

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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1830.

MESSIAH  
OR  
FIFTY EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES  
ON THE SERIES OF  
SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES  
WHICH FORM THE SUBJECT OF HANDEL'S CELEBRATED  
ORATORIO  
OF THAT NAME,  
PREACHED IN THE YEARS 1784 AND 1785,  
IN THE  
PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,  
LOMBARD STREET,  
LONDON.

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———Ah!  
Tantamne rem, tam negligenter, agere!—TER.

Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this!—DEUT. xxxii. 29.

TO THE  
PARISHIONERS OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,  
AND  
ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH HAW,  
LONDON,  
THESE SERMONS  
ON THE  
MESSIAH  
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY THE  
AUTHOR,  
TO REMAIN AS A TESTIMONY OF HIS RESPECT  
FOR THEIR PERSONS,  
AND HIS SOLICITUDE FOR THEIR WELFARE,  
WHEN HIS PRESENT RELATION  
TO THEM, AS THEIR MINISTER,  
SHALL BE DISSOLVED.

## SERMON XX.

### SIN CHARGED UPON THE SURETY.

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.* ISAIAH, liii. 6.

COMPARISONS, in the scripture, are frequently to be understood with great limitation: perhaps, out of many circumstances, one only is justly applicable to the case. Thus, when our Lord says, “Behold I come as a thief” (Rev. xvi. 15)—common sense will fix the resemblance to a single point, that he will come suddenly, and unexpected. So when wandering sinners are compared to wandering sheep, we have a striking image of the danger of their state, and of their inability to recover themselves. Sheep wandering without a shepherd, are exposed, a defenceless and easy prey, to wild beasts and enemies, and liable to perish for want of pasture; for they are not able either to provide for themselves, or to find the way back to the place from whence they strayed. Whatever they suffer, they continue to wander, and if not sought out, will be lost. Thus far the allusion holds. But sheep in such a situation are not the subjects of blame. They would be highly blameable, if we could suppose them rational creatures; if they had been under the eye of a careful and provident shepherd, had been capable of knowing him, had wilfully and obstinately renounced his protection and guidance, and voluntarily chosen to plunge themselves into danger, rather than to remain with him any longer. Thus it is with man. His wandering is rebellious. God made him upright, but he has sought out to himself many inventions, Eccl. vii. 29. God has appointed for mankind a safe and pleasant path, by walking in which, they shall find rest to their souls; but they say, We will not walk therein, Jer. vi. 16. They were capable of knowing the consequences of going astray, were repeatedly warned of them, were fenced in by wise and good laws, which they presumptuously broke through. And when they had wandered from him, they were again and again invited to return to him, but they refused. They mocked his messages and his messengers, and preferred the misery they had brought upon themselves, to the happiness of being under his direction and care. Surely he emphatically deserves the name of the Good Shepherd, who freely laid down his life to restore sheep of this character!

My text therefore expresses the sentiment of those, and of those only, who are acquainted with the misery of our fallen state, feel their own concern in it, and approve of the method which God has provided for their deliverance and

recovery. It contains a confession of their own guilt, and an acknowledgment of his mercy.

I. A confession of guilt and wretchedness.—Sin has deprived us both of the knowledge and presence of God. In consequence of this, we wander, every one to his own way. All are under the power of sin, and all equally strangers to the paths of peace and safety. The paths which sinners choose for themselves are diverse from each other, as inclination or circumstances vary; but however different in appearance, if persisted in, they terminate at last in the same point. They all lead to destruction. We may observe on this head,

1. It is a sufficient proof of our depravity, that we prefer our own ways to the Lord's; nor can he inflict a heavier judgment upon us in this life, than to give us up entirely to the way of our own hearts. He made us to be happy; but as he made us for himself, and gave us a capacity, and a vastness of desire, which only he himself can satisfy the very constitution and frame of our nature, render happiness impossible to us, unless in a way of dependence upon him, and obedience to his laws. The lamb that grazes in the meadow, and the fish that swims in the stream, are each in their proper element. If you suppose them to change places, they must both perish. But the brute creation have no propensity to such changes as would destroy them. The instincts implanted in them by their great Creator are conducive to their welfare; and to these instincts they are uniformly faithful. If you can conceive of beasts impatient to leave the shore, and improve their situation by rushing into the ocean; and the fishes equally earnest to forsake the waters in quest of new and greater advantages upon the dry land; it may illustrate the folly of fallen man, who, turned aside by a deceived heart, refuses life, and seeks death in the error of his ways. For the will of God (if I may so speak) is our proper element; and if we depart from it, our sin unavoidably involves our punishment. We naturally indulge hard thoughts of God, and think the rule he has enjoined us too strict and severe, intended to restrain us from real good, and propose to ourselves some unknown advantages by transgressing it. Thus Satan persuaded Eve, and we derive from her and though we know that she only gained misery by the experiment, we rashly repeat it for ourselves. The scripture assures us that the ways of God are pleasant, but we will not be persuaded. Experience proves that the way of transgressors is hard, but we resist the conviction, and hurry on in a round of continual disappointment. Are the proud, the covetous, the voluptuous, or the ambitious, happy? I appeal to conscience.

