

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!

Tantanne rem, tam negligenter, agere ! TER.

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

## SERMON XLIII.

### DEATH SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.

*Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* 1 COR. xv. 54.

DEATH, simply considered, is no more than a private idea, signifying a cessation of life, or that what was once living lives no longer. But it has been the general, perhaps the universal custom of mankind to personify it. Imagination gives death a formidable appearance, arms it with a dart, sting, or scythe, and represents it as an active, inexorable, and invincible reality. In this view Death is a great devourer; with his iron tongue he calls for thousands at a meal. He has already swallowed up all the preceding generations of men; all who are now living are marked as his inevitable prey; he is still unsatisfied, and will go on devouring till the Lord shall come. Then this destroyer shall be destroyed; he shall swallow no more, but be swallowed up himself in victory. Thus the scripture accommodates itself to the language and apprehensions of mortals. Farther, the metaphorical usage of the word *swallow* still enlarges and aggrandizes the idea. Thus the earth is said to have opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah and his accomplices. Numb. xvi. 32. And thus a pebble, a mill-stone, or a mountain, if cast into the ocean, would be swallowed up, irrecoverably lost and gone, as though they had never been, Rev. xviii. 21. Such shall be the triumphant victory of Messiah in the great day of the consummation of all things. Death in its cause and in its effects, shall be utterly destroyed. Man was created upright, and lived in a paradise, till, by sin, he brought death into the world. From that time death has reigned by sin, and evils abound. But Messiah came to make an end of sin, to destroy death, and him that hath the power of it, to repair every disorder, and to remove every misery; and he will so fully, so gloriously accomplish his great undertaking in the final issue, that every thing contrary to holiness and happiness shall be swallowed up and buried beyond the possibility of a return, as a stone that is sunk in the depths of the sea. Thus where sin hath abounded grace will much more abound.

This victory, however, being the Redeemer's work and the fruit of his mediation, the scripture teaches us to restrain the benefits of it to the subjects of his church and kingdom. In Adam all die. A depraved nature, guilt, sorrow, and death, extend to all his posterity. The All, who in Christ shall be made alive, are those who, by faith in him, are delivered from the sting of death, which is sin, and are made partakers of a new nature. There is a second death, which, though it shall not hurt the believers in Jesus (Rev. ii. 11), will finally swallow up the impenitent and ungodly. We live in an age

when there is, if I may so speak, a resurrection of many old and exploded errors, which though they have been often refuted and forgotten, are admired and embraced by some persons as new and wonderful discoveries. Of this stamp, is the conceit of a universal restitution to a state of happiness of all intelligent creatures, whether angels or men, who have rebelled against the will and government of God. This sentiment contradicts the current doctrine of scripture, which asserts the everlasting misery of the finally impenitent, in as strong terms, in the very same terms, as the eternal happiness of the righteous, and sometimes in the very same verse, Mat. xxv. 46. Nor can it possibly be true, if our Lord spake the truth concerning Judas, when he said, "It had been good for that man if he had never been born," Matth. xxvi. 24. If I could consider this notion as harmless though useless, and no worse than many mistakes which men of upright minds have made, through inattention and weakness of judgment, I should not have mentioned it. But I judge it to be little less pernicious and poisonous, than false. It directly tends to abate that sense of the evil of sin, of the inflexible justice of God, and the truth of his threatenings, which is but too weak in the best of men. Let us abide by the plain declarations of his word, which assures us, that there remaineth no other sacrifice for sin (Heb. x. 26, 27), no future relief against it, for those who now refuse the gospel; and that they who cordially receive it shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, and shall one day sing, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

I would farther observe, that many prophecies have a gradual and increasing accomplishment, and may be applied to several periods; though their full completion will only be at the resurrection and last judgment. This passage, as it stands in the prophecy of Isaiah I (chap. xxv. 8), from whence the apostle quotes it, appears to have a reference to the comparatively brighter light and glory of the gospel state beyond what was enjoyed by the church under the Levitical dispensation; and especially to the privileges of those happy days, when the fulness of the Gentiles, and the remnant of Israel shall be brought in, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. I would not exclude these subordinate senses; I have already considered them. But my text calls our attention to the end of all things. Then, in the most emphatical sense, Death will be swallowed up of victory.

Let us endeavour to realize the great scene before us, to contemplate the redeemed of the Lord when they shall return with him to animate their glorious bodies. Let us ask the question which the elder proposed to John, "Who are these clothed with white robes, and whence came they?" Rev. vii. 13. They came out of great tribulation, they were once under the power of death, but now death, as to them, is swallowed up in victory. In every sense in which death ruled over them they are now completely delivered.

