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S. H. 1825.

THE
AGED PILGRIM'S TRIUMPH

OVER

Sin and the Grave:

ILLUSTRATED IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS,

Never before Published.

BY THE REV. JOHN NEWTON,
OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH.

WRITTEN, DURING THE DECLINE OF LIFE, TO SOME OF HIS MOST
INTIMATE FRIENDS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
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1825.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Addressed to Mrs. Ring, of Reading, Berks.



MY DEAR MADAM,

WHILE reading to you some of the original Letters of which this Volume is composed, addressed by our revered friend, the late Rev. JOHN NEWTON, to my beloved parents, you observed, "It is selfish to retain such a treasure in the bosom of your own family;" and expressed a wish that they might be offered to the public, and particularly to the afflicted and nervously dejected, for their edification. The same wish has been expressed by some other respected friends; with which I now cheerfully comply. These Letters were written in the freedom of cordial and confidential friendship, without any view toward their

publication; but I hope I may feel persuaded, that the benignant smile which I always received from the writer, during his visits to my relatives, would not now, were he living, be changed into a frown; and that could my departed parents be consulted, their cheerful acquiescence would be readily obtained for their further circulation, in the confident hope of their more extended usefulness. In sending them to the press, I have but one feeling of reluctance, which I am persuaded my beloved parents in the same case would have had: it is this,—that their little acts of friendship and Christian love should be made so public; but I know you agree with me, that their statement could not be suppressed, without doing injustice to the character of our reverend and valued friend. When I consider those acts of friendship were only such as became the Christian character, I sacrifice my reluctance to their publicity, to the ardent desire, that these excellent Letters may be

found as consoling to others under affliction, as they were to those to whom they were originally addressed; and as, under the weight of various heavy trials, I have found them myself. To you, my dear and kind friend, I owe my best thanks for your voluntary assistance in transcribing them for the press; and the Christian public will be also indebted to you for the addition which you have made to their number, of original Letters received by you from the same writer. May the perusal of the volume which is ushered into the world with your approbation, prove to you a source of consolation whenever your spirits may require support; and that you and your invaluable and highly esteemed partner may long enjoy the rich blessings so often implored for you by our reverend and mutual friend, is the heart-felt desire of,

My dear madam,

Your very affectionate
and grateful friend,

THE EDITOR.

LETTERS.



LETTER I.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE interviews I had with you in London, though short and few, were sufficient to make me willing, very willing, to accept your obliging invitation to S. But at that time, and from that time, till within this week, such a visit appeared to me rather desirable than practicable. My business lies at home, and I am not, or would not be hasty to move till I can see the Cloud and Pillar moving before me. I think something of a Providential call, or leading, or opening, makes a journey or a visit much more pleasant. Some such openings seem to point out my way to Lymington, particularly the desire of my honored friend Mr. T. Thornton, who wishes me to be some time with him there, and at the Isle of Wight. This desire ought to have with me the force of a command, when it is in my power to comply. We have a dear girl about thirteen, who has a hectic, and other complaints,* and just about the time that Mr. T. mentioned his intended journey, the physician wished she might go to the salt-water. Previous to all this, some months ago, a gentleman who lives at or near this very Lymington,

* Miss Cunningham, a niece of Mrs. Newton's.

a person whom I had never seen, or had any knowledge of, called on me at Charles'-Square, to invite me and mine to his house, having somehow heard, as he said, that some one in the family had occasion to use the salt-water. Had an excursion from London to the salt-water been the only point in view, I should have thought of no place so soon, and with so much pleasure as S. ; but there are some other circumstances, besides what I owe to Mr. T. which make me think the path of duty will lead me to L. But I can assure you my heart has jumped at the thought that I should have opportunity of paying my respects to you and Mrs. T. by the way ; provided you are at home, and that it is convenient to you to receive us at this time, of which I shall hope for the favor of a line from you to inform me before I set out. If the time fixed should suit you to receive us, I promise myself much pleasure in waiting upon you ; I have likewise another reason for wishing to see S. I was there so long ago as the year 36, in the shape of a little sailor boy. My father was master of a ship, and took in a lading of corn for Spain. It was my first voyage to sea. I love to revisit the spots where I spent a part of my early life ; it revives the ideas of things and events long passed, and I hope the contrast between my situation then, and what it is now, will strike me when I return to the same place, with some profitable impressions ;—for, alas ! at the best I am too faintly affected with a review of the wonderful way by which the Lord has led me thus far through the wilderness. The turns of my life have been extraordinary, and perhaps have appeared more so to you and to many, than I fear they do to myself. I saw our good friend Mr. S. the other day ; he is pretty well, and talks of writing to you by me. The Lord, all-sufficient, has

graciously supported him under his late trials and changes. The removal of dear Mrs. S. was a heavy loss to her family, and sensibly felt by many of her friends. Mrs. Newton and I had a share in it; we loved and respected her greatly; but the Lord does all things well, and it will never be quite well with any of us, till we follow her to the land of light, and join with her, and with the innumerable company before the throne, in songs of praise to Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

We join in love and respects to you and Mrs. T.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Charles'-Square, Hoxton,
July 20th, 1784.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR SIR,

APPEARANCES are so against me, that if you and Mrs. T. have thought me ungrateful, I cannot wonder. The truth is, my time slips away so pleasantly and insensibly here, that it was not till last night I found out that I had passed five whole days since I saw you without writing to you. I almost started at the thought, like a person suddenly awakened from a sound sleep. I now beg your pardon, and would promise to behave better upon the like occasion hereafter, if I did not know myself a little too well to venture to promise much in future. However, I do hope I may thus far engage, that neither I, nor Mrs. Newton, nor Eliza, can easily forget the kindness we received at S. We performed our journey hither without any inconve-

nience, except what we felt from sympathy with poor William, and a little likewise we sympathized with your horses. I think neither your coachman nor your horses ever travelled so many miles in worse weather. I ought to have written the very next day, in hopes of hearing that William got no cold, nor your horses any damage, by us. I cannot yet inform you how long I shall stay here. When I was with you I felt myself so comfortably at home, that I could have been well content to have made your house the end of my journey. I shall find the like reluctance, for the like reasons, to leave Mr. E.'s house. But it was necessary I should leave you to come hither; and it will be necessary for me to leave Mr. E. to return to you, and then I must leave you again to return home. It is well I am to go home, for I could have no good heart to go any where else after visiting Hampshire. But home (as they say) is home. There is my church, my people, the appointed sphere of my service; and after the great indulgence I have in this excursion, I hope I shall return with a good grace, and apply myself with cheerfulness to the duties of my situation, though in the midst of the noise and smoke of London. What an unspeakable mercy to be pleased with being where the Lord would have us be. On Sunday evening I expounded to a few in a house Mr. T. had taken at K. Our room and our auditory were both small, but I was well received. This is all I have hitherto done in the preaching way, except morning and evening as Mr. E.'s chaplain to his family. But I am the Lord's servant; He knows I am here, and what He would have me to do. Therefore I am well content to sit quiet and learn; something I hope I shall learn one day or other. I may at least study to be quiet. Every thing around me is delightful. I ride, walk, am alone,

or in company, read or write, just as I please. I want nothing but more thankfulness to the Lord, and more intimate communion with Him. It is a mercy to know that these are things above all others truly desirable. Accept my best love and thanks, and believe me to be

Your affectionate and obliged servant,
JOHN NEWTON.

P., near L.,
12th August, 1784.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE first office I intended for my silver pen, was to give you information of our safe arrival in Charles'-Square. Accordingly I now hansom it. I will not search for silver words to express our thanks to you and Mrs. T. for your great kindness; suffice it to say that we love you dearly. May the Lord, for whose sake you took us strangers in, reward you. But words of gold would not be sufficient to express the praise due to our good and great Shepherd, who led us out in peace, was with us by the way in our journey, and brought us home in safety. He preserved our habitation likewise, and those whom we left behind, so that we saw or heard nothing upon our return to cause uneasiness.

We reached Hook in about three hours after we left you, and arrived at home a little before four. My dear's head is not quite well to-day. Eliza was a little fatigued, but a dish or rather *many dishes* of tea, refreshed us. We unite in making up a parcel of our best love to you, Mrs. T., and all your young people,

with our hearty thanks to each and all of them, for the kindness they shewed us.

I seem at present a stranger even at home, but by to-morrow (I hope) my thoughts will get into their own channel, and I hope (and beg your prayers for it) that the Lord will enable me to benefit by the recollection of what I have seen or heard while abroad. My late excursion was very pleasant, but I ought to wish it may be made profitable. But I have had long experience how little I am able to improve by the most desirable advantages, and how little I am affected by a combination of the greatest mercies. I may express all my complaints in one short sentence, *I am a poor creature*; and all my hopes and comforts may be summed up as briefly, by saying, *I have a rich and gracious Saviour*. Full as I am in myself of inconsistencies and conflicts, I have in Him a measure of peace. He found me in a waste howling wilderness; He redeemed me from the house of misery and bondage, and though I have been ungrateful and perverse, He has not yet forsaken me; I trust He never will; "unsustained by thee I fall;" but He is able to hold even me up; to pity, support and supply me to the end of life. How suitable a Saviour; He is made all things to those who *have* nothing, and is engaged to help those who can *do* nothing. I expect this will come in season to tell you, that while you are reading it, I hope my heart will be thinking of you, and desiring a Sabbath's blessing upon you and yours. I shall then be preparing to meet my beloved people at St. Mary, Woolnoth. Think of me in the same way; pray for me, that I may return to them "in the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ." Though we are near eighty miles distant from each other, we can easily meet at the throne of grace. Prayer can ascend

from S. and London, and bring back an answer of blessings to both places in the same minute. I have still the same light and the same sun as when I was with you, and thus the Lord is the same, and equally near to us all. What an honor and privilege is it to know the way to the mercy-seat, and to be permitted to plead in that name which always prevails.

Tell Mrs. K. I shall not forget her request. I hope the Lord will spare her child, to be a comfort to her ; but should He appoint otherwise, He will be faithful to His promise, and make her strength equal to her day. I can venture to assure her, that the child shall certainly recover, if He who is infinitely wise, sees it best for her upon the whole. But we are short-sighted creatures, not only unworthy, but unable to choose for ourselves ; if the choice was left to us, it would be our wisdom to refer it back to Him, and we may be sure that He does not willingly grieve or afflict us. He takes no pleasure in seeing us weep and mourn ; rather, every day brings us ten thousand proofs that He delighteth in our prosperity. When we are in heaviness, therefore, there is a need-be for it—faithful are the wounds of such a friend ; they are made no sooner, nor longer, than the exigency of the case requires ; and He who wounds has promised likewise to heal. He is all sufficient, and can give more than He will ever take away from his children. I trust she will find power to commit herself, and her every concern, into His hands ; and that she will have reason to acknowledge, from day to day, that He doth all things well.

I am, very sincerely,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate and much obliged servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

Charles'-Square, 3rd Sept. 1784.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR SIR AND MADAM,

MY first letter is due to you, and if I was to fill it with thanks, I should not say half enough. Let me say once more I thank you, we both thank you, we all thank you. The Lord brought us home safely at three o'clock. Eliza bore her journey very well. B. and I followed in good time. We had a very pleasant journey. St. Paul's struck six when we came to it.

I am now to get into my round again. When I saw your horse* the other morning going round and round with the wheel, it reminded me of myself. The horse would be better pleased, I suppose, if he was at liberty to scamper about; but his service and usefulness depend upon treading the same steps over and over again. So I, if I had my will, might perhaps be seen sometimes in twenty places distant from home, and *often* at S., but the wheel to which I am fastened, and which marks out the track and circle of my duty, is in London. Your horse I suppose is blinded to prevent his growing giddy. I do not wish to be blinded, but I wish to move simply and quietly step by step in the Lord's path without looking about me, without questioning or reasoning. I am not my own, but belong of right to Him who paid my ransom, and delivered me from the house of bondage, from the power of Satan, and therefore I am not to do my own will, or be at my own disposal. This is my duty, and it is my privilege likewise. For He who requires me to give up all to Him, engages to be, and to do all for me. I shall not want, I need not fear, if the Lord be my Shepherd. O what

* Before Mr. T's mills went by water.

a guard, what a guide, what a protector, what a comforter is He to all who put their trust in Him, and devote themselves to His will.

My late visit was pleasant, and I hope in the review of what passed I shall be enabled to find some profit. As iron sharpeneth iron, so there is a mutual benefit arising from the communications of Christians who meet and converse in a right spirit. I would be thankful for what I know of this, and wish to be thankful that I have been at S. twice, and I can truly say that I shall be very willing to go a third time, if the Lord should ever make my way clear to you. I know no place to which inclination would sooner lead me, or where I seem to feel more at home. I shall think of Mrs. T. daily, till I hear of the event, of which I hope you will favour me with as early an information as you conveniently can. I send her Nehem. ch. i. verse 7. as a good cordial, which has been tried and approved by many.

I am, dear sir and madam,
Your much obliged and affectionate,
JOHN NEWTON.

Hoxton,
17th September, 1785.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I MUST address a line or two to you. I have good reason to think of you and Mr. T. daily, and could wish, if I durst wish for any thing, to be nearer you, and more with you. But we are placed like centinels in our respective posts, and we must not leave them oftener, nor longer, than our great Commander directs.

B 5

I believe both you and I see cause to be thankful for the situation He has allotted us. Mine is not wholly without its trials, but its comforts and advantages are more numerous and important. I can truly say that if I had only inclination to consult, you would see me frequently, and my visits would probably be longer than my last was. I left you with regret, though I was coming home. I suppose your time of confinement is drawing near; when it comes I trust the Lord will be near likewise, and repeat to you the former experience you have had of His goodness. I hope Mr. T. will favour me with early notice of it, that I may join with you in thanksgiving. Our children send their love and duty. Eliza is a considerable sufferer, and we sympathize with her, but my dear is pretty well, and I trust the Lord does and will support her, whatever the issue may be. He is wise and good in all His dealings, and His mercies to us are new every morning, and numerous as the minutes of our lives. I have had a desire of living to Him for thirty years past and more, but I am a poor proficient, and a poor servant to this day; but as I live upon His bounty so I would rely upon His grace; I have nothing else to support my hope, for not only am I a sinner, but I see and feel sin in my very best, and were it not for the blood of sprinkling, and the power and compassion of our great High-Priest, despair would overwhelm me at last,—but those words, (which I am sure are true,) “He is able to save to the uttermost,” are an anchor of hope from which the enemy has not been permitted to force me.

I have begun to preach (on Sunday evenings,) from the Book of Jonah. It bears a near resemblance to my own history, and I need not go far, nor consult many books, to explain the workings of the heart of man, from Jonah’s case. The recollection of many

parts of my past life, and many feelings of my own heart to this day, will furnish me with something to say upon it. When the path of duty led to the East, I have foolishly and obstinately set my face to the West. I have suffered by storms, which my own sins have raised, and if I never was in the belly of a fish, I have been in my own apprehensions, in the mouth of Hell! I have had my gourds likewise, and while I have been, admiring them, a worm has been sent to the root. Some of them have faded, and some of them are still spared. The crowning wonder and mercy of all is, that I am still spared myself!

We join in love and thanks to you and Mr. T. We remember all the younger part of your family with much love.

Please to remember us affectionately to Mr., Mrs., and Miss K. The Lord be with you, dear Madam, and bless you indeed. This is the sincere and bounden prayer of

Your much obliged and affectionate,
JOHN NEWTON.

Hoxton,
1st October, 1785.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ADDRESS my letter to you this time, to prevent the contents of it coming to abruptly upon Mrs. T., which might be the case if Mr. T. should open it in her presence. Our dear Eliza never went out of doors after she came home from you. She had a succession and a variety of pains and maladies, but on the 6th instant, (the day three weeks from her leaving your

hospitable roof,) the Lord delivered her from them all. This is the dark side of the dispensation; I have not time, nor words to describe the bright side, but I may hereafter attempt to draw up some brief account of her, which, if I do, will surely find its way to S. Four days we expected her dismissal every hour, and though she suffered much, we could not but be thankful she continued so long. Her peace and confidence in God were abiding; her mouth was filled with words of grace, comforting or exhorting all around her. Often she declared she would not change conditions with any person upon earth, nor be willing to live longer here, even if restored to perfect health, for all that the world, or a thousand such worlds can afford. She smiled upon pain, she smiled upon death; for when she went, which seemed to be in a sort of slumber, she had reclined her cheek gently upon her hand, and there was almost a smile left upon her countenance. I can answer for her, as for myself, and Mrs. Newton, that she brought home with her a thankful sense of the great kindness she received at S., and spoke of you all with much affection and gratitude. Mr. and Mrs. T. knew, I trust, how our hearts beat towards them. I am glad of this opportunity of expressing my particular thanks to you for your very obliging attention to Mrs. N. and the dear child, for which I shall always hold myself your debtor. Could I pray as I ought and wish, I would make you large returns in that way. May the Lord God of your father be your God; may you together with his name and fortune inherit his character and spirit, and be no less respected, no less beloved, no less useful than he.

My dear sir, when sweet Eliza was dying, I almost wished it practicable to have set my door open, and invited all who passed by to come in and see what it

is to die in the Lord, and to hear what a child under fifteen could say of His goodness, and of the vanity of every thing short of His favour.

Please to give our hearty love to Mr. and Mrs. T. Remember us likewise affectionately to Mr. Samuel, and the Miss T.'s, and Mr. K., and his house.

I am, dear sir,
Your much obliged servant,
JOHN NEWTON.

8th October, 1785.

Mrs. Newton hopes Mr. T. will receive two pheasants by the mail coach to-morrow morning.

This letter is directed to "Mr. Walter T—, junr."

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter, which we received last night, did us good; we longed to hear of you, and were sometimes full of fears, but when I considered whose you are, and whom you serve, I was more easy. You are in safe hands; the everlasting arms which hold the stars in their courses, are underneath you; the Lord is your shepherd and keeper, your sun and shield; why then should I fear for you? Or why should you fear for yourself? I hope you do not.

Yes, madam, the Lord has done great things for us since we came home. He sent a chariot of love for dear Eliza. We almost saw her mount. Surely she was in Heaven, and Heaven in her, before she left the earth. The manner of her dismissal had a merciful effect upon us, so that, though it was in one

view like pulling off a limb, yet upon the whole we felt that praises were much more suitable for us than complaints. I still weep for her more or less every day, but I thank the Lord I have not dropped one tear of sorrow. My dear likewise has been wonderfully supported.

By yesterday's post I sent to Mr. T. and to Mr. K. the little narrative I have printed of Eliza's translation to glory. I will send Mr. T. two or three more if I can find a conveyance. I only printed for my friends; none will be published. Just at the time I wrote it, I could not have written an account fit for the public to see, but friends will have patience to hear little particulars as they occur to mind. The Lord bless and support you through your expected trial. May you again be the joyful mother of a lively and a lovely infant. We join in best love to Mr. T. We send our love likewise to every branch and twig in both the families. In particular I thank Miss K. for her letter to B.; please to tell her that I dropped several tears upon it. I love her doubly for the kind mention she makes of Eliza. The dear child has left me deeply in debt. I feel myself under obligations to every body who looked kindly upon her, or spoke kindly to her. Judge then (if you can), how we feel towards Mr. and Mrs. T. on her account. If I could make gold as fast as your mill makes blocks, I could not repay you, but love is better than gold. I will keep paying you in love as long as I live.

I purposed leaving the remaining part of the paper for my dear to fill up, but she says her head is very poorly, and has been for some days. I hope in her judgment she is perfectly satisfied with the Lord's will, but her feelings have been strong, and if her health and nerves are affected for a time, I shall have still

cause I hope to be thankful that she is no worse. She has had but an uncomfortable sort of head since the year 1776, when she was seized with a violent nervous disorder, which though the Lord graciously relieved her from, within about a year, she has been more apt to suffer by changes, surprizes, and cares, since that period, than before. I observe that nerves are such obstinate things that they will neither yield to reason nor to Scripture. But the promises of God are sure, whatever our feelings may be for the time, if our faith and hope be bottomed upon His good word, we shall not be disappointed in the end. Once more I commend you, and all dear to you, to the keeping of the great Shepherd, and remain,

Your very affectionate and much obliged friend,
JOHN NEWTON.

28th October, 1785.

LETTER VIII.

The former part of this Letter was written by Mrs. Newton.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YESTERDAY I had a pheasant sent me; it immediately occurred to me, "Perhaps dear Mrs. T. could eat a bit."

The fear of being too late for the coach made me do it up in great haste, with a line. My dear B. had just finished me a shawl, which I thought very pretty, and as you were about leaving your chamber, hoped you would not be angry if I begged your acceptance of it, as it is very warm, and B. is quite willing to do me another, and is glad I thought of it. We have thought

and talked of you, and dear Mr. T.'s kindness to us I believe every day since we had the pleasure of being with you, and we should be glad to hear from or of you as often as convenient. I have not been very well since we left S., but am not quite confined to the house. I wish I could tell you that I am much humbled and thankful, and felt as I ought, but I must not begin, for fear I should not know how to leave off, as your spirits are weak, and mine are not strong.

(Continued by Mr. Newton.)

My dear says I must write a bit. I am sure I am willing, but am generally a little lazy on Sunday evenings, and to-day I have preached three times; but I expect to be very busy to-morrow, and therefore while I am smoking my pipe before supper, I take up my pen to you. Ah, madam, I could not have known you and Mr. T. without loving you, though I had never visited you at S. but your great kindness to us, standing in connexion with sweet Eliza's sickness and death, and the comfortable entertainment she had under your hospitable roof, has bound my heart to you in a peculiar manner. Had she lived and recovered to be quite well, I hope I should not have been ungrateful; but I seem to feel it more sensibly because she is gone.

I hope the Lord has graciously comforted you in your confinement, and that you are growing strong every day, and will soon be restored to your family, and to the house of the Lord. May the Lord grant my dear friends as much comfort in all your children, as we had in sweet Eliza, and if it please Him, without the abatement of sickness, or the pain of an early separation. But why do I say pain? If I must call it pain, (and surely I felt it) I must likewise say, it was a delightful, desirable pain, preferable to all the plea-

sures such a world as this can afford. I little doubt but you who are real parents, could part with your children without reluctance, upon the same terms. Oh! it was wonderful! I could not complain if I would, making myself, my partial self, judge in my own cause. I was constrained to confess that no one circumstance in my whole life called for a larger return of gratitude and praise than the removal of this dear girl, notwithstanding that, if it had been the Lord's will to restore her to health, I should have rejoiced more in her recovery than in the possession of the best estate in Hampshire. I knew that I loved her dearly, but how dearly I never knew, till about the last week of her life. Yet I am most perfectly satisfied, and have not had the most distant wish for a moment since she died, that the event had been otherwise. I love to talk of her, and every day more or less I still drop some tears over her memory: perhaps this is a weakness, I hope it is not a sin. I do not find it gives me any uneasiness. She is almost continually in my thoughts, but so, as rather to draw forth my thankfulness to the Lord than otherwise, that she is where she is. I hope the thought of her helps me sometimes in prayer, often in preaching, and gives me such a confirmation of the great truths I speak of as I would not be without.

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

My love to dear Mrs. and Mr. K.; thank him for his very kind letter; I shall consider of his proposal, and make the monument more public; he has pointed out an expedient. One great objection I had to it was, that I could not bear to seem to make such an instance of the Lord's goodness a matter of sale,—it hurt my feelings; I thought I should dishonour Him by it, and that it would seem to cast a stain upon my affection

for the dear child. But by appropriating the profit to some charitable institution, in which I have no direct concern, this impropriety may be avoided; and I think, if it can properly be, such a story ought to be known far and wide. I am anxious that it might promote the glory of the Lord, and do good, both to parents and children. I begin to weary, and supper is ready. The Lord bless you both, and all belonging to you. This I hope will be the daily prayer of

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

12th September, 1785.

LETTER IX.

My dear did intend to write to dear Mrs. T. yet she has not. I did not intend writing just at this time, yet it seems I must. Mr. and Mrs. K. peeped at us once, and now they are going. They told us that Mr. and Mrs. T. were thinking of a journey, but were not determined which way to go. Now if you will condescend to ask our advice, or be guided by it though unasked, the matter will soon be settled. By all means come to London, and (if you can make shift with our accommodations) come to Charles'-Square—aye, do, there's a dear madam. I wish I could bribe you. Let me see. I take you and Mr. T. at your word, that you would not only entertain us at P. but be really glad to see us. Now I not only should be glad to spend a little time with you, but I look upon myself as bound to do so, were it in my power, from duty and gratitude. My former visits suited my convenience very happily indeed, and I now wish to pay you a visit of thanks. But my poor dear expects that

a sight of S. would revive so many painful feelings, that she is almost afraid to think of it. But perhaps if you would come hither to help me, we should be able to talk her fear away.

I hope this new year will bring many new blessings to you and yours. The Lord is good. He has delivered—He does—He will deliver. Oh, madam, what an altar, atonement, temple, priest! What a sun and shield! What a Saviour and what a Shepherd have we! May we know and feel our privileges, and live a life of dependence and obedience. Our best love to you both, and to all your children. I am in haste, and must subscribe myself your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Hoxton,
9th January, 1786.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter was to have been answered by my dear, but she is not able to write, as she has been very poorly for some time past. My chief business now is, to inform you that Mrs. R. will be at S. on Tuesday evening. You will have I trust, in her, one in whom you may confide, and who will serve you from love. We have reason to think well of her, and I judge from my own feelings, that she will think herself comfortably provided for with you; for I think that if I were a servant, I would look no further for a place, if Mr. and Mrs. T. would take me. I should perhaps make an awkward servant, but I think I should be an affectionate one, and love will try hard to please. I believe

Mrs. R. is better qualified to serve, and I doubt not but you will soon make her love you.

We need no need of pressing to come to P. Inclination would plead, gratitude would constrain to a speedy compliance with your call, if we could do just as we please. May the Lord, if He sees fit, direct our way to you in good time; but I know not when or how it will be. We have taken a house in Coleman Street Buildings, and shall hardly be settled in it till towards the end of April, a space of time long enough to look forward to in such a world as this. About that time likewise, I suppose "Messiah" will make its appearance. If we are spared till the house is settled, and the book published, we may then perhaps see a little farther into the year, and how the path of duty will be. It is not for me to say, to-day or to-morrow I will go to S. and continue there a week, or a month. I ought to say no more than, if the Lord please, I should be glad to do this.

I have no near connections with the Sunday School Society, but I will send Mrs. T. the plan and rules by Mrs. R. I am glad to hear the design will be taken up at S. The Lord bless you all.

I am, my dear madam,
Your very affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Hoxton,
25th February, 1786.

LETTER XI.

MY DEAR SIR,

MRS. NEWTON will write to dear Mrs. T. this time, but I shall borrow a side of the paper to write to

you. How shall I begin? I first entered your hospitable roof on one of my memorable days (4th August,) the 21st of March is another of them. On this day, thirty-eight years ago, I was pumping for life, without victuals, almost without clothes, every rolling sea breaking over my head, and expecting every time the ship plunged, that she would rise no more. Our preservation was surely miraculous. Oh, how unfit was I then to die, and oh, how unfit to live! But I was spared, and having obtained help of Him who sent from on high, and delivered me out of deep waters, I continue unto this day. What a path has mine been; through what changes have I been led! Surely I, above most, have reason to say, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has been exceedingly abundant." Verily I am a debtor. How ought I to love and serve and praise? Come my friends, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. You likewise were a sinner, but you were not a scorner and a blasphemer, profane and profligate like me. Yet the grace which was necessary for you, was sufficient even for me also. I trust you will pray for me, that His grace may be with me to the end.

The "Messiah," which Mrs. T. enquires after, is printed off. An index is making, which we must wait a little for. I suppose the book may be published by Easter. I shall send to you among the first, ten sets. One set, dear Mrs. T., you must do me the favour to accept as a token of love from me; and I shall be obliged to you to forward another set to Mr. E. My heart was much upon this business, and now the Lord has enabled me to finish it, I would be thankful. Though I am at present in good health, the question of Pharaoh to Jacob ought to be much in my thoughts, "How old art thou?" Indeed, I am old enough to be

wiser and better than I am. Now I am turned of three-score, I have no right to expect that my abilities either for preaching or writing will continue very long. The shadows of evening cannot be very distant from me. It is therefore probable that the "Messiah" will be my last book from the press; and if so, I take leave of the public with a noble subject. Surely I am bound to wish, that while my lips or my fingers can move, His name and His grace should employ my thoughts, my words, and my pen; and especially my last words, whether in the pulpit, in the parlour, or in my bed, and so from the press. What do I live for, but to bear a frequent public testimony to Him, and to commend Him to my fellow-creatures? And it pleases me to think, that when I can speak and write no more, I have some testimonies to bequeath to posterity. Possibly some poor sinner, after my departure, may be won to seek His face, by reading what He has done for my soul; or what He has enabled me to publish concerning His compassion and His power.

My dear was mostly confined to the house for above a month; at present she is better, thanks to the great Physician. We shall soon enter upon the important business of removing from Charles'-Square, to No. 6. of Coleman Street Buildings: we have a term of ten years in the house, a long while to look forward to, especially at my time of life. I long to attain to a habit of living with the Lord by the day; to depend no more upon to-morrow than upon yesterday; to hold myself in constant readiness; to be willing to go at a minute's warning, and leave all behind me in His hands, or, (if such were his appointment,) to be willing to stay and see those whom I love go before me. All this looks pretty enough upon paper; but to be thus united to His will, and to rejoice in Him under any possible change,

would be an attainment indeed! perhaps none of us can fully reach it till we arrive (where my dear Eliza Cunningham stood two days) at the threshold of glory. However, we may approach nearer and nearer to such a frame of mind, and every step towards it is preferable to thousands of gold and silver. Please to give our love to Mrs. R. I am glad she is where she is; that she is pleased with her situation, and likely to please Mrs. T. I had a good hope it would be mutually agreeable. But I must leave the rest of the paper for my dear, only adding my best love. I am in deed and in truth,

Your affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

21st March, 1786.

LETTER XII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BY the time this reaches you, I hope you will have received ten sets of the "Messiah." I hope you and dear Mrs. T. will each of you accept a set, as a token of my love, and a peppercorn acknowledgement of my obligations. The "Messiah" is advertised, and will be published on Thursday next. Thus the Lord has graciously granted a desire which was warm upon my heart. My mind was much engaged to undertake this subject, and when I had began it, I could not help feeling a wish that I might be preserved to finish it. Help me, dear sir, to praise Him, and afford me your prayers that my attempt may be crowned with His blessing. The selling price of the two volumes will

be in boards, half a guinea; bound in calf, twelve shillings:

We have been near a month in our new house, and begin to feel ourselves at home. Through mercy, we were favoured in our removal with tolerable health, and were preserved from painful incidents. This is the fourth dwelling in which the Lord, in His providence, has placed me since I left off the sea, in the year 1754. My history is briefly expressed in Deut. xxxii. 10. and in Isaiah xlii. 16. He found me in a waste howling wilderness indeed! He has led me about into a variety of situations, and in them all He watched over me, and kept me as the apple of His eye. When I was blind, He led me in ways which I knew not, and which no mortal could have supposed were likely to bring me where I am. I was once an utter stranger to the paths of truth and righteousness, but in a wonderful manner He drew and guided me into those paths which I had not known; and though my heart is prone to wander, He has kept me with a high hand, so that I have not wholly declined from them. How often has He made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight! These things has He done for me, as I am encouraged to hope He will continue to do them, for His promise is, "I will not forsake them."

I avow a warm desire of seeing S. in the course of this Summer, should opportunity be afforded. But Mrs. Newton, though she loves our friends there (especially at P.) no less than myself, does not think her spirits strong enough as yet to return to a place, where almost every person, and every object, would forcibly recall the image of dear Eliza Cunningham to her mind. But if the Lord judges it proper for me

to visit you, he can easily over-rule this difficulty. It is our mercy that he has absolute power over our hearts, and can strengthen us for whatever he calls us to. At present we must wait. If, towards July or August, she should find herself stronger, and I can procure a proper supply for a couple of Sundays, I shall be glad to come. In the mean time accept our best love, which we always feel in exercise when the name of Mr. and Mrs. T. is in our thoughts, which is very frequently.

I am your much obliged and affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street Buildings,
18th May, 1786.

Mrs. H. S. a particular friend of ours, as Mrs. R. can tell you, is advised to put herself into the salt water. We promised to enquire if you could procure her board in some quiet serious family; for she wishes to be without care, and to have somebody near her to converse with, who would speak the language of Canaan.

LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

YOU might well expect to hear from us before now; I should have let you know that the carpet came safe, which is all I have to say of it. How it looks, how it fits, and how much it is admired, I leave my dear to inform you; I suppose she will likewise thank you for your trouble.

Carpets and such fine things lie out of my department. The path through this wilderness is not spread

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with carpets ; if it were, shoes of iron and brass would be unnecessary, and if they were not needful, the Lord would not have provided them.

But He knows the way is rough, and provides accordingly. He trod it before us, and has left upon it the marks of his footsteps for our instruction and encouragement. May we follow him cheerfully ; as He passed through sufferings to glory, so shall his people ; but how different is the cup which he puts into our hands, from that which he drank for our sakes !

“ Our sufferings are not worth a thought, when, Lord, compared with thine ! ”

At present my path is remarkably smooth. My health good, my dear pretty well, Betsy well too. A peaceful united family at home, kind friends abroad, bread in the cupboard. Some liberty in the pulpit, some tokens of the Lord's presence in the congregation, and a mind, through mercy, so well satisfied with my situation, that there is not a person upon earth with whom I would wish to change. And all this heightened by the consideration (which is seldom long out of my thoughts) of what I was, and where I was, when the Lord first began to draw me to himself. Verily I am a debtor. I seem to have nothing to ask for myself, but for a more thankful, dependant, humble, and active spirit in his service. Our friend Mr. Johnston will, I believe, go chaplain to the proposed settlement in New Holland, and have the honour to be the first man who is to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the Southern Hemisphere. He did not seek this service ; it was proposed to him, and he has felt the importance of it, and the difficulties attending it. Yet he does not decline it. I hope his call is not from man only, but from the Lord. It is a call like that of Abraham, to forsake all that is dear to

him, and to venture himself upon the promises and power of the Lord. He seems to be in every respect a fit person, and I believe his views are so upright, that the Lord will not permit him to take a step of so much consequence, unless it be agreeable to His will. We often think of dear Mrs. T. and of the hour which is before her. I trust the same gracious Lord who has been with her in former times, will support her and appear for her again, and that you will again invite us to praise Him on her behalf. Every answer to prayer which he affords is an encouragement to call upon him again, and then again, even as long as we live; for as we shall need his help, so he has promised to help those who put their trust in him.

I must conclude with assuring you, that I am,

Your affectionate and obliged servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

27th October, 1786.

LETTER XIV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I KNOW not, but I suppose the time cannot be very far distant, when we may hope to receive pleasing information respecting dear Mrs. T. as you were kind enough to favour me with a letter last time, that as I wish to help you with my prayers as I am enabled, so I may join with you in praise. It is written, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in the seventh, no evil shall touch thee."

We are sorry for poor C.* but hope what is past

* A poor widow woman, well known to Mrs. T. when on her death bed, requested her to do all she could for her three orphans, which

will be a timely warning to her, and that she will have reason to be very thankful that she is yet continued in your family, though not with you. Alas! how foolish are the bargains which we make with sin! nothing is gained by them but sorrow and trouble.

