of prevention is pointed out, and the success infallibly secured by that one promise, though there are many to the same effect, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," Is. xl. 31.

4thly, Healing. This is often necessary; for the spiritual warfare is not to be maintained long without wounds. Our great enemy is so subtle, so watchful, so well provided with temptations adapted to every temper and circumstance; and we are so weak, unpractised, and so often remiss and off our guard, that he will at times prevail to bring us into a dark, barren, backsliding state, despoiled of comfort, and oppressed with fears. But see what a good and gracious shepherd we have: hear his comfortable words, "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick," Ezek, xxxiv. 16.

5thly, Support under trouble. He has engaged to lead his people safely through fire and through water, Is. xliii. 2. He gives them leave to cast all their care upon him, with an assurance that he careth for them, 1 Pet. v. 7. He has said, All things shall work together for their good ( Rom. viii. 28); that his grace shall be sufficient for them (2 Cor. xii. 9); and that in good time he will bruise Satan under their feet (Rom. xvi. 20); make them more

than conquerors (Rom. viii. 37), and place them out of the reach of sin and sorrow for ever. Besides the habitual peace which arises from the believing consideration of these truths, he has likewise peculiar seasons of refreshment, when he manifests himself to the soul in a way the world knows not of, and often makes the hour of their sharpest trials the time of their sweetest and highest consolations. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ," 2 Cor. i. 5.

3. All dispensations are under his direction. He is Lord of all, and does according to his pleasure among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth. He is the supreme disposer,

1st, Of these external dispensations which are distinguished by the name of providential.

(1.) Those that are welcome and prosperous are both his gifts and his purchase. To his people they come free; but he paid dear for them. And this gives them their chief value in the judgment of those who know him, to receive them as the pledges and fruits of his redeeming love. When the blessings of common providence are received and enjoyed as the gifts of God reconciled in Christ, they are then, and not otherwise, truly comfortable. It is this thought enables the poor believer often to taste a sweeter relish and flavour in bread and water, than the voluptuary ever knew in the wasteful profusion and studied refinements of luxury. To be able to look back and see how the hand of our gracious Lord has led us from our childhood, chose and managed better for us than we could have done, corrected our mistakes, and in many things exceeded our desires; to look around and see all our concerns in his sure keeping, who delights in our prosperity, and will suffer nothing to grieve us, but what he intends to employ as means for our greater advantage; and to look forward and see, that he has prepared still better things for us than ever our eyes beheld, or our hearts conceived,—how cheering are these views! Those who are thus stayed upon the Lord Jesus, as overruling and managing all our concerns, are not terrified with every shaking leaf: "their hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord."

(2.) Afflictive dispensations are likewise of his sending. And the consideration of his hand in them, the good he designs us by them, the assurance we have of being supported under them, and brought through them; according to the degree in which these things are apprehended by faith, and accompanied with a humbling sense of their own demerits, his people submit to his appointment with patience and thankfulness, and say, after the pattern which he has left them, The cup which my Saviour puts into my hand, shall I not drink it?

In brief, it is he who appointed the time and place of our birth, and all the successive connections of our lives. Our civil and our religious liberties

are both owing to his favour; and in these he has been peculiarly favourable to us. "He has not dealt so with every nation," Psal. cxlvii. 20.

2dly, Of the dispensation of grace. It is he who raises up instruments to preach his gospel, appoints them their places, furnishes them with that measure of gifts and sufficiency which he sees requisite and best. And it is he only that makes their poor labours successful. He sends his word to some, and brings others to his word; and in both cases, he so makes use of ordinary means, that to a common eye he seems to do nothing, when in reality he does all. He brought St. Paul to Corinth, and maintained him there a considerable time against all the efforts of his enemies, Acts xviii. 10. He overruled the thoughtless rambling of Onesimus (Philem. verse 11.), and led him, by a way which he knew not, to the means by which he had appointed to bring him to the knowledge of himself. And these instances are recorded for our instruction, as specimens of what he does in the same kind every day.

