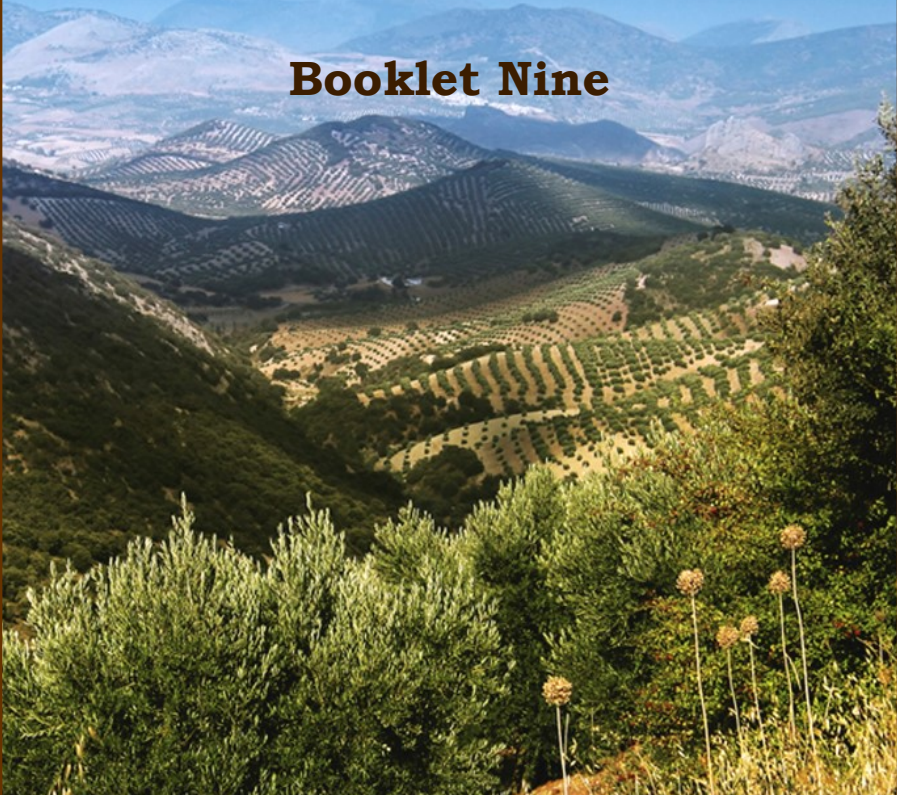


Sermons of John Newton

Based on Scripture Passages
Used in Handel's 'Messiah' Part 2

Booklet Nine



19. Messiah Suffering and Wounded for Us - Isaiah 53:4, 5
20. Sin Charged upon the Surety - Isaiah 53:6

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Booklet Nine

19. Messiah Suffering and Wounded for Us and 20. Sin Charged upon the Surety

19. Messiah Suffering and Wounded for Us

“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” Isaiah 53:4, 5.

When our Lord was transfigured, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and conversed with Him. Had we been informed of the interview only, we should probably have desired to know the subject of their conversation, as we might reasonably suppose it turned upon very interesting and important topics. The Scripture makes little provision for the indulgence of our curiosity, but omits nothing that is necessary for our instruction: and we learn thus much from it, that they discoursed, not upon the trifling things which the world accounts great, such as the rise and fall of empires; but they spake of the sufferings of Jesus, and of the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. They spake of His Exodus (Luke 9:31) (as the word is) His departure out of life, the issue and completion of His engagement for sinners, that is, His crucifixion and death. This is the grand theme of heaven and heaven-born souls. We lately considered the cruel insults that MESSIAH submitted to from the servants in the High Priest’s hall, and from the Roman soldiers. The passage I have now read, leads our meditations to the foot of the cross. May the Holy Spirit realize the scene to our hearts! The cross of Christ displays the divine perfections with peculiar glory. Here the name of God is revealed, as a just God, and a Saviour. Here the believer contemplates in one view, the unspeakable evil of sin, and the unsearchable riches of mercy. This gives him the most affecting sense of the misery which he has deserved, while at the same time he receives the

fullest assurance that there is forgiveness with God, and discovers a sure foundation whereon he may build his hope of eternal life, without fear of disappointment. From the moment the Apostle Paul was enlightened to understand this mystery of redeeming love, he accounted his former gain but loss; his former supposed wisdom, no better than folly, and became determined to know nothing, to depend upon nothing, to glory in nothing, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