I am too late to inform you of our friend Johnston's

was readily agreed to. The two girls were taken into Mrs. T.'s family, and though very young at the time, I remember the boy was taken care of till he became old enough to be a footboy in the family; but becoming unruly, he was sent to sea, and I believe good accounts were received of him some time after. The eldest daughter, after every thing being tried to make her a good girl, and the best advice given, left the family, bent on her own destruction, and, shocking to relate, some time after was found dead in a ditch, near that house where she might have been happy. My heart indeed is pained, while I reflect on what must have been the feelings of this unhappy creature, breathing her last, unattended, and exposed perhaps to an inclement night, near the neat little cot where her mother died in peace, looking unto Jesus, and happy in believing her children would be led to seek Him as their best friend, and whom she found faithful to his promise, "I will never leave thee, no, never, never forsake thee," and this poor girl must have felt, by her own disobedience, she had fallen a victim to sin. "The wages of sin is death." My father being an overseer, sent a man to convey the body for decent interment. I recollect clinging to my father while we listened to the man's sad tale when he returned. "O, sir, such an object of sin and filth I never saw; she was only fit to be touched with tongs, and I fear died for want; it was supposed she was trying to reach her parish." Thus ended a poor girl who forsook all good. I remember my mother saying one day, "if you thus waste bread, you will come to want a bit yourself." Alas! she was too true a prophetess. The other daughter went on well for some time (perhaps years) but one day her mistress lost some things, and after they were enquired for the poor girl was missing. Her mistress ordered her drawers to be examined, in which were found stolen articles, and after a diligent search, the poor conscience-stricken creature was discovered under a bedstead, bathed in tears. She was tenderly dealt with, though reproved, and warning given as a punishment; and afterwards taken into my brother's service, in which she lived many years with credit, and is now a respectable wife and mother. This is the young woman Mr. Newton refers to.

preferment, to go chaplain to Botany Bay, or rather, as I call it, to be Bishop of New Holland. He will have a very extensive diocese; and if he reaches the place, he will have the honour of being the first man who ever preached the Gospel in that immense space which we call the South Sea, which comprehends nearly one half of the globe. Never was the name of Jesus heard in those distant regions, except from the mouths of blaspheming sailors, in the few places where our ships have touched; but I hope it will soon be heard in New Holland, and who can tell what great events may follow from this beginning? Mr. Johnston seems a fit man; he did not seek the service, and he received the proposal with fear and trembling; but since he has accepted it, he has been in good spirits. Methinks I foresee that his voyage will not be without many hardships and difficulties; but the Lord whom he serves, and who, I hope, calls him to this business, is able to support and preserve him. He has lately married; his wife seems a fit companion, and has a respectable character, though some rather question her prudence in venturing upon such a voyage. His being married will, I hope, add to his comfort, if they arrive together in safety at Botany Bay; but it will probably give him many painful feelings while they are at sea, which he might not have had if he had gone single. To go to a coast where they must lodge in the woods till they can build houses; to have hundreds of convicts with them, and thousands of savages around them, seems not very inviting to flesh and blood; but Faith and Love can conquer *all* in the Lord's hands, and for his sake, even to undertake a voyage of near 20,000 miles. How different is my lot! I have a good house, plenty, peace, kind friends, and no hardships to struggle with.

We have the advantage in point of personal convenience, but Mr. Johnston has the post of honour; and if Paul was now living, I think it probable, he would rather go to Botany Bay than be a London rector.

It is, as you say, a good while yet to Summer. I should be very ungrateful, and indeed very foolish, if I did not like to visit P. whenever duty and Providence will allow; but it is probable, if I live till Summer, and can go abroad, I must take a different route. It will then be four years since I saw Olney, and I have many dear connections and openings for probable service in that neighbourhood. I can say no more upon this subject at present, than to thank you for your kind invitation, and to assure you that you are so upon our hearts that we could be willing to live and die with you. Wherever we are, I trust we shall always feel ourselves dear Mr. and Mrs. T.'s

Very affectionate and obliged

Friends and servants,

JOHN and MARY NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
12th December, 1786.

LETTER XV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE business of this letter is to thank you for your early information of dear Mrs. T.'s safety, and to assure you of the heartfelt satisfaction the news gave us, and to tell you that we desire and endeavour to join with you in praising the Lord for this new great mercy afforded to her and to you, and in praying that the child he has now given you may, if she is spared, live to be a comfort to you, and to know, love, and serve, and trust in the God of her parents. May the

Lord who preserved her to see the light of the world, number her among the lambs which he bears in his arms, and carries in his bosom, visit her in early life with the light of his salvation, and breathe his own Holy Spirit into her heart. And may you both be spared to see his peace bestowed upon all your children, and your children's children, Amen! The Psalmist's question ought to be often upon our minds, and I hope is often upon your's, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* Alas! poor are the best returns we can make him. Nor does he need our services; and our warmest acknowledgements are so disproportionate to our obligations, that instead of deserving his acceptance, they need his forgiveness; yet he is pleased to accept them; and is pleased when we make his former mercies a plea and encouragement to ask him for more, and when we determine by his grace, because he has heard and answered us so often, to call upon him as long as we live. You have much to praise him for, and especially that he has given you a heart and ability to be useful to others, and to excite them to praise him likewise.

Glad should we be if the Spring or Summer should bring you, or any dear to you, under our roof. We have a bed which we should think honoured by such company. If I could find stronger words than I have heretofore employed to express the pleasure it would give me to visit S. and especially P. I would now use them; but I need not tell you that I am not my own, and that my movements, if I can move at all this year, must be directed, not by my own inclinations, but by what I believe in conscience to be my path of duty; and this will probably lead me, if I leave London, to the neighbourhood of Olney; and I am morally sure, neither duty nor prudence will permit me to

attempt two journeys in one Summer. I could not be happy even at P., if my heart told me that I ought to be somewhere else. At present, therefore, I have not the least expectation of seeing dear Mr. and Mrs. T., unless I may hope to see you in London. Through the Lord's blessing upon my last visit to you, I have no plea or pretence for bathing in the salt water. Indeed, you need not press me to come down; your kindness this way is like spurring a free horse, who needs a bridle more than a spur, when I think of my friends at P. I was not sure I could write so much without interruption, but I must now conclude, commending you and your's to the Lord's blessing, and assuring you that we do, and I hope always shall, feel ourselves,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

Friends and servants,

JOHN and MARY NEWTON.

Coleman-Street Buildings,

25th January, 1787.

LETTER XVI.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IT is not a quarter of an hour since I received your letter, and I am already beginning to answer it. I hope you will allow that for once at least, I am tolerably punctual. Not having a glass in my study, I cannot tell whether I blushed while I read your charge against me for neglect; however, I am about to amend immediately.

I wrote the above four lines on Saturday; then

company came in, and I was forced to lay my pen by, as may be the case, perhaps, twenty times before I can finish my letter. As to our visiting P., inclination says the sooner and the oftener the better. But I am not at my own disposal, and the pleasure it would give us, must depend upon circumstances not in my own power.

We all hope, by-and-bye, to have new nerves not subject to complaint. In the mean time, if the Lord is pleased to sanctify the infirmities to which our present mortal frame is subject, we shall have cause to praise him at least, no less for the bitter than the sweet. I am convinced in my judgment, that a cross or a pinch somewhere or other, is so necessary to us, that we cannot go on well for a considerable time without one. We live on an enchanted ground, are surrounded with snares, and if not quickened by trials, are very prone to sink into formality or carelessness. It is a shame it should be so, but so it is, that a long course of prosperity always makes us drowsy. Trials therefore are medicines, which our gracious and wise Physician prescribes, because we need them; and he proportions the frequency and the weight of them to what the case requires. Many of his people are sharply exercised by poverty, which is a continual trial every day, and all the year round. Others have trials in their families. They who have comfortable firesides, and a competence for this world, often suffer by sickness, either in their own persons, or in the persons of those they love. But any, or all of these crosses, are mercies, if the Lord works by them to prevent us from cleaving to the world, from backsliding in heart or life, and to keep us nearer to himself. Let us trust our Physician, and he will surely do us good. And let us thank him for all his pre-

scriptions, for without them our soul-sickness would quickly grow upon us.

I sympathize with Mr. and Mrs. K. in their trials, yet I know they will profit by them. I hope Miss K.'s complaint will find relief, but it is better to have a stiff neck with the grace of God, than to be stiff-necked in the sense in which many young people are, who can move their heads freely enough. I hope it is a mercy that she bears the yoke awhile in her youth, and when the affliction has answered the good end for which it was sent, the Lord can easily remove it.

I now take up the pen for the fourth time, and as I mean to send my letter to-morrow, I must make a finish to-night. What shall I say to fill up? Let me commend you and your's to the grace and care of our Lord Jesus. They that dwell under the shadow of His wings shall be safe. His service is perfect freedom; in His favour is life. May his name be precious to your heart! and may you have such increasing knowledge of his person, character, and offices, that beholding his glory in the Gospel glass, you may be changed into his image, drink into his spirit, and be more conformable to him. The highest desire I can form for myself, or my friends, is, that he may live in us, we may live to him, and for him, and shine as lights in a dark world. To view him by faith, as living, dying, rising, reigning, interceding, and governing for us, will furnish us with such views, prospects, motives, and encouragements, as will enable us to endure any cross, to overcome all opposition, to withstand temptation, and to run in the way of his commandments with an enlarged heart. And yet a little while, and he will put an end to our conflicts and fears, and take us home to be with him for ever. Thus, by the power of his blood, and the word of

his testimony, we shall be made more than conquerors, and in the end obtain the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

The Lord bless you, dear madam, and Mr. T., and all who are dear to you, and reward you abundantly for all your kindness to me and mine.

I am sincerely,
Your very affectionate and obliged
Friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street Buildings,
24th April, 1787.

LETTER XVII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE been too long silent, but indeed I have not forgotten you. I hope we never can forget our dear friends at P. and S. My heart jumped last Sunday at the sight of Mr. K. and I hoped he would have called upon me, but I suppose he could not find leisure, and is by this time returned to you. I had a heap of questions to ask him concerning you and your's, but I mean now to apply to yourself.

Let it not be long before you inform me how you and Mr. T. and all your family are. I hope the young ones grow and thrive like olive plants, and that the elder branches of the family are planted, and planting in the Lord's vineyard, and promise to be trees of righteousness, and to bear fruit in their old age.

We are all much as we were, when we last saw you,

only about a year and a month older ; that is so much the nearer to that gate, which death will ere long open, to introduce us to an eternal state. It is a solemn thought. How new and untried the passage ! How inconceivable the prospect beyond it ! Formerly I have supposed, that if I lived beyond the age of sixty, the nearness and importance of that change which I might then reasonably expect could not be far off, would be continually upon my mind. But now that I am near sixty-three, I find myself little more affected by it, than I was thirty years ago. I may now be sure, that if grace does not weaken my attachment to the things of time, an advance in years will not do it. I am an inconsistent creature, and should be condemned out of my own mouth, by what I preach to others, if the Lord were strict to mark what is amiss. But I trust I am not under the law, but under grace. He knows my frame, that it is altogether shattered and defiled, and that I have no *plea* to offer in my own behalf ; and therefore he has mercifully provided one for me, on which my soul desires wholly to rely. I have sinned, but Christ has died, has risen, and is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, and upon the warrant of his own word, I venture my all upon Him. I could complain much of myself, but you cannot help me, therefore I forbear. I would rather invite you to join with me in praise. "Come magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his holy name together." He found us when we sought him not ; *then* we began to seek him, and *then* he was pleased to be found by us. He has guided us by his eye, guarded us by the way, restored us when wandering, revived us when fainting, healed us when wounded. He has known our souls in adversity, helped us in all our difficulties, comforted and supported us under all our sorrows. If

we look around us, how are we distinguished by the mercies of his Providence; our wants supplied, our wishes almost prevented; comforts and friends on every side, and the green pastures of his ordinances near and frequent to the refreshment of our souls. If we look forward, what unspeakably greater blessings! We cannot conceive a thousandth part of what is signified by the white robes, the golden harps, the balm of life, the rivers of pleasure, which are prepared for the faithful followers of the Lamb! Can any thing enhance the value of these blessings and these hopes, or heighten our obligations for them? Yes, the consideration of the way in which they become our's. The smallest and greatest of them are all the price of blood.

“ He sunk beneath our heavy woes
 To raise us to a throne;
 There's not a gift His hand bestows,
 But cost his heart a groan!”

And now, my dear madam, what shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits? Ourselves, surely. At best it is but a poor return; but let us give Him the whole. Two methods he points out to us, by which to shew our gratitude, which is all that we *can* do, for we cannot properly *serve* Him who is all-sufficient. The first is, that we make his bounty to us the pattern and the motive of our bounty towards our fellow-creatures, and that we devote and employ our time and talents, in every possible way, according to our situation, to promote the good of others. That we live no more to ourselves, but aim at being useful and subservient to his merciful designs. The second is, that we aim to shew forth the power of his grace, and the tendency of his Gospel, by a spiritual, humble, meek and holy conversation, by watching unto prayer, that

our tongues, our tempers, our pursuits, may all bear witness for us to his praise, that we have received the grace of God in truth, and that our light may so shine before men, that he may be glorified. The Lord bless you all.

I am, my dear madam,
Your most affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street Buildings,
27th October, 1787.

LETTER XVIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

MRS. NEWTON has occasion to write to you about matters which do not lie within my sphere; but as she thought she should not fill the paper, she invited me to begin, and when I can find time, I want little persuasion to write to you. I thank you for your favour of the 12th; it gave us the sincerest pleasure to hear by it, and from Mr. Romaine, of the welfare of you and all your family.

This last Summer we could not once get further than ten or twelve miles from home. I was prevented taking a longer journey partly from the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of procuring a proper supply for my church, and partly by the state of my dear's health. Next Summer is at a great distance yet. Should we be spared to see it, and should we be able to go abroad, our first visit must be to Olney; it will be the fifth year since I was there; and this very week Lord Dartmouth has given the living to a very particular friend of mine, Mr. James Bean. With

him I can make an exchange, and shall therefore be freed from any difficulty respecting a supply; whether I shall be able to make two visits abroad in one year, must depend upon circumstances, but I think it rather improbable. But after I have been at Olney, my own inclination, if I am permitted to follow it, would certainly lead me to S. Last Wednesday I preached the annual Sermon to the Book Society at my own church. Mr. A. was there, and spoke to me in the vestry afterwards. If he had not prevented me, by telling me his name, I was just going to say, "Dear Mr. K. how glad I am to see you!" I think I never saw two persons, not of the same lineage, so like each other. I knew he was related to your family, but did not recollect, till he was gone, that he is your own brother. I believe I told him that I should be glad to see him in Coleman-Street; I hope I did, but the vestry was full of people, and I was obliged to speak to them, as it were, all at once; and at such times, especially when I am just come down from the pulpit, I scarcely know what I say or do. I think if a cat could speak, and should tell me she came from P., I should quickly take her up and caress her for your sake. Surely then, it would give us joy to receive any that are near and dear to you, or Mr. T. under our roof. Yes, madam, you are greatly indebted to the Lord's goodness, and so are we. Our returns are very unsuitable to the mercies we receive, and I am sure you think the same of your's. Our *all* is little, our *best* is defiled. But I know what it is, when I have been greatly obliged to an earthly friend, to be glad if I can do any thing, and at the same time sorry that I can do no more, - to show my gratitude. If the Lord has given us a willing mind, he will graciously accept, not according to what we have not, but to what

we have. The expression of the woman's love in Mark xiv. was no very great affair, but our Lord was pleased to say, "She hath done what she could." Verse 8. The Lord help us to do faithfully what we can, and then may he enable us to do more!

But I must retire to give place to my dear. I will not however leave her to tell you that I am,

Very sincerely, and with good reason,

Dear madam,

Your affectionate and much obliged servant;

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street Buildings,
24th November, 1787.

LETTER XIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE chief reason of my writing just at this time, is to enclose you Lord Dartmouth's answer. We have met with no extraordinary change since my last, which is a mercy in such a changing world. Mrs. N. still continues confined and poorly; but many houses have been made houses of mourning every week, while she is still spared. This we are sure of, that our trials might be heavily increased in a few minutes, by some stroke which we are not aware of; and considering how we are exposed on every side, we have reason to praise the goodness of our Lord and Shepherd. His eye is upon us, his arm is around us, and it is He alone who protects us from the evils of the night, and from the arrow that flieth by day. To him be all the praise!

We were glad to have a peep at Mr. K. Our love to him and his. By him I sent you a Sermon I published. I have since printed a pamphlet on the Slave Trade, which I know not how to send you. I believe it is too big for a frank, and I think it is not worth making into a coach parcel. But I suppose you will see it soon, as the committee in London upon the slave business, have reprinted 3000 copies, to be dispersed about the kingdom. I hope this inhuman traffick (for so I must call it, though once deeply concerned in it myself) will be, if not immediately, yet before long, abolished.

Oh, my friend, what slaves were we, and at what a price are we redeemed! Those whom the Son makes free, are free indeed. They have at present, a gracious liberty from the guilt and burden of sin, from servile fear and heart-rending anxiety; and a liberty of access to the throne of grace. And then awaits them a *glorious* liberty, when sin, sorrow, death, and every other evil shall be swallowed up in victory. Such a prospect is worth living for, though the present life be full of trouble; and it is worth dying for, notwithstanding the reluctance of our frail natures to the idea of death, with all its painful fore-runners.

May we have grace to gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober, and hope to the end; that we may live while we do live; that we may be burning and shining lights; may inwardly burn with a spirit of love and devotedness to our God and Saviour, and shine outwardly by a conversation becoming the Gospel, and breathing benevolence to our fellow-creatures; that God may be glorified in us and by us, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord bless both you and Mrs. T. and all your

children. My dear, and I, and B. love you dearly, and I am always glad in their name, and my own, to subscribe myself,

Dear sir,

Your most affectionate and obliged servant,
JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
8th February, 1788.

LETTER XX.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IT is high time to thank you for the bacon, which we made no scruple of charging to you. If we knew neither who sent us a token of kindness, nor from whence it came, though we might possibly guess wrong, (for the Lord has given us many friends,) yet Mr. and Mrs. T. would naturally occur to our thoughts. I hope we shall always preserve your names in the number of those who are nearest and dearest to our hearts. Mrs. Newton's health continues to be very precarious, and she is but seldom able to go abroad. I do not think her complaints are at all owing to the closeness of London, or the want of country air. Whether she will be able to travel this Summer, is in the Lord's hands. If she can, our route must be to Olney. I have not seen Olney (though many who love us there are still living) since the year 1783. Of course, it is long since we saw Mrs. Unwin or Mr. Cowper; and since Lord Dartmouth has given the living to my friend Mr. Bean, I have an additional motive for wishing to go there. But the way of man is not in himself; we cannot yet determine on any thing, but I hope the

Lord will guide us by his eye, and point out the path of duty by the leading of his providence. If I am permitted to see Olney this year, and should be able to travel next Summer, then, had I only inclination to consult, I should certainly be led to S. But I am not my own, and rejoice that I am not forced to choose for myself.

I hope that you, and Mr. T., and all your sons and daughters, from Mr. Walter to Miss Rebecca, are well ; and I hope Miss Sally and little John will not forget us, nor poor Miss Catlett, who would join in salutations ; but she has been absent almost a fortnight, at Milburn, near Royston. Our little family, by the Lord's blessing, are so happily united, that when any of us are abroad, home is like a harpsichord that has two or three broken strings.

I hope, my dear madam, that you are sitting under the tree of life, enjoying its shade, feeding upon its fruits, and drinking of the streams that flow by its side. The Apostle wished his friends grace and peace, and he could wish them no more. Peace of conscience as opposed to guilt ; peace as opposed to anxiety ; a quiet hope and trust in the Lord's management ; Isaiah xxvi. 3. Psalm cxii. 7.—a peaceful disposition, enabling us to cultivate and maintain peace in all our relations and connexions. In short, a peaceful heart and a peaceful home are privileges belonging to the family of faith, and should be earnestly sought by prayer. Grace may include peace ; it includes every thing else that is worth our desiring ; communion with the Lord, conformity to his image, wisdom and ability to improve the circumstances of every day to his glory, our own benefit, and the good of the church and society, as far as our influence extends. May this grace

flourish in you abundantly ! may this peace of God reign in your heart !

I need not tell you what sad storms we have had in London, and that some tall cedars, both in the religious and commercial world, have been laid low. The history of every day is a striking commentary upon Scripture. The subject of late much insisted upon, has been, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. We have seen some who *would be rich* ; they were resolved to be rich if possible ; we have seen some fall into divers temptations and snares ; we see some who have pierced themselves through with many sorrows ; it will be well if none are finally drowned in perdition. A man *may* be rich, with the Lord's blessing, and be comfortable to himself, and a blessing to others ; a few are so. But they that *will* be rich, are usually both miserable and mischievous.

With a repetition of our best love to Mr. T., and yourself, and all your family, and Mr. K.

I remain, my dear madam,
Your most obedient and obliged servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.
26th May, 1788.

LETTER XXI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

AFTER an absence of five years, the Lord permitted us to visit Mr. Cowper, Mrs. Unwin, and my friends at Olney. We left London the 8th of July, and returned the 15th of August. Mercy and good-

ness accompanied us all the way, and brought us home in peace and safety. We had a very pleasant tour, and the journey was made useful to Mrs. Newton in point of health. She has been better since her return, than for any equal space of time since our parting with you at Devizes.

We are now fast advanced in the 39th year of our joint reign, still preserved, still surrounded with comforts and mercies, and, through the goodness of Him, whose blessing alone can make people of one mind in a family, our mutual affection still unabated. But as we are now going, though almost insensibly, down the hill of life, it is high time to be in good earnest, sensible that this world cannot be our rest, and to live with the prospect of a better state continually in our view. Thirty years ago I could not believe, that if I was spared to pass the age of sixty, I should be capable of being taken up with little things, as I still, alas! find myself. I am ashamed to find my affections still cleaving to the earth, and that I can still be pleased with the possibility, for it is little more than a possibility, that I may yet live a few years longer. If this was simply from a desire of serving the Lord as long, and as much as I can while here, it might be tolerable; but to be willing, and almost to wish that I may continue here a great while, because I am so much at my ease in temporals, is certainly a proof that there is too much of the earthly and the sensual still remaining in my heart.

When will our good friends come to London? We long to see you both; hope you will remember that we have an apartment for you at No. 6, if you will do us the favour to accept it, and make shift with it: we cannot talk of great things in the world's way, but through the Lord's goodness, peace and plenty dwell

under our roof; and as I hope you do not think us made of stone, I need not say much about the welcome you may expect and will receive; the pleasure it would give us, and the attention we should hope to pay to every thing that might make your residence with us tolerable.

My own health still continues very good. Betsy likewise is very hearty. We unite in a tender of our best love, and we desire to be affectionately remembered to every branch and twig of your family; likewise Mr. K. and his family. I am very often amongst you in spirit, and often long to be with you in person. If I had only to consult inclination, I should almost live with you. I hope, however, to live with you for ever by-and-bye.

We are comfortable at St. Mary's. There are various winds of error and false doctrine abroad, and storms of discord and dissention have severely shaken some religious connections in the city; but the Lord has mercifully sheltered us from being affected by them, and we go on quietly. From the number and attention of the hearers, I hope there is good done, and now and then something encouraging comes to my knowledge, but in general it is but little that ministers in London can know of their congregations, further than by their outward appearance.

Oh, my dear friends, are we not verily debtors for innumerable mercies and blessings, but especially for the Gospel, without which we could not have known the true value or right enjoyment of any thing else? but the knowledge of a Saviour and a good hope of our acceptance in Him, like the light of the sun, gilds every object. We are not only preserved and provided for in common with multitudes, but we know the hand that guards and feeds us, and can receive

every instance of His kindness in our temporal concerns as a token and a pledge of his love, and of the better things prepared for us within the veil, and all that we have, and all that we hope for, is not simply given to us. He shed his blood to redeem us from guilt and bondage; without this we could have had neither title nor capacity for happiness; how would it heighten our relish for all our comforts and prospects, if we could always think of the procuring price, and feel the force of that thought which Dr. Watts so well expresses:—

“ He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
 To raise us to his throne;
 There’s not a gift His hand bestows,
 But cost his heart a groan.”

I have not known my dear so well for the same space as of late, for a great while past, but this is a changing world, and without changing dispensations we should be poor changeable creatures ourselves. The Lord best knows what is good for us. Oh! for grace to yield ourselves simply and cheerfully to his management. Hitherto he has helped us, and all his paths towards us have been mercy and truth. What reasons have we to praise him for the past, and to trust him for the rest!

I must now take my leave with repeating best love and thanks. May the Lord bless you and your’s abundantly. Amen. Pray for us, and believe me to be

Your very affectionate and much obliged,
 JOHN NEWTON.

27th September, 1788.

I have not seen Mr. B. since his return; he has repeated seasons of serious thoughts, and has heard

the Lord knocking at the door of his heart, but worldly connections are great hinderances, and not easily broken through; he speaks much of the kindness he received from you, and the pleasure he had in his short acquaintance with you. I think myself obliged to you on his account; I encouraged him to call, because I knew he would be greatly pleased, and I likewise wished him to hear Mr. K.

LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR SIR,

WE thank you for your note, and the expression of your kindness. Our dear C. is much recovered. She was at church last Sunday evening, when I preached a thanksgiving Sermon on her account from Psalm cxvi. 1, 2., which she was enabled to hear with composure.

When I compare the state in which she lay the last week in December, with the present comfortable prospect of her re-establishment, I am like them that dream. A restoration so unhopèd for, is almost like a resurrection from the dead. What a striking proof of the Lord's power and compassion, and that he hears prayer—even such prayers as mine. I believe I told you when she was at the worst, I durst not importunately pray for her life. I was enabled to resign the event to His wise and holy will. Under this limitation I prayed for her recovery, till appearances gave me strong reason to think that it was his pleasure to remove her. But when the pulse forgets to beat, and

when breath seems to fail, still to him belong the issues from death. His word of power revived her, and I trust she will live to praise him, both for the trial and the deliverance.

Mrs. Newton's health is very variable. Yesterday we entered the fortieth year of our marriage connection. At our time of life we must not wonder if indispositions are rather more frequent than before. But the Lord, who is rich in mercy, knoweth our frame and feelings. He can prepare us for his whole will, support us under it, and sanctify it to us. Oh! this is the great desideratum, to be surely and comfortably interested in the promise, which engages that all things shall work together for our good, to give us a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, so that at last we may attain to his eternal joy. *That* will make rich amends for all the trials we can meet with by the way.

I feel myself well disposed to accept your kind invitation to P. But if I am not quite afraid, I am at least unwilling, to look too far forward, while I know not what a day may bring forth. If, some time after Easter we should be able to travel, I shall have P. in my thoughts, and it will not be my fault if we do not spend a few weeks under your hospitable roof. But we, our time, and our movements, are in the Lord's hands.

I remain,
Your most affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

13th Feb. 1789.

LETTER XXIII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

WE want a little S. or P. news, and particularly to know how Mrs. T. and Miss Esther are. We heard of Miss Esther's illness with concern, and of her intended journey to Bath. If it answered the hoped-for end, I shall be glad, and I hope, thankful. I trust the Lord has her heart, and then I am sure, whatever the event of her illness may be, it will be well for her. But the late instance of the Lord's power and goodness, afforded in my house, encourages me to hope, and, with submission to his will, to pray, that she may not die, but live and declare his wonderful works. Even if she was brought as dear C. was, still I have seen that to Him belong the issues from death. Our dispensation was very trying for a time, but I trust we have all now cause to praise him for it. May it be so with you and your's!

Now, my dear madam, I come to you. I hope you are in tolerable health and spirits, and that the remembrance of the support and deliverances you have had in former hours of trial, may encourage you to look forward with composure and comfort upon the hour now before you. The power and compassion of the Lord are still the same. He is still mighty to save, and still he knoweth them that put their trust in him. We hope to hear favourably of you soon.

I still retain my wish to visit S. this year, if the Lord please. When I told you so last, I had thoughts of seeing you in the Spring, but unavoidable and unalterables will not permit me to leave London before

the time when you expect to be confined—we must therefore wait till you get abroad again, and what may take place during the interval, who can tell? The Lord knows. May we be willing to leave all our concerns in his wise and faithful hands, to live to him and for him to-day, and to trust him for the events of to-morrow. If you were to see Mrs. N. you would not think her worse than when you left her, but she could not leave London now, if there were no other hinderance than the state of her health. When the Lord is pleased to make her able, I trust she will be willing to come to you.

I remain,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

16th April, 1789.

LETTER XXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE now to thank you for a flitch of bacon and a kind letter. I have time for little more than to remove your friendly apprehensions for Mrs. Newton. I praise the Lord she is not worse, but rather better; and my hope of her taking a journey to P. before the end of Summer, is much stronger than when I first mentioned it.

My thanksgiving Sermon, preached the 23rd of April, will be published in three or four days. I shall order fifty may be sent to you. It is my earnest desire that you and Mrs. T. and each of your sons and daughters will accept of one, as a pepper-corn token of my love..

I beg you to present one, in my name, to Mr. K., and one to Miss K.; and to send two to Priestland's for Mr. E. and Miss G. I did not for some weeks intend to publish my Sermon; but I afterwards considered that the occasion was extraordinary; and that though it was not otherwise necessary to print, there could be no harm in adding my testimony of attachment to the king, and my thankfulness to the Lord, for the great blessing afforded to the nation, in restoring him to health and government.

We long to hear a favourable account of Mrs. T. I hope the event will be much upon my mind till I receive the good news, and that then we shall cordially join in praise to the God who heareth prayer. Mrs. N., dear C., and myself, always think of you and Mrs. T. as we ought, with great affection and gratitude, and

I am, my dear sir,

Your most affectionate and obliged servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

June 19th, 1789.

LETTER XXV.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THIS world seems all uncertainty, yet all is under a direction unspeakably gracious and infallibly wise. I hoped Mrs. Newton would have been able to travel before now; I should be glad also to get a little fresh air for myself and Miss Catlett, and I feel a particular desire, for many reasons which you can easily

guess, to take the air of P. All this the Lord knows, and he permits me to tell him what I feel, or fear, or wish. But when I have done so, it becomes me to submit all to him, and to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." I aim to say this from my heart, and to account it not only my duty, but my privilege, to prefer His choice to my own.

I am not without hopes that we shall soon be able to move. I must plan a little, and then, if the Lord does not put a negative on my plan, I shall hope and trust that we move with his good leave, and for some good purpose. My present design, if my dear is able, and no providential *ifs* prevent us, is to go to Reading on the 25th or 26th of this month, and from thence towards S, on the 28th; but I will write again by or before the 23rd; in the mean while shall be glad to hear if the time I have fixed will suit you.

Had things been at my disposal, I should have come sooner; that is, before Mr. T. was well enough to receive us; for I did not apprehend he was so ill as you intimate. I praise the Lord that he is better, and that the illness did not come till you were recovering your strength. The Lord graciously adjusts all our concerns, if we can but peaceably and thankfully submit to his management. Our times are in his hands. Vastly more than we are aware of depends upon this. To me who am short-sighted, it may seem an indifferent matter whether I set off this week or the next; on a Tuesday or on a Wednesday. But there may be consequences unknown to me, which may make the difference between one week or another of great importance. Is it not a comfort to a blind man to have a guide whom he may fully and safely trust?

Mrs. N. has not yet been down stairs, but I think she could, if needful, and I hope she will soon be able

to shew herself at church, as a proof that our God is a hearer of prayer. We all join in best love to all, not forgetting Miss Charlotte, who I hope thrives and comes forward apace.

I am, my dear madam,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

August 10, 1789.

Possibly there may be reasons for deferring our journey a week later. The Lord knows.

LETTER XXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THUS far has the Lord answered prayer. Mrs. Newton, after nine months confinement from public worship, was enabled to appear at church yesterday. I accept this as a token for good, and I shall set out on our journey with more comfort; now she has been in the house of the Lord.

Let us mutually pray for a comfortable meeting. I promise myself both pleasure and advantage in converse with Mr. and Mrs. T. and Mr. K., and shall rejoice if I may be any way instrumental to the consolation of my friends. If the Lord afford us his presence, it shall be so. I ought to have much to say of his goodness; and I ought, now my day of life is far spent, and the night is approaching, to be earnest and diligent in pressing upon all around me, the

vanity of the present, and the importance of the unseen state.

We repeat our best love to you and your's as if named, hoping soon to tell you, by word of mouth, that I am sincerely,

Your obliged and affectionate
Friend and servant,
JOHN NEWTON.

27th August, 1789.

LETTER XXVII.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE Lord brought us safely home. We arrived about half-past-six, and found our family all well. Mrs. Newton is pretty well to-day. I was rather fatigued with the jolting, but a very good night has set me up again. How can I be sufficiently thankful to the Lord, who is the source of all the good I receive. I would thank him for the opportunity of seeing my dear friends at P. and S. once more, and for the comfortable month I spent with you; that Mrs. Newton's health was so tolerable upon the whole; and that we performed the journey, not only without harm, but without the smallest alarm; not so much as a horse stumbling once all the way out and home, and then found all in peace at our return.

Yet even these are small mercies, compared with the hopes and prospects afforded by the Gospel, and the love of Him who died for us upon the cross, and who visited us with the light of his salvation when we

were wandering in the dark paths of sin, and liable to perish. The Lord bless you and your's abundantly.

Your much obliged,

And very affectionate servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

3rd October, 1789.

LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR SIR AND MADAM,

YOU have both kindly desired me to write soon, therefore I will try; though sometimes a forced attempt to write is like setting a mill to work when there is nothing in the hopper; or rather like expecting the wheels to move without either wind or water. Your block-mill is very different in the inside from a house, and when the stream is right, the difference is very perceptible; then every part is in busy motion; but I have several times seen it fast asleep, and as quiet as a barn. A person who had never seen a mill might then suppose that the wheels and machinery were as firmly fixed as the beams on the roof. But the water, when it comes, sets every thing to work. Thus, what the Lord does in the hearts of his ministers and people, qualifies them to move under his gracious influence; but still, without him they can do nothing.

I am glad to hear that the amendment in Master William's eyes continues, likewise to hear that Mrs. M. was better than when you left her, though Dr. B. seems to entertain little hopes that she can recover. But we know all things are easy to the Great Physi-

cian, and that when we ask what he sees good and best for us upon the whole, he often performs wonders in answer to prayer. Oh how happy are we when we can leave all in his hands! As often as I look at dear C. I see a proof that he can effectually help when all human help and hope ceases. This *treatment*, as it is called, is a marvellous thing. I cannot reason about it. I stood it out as long as I could, but the obstinacy of indisputable facts at length silenced me, and my knowledge of Dr. Benamore's character satisfies me, that the means he uses, however unaccountable I may think them, cannot be unsuitable to the character of a Christian and conscientious man to employ.

I thought to have written a longer letter, but the mill must stop, if not for want of water, for want of time; I have been interrupted several times, and company is now waiting for me in the parlour. The key may possibly be found; the ring, I suppose is quite lost. No great matter—perhaps I looked at it too often: it always reminded me of dear Eliza, and perhaps might be something of an idol for her sake. She is deeply impressed upon my heart, and unless I could lose that likewise, I am in no danger of forgetting her.

The Lord bless you both in heart and house, in yourselves, in each other, in soul, in body, and in all your connections and concerns. Amen. Pray for

Your much obliged and affectionate,

J. and M. NEWTON.

No. 6.
18th October, 1790.

LETTER XXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A LETTER from Mr. M. last week informed me of your dear daughter's dismissal from this state of sin and sorrow. May he, and you, and all nearly concerned in this event, be enabled to say from your hearts, "Thy will be done." However sharp his dispensations may be to our feelings, we are well assured in our judgments, that he does all things wisely and well, and that all his paths are mercy and truth to them that fear him. She is gone a little before—we likewise are hasting onward. May we meet where neither sickness, pain, grief, temptation, nor sin can follow us!

I snatched time to write to Mr. M., but being just going into the country for a few days, was obliged to defer an answer to you till my return, but I have not forgotten you; I feel myself as a part of your family, and participate with you in your comforts and your griefs. I trust the Lord, who is always faithful to his promises, will support you under every trial, and equally sanctify to you both the sweet and the bitter of life. This is a chequered life. Every day mercies and comforts are renewed, and every day likewise has its cross; but we dare not say that our crosses are very heavy. In my ministry, which I ought to consider as the most important point, I am signally favoured. There I meet with very few trials, and many encouragements. I think St. Mary's has of late been fuller than ever, and the great attention of the audi-

tory, together with the liberty, which, for the most part, I am favoured with in preaching, gives me reason to hope that the Lord is amongst us, and that some good is going forward. There is a spirit in many of my hearers in town, which helps me more than all my books. This was wanting when I preached at S., and I felt the want of it. It is a mercy to be enabled to be in a measure faithful when abroad, but the *comfort* and pleasure of preaching I find mostly at home. But I have reason to be ashamed that I am so poor and ineffectual a preacher to my own heart; but perhaps if it were better with me in some respects, it might be worse in others. The Lord best knows what is needful to check the growth of those evil weeds, of pride and self-conceit, in my heart. That state which gives me daily, continual proofs of my poverty and weakness, may be the safest for *me*, though self might prefer very lively frames, and great manifestations; sensible comfort is desirable in itself, but every one is not fit to be trusted with much of it. The Lord shields me from violent temptations, and helps me, in a measure, to maintain a conscience void of offence. These are mercies which call for more praise and thankfulness than I have to offer. My hope is seldom shaken, and if I have not much sun-shine in my walk, I trust I have day-light to see my path; and though my defects, defilements, and omissions are innumerable, yet, as it is given me to trust in the Saviour for acceptance, pardon, and perseverance, for the most part I have peace at the bottom of all my conflicts; perhaps more than this, especially in my public way of life, surrounded as I am by kind and partial friends, might be dangerous, and make me more high-minded and self-sufficient than I already am. I am a sin-sick soul, and having been permitted to apply to an infalli-

ble Physician, who has graciously undertaken my case, it is best for me to leave him to prescribe and manage for me as he sees fit, and not be too forward in pointing out to him how I wish he should deal with me.