3dly, Of the dispensation of death. Our times are in his hands. He claims it as his own prerogative that he keeps the keys of death and the invisible state, Rev. i. 18. None can remove us sooner, none can detain us a moment longer, than his call. In this likewise he is little observed. We charge death to fevers, frights, and falls; but these are only the messengers which he sends. Sin has brought us all under a sentence of death; but the moment and the manner of the execution befall us according to his good pleasure. Till then, though his providence leads us through fire and water, though we walk upon the brink of a thousand apparent, and a million of unseen dangers, we are in reality in perfect safety. Having appointed St. Paul to stand before Cæsar, though the tempest greatly assaulted, and seemingly overpowered the ship he was in, St. Paul was as safe on the stormy sea, when all probable hope of being saved (Acts xxvii. 24) was taken away, as Cæsar himself upon his throne. But when his time is come, in vain are all the assistance of friends, the skill of the physician, or the power of medicines, to procure the smallest respite.

4thly, Of the dispensation of judgment. "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John v. 22); and has especially appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by the man Christ Jesus whom he hath ordained, Acts xvii. 31. Then his glory shall be confessed by all. Every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him. Awful will that day be to those who hate him, when he shall appear in flaming fire, to convince sinners of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all their hard speeches which they have spoken against him, Jude 15. They must give an account of all. Account, did I say? They can give none, but will be struck dumb before him, and hear with horror their dreadful doom,



“Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” Matth. xxv. 41.

But it will be a joyful time to his own people. The clouds of infirmity, affliction, and reproach, under which they are now obscured, shall vanish away, and they shall shine forth like the sun in the presence of their Father. God, even their own God, shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. They shall be glorified, and their enemies ashamed. What joy will fill their hearts when Jesus the Judge shall own his relation to them before assembled worlds, and shall say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Then sorrow and sighing shall be heard no more; but songs of triumph and shouts of everlasting joy shall take place; and so shall they be ever with the Lord.

How are your hearts affected with this subject? Do you not expect that I should close it with a suitable word of application?

1. To those who are as yet in their sins. Will you not tremble before this great Lord God? If these things are not so, if you can prove that we have followed cunningly-devised fables, go on secure. But have I not your consciences on my side? Do you not feel a secret foreboding that these are the truths of God? And dare you still persist? Do you not see that you are already in his hands? In a moment he could break you in pieces, yet he spares. He affords you one opportunity more. Today, while it is called today, hear his voice, lest tomorrow should surprise you into eternity, and the weight of unpardoned sins should sink you into the lowest hell. As he has power to punish, so likewise he is mighty to save. Believe his word and live. His obedience unto death is a plea with which you may approach the mercy-seat. He has power to take away your heart of stone, to subdue your enmity, to forgive your sins; and what he does he does freely, without money and without price. You need not, you cannot mend yourselves before you come to him. If you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you obstinately reject him, you will perish under the most aggravated guilt, as sinners against the light and grace of the gospel.

2. You that see your need of a Saviour, lift up your heads and rejoice. Is he not, thus qualified, able to save to the uttermost? Why should you keep back, when he bids you come unto him that you may find rest? Could you invent any invitations more free, more full than those that are recorded in the gospel? Can you desire any stronger security than the blood of Jesus and the oath of him that liveth for ever? Do you wish to know how other great sinners have succeeded in their application to him? Search the scriptures, and read how he saved Mary Magdalene, the dying thief, the cruel jailor, the persecuting Saul, and many of those who were actually con-

cerned in nailing him to the cross. Be patient, continue waiting on him in prayer, and you shall find he has not inclined you to seek his face in vain.

3. To believers I hope this is a comfortable theme. You see all your concerns are in safe hands. He to whom you have committed your souls is able to keep them. Jesus, who has all authority and power in heaven and in earth, vouchsafes to be your Shepherd. What then can you want, who are at his providing? What have you to fear, who are under his protection? Why then do you so often distrust, so often complain? It is because your faith is weak. Are you tempted to think you could place yourselves to more advantage than he has placed you, that you could do better without the afflictions he is pleased to send you, that you cannot spare what he takes away, nor do well without something which he withholds? Reject all such thoughts; they are highly dishonourable to your Saviour, and to your profession. Those who know not God must reason thus; but you have a covenant-promise, that all things are working together for your good. "This is not your rest, it is polluted." But you will soon be at home; and then, when, by a clearer light, you look back upon the way by which the Lord led you through the wilderness, you will be ashamed (if shame is compatible with the heavenly state) of your misapprehensions while in this dark world, and will confess to his praise, that mercy and goodness surrounded you in every step, and that the Lord did all things well. What you will then see, it is now your duty and your privilege to believe. If you sincerely desire his guidance in all things, labour to submit to it. The path which he has marked out for you is difficult, but he has trod it before you, and it leads to glory. The time is short. Yet a little while, and you shall receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.