A representation of the Redeemer's sufferings, capable of exciting tears and moving the passions, may be by the powers of oratory; and similar emotions have often been produced by a romance or a tragedy, though the subject is known, beforehand, to be entirely fictitious. But light in the understanding, is necessary to convince and influence the heart. Unless the mind be deeply penetrated with the causes, which rendered MESSIAH'S death necessary, the most pathetic description of the fact, will leave the will and the affections unchanged. I hope many of my auditory [many in my audience] can assign these causes. You have felt yourselves personally concerned in an event which took place long before your birth; and if you are asked, Why was Jesus mocked, buffeted, and spit upon? and why were His enemies permitted to nail Him to the cross? you answer, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows"—and you can likewise say, "By His stripes we are healed."

The words lead us to consider the cause, and the effect.

1. The cause of the Redeemer's sufferings, implied in the word "our,"—He bore the griefs and sorrows which were our desert. Such is the language, the confession, the grateful acknowledgement of all who believe in His name. They who are delivered by grace from the spirit and power of this evil world, and who live by His death; and, likewise they, who see they must perish, unless saved by Him, are authorized to consider Him as mindful of them, and making provision for them, in the day of His trouble. They who were actually healed by looking at the brazen serpent, according to God's appointment, had a sufficient proof in themselves, that it was erected, and placed in view of the camp on their account (Numbers

21:9). “He bore our griefs.”—It does not follow that sinners must have been crucified, if the Saviour had not been crucified on their behalf. But as this was a painful and terrible punishment, it may teach us, that without His interposition we were justly liable to extremity of misery in the present life. That we who have offended God, should enjoy health, peace, or satisfaction for a single hour; that we do not draw every breath in the most excruciating pain; that we derive any comfort from creatures; that we are not a burden and terror to ourselves, and mutually to each other; that our state, while upon earth, is, in any respect, better than an image of hell, must wholly be ascribed to Him. A sinner, as such, is under the curse of the law, and this curse includes every species of misery that can affect us either in mind, body, or estate. But He was appointed, from the beginning, to sustain and exhaust the curse for us. And, therefore, the earth, though so long inhabited by wretches in a state of bold rebellion against their Maker, is filled with the fruits and evidences of His long-suffering patience and mercy. Therefore He still affords “us rain and fruitful seasons” (Acts 14:7), indulges us with a variety of temporal blessings, and gives us power to take comfort in them. This consideration greatly enhances the value of temporal good things to His people. They receive them as from His hand, as tokens of His love and pledges of His favour, sanctified to their use by His blood and promise. Cheered by such thoughts as these, His poor people often enjoy their plain fare with a pleasure, of which, the expensive and dissipated sensualist has no conception. And how does it add to the relish of all earthly comforts, to think, while we are using them,

*There’s not a gift His hand bestows,
But cost His heart a groan!*

So likewise, the remembrance of what He bore for them alleviates the pressure of all their sufferings and affords them a ground whereon they may rejoice, “yea, glory in tribulation also” (Romans 5:3).

But His crucifixion, and the whole of His sufferings from wicked men, cannot give us a just idea of what He endured for us.