I am just now interrupted, and can only add my best wishes, prayers, love, and thanks to you and your's. I am most affectionately,

Your much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.

27th October, 1789.

LETTER XXX.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THE thought of seeing you in London gave us pleasure; but the thought that illness was the occasion of your coming, made it a mournful pleasure. It is well for my friends, as well as myself, that I can neither choose their dispensations nor my own. Though I know the necessity, and something of the advantage of afflictions, yet I should not permit those whom I love, to be sick, or in pain, or in grief, one hour in the year, if I could help it. Consequently, my foolish tenderness would greatly hurt them. I might as well expect they would continue in good bodily health a year without victuals, as to be preserved in a thriving state of soul for a year without trials. It is a mercy both to them and me, that we are under better direction and management than our own.

Mr. K. whispered a secret in our ears, which we kept close stopped up—that you were to be in town on Wednesday—and often that evening I listened at the door, in hopes Mr. T. would knock, or that somebody might be sent with a permission for me to come and see you. But he has informed us since, that you were too ill to fulfil your intention. I wish, my dear madam, you would no longer punish yourself with powerful medicines, which, when they do not give effectual relief, are probably hurtful, but come to London and try your son's doctor. His medicine has no taste, no violent operation, yet it has great effects, and seems equally applicable to all cases and constitutions; I suppose this is because all complaints may spring originally from one general cause—an obstruction in some part of the human frame. I had with reason, a good opinion of this wonderful method of cure, when I was at S., but now I can speak more positively; for I am acquainted with the principles upon which the science is founded, and can affirm them to be as rational and innocent as the art of making butter.

It is still true, as I said, that we are in the Lord's hands, and that when he is pleased to lay trouble upon us, it cannot be taken off without his leave, nor before his time. But when that time is come, he often inclines us to use the means which are most suited to relieve us, and perhaps puts it in our hearts at the right season, to point out the means to one another which he designs to make useful. It is with this hope that I write to you. I hope the Lord will greatly sanctify your present illness; then you will be the sooner well. For when affliction has answered the end for which his wisdom appointed it, we may humbly rely upon his goodness to remove it, for he will not let his people suffer without a need-be.

Well! it is an unspeakable mercy to be believers in Jesus; for to such, all things are engaged and over-ruled to work for good. If they have health, it is well; if they are sick, it is well likewise; the Lord loves them when he gives, and he loves them when he takes away. Their comforts are blessings, for they are sanctified to them by his promises and by prayer; their trials are also blessings, for they are sent to wean them from the world, and to draw their hearts nearer to himself. They afford them new proofs of his care over them, and of his power to support and deliver them. And though believers must suffer sometimes while here, the days of their mourning will soon be ended, and then all shall be well for ever.

I breakfasted lately with Sir Charles Middleton. He enquired with much kindness after Mr. T. and told me that he had Mr. T.'s friend to assist him in the Navy Office. But I must break off with a tender of love, and thanks, and best wishes, in which C. cordially joins.

I am, your affectionate and obliged

Friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.

19th February, 1790.

LETTER XXXI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It has been upon my mind to write to you for some time past. By staying till to-day, I can inform you that Mr. A. breakfasted with me this morning, and

leaves town to-day. As our acquaintance is new begun, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing him now and then, and I trust we shall be mutually glad to meet. Mrs. N. has been very poorly of late. We are called to the exercise of faith and patience, and the circumstances of her case still afford encouragement to pray for her recovery, with submission to the Lord's will. I hope our desires to submit to his will, are not from constraint, but from *real* though too faint views we are favoured with of his wisdom and goodness. I hope we neither wish nor dare to choose absolutely for ourselves, even if it were left to our choice. We are aware that afflictions spring not out of the ground, but that to those who desire to fear and love the Lord, they are tokens, not of wrath, but of favour; that there is a need-be for them, and that though at present not joyous but grievous to the flesh, they are designed, through his blessing sanctifying them, to yield *afterwards* the peaceable fruits of righteousness, when we have been duly exercised by them. The word "afterwards" intimates that this good effect may not be produced immediately. When he sends them for a gracious end, he will not remove them till that end be answered—and *then* they shall not be prolonged. In the mean time he promises to be with his people in their trouble, and to make their strength equal to their day, so that if pressed they shall not be cast down, or if cast down, they shall not be destroyed. I trust you will help us with your prayers.

You were told that Dr. B. informed Mr. F. that he had cured Miss K. I could not believe it possible. Mrs. Newton asked Mr. F., and he assured her that there was not the smallest foundation for such a report. I wish to be as cautious of receiving reports, as of receiving a thief into my house, for I find that nine

of them out of ten are utterly false and groundless ; and that when there is *some* truth in them, it is usually mixed with additions and misrepresentations. And too many people, who would scorn or fear to invent untruths, are too easily induced to circulate what is invented by others.

The Lord is good. His mercies are new every morning. We have one trial : I may almost say we have *but one*. But he affords us and continues to us a thousand blessings and comforts, which call for much thankfulness and praise. My history may be read in a small compass, in Deut. xxxii. 10—14. He found me in a waste howling wilderness—he has led me about, put me in various places and situations, and every succeeding change has been to my comfort and advantage. In mercy he has frequently stirred up my nest, shaken me in it, and forced me to fly to him, when I should otherwise have dropped into sleep and security. I hope he has instructed me. He certainly has kept me as the apple of his eye : he has provided well for me, and raised me to undeserved honour, even to preach the faith I once laboured to destroy. This I account the highest honour a sinner can attain to in the present life. Alas ! I must take in the 15th verse likewise. Often have I waxed fat and kicked, and it is owing to His goodness, not my own, that I have not utterly forsaken the God and Rock of my salvation. If I am saved at last, (and I humbly trust I shall,) it will be not only in defiance of my enemies, but in defiance of myself.

We were glad to hear from Mr. A. that you were all well, and shall hope for a line of confirmation under your own hand before long. Mrs. Newton rides out an hour or two in a coach in the evening, when the weather is fair, but cannot go to church or drink tea

with a friend. Through mercy she has good spirits, and a measure of patience, which I trust is given her from above, from him who knows her frame, and what is needful for her support.

I am,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

9th July, 1790.

LETTER XXXII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

MY mind is often at P., but it has been more so than usual to-day. This day twelvemonth you received us under your hospitable roof, and the month of September was filled up with proofs of your kindness. I trust we shall not cease to remember you both with affection and gratitude, while we are able to think. My dear has often said, why do you not write to Mr. and Mrs. T. ?—Not for want of good-will, I am sure ; but I know not well how to write. I am sensible that you wish to hear how she is, and I am at a loss to tell you. Let me begin with the pleasing side. Her spirits are good ; she is but seldom in much pain ; for the most part she sleeps tolerably well, and the Lord favours her with patience. Her husband and her child love her dearly ; her servants likewise shew her an affection and an attention which money could not purchase. Through the Lord's goodness I am able to procure whatever may have the least tendency to alleviate her trial or to meet her wishes. We have

many kind friends who sympathize with us, and pray for us. These are all great mercies, of which many whose illness is perhaps worse than her's, are destitute.

But she has the jaundice superadded to her principal complaint, frequent and great sickness at her stomach; and at a time when it is desirable she might take a double quantity of nourishment, she has often a loathing to food, so that it often requires great exertion to take the little food she can. You will not wonder therefore that she is very weak. Yet she is not confined to her bed, and is generally able to go a little way in a coach every afternoon, if the weather be fair. But the chief mercy to us both is, that we know in whose hands we are, and have access to a throne of grace to plead the promise of strength according to our day. There is nothing in her case at present according to appearances to discourage prayer and hope for her relief; but it is critical. I hope we desire to leave it with Him who does all things well. The flesh will have its feelings—but the Lord is near; he can, he does support; and if he is pleased to sanctify what he appoints, we shall one day praise him. I hope we desire to praise him now. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; and he who knows our path, considers our frame, and remembers we are but dust, is a friend indeed; able to help and to save to the uttermost.

We have lived together more than forty years; we cannot expect, surely we cannot desire, to live here always. The Good Husbandman will not cut down his corn till it be fully ripe. His hour therefore, whenever it comes, must be the fittest and the best—and till his hour comes, we are immortal. However low we may be brought, He can raise us again, for to the Lord our God belong the issues from death! I trust we shall have your prayers that our wills may be per-

fully united to his. It is a fixed and doubtless a wise appointment, that our sharpest temporal trials must grow out of our dearest comforts. Unmixed, unfading, happiness is not for this world. But blessed be God, he has likewise appointed that those who sow in tears shall in due time reap with joy. We seek a rest beyond the skies, in everlasting day. Then happiness will be without mixture, abatement, interruption, or end. Then we hope to weep no more. What reason have we, my dear friend, even while sorrowing, to be always rejoicing! A sinner saved from hell, his just desert, and who has the hope of eternal glory set before him, can have neither right nor reason to complain. But oh this sluggish heart of unbelief!

I hope the time when either of you will be watching the looks of the other, with the solicitude which I feel, is yet distant. But *it will come*. And when it does, the remembrance of the years you have passed together will be like a dream when one awakes—so transient, so beyond the power of recall! Then when flesh and heart are about to fail, when you are upon the point of taking leave of all that you have seen with your eyes, may the Lord be the strength of your heart and your portion for ever!

I would be thankful, that in this hour of trial, dear C. is favoured with perfect health. This is a great comfort to me. Our merciful Lord does not bring all upon us at once. When she was ill, my dear was able (and just able) to attend her: she is now repaid. Other calls constrain me to leave off. I may truly say my hand and heart are full.

I am always,

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

September 3rd, 1790.

My dear can sometimes eat a little fruit, and the doctor recommends it. If your walls can afford a few peaches, and you can spare a pine-apple to accompany them, I will thank you. These things can be bought in London, and we do not quite want what money can procure; but the circumstance of coming from P. would give them a peculiar relish, the taste of your kindness. She knows not of my mentioning them. She would be glad to know the title of the little book which contained the story of a little gleaner, and the other children's books.

LETTER XXXIII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

MRS. C. called last night, and brought the basket of fine peaches and pears, which looked and smelled as if they came from P. I examined the basket to the bottom for a letter, but was disappointed. I thank you however for the fruit, and for the pine-apples which you sent before, but my dear is quite sorry, and I am almost so, for the trouble I gave you. She saw the letter I sent, but I put down the fruit postscript afterwards, without her knowledge.

I hope you will write soon. I cannot say she is either better or worse than when I wrote last, but her spirits continue good. Our trial is long, but we are mercifully supported, and have much cause to be thankful. If the Lord please, she shall yet recover—there seems nothing directly to forbid the hope, if her appetite was but in a measure restored. I humbly

trust he will give a gracious issue in his own time, and that we shall one day say, He has done all things well. I entreat you now, not for pines or peaches, but for your prayers.

I did not doubt but Mr. T. would accept the bill I drew upon him in favour of Mr. L. and I thought they would like to know each other. I need not say that Mr. L. is a sensible ingenious man. His peculiar case has made him much known and noticed. His many difficulties and disappointments have formed him (by the Lord's blessing) to a spirit of cheerful dependance and undaunted perseverance, in a remarkable degree; and I cannot doubt but the Lord whom he serves and trusts, will bring him safely through all the changes and storms he meets with.

He made me both sorry and glad by his account of dear Mrs. T. I wish his easy recipe of hot water may effectually remove the complaint in her stomach. You know I have been a warm advocate for drinking hot tea.

After all, we are at the Lord's disposal, who knows what is most fit for our good. When health is better for us upon the whole than sickness, we shall be well. But when he sees sickness will be most for our advantage, all the doctors in town or country cannot prevent it, or remove it an hour sooner than is necessary to answer his gracious design; for he *will* do us good, even in defiance of ourselves, and however unpalatable the proper means may be to our taste. Mrs. T. gives her children food or fruit with pleasure; she has not the same pleasure in appointing them physic or blisters; but if these are deemed needful, because she loves her children, she will not be moved by the wry faces they may make, or the smart they may feel, to neglect the use of what the physician prescribes. Now

much of the skill of our heavenly Physician is seen in the reasonable application of those bitter medicines which we call afflictions. He knows that they are not joyous, but grievous, at the time. He likewise knows and considers our frame, remembers that we are but dust, and therefore he will proportion the dose exactly to the nature of the case, and the strength of the patient; or if he sees fit to double the dose, he can double the patient's strength to bear it.

The all-sufficiency of God is a pleasing subject: he can communicate his power to our weakness, so as to make us equal to the severest trial. He has enabled many of his servants to rejoice even in the flames. Creature comforts are like candles—they waste while they burn, go out one after another, and we are sometimes afraid of being left in the dark. Candles are useful in the night, or in a dark place. But if we enjoy the beams of the Midsummer Sun, we can make a good shift without candles. Thus if not only one or two of our earthly comforts were to fail us, but if the whole creation around us were destroyed, and you or I were the only creatures in the universe—the Lord, the Sun of the soul, could make us completely happy, and fill our capacities for happiness to the utmost, immediately from himself. In the present state we must feel, but if we are his, we need not fear. We may, yea, sometimes we *must* weep, but he will soon wipe all tears from our eyes. But I must break off. We send our love to all who bear the name of T. or K.

Ever your affectionate and most obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

23^d September, 1790.

LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It is time to thank you for the box of fine fruit, and for Mrs. T.'s kind letter; but indeed, what between home and abroad, I am almost as busy as Mr. T., though in a different way. But I can, and do think of you often.

I have little to add to my former account of Mrs. Newton. It is still a time of suspense, and I still have a hope of being able to send you better news; but her situation is critical. There are times when I can leave her and myself in the Lord's hands, with a degree of cheerfulness,—and there are times when anxiety and heart-aches will return. When He is pleased to strengthen us, we can do or bear any thing—without him we can do nothing. Thus the truth of Scripture is confirmed by experience, and this is one benefit we derive from trials. They shew us what we are in ourselves, and give us proofs of his power and faithfulness; so that we may say with David, “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.”

I thought you would not be angry with me for sending Mr. L. to you; and he is glad that he knows you, and pleased with the hope that his recipe of hot water has been useful to Mrs. T. I think I have been long benefited by drinking hot tea. I shall be glad to hear that she is completely relieved, though in my own better judgment, I believe that they, who love the Lord, never suffer too much; can never be sick when health would on the whole be better for them; nor in heaviness without a need-be. For in his daily providence

over us and our's, we have multiplied proofs that he delighteth in our prosperity, so far as we can safely bear it. But sin is a dangerous sickness, which requires a repetition of medicine; and afflictions, though in themselves evils, are among the medicines by which the Lord promotes the recovery of our souls; and when he is pleased to sanctify them, they well deserve to be numbered among the means of grace.

Most medicines that are efficacious in bodily disorders, are unpleasant to the taste and in their operations. Thus afflictions at the time are not joyous but grievous; it is *afterwards* that the good effects appear. And we may be assured that the infallibly wise Physician prescribes nothing in vain. What ground can there be for complaint, or fear, or despondence, when he has assured us before-hand, that all things shall work together for good?

But though all this sounds well from the pulpit, and looks pretty enough upon paper, when affairs go on smoothly; and though we can talk thus to others who are in trouble, we find it difficult to realize what we profess to know, when the case becomes *our own*. However, the Lord can help us, and he *does*, but in such a manner, as to make us feel that our help can come only from himself. What a mercy to be able, in the midst of all the changes and distractions of the present life, to look forward to a better! We shall not always be as we are now. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." They shut their eyes upon sin, and pain, and sorrow, to open them in his glorious presence, in the midst of the assembly that surround the throne. What a wonderful transition! May we judge by the scriptural rule, and weigh all our concerns in the balances of the sanctuary! When we compare temporals, whether pleasant or

painful, with eternal, how do they sink in point of importance! It would be a poor thing to possess all the good such a world as this can afford, even for the term which Methuselah lived, and then to fall into the pit from whence there is no redemption. And to lie like Lazarus, full of sores, at a rich man's gate, for many years, would seem no great matter, if like him, we passed from that state into the joy of our Lord! To patient faith the prize is sure. May we have grace and patience to endure to the end; to do and suffer the Lord's will for our appointed season, and soon all will be well.

But I must stop—we join love to you and all your's, as if particularly named.

Thus far I had written on Saturday, when the Doctor in coming down stairs, informed me that the symptoms which had lately taken place seemed to forbid any hope of her recovery, and that he was not sure she would survive that night. She is living still, but I think it probable my next letter will come to you with a black seal. I was graciously supported through my services yesterday, and neither my food nor rest interrupted by my feelings. My mind is in the main composed, and I trust I can say from my heart, "Thy will be done." I praise Him that he has spared her to me so long:—she has not only been my chief earthly comfort, but the hinge upon which the leading movements of my life have turned. I certainly ought to love her;—she was a valuable and faithful companion; but my attachment has been excessive and idolatrous; and my greatest trials, as well as the greatest proofs of my ingratitude in the sight of the Lord, have sprung from this source. How justly might He have taken her from me long ago; or withdrawn his blessing, without which, no union of heart

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can subsist between such inconstant creatures as we are. She has seemed almost as necessary to me as the light of the sun, and to this minute, was it lawful or desirable for me to choose for myself, and was my study full of guineas, I would rather part with them all than with her. Yet blessed be the Lord, I am satisfied, and have not a wish that things should be otherwise than they are, because I know his appointments are wise and good.

The patience the Lord has given her through the course of this long and heavy trial is wonderful. I have at no time heard the least expression of repining or impatience escape her lips. I cannot doubt but she knows herself to be a sinner, and has put her trust in the Saviour; but she has seldom spoken much of herself, and at present is quite silent on that head. Though calm, and even cheerful, when she has an interval of ease, her spirit seems locked up. But the Lord can open it, and enable her to give us some words of comfort, before she goes hence. This is not necessary to my satisfaction, and I have no right to claim it, but it seems desirable, and I hope I may humbly ask it. I have little else to ask for her now. I have much to ask for myself—wisdom, strength, submission, circumspection, and principally that I may not dishonour my profession by giving way to unmanly sorrow, which is indeed, at the bottom, little better than rebellion against the Lord. Pray for us, my dear friends.

I am always,

Most affectionately your's,

JOHN NEWTON.

18th October, 1790.

LETTER XXXV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

WHEN I wrote last I thought you would soon hear from me again. Not a week, seldom a day has passed, without an expectation of my dear's speedy removal. Such has been the cause of my delay. Yet she is still living, or rather now, and since Saturday, dying. Her sight and speech have failed; she pays no attention to what passes around her. While she could speak, she often called upon her dear Lord, and her dear Saviour, the Lord Almighty, &c. She called for me on Saturday; I kneeled down by her; she stroked my face, and squeezed my hand;* we both dropped a

* Like Jonah (well our stories suit)

I viewed my gourd, well pleas'd;

Like him, I could not see the root

On which the worm had seized.

But saw, at length, the hour draw nigh,

(What hour I since have known;) 110

When all my earthly joy must die,

And I be left alone.

She dropp'd a tear, and grasp'd my hand,

And fain she would have spoke;

But well my heart could understand

The language of her look.

Farewell! it meant, a last adieu!

I soon shall cease from pain;

This silent tear I drop for you!

We part—to meet again.

I said, "if leaving all below

You now have peace divine,

And would, but cannot, tell me so,

Give me at least a sign."

few tears ; thus we took a silent leave of each other,
for I said little, and she said nothing, but her frequent

She rais'd, and gently wav'd her hand,
And fill'd me with a joy,
To which the wealth of sea and land,
Compar'd, were but a toy,

I trust, indeed, she knew thy grace
Before this trying day;
But Satan had, awhile, access,
To fill her with dismay.

Till then tho' two long years she pin'd
Without an hour of ease,
Cheerful she still appear'd, resign'd,
And bore her cross in peace.

Daily, while able, closely too,
She read the word of God ;
And thence her hope and comforts drew,
Her med'cine, and her food.

A stranger might have well presum'd,
From what he saw her bear ;
This burning bush was not consum'd
Because the Lord was there.

Three days she could no notice take,
Nor speak, nor hear, nor see ;
O Lord ! did not my heart-strings ache ?
Did not I cry to thee ;

That while I watch'd her, night and day,
My will, to Thine, might bow ?
And, by this rod, didst thou not say
" Behold your idol now ! "

" From her you lov'd too much, proceed
Your sharpest grief and pains—
For soon or late, the heart must bleed
That idols entertains. "—

Yes, Lord, we both have guilty been,
And justly are distress'd ;
But since thou dost forgive our sin,
I welcome all the rest.

word—My pretty dear! Though she wanted either strength or freedom to speak much to me about herself, I had good proof that her heart was conversant with the Lord; the darkness and temptation, which I believe I mentioned in my last, gradually wore off. She seldom had violent pain, though she must have been a great sufferer, lying always in one place and posture; for she has not been moved to have her bed made for more than a month, and only two or three times with difficulty moved from one side of the bed to the other, to get the sheets changed. Her patience and composure have been very admirable, the gift and blessing of the Lord. I am now waiting the Lord's hour for her release, and expecting it from one hour to another. If I send my letter to-day, perhaps you may pay postage. I think you may take it for granted, that before it reaches you, my dear will be delivered from this sinful and sorrowful world. I need not say, pray for me; yea, I request you to praise on my behalf, for I am mercifully and wonderfully supported—I am not at all

Only uphold us in the fire,
 Our fainting spirits cheer;
 And I thy mercy will admire
 When most thou seems't severe.

Fainter her breath, and fainter grew
 Until she breath'd her last:
 The soul was gone before we knew
 The stroke of death was past.

Soft was the moment, and serene,
 That all her sufferings clos'd;
 No agony, or struggle seen,
 No feature discompos'd.

The parting struggle all was mine,
 " 'Tis the survivor dies;"
 For she was freed, and gone to join
 The triumph of the skies.

disabled from public service, nor are my appetite or sleep worse than usual. I feel—but I hope my soul is truly resigned to the wise, holy, and good will of the Lord, who brought me up from the house of bondage in Africa, has led me about, kept me as the apple of his eye, and done me good to this hour. May grace forbid then I should distrust him, or complain of him now. Yet if left to myself, I should soon toss like a wild bull in a net. I heard with concern of the poor state of Mr. W.'s health, and that he was gone to France. If it be the Lord's will, and best upon the whole, He can return him to you safe and sound. My best wishes will attend him. With my love to all your family, and Mr. K.

I remain,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

I write in haste, having been hindered by many visitants and enquiries.

LETTER XXXVI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

ACCEPT a short letter, just to repeat thanks for all your kindness, and to inform you we had a safe and pleasant journey, arrived at No. 6. in the evening, and found all well. My heart travelled with you to P., where I hope to hear the Lord gave you to return with equal safety, and perhaps about the same time. I could gladly have returned with you. Indeed, if

my post and duty were not here, I could willingly live and die with you.

The first day at home, after a long absence, calls of course for attention to many things; but I must find time to say, Oh! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Very wonderful have his dealings been with me, since the day when he took me by the hand to bring me out of Egypt. You, no doubt, have seen him working wonderfully in your own concerns. We are verily debtors! May he give us of his own, that we may have something to offer him, for we have nothing that we can properly call *our's*, but sin and misery. I wish to be more thankful for what the Lord has been *to me*—but I long to rise a step higher still, to be enabled to contemplate his character, as displayed by the cross of Christ, so that I may continually admire and adore him for what he *is in himself*. He would have been great and glorious, wise, powerful, holy, and gracious, though I had never been brought into existence, or had been left to perish as I deserved. There would have been a redeemed company though I had never known him.

Here I would so fix my eyes and thoughts, as in a manner to forget myself—and then, when my heart was overwhelmed, as it were, with His majesty combined with mercy, his glory shining in grace—to bring the matter home, and say with gratitude and triumph—This God, this great and wonderful God is our God! May we be more employed thus upon earth; so far as we are, we shall share in the joys of the inheritance of the saints in light.

The sun shines bright upon you this morning, (for it is a fine day), but I cannot see it: the houses hide it from me, but I have light from it. It is thus with my soul. I seldom have much sun-shine, but light I

trust I have from the Sun of Righteousness, by which I see my way, and have an imperfect glance of the end to which it leads. Well—such a glance is worth all this poor world can bestow. The redeemed before the throne—look how they shine!—hark how they sing! They were not always as they are now; they were once like us, sorrowing, suffering, sinning; but He has washed them from their sins in his own blood, and wiped away their tears with his own hands. Amongst them are some who were once dear to us, with whom we have shared in pleasure, and sympathized in pain. There I trust is my dearest. I cannot describe my feelings last night, when I looked upon the bed in which she languished so long, but it was a comfort to think—she is not here now—I hear no moans, I see no great distress—she is gone—she is risen, and I hope ere long to follow her.

My love to your whole family—mention me to your servants, who were all very obliging to us. May the Lord give them the privileges of his servants. The Lord bless you—pray for us. Now I must subscribe myself, in great haste,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.

1st October, 1791.

LETTER XXXVII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I HOPED to have seen you about this time, and therefore deferred writing, but Mr. Romaine tells me

you cannot come yet. Whenever the Lord brings you, I shall jump for joy to see you, and so will Catty. I often think of Mrs. F. and Mrs. D. How gladly would I restore them to health if I could! The Lord can easily do it, and if it be best upon the whole, he will. Should he appoint otherwise for either of them, I hope they are safe in his gracious hands. If they are sinners, believing in the Saviour's name, I am sure it will be far better for themselves to depart, and to be with him for ever, than to remain in such a world as this, where we can drink of no cup which has not some mixture of sin, or sorrow, or both; and as to their dear surviving friends and relatives, I can, from my own experience, testify to them of the mercy and all-sufficiency of the Lord; when our gourds wither, and the streams of creature-comfort run dry, the shadow and fruit of the tree of life, and the streams of that river which is always full, and flowing to refresh the hearts of his people, can make them abundant amends for all that they are called to suffer, or to part with. I also have seen affliction! I saw the worm gradually preying upon *my* gourd for two long years, and feeling my deep-rooted attachment to it, I often thought that if I outlived it, I should never know a cheerful day again. Still it drooped, and at last it died! I am thankful I have not to go through the like again; and to this hour she is seldom two minutes together out of my thoughts: I miss her continually, and believe I always shall; yet you have been witnesses that my tender feelings have not made me unhappy. The Lord was gracious when he gave her, and gracious when he took her from me; and I can say now, what I could not say while she was living, that with respect to temporals, all is as well with me as I wish it to be. I am sure he has done well, and

I would not now hold up a finger to have things otherwise than they are, if it were lawful or possible to expect it. If either Mr. F. or Mr. D. should be called to the like trial, may they seek and obtain the like support. I beg my love to them all; you have already had the honour of bringing up two children for the Lord. I shall be glad if all the rest may live to be your comfort. But if, as I hope, you shall meet them all in the kingdom, it will then be no concern either to them, or to you, which of them went before, or which followed you; then you will clearly see, that every one of them came into the world, and went out of it, exactly at the right time; may you now be enabled to believe it. Through mercy we are as well as usual at No. 6; particularly I am so. I have a good appetite and sleep soundly. I have much to attend to abroad, but running about is good for my health; I have enough to do when at home, which keeps my time from hanging upon my hands. I am cheerful when in company, and not uncomfortable when alone.

To-day, after preaching my annual sermon to the Goldsmiths, I dined with them. I preached to them this day twelve months, but could not dine. Then, and for some time before, and for just a month afterwards, I never stirred out of the house but I expected to find my dearest a corpse at my return; of course nothing but indispensable duty led or kept me from home. It was a long and painful post of observation, darker every hour. But it is past. The comforts and pains of wedded life (both were mingled in mine, though the comforts far exceed,) are gone, to return no more. Only the remembrance remains, as of a dream when one awakes; but I hope the blessed consequences of our union will subsist for ever. She was as the hinge upon which my life turned; my extrava-

gent passion for her opened the way to that misconduct which buried me in misery and in Africa so long, and my regard for her was at that time the only motive that could have made me willing to come home. After she was mine, her counsel and her management were the great blessings of my life. How much do I owe to her as the instrument of the Lord's goodness! But whither am I running? When I write to friends who loved us both, I insensibly, and without intending it, make her my subject; so true it is, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, and the pen will write. My thoughts are full of her, and it is some relief to give them vent. Yet I blame myself. She was not crucified for me. We know who was. *He* ought to be my theme. But still if he had not brought us together, it seems probable that neither of us would have known him. I trust she is now with him, and that shortly we shall all meet together to praise him for all the sweet, and for all the bitter we have known here. To his grace and blessing I commend you all: we join in best love. We often talk of pleasing P. but it grows late, and I must subscribe myself,

Your affectionate and greatly obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,

16th November, 1791.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN dear Betsy and my dear partner were ill, you were kindly anxious to hear from us. I hope you

believe that we are no less interested in your concerns! We long to hear how you, and dear Mrs. T., and your family are; and particularly to hear of Mrs. F., and Mrs. D. I called on Saturday to enquire of Mr. Romaine, but he could give me no late information.

We are all in the Lord's hands. He is wise and good; and does all things well. In times of trouble, and especially in my last great trial, I have found him a present and all-sufficient helper, and I trust you will always be able to say the same. If we truly fear him we have no cause to be afraid of him. He will not cause grief without a need-be, nor without suitable support, nor without bringing it to a happy issue.

Next Thursday will be the 15th; on the evening of that day last year my dearest left us. I mean to devote that day, or so much of it as I can keep for myself, to prayer, praise, and humiliation. I have much to ask, much to be thankful, and much to be humbled for. Think of me on that day. If I were with you, and the weather would permit, I would probably pass many hours of it in Mr. S.'s wood; but we have no such place of retirement here; and when at home, I am not sure of half an hour free from interruption. Dear Catty has a cold, but I hope it will soon go off: for the rest we are all pretty well at No. 6. London, and frost agrees as well with my health in Winter, as P., and warm weather did in Summer; I am highly favoured in this respect, and indeed in all respects. Oh! for a more humble and thankful heart.

May the Lord bless you all.—Amen.

I am, and hope always shall feel myself,
Your affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.

12th December, 1791.

LETTER XXXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is true; I have been long wishing and waiting to hear from you. I think (besides the note which accompanied Ebenezer,) you were one letter, if not two, in my debt. Not that I should stand upon twins with such friends, if I were not so much engaged at home and abroad, that I can seldom find leisure for super-numerary service. Dear Mrs. T.! However I shall not give her up. How often have I known my dear Mrs. Newton apparently upon the very verge of the grave; and yet she was repeatedly raised up, and continued to me more than forty years. But she was often very ill, and confined mostly to her chamber for six months at a time, before the last trying bout. Sickness and health, life and death will always be in the hands of the Lord. After all, neither you, nor Mrs. T., nor any of us can be quite happy in this world. It is a state in which sin and sorrow will hunt us, and pain us, to the last step of life; and therefore, though we wish to keep those whom we love with us as long as we can, it is well both for us and them, that we cannot live here always. We are, as you say, in the Lord's hands, and he does all things wisely and well, at the right time and in the right manner. When believers are removed, the fever, or dropsy, or whatever the complaint may be, are only the means, but not properly the cause, of their death. They die because the time is come, when He who loves them will have them with him, where he is, to behold his glory according to his prayer, John xvii. 26. Till

then they are immortal. They recover from sickness, however threatening; and are preserved unhurt, in defiance of the greatest dangers. But when His hour arrives they must go; when he will have them with him, we cannot detain them, nor ought we to wish it, though the flesh will feel the parting stroke. Should I survive Mrs. T., I shall lose one of the friends who is nearest and dearest to my heart; the trial will come still closer to you, if she goes first; but I have known the like. I am the man who hath seen affliction, and I can encourage you from my own experience, to trust in the Lord, and not to be afraid. He is all-sufficient. I have found him so, and I doubt not but both you and Mrs. T. will. My wound is not yet healed; my feelings are much the same as at first, but I am not uncomfortable. It is but a temporary separation. In a little while I hope we shall all meet again to part no more; then sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

I shall wait as patiently as I can for a letter from Bath, which I hope will inform me you have had a safe journey, and that dear Mrs. T. finds some benefit. I shall be with you often in spirit. Though my late stroke was a bereavement indeed, I can still feel for my friends. The good Lord bless and keep and comfort you both, whether sick or well, at home or abroad, by night and by day. Amen.

Believe me to be, my dear friend,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

12th April, 1792.

LETTER XL.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

MR. CECIL came home on Monday last, but I have not yet been able to see him. I am glad you know a little of him—it is indeed but little you could know of him in so short a space. There are few such men! May the Lord increase their number. If the Lord please, I mean to leave London the 6th of June. My intended route is to Northampton, Leicester, and Melton-Mowbray, and so homeward by the way of Olney, where I have not been these four years. I am probably going into these parts for the last time. I thank you for your kind invitation to P. I can honestly tell you as formerly, that is the very place to which inclination would lead me frequently, and preferably to any other; but it cannot be this year at least. I can likewise assure you that I should be very glad to see you and Mrs. T. long and often in London, but you would say, your business will not admit of it. I likewise am very busy; I cannot, I dare not be much from home; a supply for the pulpit will not suffice. It is my own assigned post, and I must be upon the spot myself. I should be glad to comply with Mrs. M.'s request, but I have not time for necessary prose, much less for making verses. I must begin in my old age to learn to write short letters. I suppose I have now fifty in my drawers which ought to be answered; and while I am writing one, I usually receive two or three. My debt to correspondents increases so rapidly,

that I fear I must soon declare myself a bankrupt, and leave my creditors to divide those in Cardiphonia among them as they can agree. Just now too I have much to settle previous to my going abroad, and travelling I find is not a season of leisure. Besides I am not a poet; I have not my rhyming talent (such as it is) at command; like the wind and tide it must be waited for, and who can tell whether wind or tide may offer in June? After all, if I can do it, I will, and she shall hear from me. If I cannot, I wish her kindly to accept the will for the deed.

How time flies! Could I improve it as I ought while it passes, I would say, "the faster the better." but none of our Lord's commands seems more easy than when he directs us to say "when we have done our poor all, we are unprofitable servants." I should be ruined, were not he likewise graciously pleased to accept the will for the deed. Through mercy I can venture to say, I would do good; but, alas! evil is present with me! Sometimes my thoughts endeavour to pierce within the veil; and at times I desire to be there myself. I think no one can have less reason or more reason, to be weary of this world. I have little reason, if I consider the innumerable comforts and blessings with which His goodness daily surrounds me. But I have much reason when I feel what I am, and have small hope of being much otherwise, while I stay here. To see him as he is, to be like him, and be with him for ever; to join the choir of the redeemed; to meet again with my dear Mary, Eliza, and many others whom I have known and loved that are gone before me, how desirable! But my times are in his hands; may I wait with patience, and do the little I can with diligence, and as well as he is pleased to

enable me. The Lord bless you both, and fill you with joy and peace in believing.

I am, sincerely and always,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

25th May, 1792.

LETTER XLI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

YOU would have been welcomed with a letter on your return from Bath, if I had been at home; but we have been to visit, and perhaps to take a last farewell, of Northampton, Leicester, Melton, Olney, and the parts where I was chiefly conversant for sixteen years before I removed to London. We have to thank the Lord for health and safety, much kindness, and many mercies, while abroad, and that we found all in peace when we came home.

This is my birth-day, and it is eight years to-day since I was first under your hospitable roof; many pleasant days I have to thank you for since, and especially am bound to thank you and Mrs. T. for your great kindness to dear Eliza, and my dear Mrs. Newton.

You never need use any argument to induce me to come to P., for I am well disposed to live and die with you if I could; but we have our several stations allotted us. I have eaten my cake for this year; what the next may bring forth we know not, but I thought myself bound in conscience to see my Olney folks (if the

Lord permitted) before I go hence, as I had not seen them for four years.

My health, through mercy, is still perfect, but I doubtless grow older, and feel myself weaker; but in the pulpit I find as yet little or no difference. Now I want to hear of Mrs. T., Mrs. F., and Mrs. D., and every one of your children; therefore I hope I shall have a letter soon. I hope I can say I am a stranger and a pilgrim. I shall soon be at home. Only pray that I may be useful while I am upon the road, and may arrive safe at last. They who are gone before us are waiting for us. Oh! it will be a happy meeting before the throne of the Lamb, out of the reach of sin and sorrow, to meet and part no more.

The good Lord help us to serve him now, and bring us thus together (with those whom we have loved) at last. Amen.

