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**LETTERS**  
**OF THE**  
**REVEREND JOHN NEWTON.**



ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY NINE LETTERS

FROM THE

REV. JOHN NEWTON,

LATE

RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH, LONDON,

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM BULL,

OF NEWPORT PAGNELL.

WRITTEN DURING A PERIOD OF THIRTY-TWO YEARS,

FROM 1773 TO 1805.

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“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”—*Ps. cxxxiii.*

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: for God is love.”—1 *John* iv. 7—8.

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1847.







## PREFACE.

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THE following letters were addressed to the Rev. William Bull, of Newport Pagnell, the beloved father of the Editor. It so happened that Mr. Bull undertook the pastoral charge of the Independent congregation at Newport about the time that Mr. Newton entered on the curacy at Olney. They were soon introduced to each other, and a slight acquaintance commenced. Some trifling reports, tending to lower the reputation of Mr. Bull, reached the ear of Mr. Newton, and produced a coldness between them. When, however, it was found that these reports originated in falsehood, there was a permanent renewal of that intercourse which had been for a short time suspended.

How completely Mr. Newton was satisfied, and how cordial was his subsequent attachment to his friend, will appear by the following extract from his Diary, dated March 11th, 1776:—"At ten, thy servant Bull came and stayed till after dinner. Was he not thy messenger? Oh make his visit a

blessing. Much passed that might afford instruction and humiliation. Is this the man I once thought so lightly of? — and now how far is he before me? With him I conversed freely, as though I had a savour of divine things, and a right to speak of them. And, perhaps, he thought me better than himself; but what would he think if he knew me as I am? Were this possible I should be ashamed to see him, yet I thus stand open to thy holy eyes, and hardly feel the thought. Our discourse turned on the deepest and most affecting points — the sorrows of Thy soul when thou didst expiate thy people's sins. Alas! how little am I affected with this subject! I perceive that he meditates upon thy word, and makes it his food."

The pleasure, and, he trusts, profit, which the Editor found in the perusal of the "SIXTY-FIVE LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN," by Mr. Newton, recently published, led him to consider whether he was doing right in keeping from the public eye the following correspondence, and he cannot but hope that it will be read with pleasure and benefit.\* It is thought, too, that at the present time it might be peculiarly seasonable, and tend to soften,

\* "His chief excellence as a writer seemed to lie in the easy and natural style of his epistolary correspondence. His letters will be read while real religion exists, and they are the best draught of his own mind."—Cecil's "Memoirs."

in some measure, the asperity of a controversial spirit in some quarters too prevalent, and promote union amongst Christians—an object which, to his mind, does not seem so completely utopian as some are ready to imagine. At all events, the following pages will exhibit an example of “an evangelical alliance” which lasted unbroken between the parties till “death did them part.”

Some persons will perhaps think that more frequent omissions should have been made in these letters; but it is presumed, that they will be read with more interest, and exhibit a better portrait of the lovely character of the writer, to publish them almost entire. The distance of time since they were written will be a sufficient apology for retaining the names in most instances of the persons referred to. The good man and his pious friends are nearly all now members of another community, where they cannot be affected by the mention of their names; and those who survive will, with the Editor, feel it a privilege to have been included in a circle of which the excellent John Newton was the centre.

It is proper to add, that fourteen of these letters have been already published in the second volume of the “Cardiphonia,” with some omissions, which are here supplied.

The Editor would be sorry to give any person reasonable ground of offence, still more to damage

the well-deserved reputation of the author; but he must believe that, under the Divine blessing, the exhibition these letters afford of practical wisdom, true piety, and Christian friendship, will be contemplated with profit and pleasure by those "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth."

Several explanatory notes have been inserted, which it is thought will not detract from the interest of the volume.

THOMAS PALMER BULL.

*Newport Pagnell, February, 1847.*

LETTERS  
OF THE  
REV. JOHN NEWTON.

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LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

WE were glad to hear you were no worse for your journey hither; I hope I was the better for it.

I preached yesterday from the two Stars, Matthew's and Balaam's, and was favoured with liberty, especially from the latter, in the evening, when we had a church full of people.

I thank you for what you call your rudeness; but let there be no apologies or ceremonies between you and me. I hope you did not think I put the papers in your hand by way of fishing for compliments, but that I should snarl and snap if you found the least fault. I am capable, indeed, of all this, and more; but through the Lord's mercy I have not thought myself infallible for some years.                   \*                   \*                   \*

"*Myself*" not only pleaded precedents and the examples of the best writers for preserving its place, but its pretensions were supported by a friend on whose judgment in composition I can depend much better than on my own; but I over-ruled it with a high hand, and said, You saucy word, to offend Mr. Bull, the first time you

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were in his company. "Delendum es." I will make an example of you, and excommunicate you, right or wrong, however necessary you may think yourself to the emphasis of the sentence. We are to abstain from all appearance of evil, and consequently from all appearance of *egotism*, which is an evil of very ugly semblance. However, "inter nos," I think it will not read so well,—“It is a path in which I have known *many* led, and in which I have walked *myself*.” The opposition between *myself* and *many* seems almost necessary both for distinction and for the euphony of the close.