Grievous as they were, considered in themselves, they were light if compared with the agonies of His soul. These extorted the blood from His body (Luke 22:44), before the hand of man touched Him. And when He uttered His most dolorous cry upon the cross, it was not for the anguish of His bodily wounds, but His soul felt, for a season, a separation from the presence and comforts of God. Therefore He said, “Why has Thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). It is true His holy nature was not capable of some part of the impenitent sinner’s portion. Remorse of conscience, the stings of the never-dying worm, the horrors and rage of despair, could not touch Him, who had no personal sin, and whose love and faith were always perfect. But a sword pierced His soul, and it pleased the Father, not only to permit Him to be bruised by the cruelty of His enemies, but to bruise Him Himself (Isaiah 53:10).

The ground of all this was laid in His voluntary substitution of Himself, from before the foundation of the world, to obey and suffer in behalf of His people. This point will offer more directly from the passage we are next to consider. At present, let us briefly notice the expressions before us.

(1). “He was wounded.” This word, which signifies pierced or stabbed, refers to His crucifixion. This punishment, being unknown to the Jews till they were brought under the Roman power, they had, therefore, no express name for, in their language. Yet it is plainly described by the Psalmist, who, speaking by the Spirit of Prophecy, in the person of MESSIAH, says, “They pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:16). And it was typified under the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13; 1 Corinthians 5:7; John 3:14), by the curse annexed to hanging upon a tree, which was the nearest death to this; by the Paschal lamb, which was roasted; and by the brazen serpent. It was a fit death for a sinner, painful and ignominious. How circumstantial were the prophecies, how apposite [how strikingly appropriate and relevant] the types [prophetic symbols], how exactly was all fulfilled, and how wonderful was it that the Jews should be led to depart from their own customs and purposes, in order to their accomplishments, though they intended nothing less! But it was the determined counsel and appointment of God (Acts 2:23), who overrules all the

designs of men, and all that to us appears contingent, to the purposes of His own will and glory.

(2). “He was bruised.” If we distinguish wounded from bruised, the latter may be referred to the sorrows of His soul, (for it is expressly said, “It pleased the LORD to bruise Him”); that distress broke His heart, filled Him with dismay, caused Him to be sore amazed and very heavy, and to say to His disciples, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death” (Matthew 26:38). No words can be more selected and emphatical, than those which the Evangelists use, in describing His consternation in the Garden of Gethsemane. How can this His dejection and terror be accounted for, by those who deny that His sufferings and death were a proper atonement for sin; and who suppose, that when He had given to men a perfect rule of life, and commended it to them by His own example, He died, merely to confirm the truth of His doctrine, and to encourage His followers to faithfulness under sufferings! Many of His followers, who were thus witnesses for the truth, and patterns of faithfulness to us, have met death in its most terrible forms with composure, yea, with pleasure, yea, with transports of joy. But is the disciple above his Lord? If Christians have triumphed in such circumstances, why did Christ tremble? Not surely because their courage and constancy were greater than His. The causes were entirely different. The martyrs were given up to them who only could kill the body, but Jesus suffered immediately from the hand of God. One stroke of His mighty hand can bruise the spirit of man, more sensibly than the united power of all creatures. Jesus died. They that believe in Him, are said “to sleep in Him” (1 Thessalonians 4:14). To them death comes disarmed of its sting, wearing a friendly aspect, and bringing a welcome message of dismissal from every evil. But the death of Jesus was death indeed, death in all its horrors, the death which sinners had deserved to suffer as transgressors of the law.

(3). The “chastisement,” or, the “punishment” of our “peace, was upon Him.” That chastisement, or punishment, on the account of which, sinners obtain peace with God. It properly signifies here, a punishment for instruction or example. Punishments are inflicted, either for the correction of an offender, or for the prevention of evil,

or for example to others. The two former reasons could not apply to our Lord. He had committed no evil, He was perfect before, and in suffering. But standing in the place of sinners, and engaged to expiate their offences, He was made a public example of the misery and distress which sin demerited [deserved]. Thus justice was vindicated in the exercise of mercy, and sinners believing in His name, are exempted from punishment, for His sake, in a way which affords not the least encouragement or extenuation to sin. And thus our peace is procured.