I am,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

24th July, 1793.

LETTER XLII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I sent a line by Miss S. I promised to write soon. I find it difficult to keep my word, but I must try.

I long to hear how you and Mrs. T. are, particularly how she is, as she was the invalid. If the Bath air or water did her good, I will praise the Lord, the great

Physician, who sent her thither, and gave his blessing to the means; for what can means do without him? though he can do without them; for many sick people, who are too poor to fee doctors, or to take journies, are wonderfully raised up from the very gates of the grave. As He gives his people strength according to their day, so he often suits his help to their circumstances. If they can afford it, they must travel for health; thereby they are made some way useful and subservient to his providential goodness in places which they would not otherwise at that time have seen. Perhaps you found something to do while you were at Bath, which you were not aware of before you went; and your business would not have permitted you to go so far from home, had not Mrs. T.'s illness made it necessary.

I love to trace His providence, and to observe by what secret ways he will send a servant of his from one end of the kingdom to another; though he knows not his errand at the time, but possibly, at length, finds that it was to assist some of his poor children who had been crying to him in their distress. But if they are not able to go far abroad in quest of health, he will visit and relieve them at home. I was sorry that my plan obliged me to be from home at the end of June, when you thought of being in town, but it could not be helped. I wished to see my friends at Olney, Northampton, and Leicester, once more, and it was the only time of the year when I could have Mr. B. to supply for me while absent. Unless I can get a proper supply for my church, I cannot leave London with comfort, nor indeed with a good conscience. I have now perhaps taken a final leave of my old friends and my old haunts in those parts. I have entered my 68th year. I have no right to look far forward.

I have known all the good such a world as this can afford me; and since my dear's removal, I see little in it worth living for, the exercise of my ministry excepted; for the sake of this, I am very willing to wait till my appointed time shall come.

I have published another little book, of which no part but the preface is my own. I have appropriated the profits, should there be any, either to the author, if living, or to the poor; and therefore make no presents to those who are able to pay.—The title at large is—"The power of Grace illustrated. Six Letters from a Minister of the Reformed Church to J. N. &c. Translated from the original Latin by Wm. Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq. Printed for J. Johnston, St. Paul's Church-yard."

They were written to me by a Dutch minister at the Cape of Good Hope. I think I must have mentioned him to you. They contain a remarkable account of his conversion. You are placed in a situation which affords you but little leisure or retirement. It is so with me; and though our appointments are very different, I trust we serve the same Lord from the same principle, love—and aim at the same ends, the promoting his will and glory. Were we to choose our own lot, perhaps we should like more time for prayer, meditation, reading, &c. but it is a mercy such short-lived creatures as we are not left to choose, but that the Lord of all condescends to choose, care, and manage for us. Perhaps a retired life might expose us to worse temptations, though of another kind, than those we now meet with. Certainly a public busy way of life gives more opportunities for usefulness to others; and as we are bought with a price, we are not to live for, or to ourselves, but to Him, whose we are, and whom we serve. As to the things

of this world, through the Lord's goodness, *I have enough*. If you have more than I, you have more calls for it, and I need not tell you that what you have is not your own, but entrusted to you as a steward. Your conduct has long proved that you are sensible of it. He who has given you ability, has given you a heart to do good, and while you are kept above the love of this present evil world, the thought, time, and care, which a proper attention to an extensive business requires, will not hurt you. The Lord himself, by his wise providence, placed both you and me where we are. May his grace make and keep us humble and faithful, and all will be well. Every step we take brings us nearer to our Father's house, and we shall soon be at home, where the wicked cannot trouble, and where the weary are at rest. We cannot do all we would—we can do nothing as we would. But we have a High Priest; a complete atonement, and an open way of access to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Blessed be his name, we are not sent to the warfare at our charges.

My next must be to dear Mrs. T., but I shall hope to hear from her or you before I write again. Dear Catty and I are well; we join in best love to you both, with love to your sons and daughters, and the children of your children; likewise to Mr. K. and his household. The Lord bless you all. Continue to pray for us, and believe me to be always,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate and much obliged servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6, Coleman-Street-Buildings,
17th August, 1792.

LETTER XLIII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

MR. C. G. sent me the enclosed; but it must not go without a few lines from myself, to thank Mr. T. for his letter, and to say, that I am thankful to hear from Mr. Romaine, that he left you all well. How wisely the Lord varies his dispensations! Not all painful, lest we should be too much cast down; nor all pleasant, lest we should forget what and where we are. Nor do our troubles come all at once. They are parcelled out at different intervals, that one wound may be well healed before another is inflicted. In short, he does all things well. But though I believe this now, I expect to see it more fully confirmed hereafter, when I shall have new eyes, and a brighter light to see by. That time will come, yea, it is coming, it is upon the road, and drawing nearer every hour.

I am glad that your western journey was safe and pleasant, and beneficial to dear Mrs. T., and that the Lord put a widow and daughter in your way for good. He will find employment for them who desire to love and serve him; and give them, while attending their own business, opportunity of doing something for him. One of these good jobs, when mingled with our necessary worldly concerns, is like a lump of sugar which sweetens a dish of tea, and gives a relish to every drop.

The times seem big with great and unusual events. What the Lord is about to do, I know not, but as I

know that *He reigns*, I hope to sit quiet, and trust to his wisdom and care. I wish to have my eye upon his management, and my heart properly affected by what I see and hear; to mourn for sin, to pray for peace, and to preach for peace.

The French affairs have taken an unexpected turn; but as their plan is founded in atheism and defiance of God, and is in many parts of it contrary, not only to scripture, but to nature; and as they have taken a strange delight in murders and massacres, I think, when they have, as instruments, effected his purposes, (which are probably very different from any thing they are aware of) a day of account and retribution will come. Their attempt to establish a government, in which a regard to the great God shall have no place, is, I believe, the first experiment of the kind that ever was made. The heathens have already known that man is unmanageable without some hold upon the conscience; and though their religions were false, they were, as to the purposes of civil government, better than the proud schemes of French philosophy. Their views are not only impious, but in the highest degree, foolish. It would be more reasonable to expect that your mill would work without water.

The Lord bless you all; I am well through mercy, highly favoured indeed, and as comfortable (in outward respects) as I wish to be. But I still miss my right hand.

I am,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,

12th November, 1792

LETTER XLIV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE Lord crowned the year 1792 with his goodness to us likewise, and it was an additional pleasure to hear, just at the close of it, that all was well with you and your's; indeed with the believer it is always well, unless when he gives way to sin and unbelief. The Lord is certainly good when he gives, and when he heals; but is he not good also when he wounds, and when he takes away? Undoubtedly some of our most needful and important mercies come to us in disguise, and we know not how to bid them welcome; but by-and-bye, when our eye-sight is mended, we shall see what great reason we have to be thankful for them. Indeed this is not a time to seek great things for self, when the Lord seems to be bringing evil upon all flesh: things look dark on every side, but we know who is at the helm: light and glory will spring out of the blackest clouds, and happen what will, it shall be well with them who fear the Lord. He will preserve them from many, many troubles, of which they are apprehensive, and support them under those he permits to touch them; and soon they will be out of the reach of them all. The king of France was murdered the 21st, and Mr. Berridge died the 22nd. The one had borne the heat and burden of the day; the other, I trust, was called at the eleventh hour; but I hope they are now both together: the perusal of the king's will has confirmed my hope, that the Lord would sanctify his calamities. I think

it impossible that a man in his circumstances, so degraded, so deserted, so insulted, so cruelly treated, could write with such composure, unless the Lord was with him. He uses not one sharp expression; he breathes sentiments of good-will and forgiveness to his greatest enemies.

If you receive this to-morrow, it will be my dear's birth-day. I enclose you another anniversary song; she is still continually present to my mind, and I am still, through mercy, reconciled to the separating stroke, though perhaps I shall always feel it as at the first. Mr. Serle, to whom I sent my second song, wishes me to print it, but I think the Ebenezer is sufficient to appear in public, and that it would savour too much of self-consequence, to print all that I write, or may write, upon the subject; but if I live to finish my task of making extracts from my letters to her, the verses may stand, with some propriety, at the end of the book. In the mean time, whoever thinks them worth the trouble of transcribing, is welcome to a copy. This task will oblige me to write short letters even to my dearest friends, till it is finished. To you I should always write long ones, would time permit.

Accept my thanks for the bacon, which came safe and good. May the Lord feed you with the best provisions of his word and ordinances. May his blessing rest upon you, and your children, and your children's children. Amen. Dear Catty joins me in this wish, in love and thanks. I am in some haste, but always sincerely,

Your most affectionate and obliged

Friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
1st February, 1793.

F

LETTER XLV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IF your letter had come one week sooner I should have answered it while you were in Bath, but I hope this will wait upon you in good season to welcome you all to P.

I would be thankful that dear Mrs. F.'s spirits are better. Nervous disorders, which some people know not how to pity, appear to me to be the source of the heaviest afflictions (a wounded conscience only excepted) to which mortals are subject; they change the appearance of every thing about us. They open a door to dark temptations, and often seem to load the mind with guilt for what is almost involuntary and unavoidable. Few women seem better situated for temporal happiness than Mrs. T. I doubt not but she thinks so herself; and yet, at times, the pressure upon her spirits prevents her from taking comfort in any thing. How vain, then, are all things here below!

When I was with you, though I thought Mrs. M.'s case the most alarming as to the event, Mrs. T.'s seemed to me the most distressing. May He whom the winds and the seas obey, hush all her troubled thoughts into peace! It is a malady which I believe only he can cure, but whether relieved or not, he can sanctify it, and make it one of the "all things appointed to work together for good to them that fear him." Cheer up, my dear madam, there is no sorrow, nor pain, nor nervous complaints, in yonder happy world,

where I trust we shall meet in the Lord's best time: then all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall weep no more.

Yesterday was the anniversary of my dear Mary's dismissal, and being Sunday, I preached a sort of funeral Sermon from 1 Peter, i. 24, 25. Though every thing here must fade, the word of God will remain unchangeable and everlasting. Flowers and gourds will wither, the streams of creature comfort will sooner or later dry up. But the tree of Life will always flourish, the wells of Salvation will always be full. The all-sufficient Lord has been my support. I know not upon the whole, if I may not account the last three years the happiest part of my life. I am freed from the cares and anxieties I often endured while my dearest was living. This was a constant tax, and sometimes a very heavy one, which I paid for my comforts. I hope my attachment to this world is likewise weakened. I have seen an end to all it could do for me. It has now lost its charms. My lot in it is still favoured and comfortable, but the fetter which chiefly fastened me to it is broken, and I walk more at liberty. I now daily long to be where I trust she is. In the mean time, as my health is still good, and I am still enabled to exercise my ministry with acceptance, I trust with usefulness, I may well be willing and thankful to live; I can now say, and I can say it with thankfulness, I can think of nothing of a temporal kind that is worth wishing for more than the Lord has already given me. I was sorry to hear of Mr. M.'s fall. I felt for his afflictions; but I know he is in safe hands. The Lord will support him under all He has appointed for him to suffer. He can restore health; he can sanctify and sweeten sickness.

He has wise reasons for all that he does, and we shall, ere long, know them more clearly. Then we shall see and say he has done all things well. May we even now be thankful, and yield a peaceful submission to his holy will. He has a sovereign right to dispose of us as he pleases, and he has promised that all shall work together for our good. We are too apt to mistake or to forget the nature of our calling. He has promised us peace in himself, but in the world he bids us expect tribulation. The same, or equal, or greater afflictions are common to all his people, and we shall not say "This is hard," if we consider that we are sinners, and therefore always suffer less than we deserve; and likewise, that he, for our sakes, was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. By trials our graces are proved, exercised, and strengthened, and the power and goodness of the Lord towards us are more manifested and glorified. The time is short, our obligations are unspeakably great, and Heaven will make amends for all. Surely then we should cheerfully, yea, thankfully, take up our crosses, and follow our Lord, since we are assured that if we suffer with him, and for him, we shall also reign with him. Time flies apace, and past troubles will return no more; every pulse we feel beats a sharp moment of the pain away, and the *last* stroke will come. Then sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and joy and gladness shall come forth to conduct us home.

We are often with you in spirit. I hope your Wednesday evenings will prosper. I suppose your children will be all at home these holidays. May the Lord bless them. Tell them that we love them. To you and dear Mrs. T. we repeat our best love and thanks. I shall rejoice to see you in London this

Winter. Remember us to Miss K., and Mrs. S., and all your servants, not forgetting Anthony.*

I am,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

16th December, 1793.

LETTER XLVI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I THANK you for your paper letter of the 27th December, and for the expressions of your kindness which I could read very plainly upon the turkey and chine. Honourable mention was made of both of them at our table.

We little expected to hear of Mrs. D.'s removal so soon. Family breaches are painful, but when we consider that it is the Lord, and have a good hope that those who are taken from us are gone home to him, the wound gradually heals. You and I have had many of these wounds; we have seen our gourds successively wither. We have mourned for those whom we loved, but the tree of life still abounds with leaves and fruits, and under this shadow we find relief and support in every change. Ere long, some who love us

* A faithful black servant. It was a pleasing sight to see this poor man and his white wife, dedicating their child in baptism; he having renounced idolatry, and professing himself to be a believer in the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in a confession of his faith by answering questions put to him by the Rev. Wm. Kingsbury, in the domestic chapel at P. G.

will be called to mourn for us, but we hope to meet at last where there will be no mourning; it will be swallowed up in joy unspeakable.

I have reason to be thankful that I know but little of nervous disorders by experience, but I would be thankful likewise for the opportunities I have had of seeing much of their terrible effects upon others.

Olney was a sort of nervous school to me. Most of my poor people there, from lowness of diet, the confinement of lace-making, and want of exercise and fresh air, were nervous in different degrees, which gave a melancholy cast to their whole religious experience. Indeed every thing appears with a dark hue when perceived through the medium of weak and disordered nerves. Some people's nerves seem made of steel, and what they cannot feel they know not how to pity. To me it appears the heaviest trial (a wounded conscience excepted) to which our mortal frame is subject. I can truly pity Mrs. T., but I hope she will be mindful, that though it is a great trial, it is almost the only one laid upon her; in all other respects the Lord has appointed her a truly favoured lot, and placed every possible alleviation within her reach that the case will admit. I have a valued friend who is much worse than I trust dear Mrs. T. will ever be, and she has a cross surly husband, who sometimes laughs at her distress, sometimes swears at her, tells her the devil is in her, and bids her go and hang herself: this horrid thought (poor thing) often haunts her without his reminding her of it. She often tells me, "I think, if I had some person near me who would speak kindly to me, I should be better." Mrs. T. has a very different husband, and is encompassed with kind friends and attendants.

I should have been glad of a better account of

Mr. M. Please to give our love to him. I hope and believe that the Lord will give him strength according to his day, and by-and-bye all will be well.

I am at present a prisoner myself, but I have every thing to make my prison comfortable. I had a fall in the street on Tuesday, which might have proved of worse consequence. The Lord preserved both my bones and my skin from being broken, but I strained my instep violently. My leg is much swelled, and I cannot set my foot to the ground; but I am free from pain. I can eat and sleep, my spirits are good, and I have many kind friends. It may be some time before I am able to walk, but not a minute longer than the Lord sees it best. I am not my own, I belong to him, and wish not to be anxious about myself. He has permitted me to cast my cares upon him, and warrants me to believe that he careth for me. He has delivered, he does deliver, and he is still the same. How uncertain are all things here. I know not what may be the consequence of my fall, but I hope it will be sanctified to myself and to my people: they love me; this will quicken their prayers for me, and mine for them, and the Lord will hear us. If we are permitted to meet again, it will be with double pleasure. This is the first silent Sabbath I have had for many years. I have not been confined from the Lord's house on his own day more than twice since I entered the ministry in 1764, excepting two weeks, when I was under the surgeon's hands for my wen, in 1777. Few of his servants have had such an uninterrupted course of health and strength for service as I have been favoured with. It is His pleasure now to lay me aside for a season, and though he has long seen fit to honour me as an instrument, he has no need of me. He can carry on his work quite as well without me as

with me, and through mercy it is my delightful work which chiefly makes life desirable to me. If he commands me to sit still, it is my part to submit and obey with cheerfulness. Blessed be his name, he enables me so to do. I have no solicitude, choice, or desire for myself, only to yield to his will, whether I am to be confined for a week, or a month, or to the end of my life. Such is my present judgment, and that it will continue if he is pleased to be with me. If left to myself, I know I shall soon toss like a wild bull in a net.

The 15th of December last falling on a Sunday, I preached from 1 Peter, i. 24, 25. It was a sort of second funeral sermon for my dearest M. The occasion has likewise produced a third set of verses, of which I enclose you a copy, which may again be copied by as many as you please, who think it worth while. The paper would not hold all that I could say of my love to you and all your's, and my sense of your great kindness, but I trust you will believe me though I mention but briefly, and that you will believe the same of dear Catty. We join in love to you, and your children from the eldest to the youngest. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon you, and may a sense of his hand and love double the relish of all your comforts, and sweeten all your trials and cares.

I am,

Your very affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

27th January, 1794.

LETTER XLVII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IF you knew how we long for a bit of news from P., you would surely send us some; and though but a morsel, if it were good, we would be thankful for it. We want to hear that Mr. T. is in good health, Mrs. T. in good spirits, and that all the olive branches around your table are green and flourishing; my love and Catty's to them all, and to all friends.

We returned last Thursday from a five weeks' cruize. I visited my old haunts, and some new ones in the counties of Huntingdon, Cambridge, Bedford, and Hertford. We were in many places where the gospel is preached and prayed, and we frequently hear of new openings, and new ministers in the Established Church. It is a token for good, and I fear almost the only one in these dark times, that the Lord has a people amongst us, and seems likewise reviving and spreading his Gospel. If he is engaging a new set of servants, I hope it is a sign, that, sinful as the nation is, he will not yet break up his household, depart from us, and leave us to ourselves.

The leg I hurt in the Winter is nearly well, but I strained my other knee at Bedford. I thank the Lord it is getting better, but I am still a little lame. I was confined to the house the four days I was at Mr. G.'s. We left them well, but they are upon the point of removing to settle in Yorkshire. We talked of you while we were with them.

It will be ten years next Monday since I first en-

tered your hospitable door; you know the most of my history since that time, and I cannot forget the long series of ten years' kindness received from you, unless I could forget Eliza, my dear, and even myself. The Lord has given me many friends, and perhaps some who might have been very willing to oblige and comfort us, had opportunity offered; but in his providence he was pleased to appoint, that I should be actually more indebted to my friends at P., than to any others. You did it for his sake; may he reward you with manifold blessings to you and your's! If I live till Monday, I shall likewise enter upon my seventieth year. Though my health is uncommonly good, I feel some symptoms of declining years, which render travelling more inconvenient than formerly. In the four last Summers, I have revisited most of the places to which I have been led in the course of my ministry; and it is probable, that without an express call of duty, I shall not go again so long or so far from my post, and my dear people at St. Mary's. At any time of life, it becomes me to expect my dismissal daily; and if the Lord please, I rather wish the summons may find me at home.

Miss Catlett joins me in best love and thanks to you both, and in love to your family, and to all friends. The Lord bless you. Amen.

I am,

Your affectionate and much obliged

Friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

21st July, 1794.

LETTER XLVIII.

MY VERY DEAR MADAM,

No time, as they say, like the time present. Mr. T.'s letter has not been with me half an hour, and for fear of delaying too long, I strike while the iron is hot, and begin to write immediately. Though the letter is from Mr. T. I send the answer to you, because you observed in your last letter to Miss O. "He has not written to *me* a great while." I really thought that when I wrote to *us*, I was writing of course to *me*, for I usually begin, my dear *Friends*, which includes you both. However, this sheet I shall dedicate to you, your own self; perhaps you will let Mr. T. see it.

I am sorry that your nerves, or spirits, or whatever indescribable things they are, on which the comfort or enjoyment of life so greatly depends, are still very poorly; sickness and health are in a higher hand than that of any earthly physician; and if the Lord is pleased to lay an affliction upon us, no one can take it off without his leave, or before his time. Events are at his disposal, but the use of prudent and probable means is our part.

If Mr. and Mrs. Romaine are still with you, I beg you to mention my affectionate remembrance; I am glad to hear that he continues so well, and I am persuaded that he is not sorry to think that he must go hence before long. And I, if I do not yet go before him, must soon follow. May the Lord prepare me

for the summons. I was five weeks in and about Cambridgeshire, in the Summer. For four Summers, the Lord has given me my desire, in permitting me to revisit my old friends in different places. Yorkshire and Lancashire are too distant. My journeying plan is now completed. Should I make another movement, I have good reason to give the preference to P. and my friends there. I love the spot much ; I love those who inhabit it much more. What the Lord may appoint for me, I know not, what my inclination would choose is not the question, but it seems to me that duty and prudence will not permit me to make any more excursions. I am now in my seventieth year ; travelling and change of places is inconvenient to me ; my people must not be trifled with. The *how*, *when*, and *where* of my dismissal I wish to leave to the Lord, who performeth all things well for me. Yet, with submission to his will, I often pray that I may die at home, with my dear family around me, and within the reach of my people ; and therefore to go abroad again without a necessary call, would at my time of life, contradict my own prayer. I have some other reasons, but the difficulty of procuring a *proper* supply for my church is the strongest, and I think will be sufficient to confine me to my post.

Mr. S.'s removal to London is a great addition to my comfort ; he is to me a friend and a pattern ; but had you not introduced me to drink tea at Heckfield, on our way to Reading, in 1791, it is probable I might never have seen him ; so that I am indebted to Mr. T. and you, not only for the many and great instances of your own kindness, but for other benefits to which you have been instrumental, and particularly for the great privilege of Mr. S.'s friendship. I be-

lieve, likewise, the first seeds of my acquaintance with Sir C. M.* were sown in your house. He also allows me, and has given me cause to consider him, as my friend; but he is so much engaged, and it is so uncertain when he is in town, that I can seldom see him. Happy indeed it would be, if all our public departments were filled with such men as these; but I fear it is much otherwise, and though I lament the present state of affairs, I cannot wonder they are no better.

Love to all your sons and daughters, and to all my Laundry friends. May grace and peace be with you and your's, with them and their's. I am often among you in spirit, though absent in body.

Through mercy we are all well. Let us cheer up. There is a better world than this, where we shall have nerves, and hearts, and eyes all new; where our harps will be perfectly in tune to praise the Friend of sinners. There may we all meet to part no more. Amen.

I am,
Your affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
27th October, 1794.

Master William was naughty. I heard he was in London, but I did not see him.

* The late Lord Barham, then Sir Charles Middleton.

LETTER XLIX.

MY DEAR SIR AND MADAM,

PLEASE to observe, that I write to both, and each of you at once ; and I thank each, and both of you for a letter, in the shape of a side of bacon, which came safe to-day. Your love and kindness were very legible in it, but from beginning to end I could not find a syllable of information concerning the health and welfare of my dear friends at P., and their family. But I hope the best, believing that you are of the number of those whom the Lord has promised to cover with the wings of his providence, and to encompass on all sides with his favour, as with a shield. These promises will not prevent you from meeting with *many* trials, but they secure you from all but those which are designed to work for your good.

The last year closed upon us in peace, and although this year is but a fortnight old, it has already brought us many mercies and blessings. New year's-day is usually with me like a hill-top, which, when the traveller has gained, he makes a pause and looks about him ; he turns his eye upon the road he has already past, then to the prospect on each side, but especially he looks forward towards his journey's end, and if his house be in view, or if he has but a few more hills to mount before he sees it, and if it be a good home, whither his heart is gone before him, and where he knows his dearest friends and connections are waiting for him, the thought cheers his mind and renews his strength. The review of my past life sug-

gests much cause for praise, and much for humiliation. I suppose every believer thinks his own case singular, but there are some so much out of the common way, that they appear more striking and extraordinary to others. I think mine as remarkable as most. I have still some faint remembrance of my pious mother, and the care she took of my education, and the impression it made upon me when I was a child, for she died when I was in my seventh year. I had even then frequent intervals of serious thoughts. But evil and folly were bound up in my heart; my repeated wanderings from the good way became wider and wider; I increased in wickedness as in years: but you have my narrative, and I need not tell you how vile and how miserable I was, and how presumptuously I sat in the chair of the scorner, before I was twenty years old. My deliverance from Africa, and afterwards from sinking in the ocean, were almost miraculous; but about the year 1749 (I cannot exactly fix the date) the Lord, to whom all things are possible, began to soften my obdurate heart. In the year 1750, he gave me my dear Mary, and from that time I have a more distinct review of the way by which he has led me. Surely I may say, mercy and goodness have followed and surrounded me in every step. But alas! what ungrateful returns on my part! I see monuments of his goodness and of my own shame, set up like mile-stones all along the road; but there are many more of both sorts than I can possibly count. When I look to the right hand and the left, I seem to travel on a high turnpike road, through a country that is full of swamps, bogs, precipices, and pathless forests. I see little but sin and misery around me. How many sink before my eyes! How many pine and suffer in vain, not knowing where to look for help! How many are

passing this present hour in pain, sickness, and penury, and the more grievous distresses of guilt, remorse, and terror of mind; while I am favoured with health, peace, and plenty, and am smoking my pipe and writing to my dear friends by a good fire! In temporals I have all things and abound, so that I know not what more to wish for, if a wish could procure it.

But the best prospect, when faith is in exercise, is before us, especially to those who are far advanced in years. I am now old, and I know not the day of my death, and can it be that I am within a few years, perhaps months, or weeks, of joining in the songs, and sharing in the joys, of those who are now before the throne? That I may expect soon to see my Saviour without a veil, face to face, in all his glory, and in all his love? If so, why am I thus? Why am I no more affected and enlivened by this blessed hope, which, finally, as it impresses me, I would not part with for a thousand worlds? Alas! a body of sin and unbelief weighs me down. So when a bird with a stone tied to its foot attempts to fly, the weight pulls it back, and it flutters its wings in vain; our life is safely hid with Christ in God, but it will be a life of warfare while we continue here; let us fight on; the Captain of our salvation is near; see! he holds the prize in view! hark, he speaks, and says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!"

On new-year's mornings I usually preach to old pilgrims. My text this year was Ps. xxxix. 7. I have seen and known as much of such good as the world can afford, as most people. I have seen an end of all its perfection. I have seen and felt that a thread of vanity and vexation of spirit runs through

the whole ; the best of it is defiled and defective ; and when we are situated the most to our wish, there is still something to remind us "This is not your rest." What then do I wait for? Methinks I would not live here always. But if I may be enabled to honour the Lord by my profession and ministry, I ought to be willing to wait my appointed time, though (if such were his pleasure) it should be to the age of Methusaleh.

I have almost filled the paper about my poor self. But I am writing to friends whom I dearly love, and who, I have reason to know, love me. I commend you and your's to the good and great Shepherd, who is full of wisdom, tenderness, care, and power, to all his flock. May he continue to guide you with his eye, to support you with his arm, and bring us at last to meet in his kingdom. This year is likely to prove very eventful, but we know who reigns, and that, though clouds and darkness are round about him, though his way be in the sea, his path in deep waters, and his footsteps untraceable by us, yet all his paths are mercy and truth to them that fear him: he has said, it shall be well with the righteous, and his word is sure. May we be found amongst those who are *mourning for sin, and pleading for mercy*, and then his secret mark for peace and protection shall be found upon us, and we may sing Ps. xlvi. 1, 2.

I have a great acquisition in Mr. and Mrs. T. They are people just to my taste, if this is not saying too much for myself. We cannot often meet, but I am glad to think they are so near ; our intimacy seems as great as if it had been of twenty years' standing. For this pleasure, as for many others, I am indebted to you, as instruments of the Lord's goodness. I shall always remember, with thankfulness, that you in-

roduced me to them. I owe you much, and can only repay you by acknowledging the debt; but I trust the Lord will repay you for all you do for his sake.

I enclose you a few copies of my fourth anniversary; would have sent more, but was afraid of overloading the frank. I still miss my right hand, but, through mercy, I am satisfied and comfortable without it, and in some measure sensible, that I have many reasons to be thankful, but not one to complain. The Lord has dealt very graciously with me. Oh! to be more thankful to Him who has redeemed me from evil, and done me good all my life.

Some of our family have been affected by the severe weather, but are getting better. Dear C. and T. are well. We join in love to you and your's. We long to hear from you. May the Lord be a sun and shield to you and your's, to me and mine.—Amen. Continue to pray for your

Much obliged and affectionate,
JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
15th January, 1795.

LETTER L.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I THINK I wrote last, but if I did, it is high time to write again, that I may get another letter from P. for your last is dated the 28th January, so that we have had a long fast. I have heard, however, of your going to Bath, and Mr. D. tells me that you are returned. I hope if Mr. T. is too busy to write, his

good lady will be able to inform us that she has found benefit from her journey, and that all your olive-branches are in a flourishing state. A few lines to confirm this hope will be very acceptable to me and dear Catty.

My heart is often at P., but I must not see it this year. It is not practicable to procure a fit supply for my church, without which I cannot leave it. Mr. T. would be unwilling to leave his mill for a month, if it must stand still during his absence. Mary Woolnoth is my mill. Through mercy I have reason to hope that the streams which now make glad the city of God still run, and keep our wheels going. And we must work while it is day, for the *night cometh*. I expected to have had Buchanan for my curate before now, but he cannot be ordained till towards Michaelmas.

Should I ever live to take another journey, and to choose my route, it would certainly be to P., but this becomes more and more uncertain. The 24th of July, if I live to see it, will enter me on my *seventy-first year*, and though my health and strength are remarkable for my age, so far as concerns my public service, and though I am much younger than Mr. Romaine, I cannot travel so easily as he does. Some symptoms of advancing years, though they do not yet affect my preaching, render travelling more inconvenient to me than formerly. How it may be next year, if we should be spared so long, the Lord knows, and with him I wish to leave it. I am sure I love to be at P. I venture to make one request, and but one, respecting the time and manner of my dismissal—that when the summons shall come, it may find me at home, in my family, and amongst my people.

I bless the Lord my mind is at peace. I am a sin-

ner, but I trust, a sinner believing in Jesus. I neither have nor desire any other plea, than the warrant and command of God to believe in the Son of his love. He has kept me by a miracle of mercy from falling into gross errors, or staining my profession by gross sins, but I have had much mournful experience of the desperate depravity of my heart; and sin, defect, and defilement, mingle with every thing that I do; so that my best intended services need forgiveness before they can hope for acceptance; but I have been enabled to commit my soul to him who says, "him that cometh I will in *no wise* cast out," and "who is able to save to the *uttermost*." These two texts have been as two sheet anchors, by which my soul has rode out many a storm, when otherwise hope would have failed. "In no wise" takes in all characters, and "to the uttermost" goes many a league beyond all difficulties. I recommend these anchors to dear Mrs. T.; they are sure and stedfast. I believe she sometimes finds the winds high, the seas rough, and the weather dark and gloomy; but with these anchors, and having Jesus for her pilot, she need not fear. There are likewise especial promises to those who are afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted. If this is her state, the promises belong to her. I suppose when she reads her name on the direction of this letter she will not scruple to open it. Now all the good and comfortable words in Isaiah liv. are directed to the afflicted and tempest-tossed; then let her call them her own, and feed upon them in her heart, by faith with thanksgiving.

Dark times indeed! So the flesh says. But faith will ask, when were they otherwise? I can look back about sixty years, and remember many things when I was a boy. *That was what faith would call a dark*

time, when the gospel was but low among the Dissenters, and scarcely known in our Church, nor were there any Methodists; but while we had outward peace and plenty, few people could think the black cloud of ignorance and spiritual death which overwhelmed the whole nation had any darkness in it. I hope the present are rather bright times; the gospel is spreading, and the number of believers seems to be upon the increase from year to year. Are not those the best times, when the best cause flourishes the most? True, but our fig-trees and vines, our property and earthly comforts are threatened. Who knows but the united prayers of the Lord's people may prevail for their preservation? But if not, the gospel enabled the first Christians to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance. The same gospel can do as much for us as it did for them, if we should be put to the trial, for we are promised strength according to our day; but indeed we hearken too much to the flesh, and too little to faith; we are too much attached to our own petty concerns, and too little concerned for the glory of God. Many, both at home and abroad, question whether he governs the world or not; many even presume to deny it; but he says, "They shall know that I am the Lord." If I have not miscounted, this expression is repeated seventy-three times in the Old Testament. He is now pleading his own cause: dare I indulge a wish that he should lose his cause, and leave his enemies to triumph, rather than I and all my friends should be exposed to inconveniences in the conflict? Come what may, he will take care of his own people. Verily it shall be well with the righteous. He invites them into his secret chambers. He will make them

amends for what they may lose or suffer, and, if he pleases, he can preserve them from suffering at all, Ps. 91. For the rest, though they will not see when his hand is lifted up, yet they must, and shall see it, for the Lord hath spoken, and the Lord reigns. May we be prepared to meet him, and all shall be well. Dear Catty joins me in best love to you and your's. She is very well. We abound in comforts and blessings to-day. To-morrow is in His hands, who bids us cast our cares upon him, and assures us that he will care for us.

I commend you and your's to him, and remain,
Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.
30th May, 1795.

LETTER LI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

MY heart is often at P., and I have pleased myself with the hopes of seeing it once more if I should live till towards the end of the Summer; but now I know not how it will be. My curate quite answered my wishes and expectations, but I am upon the point of losing him already. I believe he will go to Bengal. Though this is a sudden step, the proposal is so circumstanced, that I dare not in conscience oppose it. I know the Lord can provide me with another, and, if he sees fit, he doubtless will; it is not every one will do; I must have a proper substitute, one who will suit

my people, otherwise I can no more move from London, than I can move St. Mary Woolnoth; but if it be his will that I should visit P., I doubt not but his providence will make it practicable. It is thus I endeavour to quiet myself, under all changes, by referring every thing to *him*, for it is written, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." The question should not be, what is most agreeable to my own inclination? but rather, what is the path of duty, and how shall I best comply with his holy will, and promote his service? There is no great fear of my staying in London, when my conscience shall tell me that I ought to be at P.; but there is some danger on the other side, lest inclination should draw me abroad, when duty requires me at home. We shall rejoice to see you both here in May or June, then, perhaps, as you say, we may arrange our plans, but June, or even May, seems too distant for old seventy-one to look forward to. It is true I am at present, through mercy, in perfect health, but it becomes me to live with the Lord *by the day*, and to carry, as the phrase is, my life in my hand, leaving to-morrow with the Lord. At all times we are little aware what the next day may bring forth; but at my advanced age every thing is more and more precarious from day to day. I am in continual expectation of being either called away or laid aside. I may perhaps still live some years, and the Lord is so gracious to me in all my concerns, that no one can have less reason to be weary of living, excepting for the body of indwelling sin. My part is only to wait, and to pray that I may at last be found ready. The how, when, and where, belong to him. Yes, my dear friends, the Lord pours contempt upon our proud

boastings. Last Winter h^rs frosts made a bridge for the French to enter Holland; this Winter his storms have disconcerted our arrogant schemes for over-running the West Indies. He shews us, that it is not Britannia, but He himself, that rules the waves. When those who plan our councils, and they who are to carry them into execution, set him at defiance, what can we expect but disappointment and confusion? If it were not for his praying few, who, though despised for their pains, continue in the breach mourning for sin, and pleading for mercy, I should give up all for lost; I can place no dependance upon fleets and armies, while the commanders, soldiers, and sailors, are, with a few exceptions, combined against the Lord of Hosts, and defying him to his face; and while the bulk of the nation are no less insensibly hardened and profligate than the French can well be; but the French never sinned against such light and privilege as we have been long favoured with.

However, it shall be well with the righteous. They may share in calamities here, but they are hasting to a better world, and will soon be at home. Then they will be out of the reach of every evil, and will hear the voice of war no more, and at present they are invited to hide themselves in the secret chambers of his wisdom, love, and power. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and when he will give quietness, none can give trouble.

Dear Catty joins me in best love to you and your's, to Mr. K. and his family. I suppose when I come to S. I shall be considered as a Dissenter, but indeed I am no Democrat.

That you, and your children, and all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in your neighbourhood, may always

sit under the shadow of the Tree of Life, and feed upon his precious fruits, is the frequent prayer of

Your much obliged and affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6.

5th March, 1796.

LETTER LII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

WE did not leave P. without a sensible regret: now we are at home, this is subsided; but I trust the sense we had of your very great kindness will never abate. I pray that he, for whose sake you received us, and showed us so much kindness, will return it in abundant blessings upon you and your's. I was favoured with a good night, and arose on the Lord's day morning fresh as usual, and was carried comfortably through the day. I preached a funeral sermon in the evening for my dear friend Benamore, from his own dying words, Mark vii. 37, "*He has done all things well.*" How can it be otherwise? If he does all things, they must necessarily be well done; for his wisdom, power, and goodness are infinite, and we are assured, that not a sparrow, much less a child, and a servant who loves him, can fall to the ground without him.