2. There is only one right way, but a thousand ways of being wrong. If you are not following him, who has said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6), you are wandering, you are far from God; for none can come to the Father but by him: and far from peace, for there can be no true peace in the mind unless he bestows and maintains it. The profane and the self-righteous, the open sinner and the hypocrite, the lover of pleasure and the lover of gold,

the formal Papist and the formal Protestant, though they seem to travel different roads, though they pity or censure each other, will meet at last (unless the grace of God prevent.) in the same state of final and hopeless misery. It is grievous to a spiritual and benevolent mind, to see those who are all wrong disputing among themselves which of them is right. Each one is ready to think himself wise, if the folly in which he allows himself be not precisely of the same kind with that which he condemns in his neighbour. But the scripture is the invariable rule, to which it is your duty and interest to be conformed now; for it is given by the inspiration and authority of God, and is the standard by which you must be judged at last. Whatever character you bear amongst men, if you have not faith and holiness, you certainly are not in the way of life. For it is written, "He that believeth not, shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16); and again, it is written, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14.

3. As wandering sheep are liable to innumerable dangers which they can neither foresee nor prevent, such is our condition, until, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are stopped, and turned, and brought into the fold of the good Shepherd. Oh! the misery of man while living without God in the world; He is exposed every hour to the stroke of death, which would at once separate him from all that he loves, and plunge him into the pit, from whence there is no redemption. And at present he is perpetually harassed with cares and fears, with wants and woes, without guidance or refuge; and yet so blinded as to think himself safe, and that his crooked wandering ways will lead him to happiness!

II. An acknowledgment of mercy.—Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded. Man sinned, and Messiah suffered. The Lord hath laid, or caused to meet upon him, the iniquity of us all, that is, the punishment due to them. The evils we had deserved were in pursuit of us, but Jesus interposed, and they all seized upon him, and he endured them, that we might be spared. Do we ask upon what grounds? It was on the ground of his voluntary substitution for sinners, as their covenant head and representative.

So much correspondent to this appointment obtains amongst men, as may show that the idea accords with our notion of justice. If a man be unable to pay a debt, and the creditor should exact the payment from a third person who was no way concerned, it would, with reason, be deemed a very oppressive action. But if it be known that this person became freely bound and responsible for the debtor, he is allowed to be justly liable. But in the present case I make no appeal to human customs. It is a divine appointment, and therefore is and must be right. It was a great design, the triumph of infinite wisdom, the highest effect of the love of God. It is revealed, not to be submitted to our discussion, or that we may sit in judgment upon the propriety of the measure, but it demands our highest admiration and praise, and, like the sun, brings with it that light by

which the whole system of our knowledge is illuminated. For till we know this great truth, and are able to see its influence upon every thing we are related to, whatever attainments we may boast, we are in fact encompassed with thick darkness, with darkness which may be felt. For the accomplishment of this design, the Son of God was so manifested in the nature of man, that he, and they who believe in him, participate in a real, though mystical union, and are considered as one: he their living head, they his body, consisting of many members; each of them represented by him, accepted in him, and deriving from his fulness their life, their light, their strength, and their joy.

1. He was thus appointed and constituted before the world began, according to the holy counsel and covenant settled from everlasting (Prov. viii. 31; Tit. i. 2) for the redemption of sinners. For the fall of man, which rendered his interposition necessary, was not an unexpected contingency, but was foreseen and provided for before man was created upon the earth, yea before the foundations of the earth were laid.