2. The effect of His sufferings for sins not His own. “He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows:” He was wounded and bruised for us, “the chastisement of our peace was upon Him,” that “by His stripes we may be healed.” The Hebrew word here, and the Greek word, the Apostle Peter uses in this quotation of this passage, which we render “stripes” (1 Peter 2:24), is, properly, the mark, which stripes or wounds leave upon the body, or, as we say, scars. The scars in His hands, feet, and side, and, perhaps, other marks of His many wounds, remained after His resurrection. And John saw Him in vision, before the Throne, as a lamb that had been slain. All these expressions and representations, I apprehend, are designed to intimate to us, that though the death of MESSIAH is an event long since past, yet the effects and benefits are ever new, and, to the eye of faith are ever present. How admirable is this expedient, that the wounds of one, yea, of millions, should be healed, by beholding the wounds of another! Yet this is the language of the Gospel, Look and live. “Look unto Me and be ye saved.” Three great wounds are ours, guilt, sin, and sorrow; but by contemplating His welts or scars, with an enlightened eye, and by rightly understanding who was thus wounded, and why; all these wounds are healed.

You who live by this medicine, speak well of it. Tell to others, as you have opportunity, what a Saviour you have found. It is usual for those who have been relieved, in dangerous and complicated diseases, by a skilful physician, to commend him to others who are labouring under the like maladies. We often see public acknowledgments to this purpose. If all the persons, who have felt the efficacy of a dying Saviour’s wounds apprehended by faith,

were to publish their cases, how greatly would His power and grace be displayed! They are all upon record, and will all be known in the great Day of His appearing. Some of them are occasionally published, and may be read in our own tongue. And though they are not all related with equal judgment, nor attended with circumstances equally striking, yet there is a sufficiency, in this way, to leave the world without excuse. Not to mention modern accounts of this kind, (though many might be mentioned which are indisputably true, and superior to the cavils of gainsayers) the Confessions of * Austin may be appealed to, as a proof that the Gospel is not a system of notions only, but has a mighty power to enlighten the bewildered mind, to subdue the obstinate will, to weaken the force of long-confirmed habits of evil, to relieve from distressing fears, and to effect a real, universal, permanent, and beneficial change of sentiment and conduct, such as no similar instance can be found, in the history of mankind, to have been produced by any other principles. But if you are a true Christian, in the circle of your connections, you will, sometimes, have a fair opportunity of giving a reason of the hope that is in you. Pray for grace and wisdom to improve such seasons; and if you speak the truth in simplicity and love, you know not but the Lord may give His blessing to your testimony, and honour you as an instrument of good. And to convert one sinner from the error of his way, is an event of greater importance, than the deliverance of a whole kingdom from temporal evil.

* Austin (St. Augustine) - Roman philosopher and theologian (354-430).

Yet, remember, if you espouse this cause, a certain consistency of character will be expected from you, without which, you had better be silent, than speak in its defence, or profess yourself a sharer in the privileges of the Gospel. There are too many persons who treat the great truths, we profess, as mere opinions, points of speculation, which form the shibboleth of a party. There are others, who think an attachment to them, the sure sign of an enthusiastic [sure sign of a fanatical], deluded imagination. And there are others, again, who misrepresent them as unfavourable to morality, and affording a cloak and an encouragement to licentiousness.