Poor dear Rebecca, the Lord saw her fall,* and

* It may not be improper to insert a note here, that any mother perusing these letters, may read as a caution to her dear children. Miss R. T., as the reader may learn by her venerable friend's ob-

therefore she was not killed, nor a bone broken. We are always glad to hear from you, but now we must beg to hear soon to confirm our hopes, that by this time she is perfectly recovered. She had often been cautioned against sliding down by the rail, but I believe her late tumble will render future caution needless. Is it not so with us? What are all the Lord's precepts, or prohibitions, but admonitions to do ourselves no harm; but we are children of a larger growth, and think we can please ourselves in our own way, till repeated experience makes us wiser, and the consequences of our choice teach us how unfit we are to choose for ourselves.

And now, how shall I fill up a little more of the paper? Surely we cannot say that there is any want of a subject between Christian friends. We are travellers through a wilderness world, and know something of the difficulties and dangers which surround us; we may sometimes speak of these, but at all times let us stir up each other to admire our great Shepherd.

servations, neglected to receive the warning given her as to the consequences of jumping down stairs, *leaning* on the rail of the banister. The day alluded to by Mr. Newton, she threw herself over the rail at the top of one flight of stairs, and was taken up apparently dead, but revived in a few minutes. The late Dr. Haws of Bath very providentially was dining that day with Mr. Newton, at P. G. in his way to Portsmouth, to visit the ship *Duff*, before she sailed on her first voyage to Otaheite; he kindly gave his immediate assistance, and expressed his hope that no material injury was received; in a few days she was restored. In the next letter a more remarkable instance of deliverance is taken notice of by Mr. N. Miss R.'s younger brother being impatient to mount a pony, his foot slipped through the stirrup, he fell, and the horse finding something at his heels, took fright, and furiously running round a large field three times, caused the body to be thrown across the saddle twice. He remained speechless. Medical assistance having arrived, he was bled, and it was ascertained, that no other injury was received by the dear child, than a slight wound on the head.

What love to redeem his sheep with his own blood ! Infinite wisdom ; what an infallible guide ! What a sure guard is Almighty power ! What a never failing supply from his unbounded fullness ! What a comfortable resource in that unspeakable compassion and tenderness, which are but feebly represented by the tenderness of the nearest earthly relations—father, husband, brother, friend, united ! How did dear Mrs. T. feel when she heard of Rebecca's fall ? So, and much more, the Lord pities his children. He says, " Oh, that thou hadst hearkened unto me ! " We have some faint perception of him now ; faint indeed ! But from the report we have heard of him, we are going, like the queen of Sheba, to see him as he is ; then we shall say, " behold the half, the thousandth part was not told us. " He who once bled to death for us upon the cross, now reigns a priest upon the throne ; He hears our prayers, he watches over us, he is preparing a place for us near himself, *and is waiting* to receive us. We shall soon be at home, at our *long home*, for then all our warfare and wanderings will be ended, and we shall go out no more. Let us then cheerfully take up our cross, and run, with faith and patience, the race that is set before us.

I shall often be, in spirit, in the new chapel ; may the Lord dwell there, and in your house, and in the hearts of all who assemble under your hospitable roof, from the beginning to the end of the year ! May the Lord bless you all, and double all your comforts, and sweeten all your trials, with a sense of his special love. I cannot tell you how much I feel myself

Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

5th October, 1796.

Mr. West went home, and left all his pains behind him, on Friday last.

LETTER LIII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I MUST write to tell you that I cordially unite with you in praising the Lord for the preservation, and by this time, I hope, the complete recovery of George. Poor dear child! what an escape! I hope he will yet live to be "*a man of consequence*.*" He will be so if he lives to know, love, and serve the Lord God of his parents, who, by his watchful providence, protected his life when in such imminent danger. We felt likewise very sensibly for dear Mrs. T.; but I trust she is now recovered from this alarm, as she did from that occasioned by Rebecca's fall. The good Lord, though we cannot see him, is always near to give secret supplies of strength according to our need, and to shew us that He can help, when all other help would be in vain. What an uncertain world do we live in! How little are we aware what the next hour or minute may bring forth! We always profess to believe this, but now and then, when he sees it needful, he permits some unthought of event to take place, to give us a deeper and more abiding impression of this truth, of which, when we go on very long in a smooth path, we are prone almost to lose sight, and then deliverance

* A title the child gave himself.

from what we feared makes us more thankful than if nothing had happened to alarm us. If we could keep up a more constant sense of our dependance upon the Lord, and that we, and all that we call our's, are in his hand, we should perhaps be exempted from many trials, which now our proneness to forget renders necessary. The Lord's providential dispensations are medicines, and though some of them at the time are very unpalatable, not joyous, but grievous; yet afterwards by his blessing, they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and do us good; upon the whole, we have good reason to be satisfied that he doeth all things well.

Since my great trial in the year 1790, I have scarcely met with any thing that deserves the name of a trial. Under *that* the Lord supported me, and though I still miss my dear every day, I am enabled to go on comfortably without her. So I hope it will be with Mr. D. Such trials as his do not spring out of the ground. The Lord, whose wisdom and love are infinite, has done it, and now his will is declared by the event, I hope he will find, as I did, that the all-sufficiency of our God can make up for every loss. Faithful are the wounds of our infallible Friend; he sometimes cuts deep, but never too deep, nor in the wrong place, nor at the wrong time, and he is near to heal. Perhaps the pain may be felt for a season; but it will subside as the cure advances, till at length nothing will remain but a scar.

Your letter was the first news we had of George's fall; though I know you are very busy, I must beg two or three lines to let us know how you all are; we feel a particular interest in all that concerns you and your's. You have many friends, and so have I, but my regard for Mr. and Mrs. T. is, as it ought to be,

something more than the common, and general sense of the word. Pray for us, my dear friends, that in our present state of comparative ease, we may not drop asleep upon the enchanted ground; and I hope often to pray that the Lord may bless you with an abundance of grace, peace, and comfort.

I am,

Your truly affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
25th October, 1796.

LETTER LIV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

WE dined yesterday at Mr. Serle's, and of course talked about you. This visit was not necessary to remind me of you, for you are often present to my thoughts, and I am often with you at P. in spirit. I love the spot, I love the house, the people within doors, and have a sort of regard for the walks in the garden, and the trees in the shrubbery. I remember with pleasure the hours I have spent among them by moon-light.

Yet the talk yesterday made me wish to write to-day, *though I wrote last*. I hear dear Mr. T. has been ill, and I know that when he is well, he is as busy as a bee. I know dear Mrs. T.'s nerves are often out of tune, and I thought "perhaps the Lord may make a word from me a word in season, and honour me as an instrument to wind up the strings a little tighter, that she may play with courage, and make melody in her

heart to the Lord." I find likewise that my good curate, Mr. M., is not so well as formerly. So, though I am rather busy too *in my way*, if I can secure an hour this morning, I mean to devote it to you, and I shall think of you all the while I write.

At present, all at No. 6. are pretty well. I feel that I grow older, and more disposed to indolence, but as yet I find no material difference as to pulpit service, and I have reason to hope the Lord affords his gracious presence at St. Mary's. The church is very full, the hearers very attentive, my heart and tongue for the most part favoured with liberty, and I have some reason to believe, that I do not speak in vain. So much for self and home. The times look dark to *sense*, but *faith* says, it shall be well with the righteous. I was not disposed to be a *croaker* on the fast day, so I told my people from Psalm xcix, what many of them knew, that the Lord reigns, and sitteth between the cherubims;—that is, upon a mercy seat. He who died upon the cross for sinners, and who has promised to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, exerciseth all power and authority in heaven and earth; let the people be ever so impatient, he is above them. He rules them as he rules the waves of the sea in a storm, and sets bounds to their rage, beyond which they cannot pass; yea, he *over-rules* them to promote his own gracious purposes in favour of his church and kingdom, though they mean nothing less. I mentioned several instances, in which, unworthy as we are, he has signally appeared in our behalf. In the sudden suppression of the riots in the year 1780; the king's recovery in 1789, which was equally sudden and unhopèd for; his preservation from the mischiefs intended in December 1792, when I am well satisfied that this city was marked out for

destruction; the plentiful harvest last year, which disconcerted the monopolizers, and brought down the price of corn in defiance of their endeavours to keep it up; and now of late, the disappointment of the French in Ireland, which He evidently did himself. He blew with his wind, and they were scattered, and he would not permit us to ascribe any part of it to our boasted fleets. Lastly, the success he gave to Sir John Jervis; there indeed, we find something to boast of. The admiral is praised to the skies, but few give glory to God; but there *are a few* who see the Lord's hand in these events, and accept them as an answer to the prayers of those whose eyes affect their hearts; and who stand in the breach to plead for mercy. Though these are few, compared to the bulk of the nation, I trust, if they could be all collected into one place, they would seem to be many. The Lord sees and hears them all, as if they were but one assembly; but they are providentially dispersed over the land like salt; so that we may hope, there is no county, city, or town, scarcely a village, where prayer is not offered for the public,—yea, many a believer, who dwells in a lonely cottage upon a heath, is thus rendering his country powerful though secret services. The eye of the Lord is upon the cottagers that fear him, and his ear is open to their prayers.

I think this ungrateful nation must be mortified at least, if it refuses to be humbled. But as he has a cause, a church, a people amongst us, and is still sending forth more ministers, and spreading his gospel, I trust we shall not be wholly given up to ruin, though we justly deserve it.

My afternoon sermon from 2 Kings, xix. 19, was in the same strain. Sennacherib, not content with invading Hezekiah, blasphemed the God of Israel,

and compared him with the idols of wood and stone which he had burnt. This made it the Lord's cause. So the French began their career by renouncing religion, defiling the churches with the remains and the statues of infidels, abolishing the Sabbath, and setting up their idols of reason and liberty. The Popish images that could not save themselves, being made of silver and gold, were too good to be burnt, but they melted them down. But they cannot so easily prevail against the true church; the Lord is a glory in the midst of her, and a wall of fire round about her.

We unite in love, warm cordial love, to you both. I mention Miss T., Rebecca, and friend George, by themselves; tell them we love them dearly. I pray the Lord to preserve them from falling down stairs or from horses. Especially I pray that he may set them apart for himself, and that, like Josiah, while they are yet young, they may seek and know the Lord God of their parents. May his blessing rest upon you all.

I am,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

18th March, 1797.

LETTER LV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

WE have taken places, and hope to be at Reading on Tuesday evening about tea-time. Now as to the time of seeing P. inclination would say, go there next week; but considering how things are at Read-

ing, perhaps I may see it expedient to stay there two Sundays. Should I mean to come sooner, I will let you know ; but should you hear no more, you may be assured, that, if I am alive and well, I shall be ready to obey your orders any time after Tuesday the 18th ; and I shall be glad if you will let me know the day, somewhere in the week between the 9th and the 16th, and the sooner in the week the better.

I shall wish to be *at home* on Friday the 21st, at farthest. I like to have a snug day before the Sabbath to comb out my thoughts a little, as they are apt to get twisted and entangled in journeying and seeing many new faces. I shall long for a walk in Mr. Sloan's wood. As to my stay, it is in my heart to live and die with you, and perhaps it may be so, for old seventy-two has neither right nor reason to look forwards two months before-hand, but I think if I am able to return home, the second Sunday in September will be the last I can spend with you. I must not, if I can help it, be much more than two months from home. If you could see the people I am about to leave, you would wonder that I can bear to leave them at all.

We join in love to you both, and to all your family. Put us into your daily frequent prayers, that I may not, after all your kindness and expense, come to you like a cloud without water.

The Lord bless you abundantly now, and abundantly if he permits us to meet.

Believe me to be,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

1st July, 1797.

LETTER LVI.

MY DEAR SIR AND MADAM,

HERE we are, and here, if the Lord please, we mean to stay, till after Tuesday the 18th. When that day is over, I shall be ready to obey your orders without delay ; but I hope you will write immediately, and fix the time when we may either expect to see you, or have permission to wait upon you at P. I shall rejoice if you can meet us, at least as far as B. If I should not hear from you, (for hinderances are always possible) we shall move off on Thursday the 20th to the Maidenhead at Basingstoke.

Indeed I could hardly hold out so long at Reading, as I hope to do with you ; between much kindness, and many services, I should be overdone. I preach twice a day through the week, besides visiting and being visited, talking and praying from morning to night. I have seldom met with so many hungry affectionate people in one place. The Lord is pleased to open my mouth among them, and they show their gratitude to him by much kindness to poor unworthy me. How little did I think of such an honour when I was a slave in Africa, as he has been pleased to afford me since ! My thoughts go back to Africa daily, and often in a day ; but without recurring to the recollection of what I was, the sense and feeling of what I still am should be sufficient to humble me, and abase myself in the dust before him. For alas ! while I am endeavouring to keep the vineyards of others, he only knows how much evil and disorder remains in

my own vineyard, and how much more easy I find it to preach to his people, than to my own heart. But he is gracious and merciful, and therefore he does not take his word of truth utterly out of my unworthy mouth.

But as I hope to see you so soon, I need not apologize for a short letter, for indeed I have not time to write a long one. We join in best love to you both, in love to all at home and abroad, especially to your dear children. Pray that I may come to you, and that our visit may be comfortable and profitable; mutually so to you and to ourselves. The Lord bless you and your's. Amen. So prays,

Your affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Reading, 10th July, 1797.

LETTER LVII.

MY DEAR, VERY, VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE Lord gave us a safe journey, and we arrived in health and peace at No. 6, about a quarter past seven last night, and found all well at home, and I believe we were welcome. The rain accompanied us as far as Bagshot; the rest of our ride was fair. We did not see much wheat out, but there was some; I pitied the other corn both cut and uncut. The wet weather at this season has been the only trial I have met with while abroad, and it has been a trial partly on account of my feelings for the poor, but chiefly, because my heart has been so rebellious, and so back-

ward in submitting to the will of the Lord, which I am sure, must be wise and worthy of himself, and upon the whole, for the very best purpose.

We said good-bye, as we passed Mr. Woodford, the foundry, Mr. Sloan's wood, and the mills, and then rode on three or four miles in silence; but as we drew nigh Winchester, I began to recover. The thought that we were going home, that every mile was a mile nearer home, abated the regret we felt at leaving P. Thus life is a journey; we meet with some things as we travel, which we would wish to avoid, and we are sometimes called to part with what we would willingly keep, and now and then we have a piece of rough road; but all the while we are going home, and lessening the distance from our Father's house. Time may well be called a diligence, for it never stops, but carries us forward, whether we are asleep or awake, whether we work or saunter. Well, blessed be God that we have such a home, and that it will be a long home. We shall be fixed as pillars, and go out no more. Such a home as we hope for will make rich amends for all the difficulties of the way.

There dwells our Saviour crown'd with light,
Cloath'd in a body like our own—

and

There all the chosen race
Shall meet around the throne,
Shall bless the conduct of his grace,
And make his wonders known.

We found all well at home, our friends below were glad to receive us, and we have had many welcomes from friends abroad. So in our better home, many whom we knew and loved upon earth, are waiting for us; and I believe many more whom we never saw, will compass us about, and congratulate us upon our arrival. If there be joy in heaven over one

sinner, over every sinner, that repenteth, is there not joy likewise for those, who, having overcome by the blood of the Lamb, take their places before the throne, and join with heart, harp, and voice, to swell the chorus of praise? I am now returning into my old track; the air of Coleman-street agrees with me as formerly, and I can still crow so as to be heard all over St. Mary's. Such good health at my time of life is not common, and indeed the Lord's dispensations to me through life, have been uncommon, I had almost said miraculous. I thank my kind cousin for the cap; I shall often think of her when I put it on; perhaps I shall not often wear it, till I appear in it before her. They tell me I look more like a Bishop in the flaming purple, than in the blue. Thanks for all, and every instance of kindness from you and your's, to me and mine. I shall be glad if my rhymes (especially as accompanied by a handsome subscription) may brighten poor Theo's sorrowful countenance into smiles;* I shall be more glad if these little trials incident to youth, may give him an early impression of the vanity and uncertainty of all our prospects and plans within the boundaries of the present life. May he and all your children begin betimes to build their hopes upon the Rock of Ages, and to lay up their treasure in heaven, where neither moth, nor rust, nor fire, nor thieves, can reach them!

My last evening sermon before I left town was a funeral; and so was my first upon my return. A young man was killed by falling from a ladder. He

* Mr. T.'s son lost his purse, while travelling to town by the stage, in his way to school; which when his Rev. friend heard, he wrote a copy of verses upon the subject, to raise a sum adequate to that sorrowed for by the beloved youth.

was the only son of his mother, and she is a widow ! He was the staff of her age, and carried on the business for her. I did not know them personally, though they have heard me for several years ; but they who did know them have no doubt but that both the mother and the son were converted persons. My text was John xiii. 7. We are not surprised to read, that when the Lord saw a weeping widow of Nain, following her only son upon a bier, he should wipe away her tears by returning him to life. It seems quite suitable to the idea we form of his power and his compassion. If my widow is a believer, he has the same compassion and tenderness for her, though he has suddenly called her son away. We know not his reasons for doing so, but we shall know hereafter, why he often calls those whom he loves, and who therefore love him, to very sharp trials. But we may be assured that he does all things well. I called upon her the next day, and found the promise of strength according to her day was fulfilled, for though afflicted, she was comforted and resigned. When we pray for increase of faith and grace, and that we may have stronger proofs of our own sincerity, and of the Lord's faithfulness and care, we do, but in other words, pray for affliction. He is best known and noticed in the time of trouble, as a present and all-sufficient help. How grand and magnificent is the arch over our heads in a starry night ! but if it were always day, the stars could not be seen. The firmament of scripture, if I may so speak, is spangled with exceeding great and precious promises, as the sky is with stars, but the value and beauty of many of them are only perceptible to us in the night of affliction. What a wonderful transition had this young man, if he knew

the Lord ; to be one minute at the top of a ladder, and the next minute joining the songs of the redeemed before the throne ! A sudden death is painful to surviving friends, but the person so snatched away escapes what many feel, who die leisurely in agonies by the cancer or the stone. Life is equally uncertain, and the hour of dismissal equally unknown to us. Oh ! for grace to be always ready, always watching, with our loins girded up, and our lamps burning. Then we may cheerfully leave the *when*, the *how*, and the *where* to him, of whose kind care and attention we have had so many proofs hitherto. He will be our guide and our guard even unto death, and beyond it.

We unite in love and thanks to you, and to all ; I hope to be in spirit with Mr. K., and my chapel friends next Sunday evening. May the Lord himself be powerfully there whenever a few meet in his name. May he bless your endeavours to build up *his* house, and may he build up *your* house, and bind up all who are dear to you in the bundle of life, so that not one hoof shall be left behind. Amen !

I commend you to his blessing.

I am,

With much affection and gratitude,

Your's,

JOHN NEWTON.

25th September, 1797.

LETTER LVIII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I THANK you for all your kind expressions of love and friendship to us. I trust we are not ungrateful. I think we could be willing to live and die with you, but we all have our appointed posts; yet a little while, and we hope to meet where there will be no separation, no sin, no sorrow.

I am glad to hear that Mr. K. supplies my place at your or my chapel. He is a curate quite to my mind. May the Lord bless his labours there, in his Meeting, or wherever he preaches. We know that the gospel is the power of God to salvation; and I believe it never is preached faithfully, and in a humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit, wholly in vain, whether we come to the knowledge of the effect or not. I hope that at the last, both Mr. K. and poor I shall find that the Lord made us useful when we did not expect. You will be glad to hear that we go on comfortably at St. Mary's. The church is thronged, and we have pleasing tokens of the Lord's presence with us in the ordinances; we have the blessing of peace, and the number of enquirers increases. I seem as young in the pulpit as ever, though when out of it I have daily admonitions that I grow older. I cannot expect to be able to preach so *often* and so *loud* very long, but by the Lord's grace I will while I can. The rest I desire to leave to him. Pray for me, that while I do live I may live to his praise, and then it is no great matter how long I stay, or how soon I am gone.

I hope my next paper will be fuller, but there are so many knock-knocks at the door, so many going out and coming in, that my head is too much in the wool-gathering way to write at large. I will only add love and prayers from me and mine, for you and your's, and all whom I know in and about S., with special thanks to you and your children for all your great kindness.

I subscribe myself,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

21st October, 1797.

LETTER LIX.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter to Miss C. gave us great pleasure ; it not only informed us that you, dear Mr. T., and your family returned in safety to P., but the strain in which it was written seemed a proof that the journey and your stay in London had been useful both to your health and spirits. If the Lord please, we hope to go on Friday to visit Mr. H. and other friends at D. near B. in Hertfordshire. I hope to be at home on the 19th or 20th of this month, and if things are so that I can come at all to you this year (which I much desire, if it be the Lord's will, for there is no place abroad like P.) I shall probably set off for Reading (by the way) early in June, where I hope Mr. and Mrs. T. will be able to meet us ; but it will be time enough to talk of this hereafter, and you shall have sufficient notice.

I look forward to a month, and even to a week, with caution. Not only because we know not what the French may be permitted to do, but because I am so old. I aim to leave all in the Lord's hands. To him I look to prepare me for whatever change he may appoint, and especially for my great and last change. And then I need not fear, if I can cast my care upon him, for he has promised to care for those who trust him. A blind man could not walk comfortably if he suspected his guide had a design to mislead him. But if he has full confidence in his guide, he can trip on with cheerfulness. I am stark blind as to future events; I know not what a day or the next hour may bring forth. But I hope I have an infallible guide, and I have been made willing to commit myself to his guidance and protection; yet I feel something within, that often disposes me to question whether I could not find out a better path for myself, than that in which His wisdom is pleased to lead me; oh shame upon this unbelief and presumption! Methinks, when working in a follower of the Lamb, it is a stronger proof of our depravity, than all the outward sins of those who know not the Lord.

We are travelling in the coach of time; every day and hour brings us nearer home, and the coach-wheels whirl round apace when we are upon the road; we seldom think the carriage goes too fast; we are pleased to pass the mile-stones: I call new-year's day, or my birth-day, a mile-stone. My heart will jump when I find myself within three miles of S. I have now almost reached the seventy-third yearly mile-stone; what dangers have I escaped or been brought through! If my heart would jump to be within three miles of you, why does it not jump from morning till night to think that I am probably within three years

of seeing the Lamb upon the throne, and joining in the praises of the blessed spirits of the redeemed, who behold him without a veil or a cloud, and are filled with his glory and love! Here I may be ashamed of myself again.

Mrs. A. called this morning, and John, Theo, and Rebecca dined with us. They are well, and I hope are well pleased, though we have no shrubbery for them to range in. They are nice children, and we love them dearly for their own sakes, and for the sake of their parents. To-morrow Mr. W. and Mr. A. must suffer death for forgery. The former has a wife and five or six children, and the latter is but lately married; his wife is near the hour of her delivery of her first child. They were both in a large way of business, and, till this unhappy step, of fair characters. Oh, sir! oh, love of money! what mischief do you occasion! what a hard master is Satan! he is not content that his servants go on quietly in the spirit of the world, though that is bad enough; but if he can prevail, he will put them upon such things as shall bring reproach and ruin upon themselves and their families, even with regard to this present life. What cause have I for praise! This enemy once possessed me; my name was Legion. How wicked, how miserable, and how lost to all appearance was I in the time of my ignorance! what ingratitude and backslidings have I experienced since I began to know the Lord! How many traps and snares has Satan spread for my feet, and how often have I been taken in them! Yet my Saviour has so set bounds to my folly and to Satan's malice, that I am still alive upon praying ground; yea, I am enabled to hope that he will keep me to the end, and save me to the uttermost. The paper and the hour remind me to say good night. Please

to parcel out my love to your family, and to the church at P. The Lord bless you all.

I am,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

5th June, 1798.

LETTER LX.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

WE left P. with regret, but we gradually recovered our spirits as we drew nearer home. In all my travels I have seldom had a more pleasant journey, especially between Farnham and Guildford. We reached S. in health and safety, about four in the afternoon; I preached twice on Sunday. Tuesday brought us home to tea, and we found all in peace.

What a pleasing excursion! no harm or alarm in the way; no cross or trial in the houses where we were during nine weeks; no unpleasing news from No. 6, either while abroad, or upon our return. My soul, praise the Lord! Yesterday I made my appearance in St. Mary's pulpit. I was glad to see my people, and I trust they were glad to see me. I am now returning to my old track; my first letter is, as it ought to be, to you. I owe you many thanks for all your kindness, and hope to repay you in the best manner I can, by praying that the Lord may continue to bless you both, and your children, and your children's children. May he fill the chapel with his presence, and bless all my chapel friends in their persons

and families. I shall still be often at P. in spirit, though absent in the flesh. Much of my heart is with you, especially as I cannot think of you, without thinking of dear Ediza, and my dear Mary, and your great kindness to them. May he for whose sake you shewed it us, render an abundant recompense to you and your's. We are still upon a journey, and every day brings us a stage nearer to our home. Yes, I trust it will be *our home*. Has not the Lord taught us to send our desires and affections thither before us? Does not our best friend live there? If we love him unseen, how shall we love him when we shall see him as he is, in all his glory, and in all his love; when we shall be like him, and with him for ever? Yes, *that* will be our long home; when we enter that city, that temple, we shall go out no more. May He who has brought us thus far, be our guard and guide to the last step, and enable us, when flesh and heart fail, to rejoice in him as the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever. Amen. In the mean time, may we keep Mr. Mead's text in our view; Eccles. xix. 10. Believe me to be, my dear friends,

Your very affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

20th Sept., 1798.

LETTER LXI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I MUST begin with complaining of Mr. T. How could you, dear Sir, destroy *my* letter? After you

had written it, it was my property, and not your's. I know it was full of expressions of love and kindness, which, as they came from your heart, I value more than a letter in the shape of a fitch of bacon, &c. &c. Of all these kind tokens of your regard, and the pleasure I should have had in reading them, you have deprived me. May I not request, yea, have I not a right to insist, that you write another very soon.

You would be pleased to see how comfortably warm we sit by the blaze of your lignum-vitæ. But we are very careful of it. We use it chiefly on high days and holydays, when the weather is very cold, or the fire has been very low. Thank you for all; all together; if I attempted to specify particulars, I should fill the paper, and yet omit a great part. But from the year 1784 to 1798, I have considered myself as more obliged to Mr. and Mrs. T., than to any of my friends.

The Lord is very gracious to us at No. 6, and at St. Mary's; yet I know not but I am entering upon a little trial. Last night I preached at ———, went to bed well, slept well, and awoke this morning in good health and spirits, but in attempting to dress myself, I fell down several times. I came down stairs safely, with great caution, but when I came into the study, I fell down three or four times. I could not tell what ailed me, as I had neither dizziness, nor numbness, nor pain; at last I found that the strength of my leg failed me, so that it could not support the weight of the left side of my body, and now I cannot walk across the room without being led. Whether this complaint may remove at my time of life, or whether it is an intimation of some farther approaching change, I know not. But the Lord knows. I should not deem it a small trial to be prevented from going

about among my friends, and from returning to P. G. next summer, if I should live so long. I say this would be no small trial, if I were not happily satisfied that my times, and all my concerns, are in the hands of Him, whose wisdom and love are infinite; that nothing can befall me without his appointment, and that he chooses better for me, than I could for myself. How often have I aimed to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." Through mercy I can, in a measure, say it *now*. In other respects I am as well in health and spirits to-night, as I have been for many years, and feel not the least pain. Unless the Lord is pleased to relieve me, I cannot trot about as formerly, but I hope still to be able to go to St. Mary's. I have been looking for some change; I have long been a wonder to myself and to many. Very few persons of my years have been favoured with so much health and strength for public service of the gospel. If he should now say, "Return, and practise yourself those lessons of resignation to my will, which you have so often recommended to others"—should this be the meaning of the dispensation, I hope and pray, that he will make me willing; that I shall withdraw like a thankful guest from a plentiful table, where I have been long feasted, and that I shall rejoice to see others coming forward to serve him better, (*I hope,*) when I can serve him in this world no longer.

I leave a little room for dear C. to write, if she has any thing to offer.

JOHN NEWTON.

3rd Nov., 1798.

LETTER LXII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF you have not already received, I hope you will soon receive fifty of Mr. Grimshaw's Life. I told the Committee, that I doubted not but you would have the goodness to dispose of so many, and remit the money, when paid, either to me, or to Mr. Ambrose Martin, the Treasurer, in Finch Lane. The price is 2*s.* boards. I should, by rights, send a copy as a present to you, another to dear Mrs. T., one to Mr. K., and so on; but I have no property in the book, and cannot well afford to send such a token of my gratitude to all my friends to whom I am obliged and indebted; I treat them all alike who are able to pay. Those to whom some particular circumstances render it proper to send one in my own name, are very few; such as the Bishop of London, Lord Dartmouth, Mr. Wilberforce, &c.

It would have pleased your benevolent spirit much, could you have peeped in at No. 6., and have seen how comfortably we warmed ourselves by your lignum-vitæ fires, during the very severe weather. The wood was doubly welcome and seasonable, because our stock of coals was lower than I was aware of, and, when the river was full of ice, coals were scarcely to be had. Severe as the weather was, we had at times a good deal of company, who all shared in the benefit of your bounty. Possibly some almost envied me for having such a friend as Mr. T., but I hope I value the friendship of Mr. and Mrs. T. more than ship-

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loads of lignum-vitæ. I thank you, however, for the wood, as otherwise I might have been reduced to sit blowing my fingers in the cold weather. It is so warm to-day, that we could almost do without a fire. How various and wonderful are the Lord's works! who can stand before his cold? But when he gives the word, how quickly does the ice melt, and the water flow! A thaw can do more in a day, towards clearing the ground and the rivers, than ten thousand men could do in a year. The influence is universal, every where in the same moment, yet all is performed in silence. Thus, the heart of man is harder than ice by nature, and nothing can soften it but the warmth of grace. In a severe frost, ice may be pounded in a mortar, till it is fine as table salt, but every small particle will be ice still. But, before the fire it will melt without a blow. Nothing but the knowledge of a Saviour's love can dissolve the obstinacy of our spirits, and make the tears of godly sorrow flow; but this will do it effectually.

What a pleasing change will the advancing Spring soon make! The ground lately covered with snow, and the hedges which seemed dead, will be dressed in green, and adorned with flowers and blossoms! The trees in your garden will be all at work, in producing fruits of different kinds. The trees are wonderful machines; why should one make cherries, others apples, pears, or plumbs, when they all draw their nourishment from the same ground, are watered by the same rain, and warmed by the same sun? Thus it is in the Lord's garden; his plants are all living, because they derive their life from him. They have their different seasons. In Winter, though they droop, they are not dead; in Spring they thrive and blossom: the fruits they bear are all good, but not all alike. Though

there is the same spirit, there are diversities of gifts, according to the several stations the Lord allots to them. He qualifies some to rule, and some to obey; some to be rich and moderate, and some to be poor and contented; all to be useful in their places; and when they have grown awhile here below, he transplants them successively to flourish in his heavenly garden, to far greater advantage. Blessed be his name, for the light and hope of his glorious gospel!

My preaching health is still good, but I am growing older apace. I am waiting the Lord's time, and I hope in him that I then shall be found willing. May grace and peace be with you, with dear Mrs. T. and all near and dear to you!

I am,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

2nd March, 1790.

LETTER LXIII.

MY VERY DEAR SIR AND MADAM,

I HAVE not yet time to write a letter, but I must send a note to tell you, that the Lord favoured us with a safe and pleasant journey, and we arrived in health and peace, and found all well, on Wednesday last, about five o'clock. I preached twice on Sunday at Farnham, from Ephes. vi. 24, and John iii. 7. Many hearers, and remarkably attentive and well-behaved; though they have not been used to my talk-

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ing way since Mr. G.'s days. Mr. L. the curate likewise treated me with great civility. I suppose Mr. A. told you, that we dined with him on Saturday—it was a pleasant visit. On Monday we proceeded to Stoke, where I preached on Tuesday evening. Wednesday brought us home.

I spoke last night at Mr. Neale's from Psalm cxvi. 12. Ah! what shall I render to the Lord for all the personal, family, spiritual, private, and public benefits bestowed on me and mine? We are both well, only my sight seems to decay apace. No great matter. If I cannot read or write, I hope the Lord will teach me to *think*; yea, were I quite blind, He could shew me more and better than all that I have seen with my eyes during life. I wish to be more thankful that I have had the use of them so long. I can see to-day—I would not be anxious about to-morrow.

Tell dear Mr. and Mrs. A. that I think of them, and pray for them, daily and often. Tell Mr. K. that I thank and praise the Lord for his restoration to his family, friends, and people. Tell all your sons and daughters that we love them dearly. How we feel for Mr. and Mrs. T. I cannot tell you myself. You may guess, if you recollect all the instances of their love and kindness to us, and if you believe that we are not ungrateful. But I must not forget Mr. and Mrs. L.; assure them of my regard and best wishes. I was greatly pleased with his candour and openness; and, as he is desirous of knowing the Lord's will by studying His holy word in a spirit of prayer, I trust, if I should live to see him again, that we shall be nearly of one mind. There is no teacher like the Lord; nor can we learn any thing worth knowing but what we learn from Him.

I have been in the shrubbery, and in the tub* already, this morning, and I shall be often there, though you cannot see me. May the Lord bless you both, and all your's, abundantly, in body, soul, and spirit! Amen.

I am,
Your very affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

13th September, 1799.

LETTER LXIV.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

My letter to Mrs. A. was gone to the post-office before I received your's yesterday, for I heard of the event from Miss J. on Saturday. We wished Mr. A. to remain much longer in this world of sin and sorrow, but the Lord had much better views for him. The time was come when He would have him near his throne to behold his glory; and therefore our prayers were overruled. I hope dear Mrs. T. can say from her heart, "The Lord does all things well." The time is short, and they that weep should be, if believers, as though they wept not. Many whom we best loved while here, and who are gone a little be-

* The tub, often mentioned, was a seat erected by Mr. T. at the end of an avenue planted straight from the garden, that Mr. N. might be seen to fall, if he was seized with a weakness of limbs.

fore are waiting for us, and the joy of meeting where there will be no parting will make abundant amends for the pain of a temporary separation. Mr. A. met with storms and billows during his voyage on the sea of this life, but we trust he is now in that peaceful haven, where the winds of trouble never blow. What a wonderful transition, to pass, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, from pain, and sickness, and weeping friends, to join in the songs of the innumerable company of the redeemed, before the throne of God and the Lamb! I had but little conversation with Mr. A. at P. If the Lord was pleased to make any part of that little instrumental to his comfort, I have great reason to be thankful. What an honour! what a pleasure! to be in any measure helpful to a dying friend! Whoever is the instrument, the effect is only wrought by Divine power. To God be all the praise.

We were at ——— on Friday, when you and your's were affectionately remembered. I cannot but hope our aged friend is in the right track. Perhaps the information which you received might be exaggerated, as I have heard that your informant is not entirely free from prejudice. Yesterday we were with Mrs. Bacon, and that bereaved family. They sensibly feel their loss—but the Lord is faithful; they are supported. I trust he will equally support Mrs. A., and will bless her, and make her a blessing to her children.

I still remember how I felt when I saw Mr. K. fall. I rejoice and hope I am thankful that he is recovered. He was raised as it were from the dead, to preach on our Lord's resurrection. I hope his people, considering how soon, how suddenly, he might have been, or may still be taken from them, will prize his ministry while it is afforded to them. His removal,

had it taken place, would have been his gain; but it would have been a heavy loss to S. May he be long continued, and the numbers and spirituality of his hearers be increased from year to year. Pray, my dear friends, that I may improve by what I saw, that I may be always ready and prepared for a change, and may work while it is day, not knowing how soon the night may come! And may what will be night with respect to the present life, prove the beginning of an everlasting day to us all!

I have paid six guineas to the Bible Society, three to the Moravians, and am going to pay two to the Clergy Society—eleven in all. Is that right?

I cannot write here so quietly as in your room, or in the summer-house. I expect interruptions, and must therefore draw to a close. May the Lord bless you, and make your blessings more and more! May his grace and peace fill your hearts, and unite the hearts of all your children to himself. We feel we love you, and are thankful for all your kindness. Our love to your family and all friends in town and country. We all continue well, and I trust the Lord is with us at St. Mary's. I can still preach as long and as loud as formerly. My mind has been sitting in the tub this morning. It is often there, or thereabouts; but it went alone; the poor flesh is too heavy to accompany it, and therefore, though I am present with you, I cannot be seen by you.