My notion of *instincts*, I think, you would not oppose, if I had time to explain it. The term I borrowed from Edwards, in his discourse on "Virtue." Though fallen nature is destitute of spiritual life, and incapable of loving and serving its Maker, we may say as much as Milton of Beelzebub in its favour; it is, "Majestic, though in ruins."

I could give you specimens of such feelings and instincts as you could not prove to originate from self and pride, though self and pride influence and corrupt them, when occasions offer. A natural man is capable of approving and admiring what he cannot imitate, and of feeling the impropriety of his own conduct, though he will not alter it:—"Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor," is the experience of fallen nature. Natural conscience, though blinded and partial, is not quite dead, nor has God given it up. Though all are equally destitute of divine light and life, there is a difference between Nero and Titus; and though I allow some benevolent feelings in human nature to be extinguished by an habitual course of cruelty and injustice, yet if I can prove that they have no influence upon our conduct towards God, though useful in the present state of so-

ciety, and have no more real morality than the partial justice and friendship that may subsist among pickpockets towards each other, I apprehend neither Lindsay nor Priestley could gain much advantage by the concession. I believe these were my sentiments before I read Edwards; and hope you will not be displeased that I am a little tenacious of them, since I have seen them supported by so great a master.

I am afraid you will think me positive, and that I asked your opinion with a predetermination to abide by my own, but I hope truth is my object. I have no horse; you have one; and as it is too dirty to walk to you, I wish before long you would trot over again, that we may settle the point here. I love you; I love your company, because I believe the Lord speaks by you to my heart; therefore I wish to see you as often as I can.

I agree with you that I am not bound to satisfy the public, whether *I eat victuals or not*; that piece of information, therefore, shall be suppressed.

My Dear is pretty well; she will be glad to see you, to prescribe to you for your good, and to make you laugh a little for your health's sake. We join in love to you and Mrs. Bull. Ora pro nobis.

Believe me to be,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

26th December, 1777.



## LETTER II.

DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,

I CALL you *dear* because I love you ; and I shall continue to stile you *reverend* as long as you dignify me with that title. It is, indeed, a pretty sounding epithet, and forms a striking contrast in the usual application. The inhabitants of the moon, (if there be any), have, perhaps, no idea how many reverend, right reverend, and most reverend sinners we have in England. And yet you *are* reverend, and I revere you, because I believe the Lord liveth in you, and has chosen you to be a temple of his presence, and an instrument of his grace.

I hope the two sermons you preached in London were made useful to others ; and the medicines you took there were useful to yourself. I am glad to hear you are safe at home, and something better. Cheerful spring is approaching, then I hope the barometer of your spirits will rise. But the presence of the Lord can bring a pleasanter spring than April, and even in the depth of winter. That heathenish, fulsome compliment of Horace to Augustus, is a beautiful prayer in the mouth of a Christian, and has sometimes touched my heart, as if I had found it in the Bible.

“ Lucem redde, tuæ, dux bone, patriæ ;  
 Instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus  
 Affulsit populo, gratior it dies  
 Et soles melius nitent.”

Time has been when I could say, and did say, something like this, in my own way :—

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

“ How tedious and tasteless the hours  
When Jesus no longer I see!  
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers  
Have lost all their sweetness with me.  
The Midsummer sun shines but dim—  
The fields strive in vain to look gay;  
But when I am happy in his,  
December's as pleasant as May.”

At present it is January with me, both within and without. The outward sun shines and looks pleasant, but his beams are faint, and too feeble to dissolve the frost. So is it in my heart. I have many bright and pleasant beams of truth in my view, but cold predominates in my frost-bound spirit, and they have but little power to warm me. I could tell a stranger something about Jesus, that would perhaps astonish him. Such a glorious person, such wonderful love, such humiliation, such a death. And then, what he is now in himself, and what he is to his people. What a Sun! what a Shield! what a Root! what a Life! what a Friend! My tongue can run on upon these subjects sometimes, and could my heart keep pace with it, I should be the happiest fellow in the country. Stupid creature! to know these things so well, and yet be no more affected with them. Indeed, I have reason to be upon ill terms with myself. It is strange that pride should ever find any thing in my experience to feed upon; but this completes my character for folly, vileness, and inconsistency, that I am not only poor but proud; and though I am convinced I am a very wretch, as nothing before the Lord, I am prone to go forth among my fellow-creatures as though I were wise and good.