Beware, lest, by an improper conduct, you lay stumbling-blocks in the way of the blind, strengthen the prejudices of the ignorant, and give weight to the calumnies of the malicious. The people of the world are quick-sighted to the faults of religious professors, and though they affect to despise their principles, they are tolerable judges what that conversation is, which only these principles can produce, and always expect it from those who avow them. They will make allowances for others, and admit human infirmity as a plea for their faults, but they will not extend their candour to you. If your zeal for the truth, and your regular attendance upon the ministers who preach it, are not accompanied by a spirit of humility, integrity, and benevolence; if you are passionate, peevish, discontented, censorious, or proud; if they observe that you are greedy of gain, penurious, close-fisted, or hard-hearted; or even if you comply with their customs and spirit, mingle with them in their amusements, and do not maintain a noble singularity by avoiding every appearance of evil; they will not only despise you in their hearts, but they will take the occasion of despising and speaking evil of the truth itself, on your account. But if you are all of a piece, and are truly solicitous to adorn your profession, by walking agreeable to the rules of the Gospel, and filling up your relations in life to the glory of God, and the good of your fellow-creatures; by thus “well doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Peter 2:15), and in a great measure, stop their mouths, if you cannot change their hearts. And though they may affect to rail at you, or to ridicule you, they will be constrained to feel a secret reverence for you in their consciences.

But are there any hearts of stone amongst us, who are still unaffected by the love and sufferings of the Son of God; who are still crucifying Him afresh, and living in sin, though they hear and know what it cost Him to make an atonement for sin? Yet now hear—now look—behold the Lamb of God! The Lord in mercy open the eyes of your mind. I address you once more. I once more conjure you by His agony and bloody sweat, by His passion, cross, and death, to seek Him that your souls may live. Can you be proof against these arguments? Nay, then, should you live and die thus obstinate, you must perish indeed.

20. 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 53:6.

Comparisons, in the Scripture, are frequently to be understood with great limitation: perhaps, out of many circumstances, only one is justly applicable to the case. Thus, when our Lord says, “Behold, I come as a thief” (Revelation 16:15),—common sense will fix the resemblance to a single point, that He will come suddenly, and unexpectedly. 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” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). God has appointed for man a safe and pleasant path, by walking in which, they shall find rest to their souls; but they say, “We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16). 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 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 acknowledgement of His mercy.

1. 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 the 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 their 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 14:6), 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 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 16:16); and again, it is written, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

(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!

2. An acknowledgement 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 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 everything 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 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 fullness, 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 for the redemption of sinners (Proverbs 8:20-31; Titus 1:2). 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 the “Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 54:5; Psalm 23:1). David ascribes 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, worshiped, 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.

(3). In the fullness of time, He veiled His glory. He “who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God,

took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made of a woman, made under the law” (Philippians 2:6, 7; Galatians 4:4). Then the union between Him, and the people whom He came into the world to save, was completed. Because “the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same” (Hebrews 2:14). “The Word, who in the beginning was God, and was with God, was made flesh” (John 1:1). And in our nature, though He knew no sin, He was treated as a sinner for us, to declare the righteousness of God, in His forbearance and goodness to all who had been saved in former ages, and in the forgiveness and salvation of all who should trust in Him to the end of time. He suffered “once,” once for all, “the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” And now God is revealed, not only as merciful, but as just, “in justifying him which believeth in Jesus.” God is well pleased in Him, and for His sake, with all who accept Him. Their sins are expiated by His sufferings (Romans 4:6; Jeremiah 23:6), and His perfect righteousness, the whole of His obedience unto death, is the consideration or ground, on which they are accounted righteous.

By virtue of this union, likewise, He is their life. They receive of His fullness, as the branches derive their life and fruitfulness from the tree whereon they grow (John 15:1); therefore the Apostle said, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). 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 [astonishing; amazing] 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 22:42), 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 consequences of sin, from other considerations; but it is only by looking to Him who was pierced (Zechariah 12:10) 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 (Romans 8:1). 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 (Hebrews 12:6-11). 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 slips, He upholds 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?” (Colossians 3:3). And further, 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 Corinthians 5:14). They look to Him and are enlightened. And when they consider who He is, in what way, and at what price He redeemed them, and what He has prepared for them; when they attend to His gracious Word, “Fear none of these things, thou shalt suffer; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10); 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 20:24).

The ninth of twenty booklets.