I am,

Dear sir and madam,

Your very affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

24th September, 1789.

LETTER LXV.

It is time to drop a line to my dear Mr. and Mrs. T. to tell them, that by the Lord's goodness we are still favoured with health and peace; that we still retain a thankful sense of their great kindness, and continue to pray that the Lord's blessing may abundantly bless them and their's with the abundance of all spiritual and temporal blessings. I told you that I often sit invisible in your tub. I have been there this morning. The house, chapel, tub, and shrubbery are seldom long out of my thoughts. Do not be afraid, though my spirit haunts you, and peeps into every room, for, if you could see it, and hear it speak, you would hear nothing but the language of love, gratitude, and good-will. I have still to set up daily Ebenezers to the Lord's praise. My home is comfortable, my friends are kind, and I have reason to hope that the Lord affords us his presence at St. Mary's. I am seldom better than when in the pulpit, and can speak as loud and as long as formerly. It rather seems that in waiting upon the Lord in his house, my strength is renewed; for, though old age makes me feel a weariness every day, I am not more weary on a Monday than on a Saturday. However, I am daily expecting some change. But my times are in the hands of him who does all things well, and there I wish to leave myself and all my concerns. May we live with him, and for him to-day, and trust him without anxiety for to-morrow!

Some of my hearers (three or four) have died com-

fortably since we came home. The inhabitants of heaven daily derive fresh additions to their happiness from the earth. We are assured that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. I trust they have daily cause for such joy, for I hope no day passes without some conversions in one part or other of the wide world where the Bible is known. And, if the host above rejoice for a penitent when first awakened, their joy will be complete when the penitent is brought safely among them. If I am admitted there, as I humbly trust I shall, surely they will rejoice over me. They will know what a wretch I once was. Surely they will compass me about, (Ps. cxlii. 7,) and say, "Behold a brand plucked out of the fire."

We repeat our cordial love. Love to all your children and children's children. The Lord bless you all. Amen.

I am,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

19th November, 1799.

LETTER LXVI.

MY DEAR, DEAR, VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

THOUGH it is long since I received a paper letter from P., yet I have to thank you for *two* in another form. The *first* was in the shape of a fitch of bacon; your *second* came in a cart, and very seasonably, a few days before the frost. I cannot say it is much connected, and I believe you did not expect us to go

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through it, any more than the *first*, in one day; but we have a part of it before us every day, and the smallest piece of it affords us both light and heat, and not only warms our hearts by reminding us of your kindness, but warms our very fingers' ends. I thank you for *both*. You would be thought of often at dinner and by the fire-side, even if we loved you less than we do.

What a shame, then, is it that my Lord and your's should ever be a single minute out of my mind, since there is not a single minute but brings me some new proof of his goodness. I know I can be thankful to Mr. and Mrs. T. But I know also that I am far from being duly thankful to my best Friend, who remembered me in my low estate, brought me out of the African house of bondage, and has since led me *fifty* years through the wilderness. How often has he healed my wounds, soothed my sorrows, restored me when wandering, revived me when fainting, and given me suitable and seasonable help, when the help of creatures would have been in vain! Nay—all my earthly friends are his gifts, and if he had not taken notice of me first, *you* would not have noticed me at all. Had you met me when I was raving like the man possessed with Legion, you would have avoided me as you would a wild beast. And afterwards it was by his secret influence that you came to S. He was then preparing the way for much of my comfort in future life; and, if I was more thankful to him, I should be more thankful to you.

However, though we have much cause for humiliation, yet, I trust the Lord has our hearts, and that our desire is to please and to acknowledge him in all our ways. If we can truly say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire

in comparison of thee!"—then surely we love him. And can we not say this? Could all the honours, profits, and pleasures of this world satisfy us, without a hope in the Lord's mercy, and some sense of his loving-kindness? I trust they could not.

This was begun on Saturday, but I could not finish. Yesterday Mr. M. breakfasted with me. I am glad to hear things are in a fair train at B. I hope the event will prove that you made a good purchase there. If thereby the Lord honours you to be the instrument of saving one soul, it will be worth more than all the estates in ———shire. I trust not only one, but many, will have cause to praise God on your behalf, and that the prayers of those who are ready to perish for lack of knowledge, will be offered and remembered for you and your family. May you live to see it with your own eyes!

We unite in love to you and all friends as if named. The Lord bless you abundantly!

I am, in deed and in truth,
Your very affectionate and greatly obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

24th December, 1799.

LETTER LXVII.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I HAVE been often upon the point of thanking you for your letter, but I met with many interruptions. I have not the same leisure here as when at pleasing P. I thank the Lord that my health and spirits are still

good ; but you, who know how old I am, will not wonder, if I think it very probable, that this, my first letter to you, may prove my last ; it may be so, or otherwise, as the Lord shall please. However, I shall write as I would if I was sure that I shall never see you, or write to you again. In that case, if you keep this paper, it will remind you as often as you look at it, that there was an old man at No. 6, who loved you dearly, and wished and prayed for your welfare while he lived, and, before he went home, left you his last and best advice. May the Lord accompany it with his blessing. I doubt not but you know yourself to be, as you say, a sinner. Young persons of an ingenuous spirit, who have had the instruction and example of affectionate and religious parents, and have been brought up under the preaching of the gospel from their childhood, will generally have some serious thoughts and impressions ; and, if, by the blessing of the Lord, they at length become believers, they are often brought forward so gradually, that they are discouraged, because they cannot distinctly discern when the good work was begun. If it be indeed begun, it will come forward ; if this day has actually dawned, the light will increase ; for it is one thing to know in my judgment that I am a sinner, and another thing so to feel it in my conscience as to make the salvation of my soul my chief and constant concern. Mankind in general know beyond a doubt that they must die, yet multitudes live as if they neither believed the uncertainty of life, nor the certainty of death. If a man knows he is in debt, and is afraid of a jail, he usually acts consistently ; he is daily afraid of the bailiff ; the thought of his debt follows him to bed at night, and meets him as soon as he wakes in the morning ; perhaps it prevents or spoils his sleep,

and, if he cannot pay it himself, he will spare no pains to find a friend, if possible, to help him ;—but there are people who say they know that they are sinners, and yet they live at their ease in the spirit of the world, as if they expected no hereafter. They are more to be pitied than envied. I trust it is otherwise with you, and that you desire, and resolve by his grace, that, whatever others do, you will serve the Lord, and seek your happiness in his favour; and that you pray to the purport of Psalm cvi. 4, 5, and are well satisfied, that, as there is no God like the God of Israel, so there are no people like the Israel of God.

When ministers remind their hearers that they can do nothing of themselves, they are often misunderstood; we can of ourselves not so much as think a *good* thought, but we certainly *can*, if we *will*, wait, ask, and knock, in the use of the appointed means for the help we need, and which is never sincerely sought in vain. The priests under the law could not bring down the fire from heaven, but they could prepare the wood and the sacrifice, and when *they* did what they *could*, the Lord did that which they *could not*. Thus, though we cannot get forward faster or further than the Lord is pleased to lead us; we can, and we often do retard our own progress. The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence. There is daily call for self-denial. The person who would possess the pearl of great price, must part with much to obtain it, though it is given freely without money or price. If my hand is full, and clenched, I must of necessity open and empty it, before I can receive any thing else. The desire of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life must be crossed. No people are more to be pitied than those who halt between two opinions,—between God and the

world; both cannot be served or chosen. The religion of some people is constrained; they are like people who use the cold bath—not for pleasure, but necessity, and for their health; they go in with reluctance, and are glad when they get out: but religion to a true believer is like water to a fish; it is his element, he lives in it, and he could not live out of it. My heart wishes you this determined, resolved spirit, and, if you ask it earnestly of the Lord, he will give it you; then you will find the ways of wisdom both practicable and pleasing. You say the world is ensnaring; I hope therefore you will not only pray, but watch against it. I do not recommend a needless and scrupulous singularity; your situation in life warrants you to appear like the daughter of a gentleman; but too much expense of time, thought, and money in dress, is unsuitable to the professed followers of a poor Saviour, and will hurt the soul by adding fuel to the fire of that pride, which is so natural to our hearts, so difficult to be suppressed, and such an abomination to the Lord, if it be indulged.

If the Lord works in you truly to *will*, he will surely enable you to *do*, according to *His* good pleasure. A simple intention to please him, and to seek him as your portion and happiness, and a simple dependance upon him for wisdom and strength, will carry you through and above all difficulties. He is very merciful to all our infirmities, but he justly requires our whole hearts; but he will not accept of a heart that is divided, and allows no idol to share in what is wholly due to him. His heart was not divided when he undertook for us. He willingly submitted to poverty, reproach, contempt, torture and death for our sakes, and, because we could not otherwise be saved, he would not save himself. Oh, my dear cou-

sin, should not this love constrain us? Shall we, who are bought with such a price, so much as wish to be any longer our own? He invites us to come to him, assures us that they who come he will in no wise cast out; promises to be our sun, shield, counsellor and comforter. The world can make no such promises; it cannot support us under trouble, nor cheer us on a sick bed, nor in a dying hour, nor can the servants of the world enjoy that abiding peace and perfect freedom which the Saviour bestows upon his people! The world is under the tyranny of different and opposite passions, and all their pretended pleasures are mingled with discontent, remorse, and foreboding fears of death and judgment.

Permit me to advise you to study the redemption of time; it is an important talent, and we have all mis-spent too much of it. If you live to my age, you will find the benefit of rising early, if you begin now; and a little custom will make it both easy and pleasant. I owe most of what I am, under the blessing of God, to early rising. The morning hours, which many waste in needless sleep, are favourable to devotion, to seek communion with God at his throne, and in his word of grace; it is also good for the health and spirits.

I believe I need not mention acts of charity and mercy for a part of the employment of your time, for I have often observed with pleasure, that the Lord has given you a feeling, benevolent heart. May he help you in all that you do to alleviate the distressed, or to instruct the ignorant, to do it for his sake; then you shall in no wise lose your reward.

One thing more I will venture to hint. Youth is the time to lay the foundation of good habits, which

may be useful to us in future life. I much wish you to gain a habit of punctuality with respect to time, and the want of this is very inconvenient to the person who fails, and gives trouble to others: if you follow my advice, you will find the advantage long before you are as old as I am. I began to aim at this almost fifty years ago, and I have seldom, if ever, been five minutes behind my time, unless unavoidably prevented, for near fifty years past.

My letter has been in hand nearly a week; I have been more than once interrupted in the middle of a line, so that, when I resumed my pen, I hardly knew what I was thinking of when I laid it down; but, inaccurate as it is, I hope you will accept it as a token of my love and regard. Give my love to all. The Lord bless you all. Amen.

I am your affectionate cousin,
JOHN NEWTON.

24th January, 1800.

LETTER LXVIII.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I PREPARE a line to go by Miss K., who was here last week, and said she would inform you we were well, which prevented our writing. We live so in a throng, that we cannot promise to write every fortnight, as dear C. is almost as much engaged in business as myself. You may depend upon notice, if any

alteration takes place, and therefore you will take it for granted, that I am still as I was, while you hear nothing to the contrary. I hope, likewise, to send by her some copies of my anniversaries, which I have collected in a little book. I know you will accept them favourably, as a token of my love and gratitude. Some persons hold large estates or privileges by the tenure of a peppercorn or some such trifle, paid annually. I am glad when I can offer a peppercorn by way of thanks for your great and long continued kindness to me and mine.

Mr. P. has been with me several times, and I like him much. I said what I could to direct his thoughts to B., but he seems in suspense. I trust the Lord will, in due season, provide for that poor parish, and that your labour of love will not be lost. But there is a time to pray, and a time to wait.

I have often talked of learning to write short letters; I believe necessity will be my best teacher. I cannot now well write by candle-light, and I have less and less writing time in the day. My letter to cousin —— was near a week in hand. I must soon be content to meet my friends in spirit, at the throne of grace. *There* I hope we shall have daily intercourse, while we remain here. It is equally near to the tub in your walk, and to No. 6. Pray for me, that, when the time of my dismissal shall arrive, (which I may daily expect,) I may be found ready, with my loins girded up, and my lamp burning; then, though I should be called away suddenly, it will not be un-awares. It is high time for me to *die daily*. The Lord only knows whether I shall see P., or not, any more. Dr. Watts, in his poetical language, speaks of green and flowery mounts in heaven; if there be such, I hope we shall walk or sit there together, and love

and wonder, and sing and praise for ever. Amen.
The Lord be with you all.

I am,
Your very affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
31st January, 1800.

LETTER LXIX.

MY DEAR SIR,

PERHAPS I was near you and dear Mrs. T., when you walked to the summer-house and the tub, though you did not see me; for I am often there. I am well disposed to be there in person, and so is dear C., though there are many *buts* and *ifs* in the way at my time of life, and in the present state of affairs. If the Lord pleases that I should come, he will make the way clear, but it would be a poor visit, if *He* does not bring us together.

Though I love to hear from you I was almost sorry that you wrote so much, because I think it must be inconvenient to you. I likewise must learn to write short letters, for my eyes greatly fail, and my time is more engrossed than ever.

If Mr. J. and his bride are still with you, give our love. Tell them that I pray their union may be blessed of the Lord. Mrs. R.'s removal is a lesson to others. There is a time to meet, and a time to part. All that appears pleasing in this life will soon vanish like the remembrance of a dream. But happy are they who die in the Lord, and they who now live

to him will happily follow them soon. Our love to Mr. R.; tell him, I well know how to sympathize with him in his trial, and I know, and I trust he knows also, that the all-sufficient Lord will surely support those who put their trust in him. He can make up every loss, and proportion our strength to our day. He has said *he will*, and his promise is sure. Dear C. and I have still cause to praise the Lord for good health. I can preach' as usual, but I feel that I grow old. Should I be permitted to see P. this year, I think it must be my last visit, for, if my life should be prolonged, I do not expect to be able to travel. But why do I look so forward, when I know not what a day may bring forth? I hope and pray the Lord will give you the desire he put into your heart, for the good of B. I saw Mr. P. several times, and he answered the idea I had formed of him from his letters to Mr. M.

Yes, my dear Mr. Cowper is released from all his sorrows. He gave no signs of freedom from his derangement. He expressed neither distress nor comfort, when near his departure. He lay very quiet for the last twelve hours, and went away without a sigh or struggle. Oh! with what a surprise of joy would he find himself immediately before the throne, and in the presence of his Lord! All his sorrows left below, and earth exchanged for heaven.

We join in love to all. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon you, and all your connections. Accept my thanks for the second volume of *Lignum Vitæ*.

I am,

Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
1st May, 1800.

We were with Mrs. W. on the 21st of March. She was then as well as usual. She lived about a fortnight afterwards, and expressed a good hope, but I did not see her. But I likewise hope and believe she passed from death unto life and glory. I think she gave evidence of a real saving change. I was more and more satisfied of this every time I saw her.

LETTER LXX.

MY VERY, VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

I THOUGHT to have waited till I could inform you we were at home, but dear C. says you would have me write sooner—but you will excuse a short letter. We had a pleasant drive to Alton, where we dined and drank tea with friend W., and were much pleased. The Lord led us in peace and safety to Farnham by seven in the evening, and we found our friends well. Having no access to the pulpit there, we came hither to dinner on Saturday. I preached twice yesterday for Mr. W.

Surely mercy and goodness have followed us thus far. The pleasure I had, and the kindness we received at P., will, I hope, long excite my gratitude to you, and my prayers and promises to the Lord on your behalf. I think a day will seldom pass but my spirit will skip over the hills to peep at you, and my thoughts will sometimes meet, either in the house, the summer-house, or the tub. You will hear from us again before long, when your orders are executed. In the meantime accept our repeated love and thanks, &c.

May the Lord, according to my text on Friday, bless you and your's abundantly, and may you be a blessing to many in B., and not there only, but in all your connections. I trust you will always think of, and pray for us.

Your very affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Stoke, near Guildford,
September 16th, 1800.

LETTER LXXI.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH I write both to you and to Mr. T., I address my letter to you, because I wish to save him the inconvenience of writing a single line upon my account, and to you my letter must be short—I wish I could make it very sweet.

But I know it will please you to hear that the Lord brought us in peace and safety to No. 6, on the 17th, and we found all well at home. As there was no pulpit for me at Farnham, we went to Stoke on the Saturday, where I preached on Sunday forenoon and evening, and again on Tuesday evening. On Monday, Mr. W. took us to Chobham. Mr. Cecil was in town, but we saw Mrs. Cecil, and upon the whole she thinks he gets better. He has a nice opening there: two churches within two miles distant; the congregations large, willing, and attentive. Mr. P. drank tea with us on Saturday—was to be ordained the

next morning, and I suppose will begin at Chobham on Sunday the 28th.

The first news we heard on our arrival, was the death of Mr. Patrick. Perhaps you did not know him. He was a good man, and a good minister. He preached faithfully, walked honourably, and died comfortably. He was Afternoon Lecturer at Shore-ditch, and had an Evening Lecture at St. Bride's; both large churches, and thronged auditories. He is, and will be, much missed. His wife was at her mother's in Shropshire; he went to fetch her home, but he died there at the age of 55. I went abroad at 75, and came back alive and hearty. So it has pleased the Lord.

Mr. Newton's works are only to be had in nine volumes. The bookseller will not sell the six separate. Will you please to have them all?

My eyes are very so-so; if they become much worse they will spoil me for a correspondent; but this also will be as the Lord pleases, and I wish to say from my heart "Thy will be done." I may be thankful that I have had the use of them so long. Pray for me that I may do *what* I can, and *while* I can; and that I may leave all future events to the Lord, and live day by day, without anxiety for the to-morrow.

My mind is often about your house, tub, and shrubbery, and I trust will continue to be so, while I live. I hope I shall never forget the pleasant days and pleasant opportunities I have had with you, and the much kindness you have shown to me and mine. May the Lord reward you with manifold blessings to yourselves, and to all your family. My heart prays that the Lord may renew dear Mr. T.'s strength and

spirits. Now that the weather grows cool, I hope he will find himself better, and that his B. engagements will amuse, and enliven, and please him. He is engaged in a good cause there—the cause of the Lord, and the good of souls. I trust the Lord will smile upon his endeavours, and give him to rejoice in the success of the gospel there. I will not repeat a list of names, but I repeat our love. I am sure we love you and your's, and I trust we love all that love our Lord Jesus. May grace and peace be with you and your family.

I am, my dear friends,
Your very affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6,
September 25th, 1800.

LETTER LXXII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

A REPORT has reached us that dear Mr. T. and you are safely returned home. We heard likewise of his alarming illness while at Bath, but, at the same time heard with pleasure, that he was much recovered. It is needless to tell you how much we are interested in all that concerns our dear friends at P.

I hope the young plantation at B. thrives. My heart prays that it may prove a field which the Lord blesses, and that Mr. T. will live to rejoice in seeing himself the happy and honoured instrument of bringing the light and power of gospel truth into a dark

place for the good of many. If the Lord answers the desire of his heart, he will think the money it may cost him well laid out. For, to bring those who were afar off, nigh, by the knowledge of the gospel, and to save souls from death, yea, though it were but one soul, is of more importance than to restore temporal peace and prosperity to Europe.

All at No. 6 are pretty well: the air of Coleman-street and of Hampshire are much the same to me, and, though I grow older, my eyes are better. Mrs. B. went home last week, and is to be buried to-morrow. I therefore write by candle-light, as I shall have no time to-morrow, and I am not willing to defer, because we are rather impatient to hear from you. The Lord bless you and all your's with the best blessings, and make you a blessing to many.

I am,

Your affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Evening,
27th November, 1800.

LETTER LXXIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I CLAIM this side for myself, and shall leave the rest for C. to fill up. But I must thank you under my own hand, and tell you how glad I am, and how thankful I wish to be, that you are supported under your new and trying charge. When I was with you,

my heart was often here ; and, now I am here, it is very often at P. G.

O! madam, we want nothing but faith in stronger exercise to make us cheerful and comfortable under all the actual and possible changes of this poor life. Have we not a Saviour, a Shepherd full of compassion and tenderness ? If we wish for love in a friend, he has shewn love unspeakable ;—he left his glory, assumed our nature, and submitted to shame, poverty, and death, even the death of the cross, that he might save us from sin and misery, and open the kingdom of heaven to us, who were once his enemies. For he saw and pitied us, when we knew not how to pity ourselves. If we need a powerful friend, Jesus is almighty : our help is in him who made heaven and earth, who raises the dead, and hushes the tempest and raging waves into a calm with a word. If we need a present friend, a help at hand in the hour of trouble, Jesus is always near, about our path by day, and our bed by night ; nearer than the light by which we see, or the air we breathe ; nearer than we are to ourselves ; so that not a thought, a sigh, or a tear, escapes his notice. Since then his love and his wisdom are infinite, and he has already done so much for us, shall we not trust him to the end ? His mercies are countless as the sands, and hereafter we shall see cause to count our trials among our chief mercies. He sees there is a need-be for them, or we should not have them, and he has promised to make all work together for our final good.

For want of time I am writing by candle-light, which my eyes do not much like ; but they submit to it, because I am writing to you ; yet they hint that I must now desist and leave the rest to C. May the Lord

bless you all, with all desirable blessings, temporal and spiritual. So prays now and often,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

*6th December, 1800.

Think of me on the 15th.

LETTER LXXIV.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM hungry for a letter from dear P. G., but I must first earn it by writing to you. Mine, however, must be short on account of my eyes. Mr. L. brought me good news, that your family, roots, branches, and little twigs, are as well as I could expect, for which I desire to be thankful. I love you all very dearly—indeed, if I did not, my heart must be a heart of stone. I am daily praying for grace, that I may wait the Lord's leisure for my dear C.'s relief with faith, patience, and humble submission. His hour is not yet come, but he is a hearer of prayer, and his delays are not denials.

Last night I preached from Job iii. 1—3. He opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. His losses and afflictions would not have made him speak thus, had not the Lord permitted Satan to assault him with no other limitation than not to take his life. When thus left to himself under the enemy's power, the evils of his heart broke out in bitter and rash com-

plaints. The same evils are in my heart, and a similar change of circumstances would soon produce the like effects. But, blessed be the Lord, he does not permit Satan to rage so violently against me. Job's case, however, may teach us how precarious outward prosperity is. Let us pray that we may be watchful, and not lean too hard upon creature comforts, for we know not what a day may bring forth. But the same almighty, all-sufficient, compassionate Friend who supported Job, is with us also. The Lord knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust. He will either lay no more upon us than he sees we can bear; or, if his wisdom sees fit to increase our burden, he will likewise give us increase of strength according to our day.

And now, as our great High Priest upon the throne, he has an experimental sympathy with his children. He knows what sore temptations mean, for he has felt the same. He pitied Job, and bore with him; he pities and will bear with us. It is well for us that his patience and mercy are higher than the heavens. He not only brought Job through all his troubles, but justified him from the unkind suspicions of his friends; did not even mention his former rash wishes, but made his latter end better than his beginning. Then, I suppose, Job did not rue the day of his birth. Lord, enable us to resign ourselves and our all into thy hands; since thou invitest us to cast all our care upon thee, and dost assure us that thou carest for us! May we make thy word the ground of our hope, the rule of our conduct, and thy holy will the measure of our desires, and wait with faith, hope, and humble submission, for the appointed hour when thou wilt call us to our heavenly home! With this prospect in view, we may bless the Lord for our natural birth; since we have

lived to be born again from above, and have thereby a taste (though, alas, faint) for the worship and company before the throne of glory. When all our sins and sorrows are left below, and earth is exchanged for heaven, what a blessed exchange will that be!— I thank the Lord my health is good, though in my 77th year, and under a great and heartfelt trial. I often preach in public, and from house to house; six or seven times a week. I am a wonder to many, and ought to be still more so to myself—1 Tim. i. 15.

I am sitting by a good fire. The lignum-vitse not only warms my fingers' ends, but, as coming from you, it warms my heart with gratitude. May the Lord reward you and your's. I commend you to the care and blessing of our gracious Saviour, and remain

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

9th Nov. 1801.

LETTER LXXV.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IF my eyes were better you would hear oftener from me, but I can scarcely see to write at all, but a very little at a time, and then I cannot well read what I have written. My heart is often at P. G., but at present it is not practicable to visit you. If the Lord sees fit to restore my dear C., he will indulge my desire. He will do all things well in the final event. To him I commit our cause.

How true is our Lord's aphorism, "Out of the

abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." I fear my mind is too much taken up with my own petty concerns. At such a time as this, when sin and misery so greatly abound, when the laws and the gospel of God are despised, and multitudes are sinking into darkness and destruction with the light of truth shining around them, it becomes me to be more jealous for the glory of God, more tenderly concerned for the souls of men. But I am a poor creature; I am daily learning that without him I can do nothing. The Lord bless you all, and make you blessings to many. Love to the G.'s, and to all in S., P., &c.

Let us cheer up; Jehovah is our Shepherd and our Saviour. Past trials will return no more; and he who brought us through them will help us through what may be before us. For in all our changes he remains unchangeable—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." His arm is not shortened, nor his ear heavy. Time is short. We are drawing nearer home daily; and a heavenly eternal home will make full amends for the troubles by the way—2 Cor. iv. 17.

I am,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

12th May, 1802.

LETTER LXXVI.

WE, that is, all in our house who know you, sympathize with our dear friends at P. G. in what they must feel for dear Rebecca's illness; and now that

Mrs. J. is at S. I can get no intelligence. But my dear friends know that the Lord has an absolute right to dispose of all his creatures—that as sinners we can have no right; and, if believing pardoned sinners, no reason to complain. I trust you have, and will have comfortable evidence, that she is one who has fled for refuge to the hope set before us—to Jesus the all-sufficient Saviour, the Redeemer, who left his glory, and assumed our nature, that, by his obedience unto death he might pay our debts, and make atonement for our sins by his own blood. When he was upon earth, God was manifested in the flesh, and he has taken our nature with him into his heavenly kingdom, and reigns, and will reign in it, over all, God blessed for ever.

Rebecca has had every advantage of instruction and example: she is a child of many prayers; and I trust her illness is sanctified to give her nearer, deeper, and more interesting views of the truths which she learned while in health. Low as she is brought the Lord can raise her with a word, and he will, if it be for his glory, and her and your best comfort and benefit. If he appoints otherwise, he can make her last days her best days, and enable you cheerfully to resign her to him. The time is short, and we hope to follow her to a better world, where there will be no more sin, or sorrow, or painful separation. You know also that the sovereignty of God towards his people is not arbitrary, but connected with a wisdom which can make no mistakes, and a love which can give no unnecessary pain to those for whom he died upon the cross. If we are in heaviness, there is a need-be for it, and it is but for a season; his thoughts and ways are high above our's, and what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. Even now

we may be sure he does all things well. May his gracious presence be with you, and then you will be able to rejoice, even in tribulation.

My dearest child came home on Saturday last, and I have much to praise the Lord for on her account. A stranger would be ready to pronounce her quite well; but still a something hangs about her which only the power of God can remove. For this I pray; for this I wait. Our help is in the Lord who made heaven and earth—in him who raiseth the dead. But his time must be best. Though he cause grief, he will have compassion, for he delighteth in mercy. The rest of our family are well. My health is firm. Brother K. has probably told you that I am not much altered in the pulpit. Indeed, I never preached more frequently than since my trial; and I seem still heard with acceptance, and I trust the Lord favours us with his presence and blessing. Oh, help me to praise him! I am a wonder to many and to myself.

I hope and earnestly request that my dear Miss T., or some one of your family, will favour us with a letter soon. Continue to pray for us, and believe that I always feel myself,

Your most affectionate and grateful,

JOHN NEWTON.

29th July, 1802.

LETTER LXXVII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

My friend John's letter came providentially, as we say, in the very nick of time: for I had engaged a chaise for Staines, and, if my dear child could bear the journey, we should have proceeded to P. But the Lord had otherwise appointed. The way of man is not of himself. Perhaps he may have some service for me elsewhere. I must now give up the hopes I had entertained of seeing P. G. once more. But I hope I never shall forget the kindness I have there received, and the pleasure I have there enjoyed. I have likewise there had painful hours in sympathizing with my late dear Mary and dear Eliza Cunningham. Oh, if the trees in Mr. J.'s wood could speak, they might bear witness to my joys and my sorrows. The Lord reward you and dear Mr. T. for all your repeated kindness to me and mine, and bless every branch and twig of your family. I rejoice in dear Rebecca's amendment. May she live (if the Lord please) to be a great honour and comfort to her parents. My love to all friends. I can scarcely see what I have written. May grace and peace be with you all. Pray for us. I trust we shall meet in a better world. While I live here, I shall always (I hope) feel myself,

Your affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Sept. 6, 1802.

LETTER LXXVIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH the event proves that it was not the Lord's will that I should see my dear friends at P. at present, my heart is daily with you, and I have no doubt but you are willing I should tell you how and where we are.

I was advised to take my dear child to breathe a little sea air, and I was led to choose this place as more quiet and free from bustle than Brighthelmstone, Margate, &c. &c.; so far my views are answered. She bore the journey very well, and we found kind friends at Billericay, through which we passed. Here indeed we are quite strangers; but, as I aimed to commit my ways to the Lord, and to seek his direction by prayer, (for the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps,) I humbly hope that he prevented me from going into Hampshire, because he had something to do for me, or by me, in places which I had never seen. His I am, and Him I trust I desire to serve; to follow the leadings of his wise and holy Providence simply, without asking questions, and to hold my own will in subordination and subserviency to his, according to the pattern he has left us, that we should tread in his footsteps. Oh, when we think of Gethsemane, how can we hesitate to say, "Not my will, but thine be done."

I have much to praise the Lord for in behalf of my dear child. She is as active, attentive, benevolent,

and affectionate, as you ever knew her. He has done much for us, and I look to him to do more; for, with regard to her own personal feelings, she is far from being quite well. I have ground to hope that the support the Lord has given me has caused many to praise him on my account, and others to trust him under the pressure or prospect of their own trials. Now, if any thing I can do or suffer may promote his glory or the good of my fellow-creatures, ought I not to be willing? Is not He the Lord my God, who brought me out of the wickedness and misery of my African bondage to preach that gospel which I once renounced and blasphemed? Oh! the power of that blood which could wash away such guilt, and of that grace which could, in a measure, change such obstinate habits as mine! Yes, it has pleased him to set me forth as a pattern of his long-suffering and patience to other chief sinners, that none may despair when they see me.

Farther, he has hitherto given me strength according to my day. My trial has been sharp, but I am supported to this day; and am still upheld in my public service, though in my 78th year. Oh, my dear friends, continue to pray and praise for us, and engage the help of all around you who have access to the throne of grace.

Thus let us often meet upon earth—and ere long we hope to meet in heaven: there Jesus the forerunner waits to welcome travellers home. The time is short, and shortening every hour. The Lord bless you all.

I am,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

South-End, Essex,
18th Sept. 1802.

LETTER LXXIX.

MY VERY DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH absent in the flesh, I am often present in spirit at P. G. The account Mr. Serle gave me of the depression of dear Mr. T.'s spirits excited my sympathy and concern. But I know he is in the safe and sure keeping of our gracious Lord—and I am thankful, that, under all his decays and infirmities, his mind is at peace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I rejoice likewise in the Lord's goodness to you; that, in this time of your need and exercise, he gives you strength and spirits according to your day. Oh, what a mercy to have them for our refuge and support in the time of trouble! and a well-grounded hope that we shall ere long be out of the reach of sin and sorrow for ever!

I wrote to you from South-End, from whence we returned the first of this month. Our stay there, and our whole journey was as well as the case would admit. We had fine weather, safety upon the road, and found kind friends wherever we stopped. And my dear child travelled better than I could have expected. Improper treatment in the beginning of her illness has caused a very trying complaint. I feel much for her, but have great cause to praise the Lord that she is again my pleasant affectionate companion and counsellor. The Lord still favours me with good health; my spirits also are pretty good, and, though my recollection is as weak as my eyes, I am still enabled to preach, and am seldom much at a loss

when in the pulpit. My church is crowded, the auditory peaceful and attentive, and I have a good hope that the Lord owns his word from my unworthy lips. Thus, though my trial is still great, I have much to praise the Lord for. It is some additional trial that I cannot fill up my hours by writing and reading as formerly, and my hearing is too dull for me to join in common conversation. But many persons are born blind or deaf; whereas, unworthy I had the use both of eyes and ears for seventy-seven years.

We are beginning to warm ourselves with your *lignum-vitæ*, of which we have at present a pretty good stock left; but, if convenient, I should be glad of a supply before the Winter is over. Though I have no probable hope of seeing P. again, I trust that neither absence nor distance will abate my regard for you or your's, or my sense of obligation for your great and long kindness. We have not seen Mrs. J., so that I have not heard of dear Rebecca; but I can and do pray for her. I trust that whether she lives or dies, she is the Lord's. My love to all friends.

I am, my dear madam,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

9th Oct., 1802.

LETTER LXXX.

MY VERY DEAR MADAM,

I WAS not surprised at that part of my cousin's letter, in which she desired I would attempt to offer you a word of consolation; because I am persuaded

the Lord loves you; and, if so, I am sure Satan owes you a grudge, and will do all he is permitted to do to distress you. He is always ready to fish, as we say, in troubled waters, and to assault believers when under the pressure of great trials; but he is a conquered enemy, and cannot go an inch beyond the length of his chain. The Lord Jesus sets bounds to his rage, and says, as to the stormy sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther;" nor would he permit him to go so far, if it were not his purpose to make all things to work together for our good.

I doubt not, but the anxious thoughts you have about dear Mr. T., and his not being able to say all you wish, are from this quarter, and are not properly your own. Does he not tell you, that he is happy and in peace, and what need we desire more? Besides, if he had died years ago suddenly, by an apoplexy, or a flash of lightning, I believe no competent judge, who knew his real character, and his love to the word, ordinances, ways, and people of God; his consistent conduct, his abundant benevolence, and his disinterested and unwearied endeavours to promote the knowledge of the gospel, and the good of souls; I say, none who knew him would doubt, that, if he had died suddenly, without speaking a word,* he was sud-

* The last long illness of Mr. T. was borne with the resignation of a true Christian; his physician looked upon him with surprise, and said, "I never saw greater patience and acquiescence; there is a fine strong constitution, which does not easily yield to a decay produced by mental exertion." When asked a day or two before his death, "Are you happy?" he replied, "Yes," and in broken accents, "I know in whom I have believed," &c. He was most grateful for every alleviation; one day, when laid down afresh, he said, "I thank you for this refreshment;" when a part of the 41st Psalm was quoted: "Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness," "Is not this

denly removed into the presence of the Lord, whom he loved and served upon earth.

For my own part, when I consider the nature, magnitude, and intricacy of his business; the weight that must be upon his mind in contriving and improving his machinery; his extensive engagements in all the dock-yards; his fidelity in discovering and putting a stop to many abuses in the yards; and that, in the midst of all his concerns, when he occasionally met with a Christian friend, he could throw all aside, and converse on the great things of God, as if he had nothing else upon his mind—I am ready to pronounce him not only a true Christian, but one of the most eminent in our land. We think of all at P. G. con-

promise fulfilled to you?" he looked up with a sweet smile, "yes." A short time before he grew worse, he was informed that government would not renew, or had taken away his contract for manufacturing blocks for all the dock-yards, and that they were erecting their own machinery for that purpose, he said, "If I thought it would be for the good of my country, I would hold up both my hands for it." "But what shall we do as a family; it will greatly decrease our income?" He answered, "do? why be humble and thankful." "But we must move into your smaller house, (about a quarter of a mile distant,) and there is no chapel." "We will build one then." But he was not permitted to know any change, as his widow and family did not remove till after his interment. The room which was devoted to his remains for the time, was frequently visited by his deeply mourning relatives, who would often stand by the coffin, and, while weeping for themselves, rejoice over the emancipated happy spirit. His pious widow, who ever delighted in promoting good with her husband, built a commodious neat chapel adjoining the smaller house to which she retired, where, as long as she remained, the gospel of peace was preached to the poor around.

Since writing this note, supplied by fond remembrance, I have referred to Mr. T.'s funeral sermon, and find I am correct as to his last moments; but it is a very faint sketch of the account given in that sermon: entitled, The humble confidence of the dying believer; preached by the Rev. Wm. Kingsbury, of Southampton, May 8, 1803.

tinually, and remember you all in our daily prayers. I trust we shall meet again in a better world.

I am, my dear madam,

Your affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

28th April, 1803.