I. They were once dead in law. They had revolted from their Maker. They had violated the holy order of his government, and stood exposed to his righteous displeasure, and to the heavy penalty annexed to the transgression of his commandments. But mercy interposed. God so loved them, that he gave his only begotten Son to make an atonement for their sins, and to be their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. They received grace to believe in this Saviour, and now they are delivered from condemnation. They are accepted in the Beloved. They are considered as one with him, and interested in all that he did, and in all that he suffered. Now they are the children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. Though they were afar off, they are brought nigh, and admitted to a nearer relation than the holy angels, to him who sitteth upon the throne. For he took upon him, and still he pleased to wear, not the nature of angels, but the human nature. Their former guilt is cancelled, blotted out, and swallowed up. All their sins are covered. Sunk in his precious blood as in a deep sea, so that even if sought for, they can no more be found. That they have sinned, will always be a truth; and probably they will never lose a consciousness of what they were by nature and practice while in this world. But this, so far from abating their joy, will heighten their gratitude and praise to him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, Rev. i. 5. Their happiness principally consists in a perception of his love to them, and in their returns of grateful love to him. And they love him much, because for his sake, much has been forgiven them, Luke vii. 47.

II. Once they were dead in sin. They were destitute of the knowledge and love of God. They were foolish, deceived, and disobedient, enslaved to divers lusts (Titus iii. 3), to inordinate, sensual, unsatisfying pleasures. They lived in malice and envy; they were hateful, and they hated one another. In a word, they were dead while they lived, 1 Tim. v. 6. But by the power of grace they were awakened and raised from this death, and made partakers of a new, a spiritual, and divine life. Yet the principle of sin and death still remained in them, and their life upon earth, though a life of faith in the Son of God, was a state of continual warfare. They had many a conflict, and were often greatly distressed. They sowed in tears, to the end of their pilgrimage, but now they reap in joy, Psal. cxxvi. 5. This death is also swallowed up in victory. They are now entirely and for ever freed from every clog, defect, and defilement. By beholding their Lord as he is, in all his glory and love, without any interposing veil or cloud, they are made like him, and to the utmost measure of their capacity conformed to his image. Now they are absolutely spotless and impeccable; for though mutability seems no less essential to a creature than dependence, yet they cannot change, because their Lord is unchangeable, for their life is hidden with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3. They cannot fall from their holiness or happiness,

because he has engaged to uphold and maintain them by his almighty power.

III. One branch of the death due to sin is the tyranny and power of Satan. For a time he ruled in their hearts, as in his own stronghold; and while they were blinded by his influence they were little affected with their bondage. Hard as his service was, they did not often complain of it. They were led by him according to his will for the most part without resistance, or, if they attempted to resist, they found it was in vain. But in his own hour their Lord, who had bought them, dispossessed their strong enemy, and claimed their hearts for himself. Yet after they were thus set free from his ruling power, this adversary was always plotting and fighting against them. How much have some of them suffered from his subtle wiles and his fiery darts! from his rage as a roaring lion, from his cunning as a serpent lying in their path, and from his attempts to deceive them under the semblance of an angel of light! 2 Cor. xi. 14. But now they are placed out of his reach. Death and Satan are swallowed up. The victory is complete. The wicked one shall never have access to touch or disturb them any more. Now he is shut up in his own place, and the door sealed, no more to open. While he was permitted to vex and worry them, he acted under a limited commission which he could not exceed; all was directed and over-ruled by the wisdom and love of their Lord for their advantage. Such exercises were necessary, then, to discover to them more of the weakness and vileness of their own hearts, to make them more sensible of their dependence upon their Saviour, and to afford them affecting proofs of his power and care engaged in their behalf. But they are necessary no longer. Their warfare is finished. They are now where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest, Job iii. 17.

IV. While they were in the world, they had a share, many of them a very large share, of the woes and sufferings incident to this mortal state: which, as they are the fruits and effects of sin, and greatly contribute to shorten the life of man, and hasten his return to dust, are, as I formerly observed, properly included in the comprehensive meaning of the original sentence, death. They belong to its train, and are harbingers of its approach. None of the race of Adam are exempted from these; but especially the servants of God have no exemption. Their gracious Lord, who frees them from condemnation, and gives them peace in himself, assures them that in this world they shall have tribulation, John xvi. 33. This is so inseparable from their calling, that it is mentioned as one special mark of their adoption and sonship, Heb. xii. 6–8. If the prosperity of the wicked sometimes continues for a season without interruption, their day is coming (Ps. xxxvii. 13); but the righteous may expect chastisement and discipline daily. Thus their graces are refined, strengthened, and displayed, to the praise of their heav-