2. After man had sinned, this glorious Head and Surety made known the certainty and benefit of his mediation, and engagement on the behalf of sinners, according to the good pleasure of his wisdom, and as the case required; otherwise, upon the entrance of sin, the full execution of the sentence of the law denounced against the offenders, might perhaps have immediately followed: but he revealed himself. He showed mercy to Adam, covenanted with Noah, walked with Abraham, conversed with Moses, dwelt with his church in the wilderness, and was known by the name of the Holy One of Israel, Isa. liv. 5. David ascribes (Psal. xxiii. 1.) to the Shepherd of Israel the name of Jehovah, and Isaiah declares that the Lord of Hosts is the Husband of the church. These characters of Shepherd, and Bridegroom, and Husband, are appropriated to Messiah in the New Testament. He therefore is Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, whom Abraham, David, and Isaiah worshipped, or his appearance upon earth would be evidently to the disadvantage of those who believe in him. If he were not God, he would be a creature, for there is no medium, and consequently our Shepherd would be infinitely inferior to that Almighty Shepherd who was the refuge, the trust, and the salvation of his people, before Messiah was manifested in the flesh.

By virtue of this union likewise he is their life. They receive out of his fulness, as the branches (John xv. 1) derive their life and fruitfulness from the tree whereon they grow; therefore the apostle said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. This is the great mystery of Christianity, which words alone cannot explain: it is a divine appointment, hidden from those who are wise and prudent in their own sight, but revealed to all who, with the simplicity of children, are desirous of being taught of God, and wait patiently upon him, in the use of his prescribed means, for the light and influence of his Holy Spirit

From this subject, the substitution of Messiah for sinners, we may learn,

1. How to estimate the evil of sin. That sin is a great evil is evident by its effects. It deprived Adam of the life and presence of God, and brought death and all natural evil into the world. It caused the destruction of the old world by water. It is the source of all the misery with which the earth is now filled; it will kindle the last great conflagration, yea it has already kindled that fire which shall never be quenched. But in no view does the sinfulness of sin appear so striking as in this wonderful effect—the suffering and death of Messiah: That notwithstanding the dignity of his person, and the perfection of his obedience to the law, and that though he prayed in his agonies, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him (Luke xxiii. 42); yet, if sinners were to be saved, it was indispensably necessary that he should drink it. This shows the evil of sin in the strongest light; and in this light it is viewed by all who derive life from his death, and healing from his wounds. We may be afraid of the consequence of sin from other considerations, but it is only by looking to him who was pierced (Zech. xii. 10.) for our transgressions, that we can learn to hate it.

2. The complete justification of those who believe in him. They are delivered from all condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Every charge against them is overruled by this plea, that Christ has died, and is risen on their behalf, and ever liveth to make intercession for them. And though they are still in a state of discipline, for the mortification of sin yet remaining in them, and though, for the trial, exercise, and growth of their faith, it is still needful that they pass through many tribulations; yet none of these are strictly and properly penal. They are not the tokens of God's displeasure, but fatherly chastisements and tokens of his love, designed to promote the work of grace in their hearts, and to make them partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 6-11. Though necessary at present, they will not be necessary long, and therefore the hour is at hand when all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and they shall weep no more. His true servants, in the midst of the storms by which they are tossed on the tempestuous sea of this life, are no less safe, and, notwithstanding their imperfections, are no less beloved, than those who have already escaped out of the reach of every evil, and are now before the throne.

3. The reason why believers are not wearied, nor overpowered, by all the difficulties of their service, nor by all the arts and efforts of their enemies. They are one with Christ. He who has all power in heaven and in earth is engaged for their support. When they faint, he revives them; when they are wounded, he heals them; when their foot slippeth, he upholdeth them. He has said, "because I live, ye shall live also." Therefore, who can prevail against them, when their life is hidden with Christ in God? And farther, the knowledge of their Saviour's love, and of the holy, awful, yet amiable and endearing character of God displayed in his mediation, is the source of their



love, gratitude, and cheerful obedience. It is this makes hard things easy, and bitter things sweet. The love of Christ constraineth them, 2 Cor. v. 14. They look to him and are enlightened. And when they consider who he is, in what way, and at what a price he redeemed them, and what he has prepared for them; when they attend to his gracious word, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” Rev. ii, 10.);—they out of weakness, are made strong; they are inspired with fresh courage; they take up their cross with cheerfulness, and can adopt the language of the apostle, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy,” Acts xx. 24.