LETTER LXXXI.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

THERE is seldom a day, or half a day, when I am not with you in spirit, though my many engagements, and the weakness of my eyes, have prevented my writing. I should be glad to send you a letter every week, and even that would be but a small testimony of my gratitude. But I am now in my 79th year, and cannot do as I used or as I would. Through mercy my health is remarkably good, but I have a depression on my natural spirits, arising partly from old age, and partly from the dark prospect of the times, which makes me somewhat like Barzillai, (who was not two years older,) unable to find much relish in my many temporal blessings. I would praise the Lord for the strength and support he afforded you, under your late great trial. It is, indeed, a great trial, to part with our dearest friends at any time; our gracious Lord did not reprove Mary and Martha for weeping when their brother died, but condescended to drop a tear of sympathy with them. He still sympathizes with his people, for he was once a man of sorrows for our sakes, see Heb. iv. 15, 16. However,

when the Lord has declared his will by the event, it does not become us to indulge grief, which is often hurtful to health, and to our peace of mind. We should rather aim to praise the Lord for continuing our friends to us so long, than allow one repining thought for their leaving us, especially when we follow them in our thoughts, and see them by the eye of faith before the throne, and have a good hope, that we, in a short time, shall rejoin them to part no more for ever. The Lord help you to find comfort in reflecting what a husband he was, and how long he was spared to you; what a blessing he was, not only to you and your children, but a public blessing to many in different parts of the kingdom; what a character he has left, and how many (more than you will ever know) are now weeping for his removal! Oh, how it would gladden my heart and my dear child's, (who joins in love to you and in prayer for you and your's,) to see you once more. I hope the Lord will enable you and make you willing, in his own best time, to come to London. But, if I am to be so indulged, you must come soon, for I may well say with Isaac, "Behold I am old and know not the day of my death." He also was blind, and I am almost so. It is with great difficulty, and at many intervals, that I have written thus much, and I cannot now clearly see the tip of my pen. But I could write, because it is to you. My dear child, though not yet perfectly well in health, is so far restored as to be a great comfort to me. What cause have I to praise the Lord for his goodness in supporting us in the darkest part of our great trial, and for the merciful mitigations with which he now favours us. He, who has done so much, can, and will in his own good time, do the rest. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and in him I trust that he will de-

liver us. I can tell others what good reasons his people have to acquiesce in his dispensations, but alas! I am a poor creature, and I often find it hard to practise my own lessons. We join in love to all your children, and to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord our Saviour give you peace always, and by all means in himself. We can expect it only in and from him. Our life here is a state of conflict and warfare. But the time is short and the end is sure. We hope at last to be more than conquerors, through him who hath loved us.

I am, my dear madam,
Your very affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

18th Aug., 1809.

LETTER LXXXII.

MY VERY, VERY DEAR MADAM,

MY eyes will not bear much writing, but I must thank you for your late obliging letter. The Lord has done much for you, but your late trial is still felt. You mourn, but you do not murmur. Your spirits are weak, but I hope a little more time and prayer will restore them. I still wish you to come to London. Perhaps the journey, by the Lord's blessing, might have a different effect from what you expect, and the sight of old places might remind you of old mercies. But you are in the best hands, and I leave you with him who loves you, and will make all things work for your final benefit.

The short talk I had with your dear son gave me much pleasure. I trust the Lord has his heart. Oh, I hope and pray that all your children may be taught of the Lord, and be found at his right hand with their parents, on the great day of his appearance. I send much love to dear cousin S., and to all the preachers and hearers at P.

As to the question you propose, I refer you to the words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. He wrote by inspiration, and says, "Then shall I know, even as also I am known." I enquire no farther; I believe there is nothing but the veil of flesh and blood between us and them. They see and know us now, and the moment we are absent from the body, we shall be in the midst of them. The Lord bless you. My eyes positively say I must leave off.

I am,

Your very affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

April 30th, 1804.

LETTER LXXXIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

WE are thankful to find you are recovered from your illness. I believe it lawful to apply to Dr. A. or Dr. B. as we see occasion, but the Lord is the only physician: without him all means fail, and he, whenever he pleases, can cure with or without means, by the word of his power. If he speak, it is done. I

think, as you say, the best symptom of approaching health is, when our minds are bowed to his will, and we have reason to hope that the affliction has answered the end for which he sent it. For, as he does not afflict without a need-be, neither will he permit a trial to continue longer than necessary. I account it a pleasure and an honour, if I can, at any time, drop a word upon paper, which, by his blessing, affords you any satisfaction. May the few hasty lines I can now write have this effect!

If I lived near you I should rejoice to be favoured with your confidence, and I hope I should not abuse it. I trust I can feel for my friends, and have sympathy with them in all their exercises. But you remind yourself of a better Friend, much nearer and more compassionate than any fellow-creature can be. His pity is not like our's, helpless and unavailing, but connected with power, fully able to relieve in the severest cases. To him likewise we can venture to tell all. There is, perhaps, something we cannot impart to the dearest friend, but to Him, (with the atonement in view) we may open ourselves exactly as we are, and may rejoice, notwithstanding our vileness, that not a single thought can or need be hidden from him. Our very sins, however displeasing to him in their own nature, are part of that disease which he has graciously undertaken to remove.

We shall rejoice to see you in London, but I hope your next visit will not be for medical advice, but to give your friends the pleasure of your company. However, should such help be wanted, we have good warrant to recommend Dr. — to those whom we love. Some cases will yield more speedily and certainly to the treatment: in others, and according to the nature of the complaint, he prescribes medicines; and,

in the latter way as a physician, I have a high opinion of his judgment; and I can confide in him the more, from believing him to be a godly man, who mixes prayer with all his management. It should seem that where every thing else is equal, they who acknowledge the Lord and depend upon him for a blessing, are most likely to be crowned with success.

I must leave the rest of the paper to Mrs. Newton; my time is expired, and I know she has something to say. Whatever she can say of love and gratitude to Mr. T., and you and your family, I fully subscribe to before-hand.

Without date or signature, supposed to be written about the year 1768 or 1769.

TWO LETTERS

TO

THE HON. AND REV. W. B. O.

IN THE YEAR 1782.

LETTER LXXXIV.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR kind reception of me would be sufficient, independent of my great regard for Mrs. T., to make me rejoice in an opportunity of visiting you again. I thank you, however, for renewing your obliging invitation. I can honestly say, inclination has not been wanting, and, could I have transported myself with a wish, you would have seen me again. There is no place where I could think of spending a few days with more pleasure than at Reading. But, though I have several agreeable connections in the country, I am somehow precluded from them all, and, if I had time to visit one, and but one, I should perhaps be under a difficulty to determine to which I could give the preference, without appearing ungrateful to the rest. There are reasons, perhaps, why I ought to give some preference to the people among whom I laboured so

long at Olney; but I have not been able to see them this year, and I usually make them a sort of plea to excuse myself to other friends, who have a right to expect that I should not slight their kindness.

Mrs. Newton and I have lived together almost thirty-three years. I may borrow Pliny's reason for being unwilling to leave his wife; "*In causâ amor primum decido, quod non consuevimus abesse.*" On the other hand, she is often indisposed, and cannot travel with me so conveniently as she once did. Possibly this would not be a just and sufficient excuse for my staying always at home, if the Lord's will and service seemed to call me abroad; but I am ready to acknowledge it now, as a proper and necessary restraint from rambling, for my duty seems to be at home; but, should I live to feel the warmth of Summer suns again, I will watch the motion of the cloud and pillar of fire, in hopes that they may lead me to R. Without some concurring circumstances to intimate that the Lord opens my way, I cannot move with liberty. I rejoice in the Lord's goodness to the town of R., and congratulate you that he has conferred on you an honour which I am persuaded you esteem a far greater than any you can derive from family—the high honour of being his servant in the gospel. He has likewise given you a wisdom far superior to what bears that name among men, for he has made you "wise to win souls." There is a great diversity of cases amongst his people, but they all, (and perhaps they all equally) illustrate the power of his grace, and the riches of his mercy. What a difference between your call and mine! I, though long a ringleader in blasphemy and wickedness, was spared; and, though banished into the wilds of Africa, where I was the sport, yea, the pity of slaves, I was, by a series of providences, little less

than miraculously recovered from that house of bondage, and at length appointed to preach the faith I had long laboured to destroy. Possibly the annals of the church will not furnish an instance in all respects parallel. But your case is likewise singular: your birth, early habits, connections, prospects in life, and I suppose your character also, were such bars in the way of your happiness and usefulness, as nothing less than the power of God could break through. I suppose you are the only person in the kingdom so closely related to a noble family, who is able or willing to preach the gospel of Christ, and to glory in the cross of our Lord; thus that line,

“ Oh! to grace how great a debtor,”

is applicable to us both, and you, as well as I, can declare not merely from hearsay, but from experience, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly abundant. In one respect I ought to be more affected with a sense of this grace, than you can be upon the same ground. I have been longer in the way than you; I cannot exactly ascertain the time when I first saw so much of the gospel as to enable me to venture myself upon it for salvation, but I think it is more than thirty years since. Oh, sir, in the course of these years, what useful proofs I have had, and have given, of the deceitfulness and vileness of my heart. What wretched returns of my ingratitude and perverseness I have made for mercies received, is known only to Him who has borne with me. Much of this dark part of my story I have forgotten, but I remember enough to fill me with shame. It is true that, as to my outward profession, I have been preserved from making any considerable blots; but this enhances the wonder and the mercy, for I am conscious to myself of hair-

breadth escapes from such entanglements, as might, and would without the Lord's interposition, have issued in final apostacy; and, in this space of time, how many whom I had reason to esteem better than myself have I seen fall, (some I fear to rise no more,) while I am still left to speak of his mercy! I have seen enough to remind me of the difference of setting out, and holding out to the end, and to warn me that we can have no security from gifts, labours, services, or sufferings, from clear views, or past experiences; but that, from first to last, our only safety is in the power, compassion, and faithfulness of our great Redeemer.

That the Lord may daily add to your comfort and success, may make you as a well watered garden in your own soul, and a never failing spring to convey the water of life to multitudes, is my sincere prayer.

An hour of leisure which I cannot always command, and the pleasure I feel in writing to you, have insensibly drawn me beyond the usual bounds of a first letter, but I shall enlarge no further than to offer my respects and Mrs. Newton's.

Your much obliged and affectionate servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

Hoxton,
Nov. 5th, 1782.

LETTER LXXXV.

MY DEAR SIR,

Now the road of correspondence is opened between us, how should I pester you with letters, were my leisure proportioned to my inclination; but the throng

of engagements around me, will, in a good measure, secure you from my importunity. I am even afraid that if I should put your letter in the drawer where my letters are usually confined till I have answered them, so much time might slip away before I could release it, that you would suspect I did not duly prize it, and therefore I enjoin myself to thank you for it immediately, that my acknowledgments may be ready to travel to R. with my dear friend Mr. B. on Tuesday next. It was with much concern that I heard of your illness. The importance and seasonableness of your visitation I could learn only from yourself. Every day almost I meet with new occasions of admiring the wisdom, care, and faithfulness of our great Shepherd, intimating and adjusting his dispensations exactly to our need and state. When the enemy is spreading a snare for our feet, when our deceitful hearts are beginning to start aside, when we have perhaps actually taken some steps in that path, which, if persisted in, might terminate in apostacy, oh! then, how gracious, how seasonable, how salutary, are those tokens of love (called afflictions in the language of mortals) which he sends to break the snare, to check our progress, and to recall our wandering feet into the path of duty and peace! How many turns of my life can I recollect, of which, though at the time they were not joyous, but grievous, I may now say, "*Nisi perissem, perissem.*" I rejoice to think that you were delivered before I knew your danger: could I have known how it was with you, my concern and anxiety would have been great. What the Lord appeared to have done for you, and by you, had given you a near place in my heart, and nothing appears to me so awful as a minister, who, having given for a time proofs of a zeal for

God, and love for souls, afterwards declines, and dies away from the good cause. Oh! my dear sir, ought we not, and by the grace of God shall we not think it vastly more desirable to be visited with all the afflictions of Job, to be stoned to death, or to be buried alive, rather than to be left to such a conduct as might stumble the weak, and encourage the wicked? I may congratulate you upon your danger likewise, now it is happily over. Perhaps the Lord saw that such an experience was no more than needful to preserve you from other dangers to which your situation, talents, and services might expose you. Whatever we seem to be in the eyes of man, we are nothing in his sight farther than we are humbled and abased in our own. It requires much discipline to keep pride down in us, even considered only as Christians; more as ministers; still more as ministers conspicuous for abilities and usefulness; and, when the appendages of family and affluence are added, the temptations to self-importance are still increased. Such persons will have many admirers, many friends, not a few flatterers, but perhaps very few such friends as will have the courage to give plain and faithful advice, especially as the rules which politeness and decorum (so called) have established, form a fence which is not easily broken through; but the Lord, by leaving you a little to yourself, has provided you with something to reflect on, which I trust will be a sanctified means of keeping you dependant upon himself. There is none teacheth like him. Hereby likewise you will be more sensibly aware of the dangers and difficulties to which your hearers are liable. You will be better able both to warn them of the snares in their way, and to encourage and comfort them when they are desirous to return. Thus he speaks to all in what he said to Peter, 22nd Luke,

“Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” The doctrinal parts of our message are in some degree familiar to us; but that which gives a savour, fulness, energy, and variety to our ministration, is the result of many painful conflicts and exercises, which we pass through in our private walk, combined with the proofs we receive, as we go along, of the Lord’s compassion and mercies under all the perverseness and folly we are conscious of in ourselves. It is only in this school of experience, that we can acquire the tongue of the learned, and know how to speak a word in season to those who are weary. Thus, by his wise management, “out of the eater cometh meat.” He breaketh the heads of the Leviathan in pieces, and teaches us to get food from them, and we are strengthened and established by the very plots our enemy formed to entangle and overthrow us. Well may we say, who is a God like unto thee? How gladly should I accompany Mr. B. and his daughter to R. How much pleasure should I promise myself on the road; and how much at the journey’s end. But it must not be.

I shall take leave of Miss P. with some solicitude; I know nothing of the Lord’s future purposes, but that he will certainly do all things well. I wish I was quite as easy about the event as I believe she is; perhaps it is because I wish it, but rather seem to hope and expect, that the Lord will afford her relief at B., and that I shall see her again in better health; but oh! the mercy to be enabled to trust ourselves and those we love to him, and to see them confiding in him likewise, and resigned to his disposal in cases where the world can give no help or support. This all-sufficient God can and does make his people more

than equal to any and every trial he appoints for them.

The other night I buried the wife of a friend of mine; they were remarkably happy in each other, and she has left him with four children, the eldest under four years of age. He sensibly feels the loss, but has been wonderfully supported. He told me that he knows not if he was ever so comfortable in his soul, as since her death, and that he is so perfectly satisfied with the Lord's wisdom and goodness in removing her, that were it possible by a single wish to restore her to her former place, he could not form it.

You will surely think I have written enough for once, and I have just reserved room for the seal of a tender of Mrs. N.'s respects, and to subscribe myself,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Hoxton,
22nd Nov. 1782.

TWENTY LETTERS,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1793 AND 1802,

TO MR. AND MRS. R.

OF READING.

LETTER LXXXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I CAN truly style you so, though upon a short acquaintance. I have reason to believe that the providence of God was signally concerned in leading me to R., and particularly to lodge under your hospitable roof. The time I was with you was a very pleasing part of a very pleasing excursion; and I wish to be thankful for it, both to the Lord and you.

I address my letter to you, both because the Lord has made you one, not only in relation, but in affection and spirit. The remembrance of my past happiness in wedlock was never more sensibly revived than while I was with you, but I assure you it did not excite in me either pain or envy, but, on the contrary, a very sincere pleasure. Oh! that I could see the like in every married pair. The object of my affection is removed; my time is past; but the bare recollection of what it once was, is worth much more than

any thing else that this poor world can afford. May the Lord maintain, yea, increase your mutual regard ; but, may he likewise sanctify it, that you may avoid my sin and my suffering.

It ought to be a lasting source of humiliation to me, to remember that my dearest earthly comfort so often proved the occasion of discovering the vileness and ingratitude of my heart in a more striking light than perhaps I should otherwise have known it. There is a danger in an over-attachment. It has cost me many a pang ; yet, when I think of the apostle's charge, that " husbands should love their wives as their own flesh, yea, as Christ loved the church," these strong expressions lead me to conclude, that the danger is not in loving too much, but in loving improperly. When a wife gives her husband her whole heart, she has still room for all her friends and his ; and, should these friends be increased twenty-fold, still there is room for them all. But there is a peculiar kind of regard which is due to her husband only ; if she allow herself to transfer this regard to any other man, though it went no farther, she would be criminal. Thus, while we love the Lord supremely, we may love our husbands, wives, and children, or friends, as much as we can ; but all must be held in subordination and subserviency to what we owe Him, otherwise they will be idols, and we shall be idolaters, and the Lord in one way or other will let us know that he is a jealous God, and will not bear a rival. Above all, I congratulate you, that the Lord has called you both out of the world, and given you the same views and desires of better things than can be possessed here. This is a mercy, which some of his people have not. It often happens, that of two in one house, the one is taken and the other left. Had this

been your case, had you differed in the most important concerns, the more tenderly you loved each other, the more unhappy you must have been; but great is the privilege of walking together in the way to the kingdom. Please to give my love to your forty friends and mine, whom I had the pleasure of meeting in your drawing-room. When you first spoke of inviting some friends to meet me, I thought they would be only to dinner or tea, and was not in the least aware of the public step you were going to take. I was a little apprehensive of the consequence, but, by what I heard and saw, before and after, I am persuaded that it was not the effect of a transient warmth, but that you had deliberately counted the cost, and were willing to let it be known far and near, that you had made up your minds, and were determined, by the grace of God, that, whatever others do, you and your house, so far as your influence can prevail, will serve the Lord. In this view I greatly rejoiced in the opportunity, and it pleased me highly to see a room consecrated to him, which I suppose has formerly been filled in a very different manner.

We were favoured with a safe and comfortable journey, and reached home about one o'clock. Our servants testified both by words and looks, that they were glad to see us. It is a great comfort to be served by those who love us, and it is a comfort which many cannot procure; the Lord only can give it; he it is who maketh people of one mind in a house. A consistency of character, with a prudent condescension and kindness to those placed under us, are means which seldom fail of some good effect; but, when a whole family are united by spiritual ties, and act as under the eye of the same common Master; when the parlour and kitchen are in unison and domestic order,

love and peace make a family happy indeed. I have ordered Mr. Robinson's books, and am promised them to-day or to-morrow, and hope they will be with you before the week closes. They will be accompanied by two or three sermons, which I hope you will accept as a pepper-corn acknowledgment of my love and thanks.

I hope we had a good Sabbath. I preached from 1 Thess. ii. 17. In the evening from Matt. xiii. 16, 17. The latter sermon was intended to impress my dear people with a sense of the value of gospel ordinances. I contrasted the present state of T. with that of R. I did not mention the latter place by name, but most knew where I had been. This is another privilege, my dear friend, with which the Lord has favoured you. He could keep your souls alive though you lived in the darkest spot, but the lines are fallen to you in a pleasant place, where you have every desirable help for promoting your spiritual progress. May his grace keep you humble and dependant. May you walk before him with a single eye. May you burn, and shine, and go on from strength to strength. You have great advantages for usefulness to others, and of being happy in each other, and in yourselves. Trials will sometimes occur, and vanity will cleave (like the ivy to the oak) to all worldly enjoyments, but the Lord whom you serve is all-sufficient, and his promises are sure. I commend you to his blessing. Believe me to be,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

No. 6, Coleman-Street,
1st Oct. 1793.

I hope to hear from you soon; if one half—Mr., should be too busy, perhaps the other half—Mrs., will favour us with a letter.

¶

LETTER LXXXVII.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I SERVE you no worse than I do some of my friends, nor quite so bad, as I have many letters unanswered of much longer date than your's; but I write when I can. We were glad and thankful to hear of your safe return to R. You both have a place in my heart and in my prayers; I am often thankful that I was led to your house, and that I had the pleasure of seeing you in mine. The friendship commenced between us I trust will subsist and grow, though perhaps opportunities of personal intercourse will not be frequent; a union of hearts in grace is affected neither by absence nor local distance; a glance of thought conveys me to you whenever I please. The throne of grace is very near to you and to me, and, if we often meet there, we cannot be far distant from each other. By-and-bye we hope to rejoice together before the throne of glory; there we shall be ever with the Lord and with each other. May this thought animate us while we stay here. "We are not our own, we are bought with a price." There is but one thing worth living for; that we may live to him who died for us; that we may live to shew forth his praise by obedience, by submission, by usefulness to others, in visiting the afflicted, assisting them by our sympathy, counsel, prayers, or purse, as the case requires; in supporting the cause of the gospel, and forwarding whatever bids fair for the good of society. These aims ought chiefly to engage

our time, talents, and influence. Oh! what an honour to be the instruments of the Lord, in diffusing his benefits around us! to be the followers of him who went about doing good!

On Tuesday last I had a fall in the street; it was rather violent, but, though the middle of my leg came plump against the curb-stone, neither bone nor skin was broken, but my instep is much strained. I am confined to the sofa, and, were you now to enter my drawing-room, I could not easily rise to welcome you, much less advance one step to meet you. But my prison is very comfortable, and my keepers kind and attentive. I feel little or no pain, and can sleep very well, so that I am not much to be pitied. I more wonder that such things do not happen every day, than that they do happen now and then. During the fourteen years I have been in London, I have had but four falls. The first dislocated my shoulder; by the second I received a good polt on the pate; the third cost my nose a few drops of blood, but none of them did me essential harm, and undoubtedly there was a need-be for this last. Perhaps my being confined now, may be a means of preserving me from something worse, which I might otherwise have met with. I hope it will make me more sensible of the value of my legs, if I should be able to walk again, and more dependant upon the Lord to hold me up, that I may be safe; for, neither in a temporal, nor in a spiritual sense, am I able to take care of myself for an hour or a minute. How much does it behove us to watch and pray for grace, that we may be always prepared for the contingencies we may meet with in this present state! for who knows what a day or an hour may bring forth? In the midst of life we are in death; in the midst of apparent safety we are always in danger.

We, indeed, if believers, are always safe under the Lord's protection, and immortal till our work is done, but we can perceive it would not be conducive to the life of faith, if his people were visibly marked on the forehead to distinguish them from the world. A general exemption from such afflictions as are common to others would be equivalent to such a mark; therefore they are liable to the various calamities with which sin has filled the world. They are free from condemnation, but not from pain, sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, and sudden trying changes, and what we call premature death. These trials, likewise, give occasion for the exercise and manifestation of many graces which are not so visible in the sunshine of prosperity, and they are farther sanctified to wean the people of God more from the world, and to weaken the body of sin which still dwelleth in them. On these accounts, for a time, in the Lord's providential appointments, all things seem to happen nearly alike to all. But, even now, his people have supports and consolations in their troubles peculiar to themselves, and which strangers intermeddle not with; and, hereafter, the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not, will be perfectly manifested. All this I have written rather towards filling up the paper, than for your information. You have been enabled to count the cost and to choose your side; you are desirous and determined to be the Lord's, to be his on his own terms, to live upon his mercy, to build all your hopes upon the foundation he has laid, to expect all your supplies from the fountain which he has opened, to receive Christ Jesus the Lord as your prophet, priest, and king, to receive all from his hands, to do all for his sake. Go on, and be of good

courage ; he who has wrought in you to will, will also enable you to do according to his good pleasure. But you must expect that your profession will be a warfare ; we are encouraged to look forward to victory and triumph, but these terms, of course, imply a previous conflict ; there would be no victory if there were no enemies to fight with.

Miss C. joins in affectionate remembrance to all your friends, and please to remember me also to your servants. May the Lord bless, guide, and guard you ; make you happy in yourselves and each other, and useful in all your connections.

So prays, dear sir and madam,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
24th January, 1794.

If you see Mr. S. and his family before I can write, tell them I love them all dearly.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I OFTEN think with pleasure on the few days I passed with you and Mr. R. at R., and of your kind visit to Coleman-street: as we cannot meet so often as we wish, a little communication must be kept up now and then by letter ; though I hope we meet frequently at the throne of grace.

Our tour to Cambridge and its environs was very pleasant ; we saw many friends, I preached at several

places, we travelled in safety, and found all well at home. At Bedford, indeed, by a false step I strained my left knee, so that for a time I have had two lame legs, but I would not allow this the name of a trial when set against such a variety of favours and comforts. I can now walk pretty well again; my health is the same as when you saw me. Miss C. is likewise well. My servants all well, my friends kind, my spirits good, my cupboard not empty. What more of this world's goods can I wish for? I was not nearer to Peterborough than at Great Stukely, two miles from Huntingdon. I have some acquaintance with Dr. M. the present bishop, and believe he loves the truth, and will countenance those who preach it. There is good going on at Cambridge. Mr. Simeon is much beloved and very useful; his conduct has almost suppressed the spirit of opposition which was once very fierce against him. Probably I shall see poor Heckfield no more, but I am glad that I have seen it. I have a map of the house, gardens, woods, &c. and a long list of pleasing incidents while I was there, drawn or written in my mind. If I had not seen H. I should not have known Mr. R. or you, nor should I have been so well acquainted with Mr. S. and his family now they are in town as I hope to be, unless I had first visited them in the country. There is much of the hand of the Lord to be observed and acknowledged in the forming of our connections. He often leads by a way we know not.

I am almost six weeks in my seventieth year: it is time for me to think less of going about, and more of going home. I cannot now be far from my journey's end. May the good Lord help me and you also to praise him for what is past, and to trust him for what is to come. He appointed the hour

of our birth, and the hour of our dismissal is with him likewise. Whether sooner or later, it will be just at the right time, if it finds us with our loins girt, and our lamps burning; and, if He who kindled them is pleased to supply us with fresh oil, neither the world, the flesh, nor the powers of darkness, shall be able to extinguish them; otherwise, they must soon go out of themselves, for we have no stock of our own. But we need not put an *if* upon his faithfulness, provided we are sensible of our weakness, and wait upon him in those means by which he has promised to renew our strength.

Mr. Simeon preached for me last Wednesday from Revelations v. 11th, 12th, and 13th verses. He spoke of the company, the object of their worship, and their song; I was going to say, as if he had just come down from among them. I think he had a favoured peep within the veil; and there was such a visible impression on his hearers as is not common. Why are we not aiming to realize that scene, when we hope to join them soon, and likewise hope, that among the thousands and myriads which encompass the throne "day without night rejoicing," there are some who were intimately near and dear to us? While they were upon earth we sympathized with them in their sorrows, and why not sympathize with them now in their joys? Oh! could we but see them as I believe they see us, it would greatly weaken our sense both of the bitters and the sweets of this poor life! but perhaps it would totally unfit us from attending to the duties of our station. The weakness of our mortal frame would not permit us to think of any thing but what we saw. This seems to have been the apostle's case (2 Cor. xii.); while he saw invisibles and heard unutterables, he knew not whether he was in or out of the body. We are

therefore at present to walk, not by sight, but by faith. But there is much attainable even here, which our unbelief keeps from us. It is comfortable to have a hope of heaven hereafter, but we should desire to have as much of heaven as possible while we are here; to resemble the angels who always do the will of the Lord, and behold his presence. What should we think valuable in this life but to live to him who died for us? We should consider what opportunities our situation, time, abilities, connections, influence, and substance may afford us for promoting his service, and the good of our fellow-creatures; for verily we are debtors, and whatever is given is more properly entrusted to us, and we should employ them all for him as good stewards of his manifold blessings; we should aim at the honour and pleasure of being useful, that we may experience the truth of our Lord's aphorism,—“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And if we obey with a single eye, and depend upon his grace with a single heart, he will surely favour us with a peace that passeth understanding, which will keep our hearts and minds composed under all the changes we may pass through in our pilgrimage, and ere long we shall see him as he is, and be with him for ever.

Give our love to all our friends as they come in your way, and, when you have distributed all you can for us, we have still abundance of love left for you and Mr. R. Let us often pray for each other, that the Lord may fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.

I am, my dear friend,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
16th Sept. 1794.

LETTER LXXXIX.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH I cannot write a long letter at present, I must thank you for the favour of your's.

After the kind reception I had at R. and particularly from you, I need little solicitation to visit you again, were it in my power; but it is not: I am not my own; I have a numerous, affectionate, and, I trust, a thriving people. These are my charge, and this my post; suitable supplies are not easily procured, and they must be suitable; for I could not be content to get a minister to fill the place in my absence, unless I believed he could answer the expectation of my hearers; and perhaps some who are better men than myself could not so well do this; for, having been together so long, we seem now as formed for each other; and without something in my own way and cast of preaching they might complain if I left them. I have been abroad four successive Summers, and in these excursions I have visited most of my former haunts, and, as I think, taken my leave of them. My desire of seeing my old friends has been granted, and my plan completed. When I took leave of my people the Sunday evening before I left town this year, I told them, that except I should have an express providential call of duty, I did not intend to be absent from them any more on a Lord's day. I purposed that if I should live to enter my 70th year I would give up the thoughts of rambling. My opportunities of preaching to the people whom I love, and to whom I am united, will now probably be few. I

may expect either to be called home, or laid aside very soon, and it is much upon my heart (if the Lord please) to live and die with them. The question is not how far inclination might lead me, but what is the path of duty? and the answer to this question is pretty plain to my own mind, that I am bound to remain upon my appointed spot. The motives of friendship and personal regard which tempt me to go to one place would tempt me to go to twenty; and, setting aside these, there is scarcely a place in the kingdom where my assistance seems less necessary than at R. But, whether I see R. again or not, the Lord's interest and people there, those to whom I am personally known, and particularly my dear Mr. and Mrs. R. will always have a warm place in my heart, and, I trust, in my prayers. I often recollect with pleasure and thankfulness your kindness to us; and, did not my engagements here forbid, I would gladly and often go farther than R. to tell you so. But I believe I must content myself with the hope of hearing from you, and writing to you now and then.

Well, blessed be God for the prospect of a better state. There I trust we shall meet to part no more. Oh, how shall we love and sing, wonder and praise, when we see him as he is, and look back by a clearer light upon all the way by which he led us through the wilderness! He is faithful that has promised. It is preaching morning; I can only add, the good Lord bless you, both jointly and separately, temporally and spiritually. Amen.

I am,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
Oct. 1, 1794.

LETTER XC.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOU must accept of a letter to-day instead of a visit. On Friday I went out, purposing to take places in the coach for to-morrow, but while on my way I was informed, that my curate, Mr. B., was that morning suddenly attacked by a complaint which he had twice before, but we hoped he had quite recovered from—an inflammation in his lungs; his fever is high, and his state critical, if not dangerous.

This unexpected providential dispensation puts me to a stand. I fear I shall not be able to get a supply for my church, without which I cannot stir. All is in the Lord's hands. If you do not see me this week, you may conclude that he does not permit me to see R. or S. at present. He has wise reasons for all his appointments; whether we know them or not, we are sure that he does all things well, and that nothing happens to us without his knowledge and appointment. I trust, in the meantime, that you, and the rest of my friends with you, will pray that if I come, I may not come to you like a cloud without water, but that our gracious Saviour may unitedly bless our interview. I long to hear of Mr. and Mrs. W.; they are often in my thoughts and prayers. I love you all, but my mind feels for the afflicted: how very heavy must Mrs. W.'s trial be; but the Lord supports her. He is there; therefore the bush, though in flames, is not consumed. Such examples of the Lord's faithfulness, and the power of his grace, should encourage

us to trust to him fully. I thank God we and our's are all well outwardly.

We join in love to both of you, and to all friends as if named. Want of time and want of better eyes oblige me to hasten to a close, which I cannot do better than with a prayer, that the Lord may give you a large and growing experience of all that is contained in his precious promise, Isaiah v. 11th verse. I hope always to feel myself,

My dear friends,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
15th August, 1796.

LETTER XCI.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

“OUT of sight, out of mind; now he has left us he cares little about us, or we should have heard from him before this.”—Have you said or thought this of me? then I can assure you that you are mistaken. I cannot easily forget the good town of R. or any of my kind friends there; least of all the house in——, where I was taken in three years ago, when I was a stranger.

We arrived here in peace and safety at one o'clock on Friday; found our friends and their family well. We have also good news from home, only Mr. B.'s pretty little boy is gone, and they apprehend that he will soon follow his child. I dare not say that this is not good news likewise; the child is taken in the bud, and transplanted into a fairer garden, out of the reach

of storm and frost. And the father, though a young man, will, I doubt not, go as a shock of corn fully ripe; but we are allowed to feel for ourselves, and to say, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth!" His removal, if he be removed, will cause sorrow to his parents, to many who love him, and to me; but it will cause joy in heaven, and, when we meet him there, we shall rejoice with him with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory. In the meantime submission becomes us; "He who gave has an undoubted right to take away," and we are sure his sovereignty is combined with infinite wisdom and goodness; and that, when he crosses our wishes, no less than when he grants them, he does all things well! Be still, my soul, and know that he is God! Here I have a little time to breathe, for really at R. you kept me upon a full trot. I was so engaged in talking, that I had little leisure for hearing. If any thing I was entitled to say was made acceptable to yourself, or useful to others, I have reason to be thankful. Well, the Lord bless you all! I think you are a happy and a favoured people; may the good Shepherd dwell in the midst of you, and preserve you in love and peace! for, when strife and contention enter, the Holy Spirit withdraws his influences, and then neither Paul, Apollos, nor Cephas, could do much good. May you be all men, women, and children of God!

I was at Mr. K.'s on Sunday, otherwise I have not seen S. yet; having such pretty woods and walks to range in, and abundance of letters to write, I have but little inclination to go among the crowd. God made this beautiful country. The town is man's contrivance. Both works carry the marks of their respective authors. The more I contemplate the one, the more I find to admire; in the other I see *all* at

once, and a poor, noisy, confused *all* it is. God's world is full of wonders. Man's world is full of sin and misery. I am weary of it. I should be more so, if I were more spiritually minded. How palpably true is our Lord's declaration, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" Not only he *shall* not, but he *cannot*. He has no faculty capable of discerning it. If we know not exactly as to particulars what heaven is, we know to a certainty what it is not. We are sure it is not like earth. There are no routs, assemblies, play-houses, or horse-races there; no estates to be bought or sold, no funds to be transferred, no business to be managed upon the Exchange, or in coffee-houses. How then could they, whose hearts are more set upon these things, possibly be happy even in heaven, when separated for ever from all that they love? Heaven must be a hell to an unhumbled, unsanctified sinner, even if he could be admitted there. The company, the employments, the enjoyments, are of the same kind with what he despised on earth: admit a pig into your drawing-room among your friends, he would find no pleasure there; he would rather be in the sty, or wallowing in a ditch. Well, such were some of us, yea, such were all of us, once; what thanks to the mercy, which, undesired by me no less than undeserved, brought me out of the house of bondage in Africa, and dislodged the legion that hurried me into the extremes of madness and wretchedness! And you, my dear friends, have no less cause to praise him; though you were not profligates like me, you were carelessly swimming down the stream of the world, and, when upon the edge of the whirlpool which would have swallowed you up, he snatched you with a strong hand, set your feet upon a rock, and established your

goings, and has put a new song in your mouth. Now you know the reason why you could not be happy in a worldly life. You were formed with a capacity for greater things. God formed you for himself, and therefore nothing short of his favour and communion with him could satisfy your desires. Could we understand this without the gospel, we must sink under despair; for we should see that sin had made a great and impassable gulf between us and our chief good. But Jesus left his glory to fill up this gulf. By him we have access to God. He is our way, our door, our throne of grace. In him we are accepted, and out of his fulness we are invited to receive grace for grace according to our need. Now we know what will make heaven to be a heaven indeed. There we shall see Him face to face, whom we can only see in part, through a glass darkly, yet the little we can see has won and engaged our hearts. Oh, what will it be to see him in all his glory, in all his love! to be perfectly transformed into his image, and to be with him for ever!

I opened the new chapel here on Sunday evening, and preached from "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." May the Saviour be ever present with all, by night and by day, at home and abroad! and may his presence make the ordinances sweet and profitable to our souls!

I am,

Your affectionate and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Portswood Green,
31st August, 1796.

LETTER XCII.

COME, my dear madam, I think you have wept enough. I now write and entreat you to wipe away your tears. You have had a great wound, and you cannot but feel it, but it was not the wound of an enemy. I hope you are now aiming to say, "The will of the Lord be done." This afflictive dispensation did not spring out of the ground, nor happen by chance. It was the appointment of Him whose wisdom and love are infinite. He could easily have prevented it, and undoubtedly would, if it was not his purpose to overrule it eventually for good. The removal of Mr. B. was not so public and general a loss as your's, though it touched me very sensibly. But I was soon brought to acquiesce, and to adopt the Psalmist's words, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it."