only Father. There is no promise in the Bible that secures the most eminent and exemplary believer from participating in the heaviest calamities in common with others, and they have many trials peculiar to themselves. Thus, while upon earth, they endure hardship for his sake. Because he chose them out of the world, and they would no longer comply with its sinful maxims and customs, the world hated them, John xv. 19. Many of them were the mark of public scorn and malice, accounted the offscouring of all things; they were driven to deserts, and mountains, and caves; they suffered stripes, imprisonment, and death. Others had trials of pains, sickness, and poverty, of sharp bereaving dispensations. Their gourds withered, and the desire of their eyes was taken away with a stroke. They had fightings without, and fears within. So that if their pressures and troubles were considered, without taking into the account their inward supports and the consolation they derived from their hopes beyond the grave, they might be deemed of all men the most miserable, 1 Cor. xv. 19. But they were supported under these exercises, brought safely through them, and now their sorrows are swallowed up in victory. Now the days of their mourning are ended, Is. lx. 17. They now confess, that their longest afflictions were momentary, and their heaviest burdens were light, in comparison of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17) which they have entered upon. Sorrow and sighing have taken their everlasting flight, and joy and gladness have come forth to meet them, and to dwell with them for ever, Is. li. 11.

V. In their collective capacity, the seeds of sin often produced bitter fruits. Through remaining ignorance and prejudice, they often mistook and misunderstood one another. They lost much good which they might otherwise have enjoyed, and brought upon themselves many evils. Through their intemperate heats and unsanctified zeal, which divided them into little parties and separate interests, the children of the same family, the members of the same body, were too often at variance, or at least cold and distant in their regards to each other. Yea, Satan could foment discord and jealousies among those who lived in the same house, or met at the same table of the Lord. But now grace has triumphed over every evil; sin and death are swallowed up in victory. Now all is harmony, love and joy. They have one heart and one song, which will never more be blemished by the harshness of a single discordant note.

May this prospect animate our hopes, and awaken, in those who have hitherto been afar off, a desire of sharing in the happiness of the redeemed! Awful will be the contrast to those who have had their portion in this world! Is it needful to address any in this auditory, in the language which our Lord used to his impenitent hearers? "Wo unto you that are rich; for you have received your consolation. Wo unto you that are full; for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep!" Luke

vi. 24, 25. When the rich man, who had lived in honour and affluence here, was torn from all that he loved, and lifted up his eyes in torment, the remembrance of his former state, that he once had his good things (Luke xvi. 25), but that they were gone, for ever gone, could only be a keen aggravation of his misery. Dreadful will be the condition of all who die in their sins; but the case of those who are now frequently envied by the ignorant, in the view of a mind enlightened by the truth, must appear doubly and peculiarly pitiable. They have the most to lose, they have the most to account for. Alas, how terrible, how sudden the change! From a state of honour and influence amongst men, to fall in a moment under the contempt and displeasure of the holy God—to pass, from a crowd of dependents and flatterers, to the company of Satan and his angels; from grandeur and opulence, to a state of utter darkness and horror, where the worm dieth not, and the fire cannot be quenched, Mark. ix. 44, 46, 48. These are sensible images, it is true; the things of the unseen world cannot be described to us as they are in themselves; but we may be certain that the description falls unspeakably short of the reality. The malicious insults of the powers of darkness, the mutual recriminations of those who, having been connected in sin here, will be some way connected in misery hereafter (Matth. xiii. 30),—remorse, rage, despair, a total and final exclusion from God the fountain of happiness, with an abiding sense of his indignation:—this complicated misery cannot be expressed in the language of mortals—like the joy of the blessed, it is more than eye hath seen, or ear hath heard, or can possibly enter into the heart of man to conceive, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Add the ideas of unchangeable and eternal to the rest, that it will be a misery admitting of no intermission, abatement, or end; and then seriously consider, what can it profit a man should he gain the whole world, if at last he should thus lose his soul? Matth. xvi. 26. No longer make a mock at sin: it is not a small evil; it is a great evil in itself, and, unless pardoned and forsaken, will be productive of tremendous consequences. No longer make light of the gospel: it points out to you the only possible method of escaping the damnation of hell. To refuse it, is to rush upon remediless destruction. No longer trust in uncertain riches: if you possess them, I need not tell you they do not make you happy at present, much less will they comfort you in the hour of death, or profit you in the day of wrath, Prov. xi. 4. Waste not your time and talents (which must be accounted for) in the pursuit of sensual pleasure; in the end it will bite like a serpent. For all these things God will assuredly bring you into judgment, unless in this day of grace you humble yourselves to implore that mercy which is still proposed to you, if you will seek it sincerely and with your whole heart; and which I once more entreat, charge, and adjure you to seek, by the great name of Messiah, the Saviour, by his agonies and bloody



sweat, by his cross and passion, by his precious death, and by the consideration of his future glorious appearance, to subdue all things to himself.