

**THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE OF  
CHRIST, THE ONLY FOUNDATION  
FOR THE SINNER'S HOPE, THE  
ONLY MOTIVE TO THE  
CHRISTIAN'S HOLINESS**

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The vicarious sacrifice of Christ, the only foundation for the sinner's hope, the only motive to the Christian's Holiness by Thomas Nolan

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**THOMAS NOLAN**

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CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO

“THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION :—

“TWO SERMONS BY THE REV. J. LL. DAVIES, M.A.

“RECTOR OF CHRISTCHURCH, MARLBORNE.”



BY THOMAS NOLAN, B.D.

INCUMBENT OF REGENT'S SQUARE, ST. PANCRAS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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It is not intended in the following pages either to analyze the argument or to answer the objections contained in the sermons called "The Word of Reconciliation."

With two only of the points advanced in them have I any concern, and against these I desire to enter a most distinct and strenuous protest. The vicariousness of Christ's obedience unto death, of His sacrifice and sufferings, I hold to be of the very essence of Christianity; and that such doctrine is abundantly to be found in the Bible and Book of Common Prayer, it is the duty of every consistent Churchman to maintain. Both these points are as emphatically denied in the "Word of Reconciliation," and, after my attention had been drawn to the subject, when I found that none of my more competent brethren had undertaken the task,\* I thought it better, *pro virili meâ*, to grapple with it myself.

The school of writing to which these two sermons belong, partakes of some of the characteristics of its predecessors in the same field of antagonism to pure Protestant

\* I was not aware when I wrote this, that Mr. Davies' "Word of Reconciliation" had been answered by the Rev. C. Hobert.



truth, for which the "Tracts for the Times" and all that class are so remarkable: for example, the assumption of superior intelligence for themselves and their disciples; the same pitying commiseration of those who will not be content to follow in their wake; and, what is most important, the studied obscurity, in the midst of affected candour and clearness, which the last-named writers brought to such perfection. As a specimen of this, in p. 19, misgivings are imputed to the opponents of this school on the very points at issue between them, but which they have not the courage to investigate or avow, while with sufficient self-complacency it is added—"It is a blessing scarcely deserved, but yet one which has been vouchsafed to these hesitating believers, that others have been found to question it for them, &c." Again, it is not always easy to arrive at the meaning of these writers. What the late Bishop Coplestone, with singular felicity, called the "Magic Lanthorn" style of writing, finds much favour at their hands. Archbishop Whately, in the preface to his admirable edition of "Bacon's Essays," speaks of men "who bring forward their speculations—often very silly, and not seldom very mischievous, under cover of twilight. They have accustomed their disciples to admire as a style sublimely philosophical, what may best be described as a certain haze of words imperfectly understood, through which some seemingly original ideas, scarcely distinguishable in their outlines, loom, as it were, on the view, in a kind of dusky magnificence that greatly exaggerates their real dimensions." To declare their meaning at once would be too startling, and might cause a reaction. The public mind must be gradually prepared for it. However, perhaps, the clear obscure of their style serves like the dim religious light in their churches, to conceal what must yet be introduced, without forcing it

as yet too prominently into notice. It would be difficult to find out in the "Word of Reconciliation" any adequate object for, or result from, the death of Jesus Christ; anything, in short, to rescue it from the character which the writer evidently apprehends for it of an "act of unaccountable humiliation and sacrifice."\* Equally indistinct is the connexion between it and any of the moral results of love and obedience, which are referred to it. In the following sermons the attempt is made to put both of these points clearly forward—THE SACRIFICE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST THE ONLY FOUNDATION OF THE SINNER'S HOPE, AND THE ONLY MOTIVE TO THE BELIEVER'S HOLINESS. This is to set forth the great salvation of Jesus Christ in its two coordinate divisions, viz. in the pardon God bestows, and the holiness He demands, or what amounts to the same—the believer's *title* to his inheritance, and his *meetness* for that inheritance. These taken together, and they are inseparable, make up the grand essential of Scripture Christianity. It is of paramount necessity, then, that these, in the first instance, be carefully guarded from all admixture of error, for an error, however slight, underlying the foundation, is sure to multiply itself manifold as the details advance; and in the next place, no pains should be spared to set forth clearly, unambiguously, and connectedly, those positive announcements of the way of salvation which are understood to be included in "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The great danger to be apprehended from both these schools of theology, over and above the direct false doctrines which they inculcate, is the unsettling effect they produce on the minds of those who have little time for thought, and have never been much used to thinking carefully. When confidence is shaken in what was once

\* Sermon I. p. 22.

believed to be firm and stedfast, it is like removing the old landmarks, or as a distinguished statesman said upon a memorable occasion, "like weighing anchor with a storm on the horizon." It leaves the mind at the mercy of the wind and current; hence so many make shipwreck altogether, and others find a temporary shelter, either in the cold regions of an universal scepticism, or in the noisome swamps of Romish superstition. We have been passing through this phase of opinion for several years past; and the storm, so far from showing symptoms of being spent, does not seem to have culminated as yet. In such a state of things, it becomes the bounden duty of every man occupying a post of trust or influence, no matter how subordinate, to contribute his mite towards stemming the evil, and upholding the truth; more especially, when there is any danger to those for whose souls he watches and must give account, of being led away and lost in the delusion. For "if the watchman see the sword come and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned: if the sword come and take any person away from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand" (Ezek. xxxiii. 6).

Considerations of this kind alone induced me first to broach the subject from the pulpit, and then to proceed as far as to prepare four of the sermons for the press. The object of them is to build up my own flock in their most holy faith; especially on the great subject of the Atonement, to give them views full and clear, as far as I understand and believe myself upon this fundamental principle of Christianity. For I am persuaded that when the heart is once "rooted and grounded in love," and the mind fixed in a safe anchorage on this great truth, men are not so ready to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with