Your beloved pastor is gone a little before you. We expect and hope to follow him soon. It will be a joyful meeting, when we shall part no more. In the meantime you will do well to consider, that he neither did, nor could do you any good, but as an instrument, and that his Lord and Master, who honoured him with acceptance and usefulness, still lives, and the supply of the Spirit is still with him. What did the first disciples feel, when their Master was not only taken from them, but crucified before their eyes? Yet he had said unto them a little before, "it is expedient for you that I go away; the Comforter will come to you." Surely *that* Comforter, whose influence was

more than a compensation for the want of the Saviour's visible presence, can fully repair our losses and heal our wounds. And he is as near to his people now, and as willing and able to help them, as he was then. The fountain from which dear Mr. C. obtained the water of life which he communicated to his people, is still full, and still flowing, and you are still welcome to come to him and drink. But we are prone to lean too hard upon the ministers by whom the Lord conveys his blessings to us, as if they were necessary. Perhaps, to cure us of this mistake is one reason why he often unexpectedly takes them from us. I have been at R. in spirit almost continually since I first heard the sad news. I was particularly with you on Sunday last. Methought I saw many tears shed, and heard many sighs at St. G.'s. I did not blame you; your loss is great; the first emotions of grief were unavoidable, and he who knows our frame allows us, that these things for the present are "not joyous but grievous." But neither shall I commend you if you indulge a continuance and excess of grief. Now the Lord has made known his will by the event, our part is submission. I pray that you may be willing to be helped, and then I am sure he *will* help you. Say not "What shall we do?" The Lord has many resources when our's seem wholly to fail. I remember, when my friend Mr. Talbot was removed, they who loved him too hastily thought the glory was departed from R. They knew not that his successor, whom they at first disliked, was appointed, and sent to shew them still greater things. I doubt not but every proper step will be taken to obtain a gospel minister. It is possible the Lord may send one who as yet knows not the gospel, to learn it from its gracious effects on Mr. C.'s people, and the

same work may still be carried on by another hand. If he is pleased to keep them together in a spirit of union, love, and prayer, I shall entertain great hopes; a patient waiting upon the Lord in prayer has often done wonders, for he is able to do more than we can ask or think.

Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
25th January, 1797.

LETTER XCIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE visited Mr. B. weekly for five weeks past, and him only, so that I have always had him by myself, excepting twice that his mother was with him, and she was no restraint.

He is always glad to see me, and hears me with attention. I set before him both the law and the gospel. I tell him, that the offence for which he is likely to suffer is small, compared with the whole tenor and high treason of living without God in the world, and the depraved state of his heart. I tell him, that, if he had committed a thousand murders, the blood and mediation of Jesus afford a ground of hope, provided he is sensible of his need of mercy, and is made willing to accept it as a lost, perishing sinner, without any plea, like the malefactor dying on the cross. But, that the gospel affords no hope, but to those whose hearts are contrite, and broken by

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a conviction of sin; for, while we feel not our malady, we cannot duly prize, or rightly apply to the only Physician.

He seems to assent to what I say, and does not mention to me such extenuations as you speak of, but I dare not say that he is rightly sensible of his state. He is composed and serious when I am with him, but I cannot perceive the spirit of humiliation which I wish for. There is a something yet wanting, which the Lord alone can perform in him. I hope the Lord's time will come, but I think it is not come yet. The last time I saw him, I gave him my narrative, and a friend has lent him Cardiphonia. I have said all, both to warn him of his danger, and to point his thoughts to the same refuge, which my measure of light and experience can suggest. But, till the Holy Spirit shines into his soul, and works by his own power, the words of a man produce no abiding effect. I hope to see him again on Tuesday, which will probably be the last day of his life; for the death-warrant is expected to-morrow. I mean then to read him a part of your letter. Let us pray for him.

If we are alive and in health, and there is a prospect of things being quite quiet, I purpose, if the Lord please, to be at R. the first week in July, and to spend a few days with my dear friends in my way to S.

But the times are so unsettled, that I know not what to say. If the storm should increase, and come nearer home, I must not leave my post. I must not leave my family, my friends, and my people, and flee away, like the hireling, from the appearance of danger, nor could I be comfortable if I did. In this sense, likewise, home is home; the sum is, if it be the Lord's pleasure to grant me my desire of visiting you, he

will make the way clear; otherwise, my coming would not be comfortable or useful either to myself or my friends.

I would commit my ways to him, and look to the pillar and cloud to direct me when to stay, and when or whether to move. May the Lord be with us all.

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
8th June, 1797.

LETTER XCIV.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I AM just come from visiting Mr. B. The faint hope I formed of him has increased. I read him that part of your letter which concerned him, and he seemed moved. He said, "I wrote the letter to my kind friend before I was convicted, and long before I had the opportunities of conversing with you; but I beg you will request the lady to assure my kind friend, that since you visited me my thoughts and views are much changed; I have done with all such pleas and excuses as I then mentioned; I have done with fortitude, &c." He added, "I thank God for sending me here, and, thereby, giving me a call and opportunity for reflection, and that he did not cut me off in my gay, unthinking state." I believe he is sensible that there is something necessary to be done, which he cannot do for himself, and that he reads the Scriptures, and prays sincerely for the Lord's teaching. I was not willing to defer the information,

as I hope it will give you pleasure, and the lady at whose desire you wrote; I hope, likewise, that if I am permitted to visit you next month, I shall be able to bring you a still better account. Grace reigns. May the God of grace and peace dwell among you.

I am,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
15th June, 1797.

LETTER XCV.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR sorrowful letter produced a sorrowful sympathy in us, but I soon plucked up my spirits. I wish I may be able to raise your's upon a good ground. I am no prophet. I do not pretend to know the Lord's councils; they are too deep for my short plummet to fathom; but, though his ways are untraceable by us, we know they are all mercy and truth to them that fear him. And I not only pray, but I hope, yea, I believe, that all these sad things will eventually prove rather to the furtherance of the gospel. Only you have need of patience. I will not praise any individual of my friends at R; but I will praise and admire them as a body, or rather I will praise the Lord for them, for they will acknowledge with me that it is by his wisdom and goodness, and not by their own, that they are what they are. I have seldom seen a body of professors equal to them, in my judgment. This seems to

be a marked case; the eyes of all the churches are likely to be fixed on the widowed church at R., and I trust your gospel wisdom, simplicity, and firmness, tempered with gentleness, your unanimity and love will shine to the praise of his glory. The united prayers of such a people are not spoken into the air. No, they enter the ear of the Lord of hosts, the Great Shepherd who is attentive to every single sheep or lamb, wherever scattered; much less will he neglect the cries and desires of a whole flock that call upon Him night and day, though he seem to bear long with them. They who prayed for St. Peter could not believe their prayers were answered, though he stood knocking at the gate; they did not consider through what locks, and bolts, and bars, and iron doors prayer can force a way.

The contrast observed by you in the pulpit is not greater than that which will be observed by others out of the pulpit and abroad, now Mr. C. is gone out of the way. I doubt not, but some who disliked his doctrine will remember his benevolence, his attention to the poor, the children in particular; a comparison will be made between his general conduct and character, and that of those who come after him. Possibly some who were weary of his preaching, and glad when he was gone, may begin to wish for one like him, and to regret that they did not prize him more while he was with them. In this sense, I trust, now he is dead, he will speak effectually to some of his people, who would scarcely hearken to him when alive. Things must have time to come round; be not grieved for what you cannot help, but leave all in the Lord's hands, and he can make the crooked straight. The mis-conduct of some may be necessary for a time, to place Mr. C.'s character in a proper point of view.

We send our love to Mr. and Mrs. ——— and all those forty or fifty friends whom I met in different houses. Not having room for *all their names*, I will mention none, but I have them written in my heart. I love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, every where, and especially at R. I am thankful that I have seen them, and shall remember the fortnight spent with them among my pleasant days.

I am,

Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

August, 1797.

LETTER XCVI.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IT is true I make it a sort of rule to write but one letter to one and the same friend while I am abroad; and even so I am busy enough. I have written nearly forty, but general rules afford exceptions, and you are one. You desire to hear from me again, you are Mrs. R., and you live at R.; each of these considerations has weight singly; but, when together, they form a threefold cord of constraint, too strong to be resisted, even were I so disposed. Mr. B. is wiser than I, and his advice is better than mine. I felt the propriety of his observation while I was reading it, and I blamed myself for having proposed a speaker for your society. Indeed, I almost wonder how such a thought found its way into my head. For my better judgment has often led me to think there is too much

talking over the Scriptures, and that perhaps the sincere milk of the word as it lies in the book, if read with seriousness and attention, as if we heard the Lord himself speaking with an audible voice, might be more useful and impressive, and make the children grow faster, than when mixed too plentifully with water which sometimes weakens it. I know that preaching the gospel is a positive divine instrument, and we cannot too highly prize the public ordinances, but possibly we might do as well with a smaller quantity of private exposition; besides that the latter is evidently liable to the bad consequences which Mr. B. has judiciously mentioned.

I am far from giving up all hopes of Mr. E. ; I trust the people will continue to pray for him, at least in secret. If it should be the Lord's pleasure to make him a fit successor to Mr. C., (we know that He can easily do it) I shall not wonder if he permit him to shew himself as he is for some time, that, when the change takes place, it may be evident both to friends and foes, that the *work is all his own*. Mr. E. cannot go farther from the truth than some once were who now preach it; while he is a stranger to the truths of the gospel, he must of course be prejudiced against them. Time was when we were all so. I am not of the Lord's council; I presume not to indulge a conjecture of what he will do, yet I have a strong persuasion that in some way or other, sooner or later, the prayers of the scattered, yet united flock at R. will obtain a signal answer. I pray that they may have patience to wait the event; the prayer of faith must prevail, but there is often a waiting time, (St. Luke, xi. verses 8 to 10.) The apostle besought the Lord thrice; he was not answered the first time, but he knocked again and again, till the door opened. These

are patterns of encouragement for us, that we should not too hastily mistake delay for denial.

Consider what great things have been done by prayer. Sing, if you please, Olney Hymn, Book 2nd;

“In themselves as weak as worms,
How can poor believers stand?”

I hope you may live to sing Hymn 48 of that book;

“Once, while we aimed at Zion’s songs.”

As to myself, I may say I am quite well, but I am so deaf, as to be almost cut off from conversation. In all other respects I am as well as when with you; I eat and sleep well, and may be thankful that I am not dumb. How often and how justly might the Lord have taken his word of truth out of my unworthy mouth, and forbid me to make mention of his name any more! But he is gracious!

I do not expect that Mr. H. will equal Mr. E. in literary accomplishments, but I know who can make Mr. E. equal to Mr. H. in the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

We did not know that gunpowder was so near us, or, perhaps, we should have been more alarmed in the thunder-storm; but the Lord knew it, and the lightning is obedient to him, and he directs every flash where to fall.

Danger is always near us, though it lies hid from us in some unsuspected corner; we are apt to think ourselves safe when we do not see our danger, but our safety is only in the Lord.

Now, perhaps, you will favour me with a letter while I am here, and then I shall be in your debt when I

get home. Whether here or there, I am, and hope
always to feel myself,

Your very affectionate,
JOHN NEWTON.

Portswood Green,
24th August, 1797.

LETTER XCVII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THE day before I left P. brought me your second letter; I must therefore fulfil my promise previous to my leaving town. I had fixed on the 14th inst. (the Lord willing) for my return. On that day he brought us home in peace and safety, and we found all well at dear No. 6. I felt something at leaving Mr. T.'s family and the church which assembled in his house, but then I was coming home. Oh! that word HOME made amends for all. So, though we meet with rubs and pains upon the heavenly road, should not the thought that we are going home, and drawing nearer to it every day, reconcile us to every trying dispensation, and teach us to say with the apostle "none of these things move me?" especially as we are warranted to believe, in defiance of all cavils of flesh and sense, that they are all under the direction of infinite wisdom and love, and appointed to work together for good. How easily could the Lord have prolonged the life of Mr. C., or given St. G. to a minister of the gospel. The event is contrary to our wishes, but it is a declaration of the Lord's will; and therefore, whether

we can make it out or not, must be right and for the best.

I have little more to say about Q.; if it be the Lord's pleasure to change Mr. E.'s views, I find by what I hear, that the time is not yet come; nor dare I say that it ever will; only, as I know that grace is unbounded, I am willing to hope and pray that it *may* be so. Our gracious Shepherd and Saviour can give success to the distant and doubtful prospect which you mention, or he can bless you more sensibly and visibly in your present scattered state, than when you were collected together. I am learning, by experience, that there can be no peace for us in this unquiet world, but so far as we are enabled to commit ourselves to his management without reserve, and to submit without *ifs* or *buts* to his wise and holy will.

As you desire my opinion on one point, I will freely give it. I am sorry that husbands and wives, and especially you and Mr. R., should separate on the Lord's day. The food, I suppose, in both places is the same; let not a little difference in the dressing divide two persons whom the Lord has united not only by the nearest earthly tie, not only by faith and hope, but by the most tender spiritual affection. Cannot you compromise the matter, and go sometimes to one place, and sometimes to the other, but always together? Let me beg each of you to give up a little of your own wills for the Lord's sake; I would not have you appear to differ a hair's breadth in your spiritual conduct. Do, my dear madam and sir, set an example of union in this respect to your friends and neighbours. If you go simply to wait upon him who has promised to meet with those who assemble in his name, and where you can hear his truth, he will bless and do you good; but, if you go because it is your favourite minis-

ter who preaches there, your taste may perhaps be gratified, but I do not think you will be more edified. I hope there are many affectionate, happy couples in your society ; but I have lived with you, and therefore I know "your manner of life." I think Mr. R. loves you too well not to make some concessions on his part for your comfort, but, should he refuse to go with you, I advise you by all means to go with him. Lift up your heart to the Lord for a blessing, and act from a principle of love to him and to peace, and you will be no loser. You may think this division, as you are agreed in every thing else, no more than a temporary inconvenience, but to me it seems a seed, which, if the Lord does not prevent, may produce lasting evil fruits. Human nature in the best of us is frail, fallible, and changeable, and Satan is very subtle and watchful ! occasions may arise from this paltry difference, which may give him an opening to hurt your tempers, and interrupt your spiritual communion at home. In short, we know not, if the Lord withdraws, how great a fire may be kindled by a single spark. You will likewise find, that your joint worship will have a better effect upon your family. Besides, what will the people of the world say, who have known your great regard for Mr. C., if they see, that, after all, you cannot agree between yourselves. Inclinations and self-love often enter unperceived into our religious concerns, and we think we are acting from a sense of duty, when, in reality, we are indulging our own wills. But, if we submit to take up a cross, and practise self-denial, a little use and habit will make things more easy than we at first expected. I will not apologize for my freedom, because I intend it as a mark of my love. Indeed I love you both very cordially.

My extra deafness was removed very gradually. I am still dull of hearing, which is no wonder at my age; but, through mercy, I am not yet dumb. I can still speak as long and as loud as when I was much younger.

I thank you for the printed account of Mr. C.'s monument: we were all much pleased with the inscription; it is short, and full to the point; much preferable, as I think, to Mr. Romaine's.

Mr. Bacon well knows I am no competent judge of his designs as a sculptor.

Please to give my affectionate respects to Mrs. C. when you see her; love to Mrs. Y. and all your society. May the Lord give them faith and patience, and preserve them in mutual love. The eyes of many are upon them. I have a letter from Mrs. J.; she says "she is waiting to see a rainbow in the dark cloud. And now may the Lord bless you both, in body, soul, and spirit, and in all your connections and concerns.

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
22nd Sept. 1797.

LETTER. XCVIII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THE former part of your letter affected me much. Thus, we always move upon the brink of unseen dangers, which, if the Lord please, can shew themselves

in a moment when we least expect them. Mr. E. coaxed you all to church to hear his opinion of you, and therefore you cannot say that he railed against you behind your backs. But this sermon, as you describe it, did not accord with the candour expressed in his letter. I am willing to hope, as all things are under the direction and permission of the Lord, that whatever happens will eventually prove for the best. Certainly, Mr. E. could not have taken a more public and decided step to justify your leaving St. G. I think your husband's answer was very proper. If an individual only had been misrepresented, perhaps it might be well to let it pass over in silence; but, as your whole body was publicly arraigned, and charged with principles inimical to government, I judge that you are not only warranted, but bound to vindicate yourselves from the aspersion. You have the advantage of the ground; if you keep close to the Scripture, articles, and liturgy, and if you preserve a meek and loving spirit, avoiding all tartness and bitterness of expression, you will gain an easy victory; for truth, which is on your side, is great, and must prevail. It is not easy to write with coolness in a controversy, but grace, obtained by prayer, can make it practicable. Mr. Fuller's book is a proof that it may be done. You remember we all agreed at R., that, when the Lord opened the eyes of the man born blind, it would not have been right for the man to beat all the blind men he might meet with, because they could not see. I am not yet willing to give up the hopes I had formed, that Mr. E., notwithstanding his present prejudice, may live to preach the faith which he now opposes. Pity him, and pray for him, and love him, as one who may be capable of doing great good in the church, if the Lord sees fit to open his eyes, and

to touch his heart, which he can do in an instant, whenever he pleases.

Believe me to be,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Portswood Green,
August 4, 1798.

LETTER XCIX.

MY DEAR MADAM,

FAME, with her hundred mouths, has told a hundred fibs about me of late. It has been reported, that I had a fever, that I had fits, that I had three repeated attacks of the palsy; yea, some, I am told, said I was dead: the truth is, I know not that my health or spirits have been worse for a single hour since I left R., than when I was with you. On Friday the 23rd, after a good night, I arose as well as usual, but I fell several times while dressing, before I was convinced that I could not stand; for I had neither giddiness in my head, nor numbness in my left leg, but the strength of it was withdrawn. I kept house on Sunday, for I could not walk across the room without support. Means were used, and, in answer to the prayers of my people and friends, proved successful. What a privilege to be interested in the prayers of those, who have themselves interest and prevalence at the throne of grace! Blessed be God, I have many such in my congregation. My complaint seems quite removed; I can stand in the pulpit my usual time without uneasiness, and walk

the streets without inconvenience. At first I was apprehensive that it might be the Lord's pleasure to confine me at home for the residue of my days, and I thank the Lord, he enabled me to say in the hour of trial, what, and when, and how thou wilt. As my curate, Mr. G., is very acceptable to my people, and I can fully depend upon him, I seemed not unwilling to be quite laid aside, if such had been the Lord's pleasure, but he has seen fit to prolong my liberty, and I wish to be thankful, for I love his ordinances and his people. I love to proclaim his glory to those who know him, and to invite others to seek him who know him not. I am not my own, he has bought me with his blood, and I trust I have willingly given and devoted myself to him. His I am, and him I desire to serve, and to put myself simply and without reserve into his hands, to be active or passive, as he shall appoint. Only may he give me strength according to my day.

May he be my gain, living or dying, and may he at last receive me himself, an unprofitable servant, who neither has, nor expects, nor desires to have, any other plea, than that of the thief upon the cross. I consider this late dispensation as a gentle tap at the door, a kind warning, to remind me to prepare for farther changes. I am now more than four months advanced in my seventy-fourth year, and have need to pray (I hope you and many pray for me) that I may be found ready and waiting. My time here cannot be long; my chief desire, which I have repeatedly expressed before the Lord, is, that my decline in life may not be stained with impatience, peevishness, jealousy, or any of those mental infirmities which have sometimes clouded the characters even of good men in their last stages, but that I may be

enabled to feel and exhibit in myself the influence of those truths which I have so often preached to others. I hear that the new chapel will soon be opened. My heart's desire will be with you. May he, who presided at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, fill your house with his presence. May he dwell, likewise, with you in your own residence. May the Lord of peace himself give you and your's peace always, and in all things, and by all means! that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

The two musicians* you sent us are well; as they do not know I am writing to you, nor can speak for themselves, I undertake to thank you, on their behalf, for your pains and care in their education. The life of Mr. Grimshaw has been in the press these three weeks; when it will get out I know not. They who deal with booksellers and printers have need of patience, but I hope it will appear in the right and best time, for all things are in the Lord's hands. I have no personal interest in the books farther than to correct the press, for I have given the copy-right out and out to the Society for relieving the poor pious clergy.

The year is now growing old, and the days are approaching which generally raise some serious reflections in an awakened mind. To me the 15th of December is one of those days. I hope you will think of me then. On that day, in the year 1790, the Lord was pleased to remove "the desire of my eyes"; with a stroke. It was a trying dispensation, but he supported me; and by help obtained of him I have been preserved in my widowhood eight years with some degree of resignation and comfort. He wounded me, and he has in mercy healed the wound he made.

* Canary birds.

Christmas will soon follow, if we are spared to see it. Oh! how should the thoughts of the incarnation of our Saviour, who, undeserved and undesired by us, voluntarily exchanged his glory for pain, disgrace, and death, to deliver us from misery and ruin! how should this make us ashamed to complain for our lighter trials, which we know are designed to work together for our final good!

New year's day likewise finds me employment; I compare it to a hill on the road, from the top of which I endeavour to look back on the way which the Lord has led me thus far through the wilderness. I can see some of the Ebenezers I have had to erect to his praise, standing like milestones upon the road; I look around to contemplate the difference his goodness has made between my situation, and that of thousands of my fellow creatures;

“ Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more.”

I then look forward, and perceive that I am drawing apace to my journey's end. I shall soon be at home. O for a glance of heavenly day, to enable me to see beyond the dark valley! to take a view of the glories within the veil, and to have a solid scriptural hope, that I shall be among the worshippers of the Lamb!

May the Lord give you both a good Christmas, a good entrance on the new year, and may it be long before either of you have such feelings as the 15th of December will recall to my mind, and which indeed are seldom out of my thoughts the year round.

May grace and peace be with you all.

I am,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street, Dec. 7, 1798.

LETTER C.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH through mercy my wounds are well healed, and I am satisfied the Lord has done all things well with me and mine, yet this place revives some old sensations more than any other spot on the globe could do. Here my Eliza Cunningham and my dear Mary languished long, and this was the last house they were both in, till they returned to Coleman-street, to go out no more till removed in the hearse. There is a wood at a little distance, to which I often resorted, and still resort. If you were there, and the trees could speak, they might tell you much of the exercises of my mind to which they were witnesses. I call it my Bethel. There in my distress I sought the Lord, and he heard me. There I have since performed, or at least acknowledged the vows I made in the time of my trouble. As my dear Mary was not a young woman, and we had lived together more than forty years, some people have thought I made too much ado when called to resign her. I pity those who cannot feel. They do not know that a union of hearts in the married state, when the Lord affords his blessing, is strengthened daily by a series of reciprocal endearments and obligations in the course of forty years; and that, as passion in time abates, friendship is proportionably strengthened and heightened, so that perhaps the flesh feels more to part at the end of forty years, than at the end of four. He must have a steady hand who can draw the exact line between overvaluing and undervaluing our creature

comforts. The latter was not my fault. Alas! I was an idolater, and I suffered for it. Now all is over, I can be thankful for the years 1789 and 1790. But I would not live them over again for the wealth of the Indies. Yet nothing in the singular history of my life is more wonderful to myself than the manner in which the Lord supported me through the trying scene, and at the close of it. Scarcely in any other way could I have known so much of the power and faithfulness of his promise to give strength according to the day, and of his all-sufficiency; for I had no more of what are called sensible comforts than usual, but still was supported. I know not how, but I well know, that if his arm had not been underneath me, I must have sunk like a stone in the water. I learned also in that school, not to be so over anxious for my friends, when under great trials, as I had been formerly; for I saw, yea, I felt, that the Lord is able to make us equal to any thing which he calls us either to do or suffer—Hab. iii. 17, 18. Though the recollection of what I had once, and what I now have not, is seldom out of my thoughts when awake, yet, through mercy, I am quite easy,—the wound is healed,—the scar only remains, and I allow myself to look often upon it, because it reminds me of the skill and tenderness of that faithful Friend, who so managed the wound he made, for my good, that nothing now but the scar appears. It also excites humiliation, and reminds me how well I deserve to have been cut more severely. When I see you and Mr. R. together, I am often reminded how it was once with me. I rejoice for you indeed; I do not envy you; sometimes I am inclined to pity you, and to fear you are too happy in each other. Oh, may the Lord preserve you from the excess of affection, which filled my otherwise happy life with

anxious cares, and thorns, and clouds, from the beginning to the end of our union. From these the separating stroke freed me; and, if I have not had so much pleasure since, neither have I had so many pains, and, perhaps, upon the whole, and when all deductions are made, my widowhood has been the happiest part of my life; especially, as the Lord, by the affection and attention of my dear E., has repaired my loss as far as the nature of the case will admit. At R. I was in a pleasing bustle; here, I have a pleasing retirement. In London, I lived in a crowd; at P. there is a crowd in me. Many vain intruders often tease me most at such seasons as I most desire to be freed from them; they follow me into the pulpit, and meet me at the Lord's table. I hope I do not love them, or wish to lodge them! Often in prayer some idle fancy buzzes about me, and makes me forget where I am, and what I am doing. I compare myself to a man upon his knees before the king, pleading for his life, or returning thanks for some great favour: in the midst of his speech he sees a butterfly; he immediately breaks off, leaves his speech unfinished, and runs away to catch the butterfly. Such a man would be thought mad; and my vile thoughts prove that I am not free from spiritual insanity. Is it so with you? I believe it is at some times, and in some degree, though I hope you are not so bad as I. As we all spring from one stock, though our features differ, depravity is the common family likeness, which runs through the whole species; but Jesus came into the world to save sinners;—He died for us, and

“ His hands infected nature cure
With sanctifying grace,”

We hope in a little time to see him as he is. Then, and not before, we shall be completely like him, and,

while we are here, his precious blood cleanses us from all sins, and makes our defective services acceptable to God.

I have neither time nor room for a list of all to whom I mean to send my love, but, if you will make out *the list*, and send it to me, I will sign it. But tell all who love the Saviour, (by whatever names they are known) whether ministers or people, that I love them, and pray to the Lord to reward all who shewed me kindness for his sake.

I am,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Portsmouth Green,
27th July, 1799.

LETTER CI.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I MUST write, lest you should again suspect that I do not love you now so well as formerly. Should Satan whisper that suspicion in your ear again, tell him from me that I love you still better every time I see you; but I grow old, my eyes fail, and my letters in future must be more seldom, and more brief than formerly. But, should this prove my last, still be assured that I love you. You and I seem anxious on the subject of love and marriage. Perhaps if we had not loved rather too much, we might not have loved enough. You may well be thankful that you and Mr. R. are united in affection, aim, and hope. The

fear of overdoing will make you pray, and prayer will bring in new supplies of grace, so that I trust the Lord will continue to bless you to each other, and to many around you. Dear C. need not have been afraid for the old man. He was not hurt at R. Though my eyes, ears, and legs remind me that I am growing old, I am almost as young as formerly for pulpit service.

My lungs are good, and I am content to be a talker rather than an accurate preacher, and my spirits are not worn down by study. I suppose, if it were requisite, Mr. R. could preach an hour upon some parts of his medical profession, because he understands it, and has it at heart: I trust it is thus with me; I have been long in the school of experience and observation; I hope I love my Saviour, and desire that others should love him too, and, when I am called to speak, I look to him to put suitable thoughts into my heart, and words into my mouth. The knowledge necessary to make a good lawyer, physician, or surgeon, is dispersed in many books, but all the knowledge needful for a minister lies in one book, and that, in a small edition, is but a pocket book. This is a great advantage. If any thing I can say is made useful either in comforting Christ's people, or in adding to their number, it is owing to his blessing! May he have all the glory!

I must not look so forward as next Summer, nor indeed to next week, for I know not what a day may bring forth; but I hope, whether I can come and see you or not, I shall hear well of your affairs; that you stand fast in one spirit "striving together for the faith of the gospel" while I remain here; and we hope to meet at last in a better world.

We join in love to you and your's, and to all the

friends of the Lord Jesus in R. May he guide us all by his counsel, and bring us together to behold his glory! Then shall we sing to the praise of the Lamb who was slain, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Believe me ever your's and Mr. R.'s

Affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
1st October, 1799.

LETTER CII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I WILL not say it is time to think of my dear friends at R., for I have thought of you daily and often, ever since I left you, but it seems high time that you should have a written acknowledgment under my own hand for all the kindness you shewed to myself and dear C. while we were with you. I cannot charge myself with want of gratitude to my fellow-creatures, but I fall sadly short in my returns of thankfulness to Him from whom all blessings, temporal and spiritual, personal and relative, flow! That I have *any* friends, that I have *many* and *such* friends is owing to his goodness; for, surely, not one of them would have taken notice of me, if he had not secretly influenced their hearts. O for grace to enjoy the Lord in all his gifts, while we possess them, and to enjoy them in him whenever he is pleased to recall them—Hab. iii. 17, 18. How desirable it is to maintain a uniform consistent profession! not to be

religious by fits and starts one day in the week, or a little of it morning and evening; but to be in "the fear of the Lord all the day long;" to set him always before us; to receive all from his hands, and to do all for his sake; to have a reference in all to his glory, and to attempt nothing but in dependance upon his strength. Some persons are, in *their way*, religious, not willingly, but by constraint. They know it is necessary; but they would be better pleased if it were *not*. They may be compared to some invalids who use the cold bath; not because they like it, but because the physician tells them they *must*; they go in with reluctance, and are glad to get out again: but the religion of the established advanced believer is *that* to him, that the river is to the fish; it is his element; he swims in it; and, if any thing occasionally interrupts his communion with his God and Saviour, he is, as we commonly say, like a fish out of water. If he cannot rejoice in the Lord, his next pleasure is to seek him, sorrowing, till he find him. Then, a prison would be a palace, and, till then, a palace is little better than a dungeon. Do not suppose that I am very spiritual because I write thus. It is easy to write and talk; it is one thing to see and describe the delicacies of a sumptuous table, and another thing to sit down and partake of the feast. Yet I trust it is my desire to have the idea realized in my soul, and that Mr. and Mrs. R. are like-minded. Well, if the Lord has given us this desire, he will not disappoint it. By a patient persevering use of his medicines, (the appointed means of grace and affliction) and by a careful observance of the prescribed regimen, we shall get forward, if slowly, yet surely. In proportion as we grow in the knowledge of Jesus we shall grow in grace, for he is both the source and the pattern of our sanctification.

But the old man is soon wearied with writing, and he tells me he must leave off; but I say, not, till he has told you that he dearly loves you, and has promised (by the Lord's help) to pray for you and your's. The old man does this heartily; but says again that he *must* lay down his pen, when he has subscribed himself,

Dear sir and madam,
Your very affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Portswood Green,
25th July, 1800.

LETTER CIII.

MY DEAR MADAM AND SIR,

I THANK you for your prompt and kind invitation; but, as I stand engaged to preach a sermon, next Sunday, for the delivery of poor married women at their own houses, I cannot set out before Tuesday, the 12th. We can stay, if you please, till the company you expect are near coming to you, and then we can either return, or go forward to S., as Providence may appoint. May the Lord direct our steps! Pray, that if we are permitted to meet, the Lord may be with us, that our hearts may mutually burn within us. Believers are like coals, they can neither feel, nor communicate warmth, unless first kindled by the fire from above. The Lord's cause at R. is much upon my heart, and I love my friends there very dearly; but I dare not say that I approve of their endeavours to draw regular min-

M

isters from the places where the Lord has placed them, and continues to own their labours. The rule "do as you would be done by" is of general and easy application. What would you have thought, had it been possible that any proposals could have induced Mr. C. to relinquish R., and go to another people? O! then let us remember, that others have like feelings with ourselves in similar cases.

I trust you will excuse my freedom. I am not disposed to flatter; and least of all when I love. As to myself, I have much to be thankful for; my health and appetite are good, my sleep sufficient, my little family well, attentive, and affectionate; I still preach, and they tell me not much worse than formerly. I have little to say of lively frames, and sensible comforts; but I am helped to believe the Bible; thence I derive my support; there I read of the power, wisdom, love, compassion, and faithfulness of the great Redeemer, and his precious promises to make all things work together for good to those whom he has taught to love him.

If the Lord has been pleased to do good to Mr. G. through unworthy me; I have cause to be thankful. Had not ~~been~~ been ill, I should not have seen him. "The way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Ten thousand blessings rest upon you both! Pray for us. My eyes begin to say, "leave off."

I am,

Your very obliged and affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
4th May, 1801.

LETTER CIV.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

IT seems high time that I should address a line to you as a testimony of my love and gratitude; otherwise, it will scarcely be worth postage, and all my gentlemen are so dispersed that I cannot procure a frank. My dear —— returned from R. worse than she went; she was afterwards with our friends at D. and rather worse than better there. But she is perfectly satisfied with her present situation, and expresses no wish to leave it. Thus my Lord affords me sweetening and alleviations to my trial. This trial is at present my only one. My health is good, and my family well and peaceful. I am still enabled to preach, and still heard with acceptance. I hope some others are benefited and encouraged in their afflictions, by observing his goodness in supporting me. I cannot say much of sensible comfort; indeed I never could, but I am satisfied in my better judgment that the Lord has wise reasons, and worthy of his love and faithfulness; that the issue shall be to his glory (which ought to be my highest end) and to our final benefit. May he enable me to act, wait, pray, hope, and submit so, as not to dishonour my profession! This is my chief prayer for myself, in which I trust you will join. "When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, the Lord sees my paths." He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and I trust his word will be fulfilled. I am now called to practise the lessons of patience, submission and hope, myself, which I have often proposed

to others. If God is pleased for a season that I should be like the bush which Moses saw, covered with flames and not consumed, the event will be to his glory, and I doubt not for our good. I am not my own. As a sinner I have no *right* to complain, as a believer I have no *reason* to complain, for he will choose better for me upon the whole than I could if I might for myself. He has delivered, he does deliver, and I trust he will yet deliver. My whole history has been a series of marvellous mercies: how ungrateful should I be to distrust him! yet thus I should do were I left to myself; but he says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." I build upon his promises; he has done, he does, he will do all things well. Glory be to his name! My eyes get worse, and I sometimes think I may quite lose my sight. But, if I should never see after to-day, I should have abundant cause to be thankful, not only for the use of my eyes for more than 76 years, but that the Lord disposed and enabled me to make some proper use of them. By his blessing some of my books have been acceptable and useful to his people. He can make them so after I am removed from the earth. The Lord bless you both and all dear to you abundantly. My love to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. I have neither eyes nor paper to mention names.

Believe me,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
31st August, 1801.

LETTER CV.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THE first intimation we had of your husband's illness was accompanied with the news of his recovery, which I was thankful for, as it saved me from the anxiety I should have otherwise felt, both for him and you; for you are both very dear to me. I have now only to join you in praise to the great Physician, to whom the issues from death belong, and to pray that the late affliction may be sanctified to you both. Let us praise the Lord our Saviour, who pardoneth all our sins, and healeth all our diseases. Our times are in his hands. O may the lives he is pleased to prolong be devoted to him who sweat blood in Gethsemane, and died in agonies upon the cross to redeem us from approaching wrath, and to open to us the way to everlasting life. May we desire to prove ourselves followers of him who wept over his enemies, and prayed for his murderers while they were nailing him to the cross. I am a sinner, I feel my need of daily multiplied forgiveness, and my Lord has said, "When ye pray, forgive, if ye have aught against any." If he has remitted to me a debt of ten thousand talents, I dare not take a fellow-servant by the throat for a few pence. In my right mind, and while pleading before the Lord for the mercy I hourly need, I dare not indulge resentment if a person spit in my face, for my Saviour was spit upon for my sake, and bore it patiently.

I am five months advanced in my 78th year; my

time of departure cannot be far off, and whether I shall ever see R. or you again, the Lord alone knows; but I can truly say, that, though absent in the flesh, I am often present with you in the Spirit, and whether I may live to see you again or not, the prayer of my heart is, and I trust will be for dear Mr. and Mrs. R.. that you may stand fast, in one heart and mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. May the Lord bless you in yourselves and in each other, and make you a blessing to many! May he, who, when he was rich, became poor for our sakes, by the force of his example, and the power of his grace, fill you with a spirit of expanded benevolence, that you may have the honour and pleasure of imitating him who went about doing good! and may you hear him say at last "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these for my sake, ye did it unto me."

My dear E. — unites with me in love; she is better, but not well. The Lord has done great things for us, and will do still more. Yet at times I am ready to faint. Thus I am learning by slow degrees, that without him I can do nothing.

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street,
Nov. 29th, 1802.

THE END.

BAKER AND SON, PRINTERS, SOUTHAMPTON.

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