You wonder what I am doing, and well you may. I am sure you would, if you lived with me. Too much of my time passes in busy idleness, too much in waking dreams. I aim at something, but hinderances from within

and without make it difficult for me to accomplish any thing. I have written three or four pages since you was here, in the little book I showed you. It is to be but about the size of a shilling pamphlet ; and if I go on as I have begun, it may be finished before Christmas. I dare not say I am absolutely idle, or that I wilfully waste much of my time. I think I could complete my book in five or six days, if I had nothing else to do ; but I have seldom one hour free from interruption. Letters come that must be answered—visitants that must be received—business that must be attended to. I have a good many sheep and lambs to look after, sick and afflicted souls dear to the Lord ; and therefore whatever stands still, these must not be neglected. Amongst these various avocations, night comes before I am ready for noon, and the week closes when, according to the state of my business, it should not be more than Tuesday. Oh precious irrecoverable time ! Oh that I had more wisdom in redeeming and improving thee ! Pray for me, that the Lord may teach me to serve him better.

Mrs. Newton has been one week confined to her chamber through illness, but is pretty well again. We abound in mercies and causes for gratitude ; but what a shame and pity to make such poor returns to the Author of them ! I long to come to Newport to see you, but I believe I must wait for that pleasure till the days are a little longer. In the meantime you will be as welcome to us here, if you will trot over, as a new guinea to a miser's pocket.

I am, very affectionately, yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

P. S. Send or bring me some notes on Job. xiv. 14 ; or Prov. iii. 6, or any other texts.

27th January, '78.

## LETTER III.

NAUGHTY SIR,

To keep me at home four afternoons upon the tip-toe of expectation, and not come near me at last. If you cannot send me a certificate, signed by the apothecary and churchwardens, specifying that you were too ill to travel, I have reason to be angry with you. But to show my forgiving spirit, if you will come over on Monday to dinner, I will give you something to eat, and your pardon in form.

I am to preach (if I can) three times on Fast-day, but have at present fixed only upon one text, which, for a certain reason, I shall not mention to you at present. I send you, however, according to order, a text and a plan which I found among my old papers. I preached it about sixteen years ago to a congregation of about twelve, in my own house, sometime before I was brought into the public ministry. I have not time to read it over; but if it may put any hints in your way, it is at your service. I cannot send you my present thoughts upon another text, for a plain reason, namely, that I am not able yet to think for myself; and I must receive before I can communicate. It would be mocking you to offer you drink out of an empty vessel.

Since I have begun to write, I have thought perhaps one of my texts will be either Ps. xcvi. 1, or Ps. xcix. 1. The whole system of my politics is summed up in that one sentence, "The Lord reigneth!" I wish you would send me, by the bearer, some hints towards a sermon on it. It would be a good text if I knew how to manage it.

The times look awfully dark indeed ; and as the clouds grow thicker, the stupidity of the nation seems proportionally to increase. If the Lord had not a remnant here, I should have very formidable apprehensions. But he loves his children ; some are sighing and mourning before him, and I am sure he hears their sighs, and sees their tears. I trust there is mercy in store for us at the bottom ; but I expect a shaking time before things get into a right channel, before we are humbled, and are taught to give him the glory. The state of the nation, the state of the churches, both are deplorable. They who should be praying, or too many of them, are disputing and fighting among themselves. Alas ! how many professors are more concerned for the mistakes of government, or of the Americans, than for their own sins ;—when will these things end ?

Love me, and pray for me, and come to see me, for I cannot come to you. With my love and Mrs. Newton's to you and Mrs. Bull,

I remain, your obliged friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 24 Feb., '78.*

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#### LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

I AM so monstrous busy, I have hardly time to tell you how sorry I am for my disappointment, and your illness, which was the cause of it. Indeed, I am as sorry

for both, as a Calvinist ought to be. It was the time you and I appointed for meeting; had it been the Lord's time, nothing could have prevented you. I wish he may give you leave to come next Monday, or any day after to-morrow which you please, only send word. What think you of it? I have a double motive for wishing to see you now, because, besides having your company, it would be a proof you were better.

Last Sunday afternoon we had a great personage with us at church. I endeavoured to persuade all the congregation to kiss him. But though I talked a whole hour about it, few would comply. Alas! it was because they did not know him; and though I told them who he was, they would not believe me.

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## LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN I found the morning coaches came in without you, I was not much disappointed at not meeting you at home, when I returned from Brickhill. I know how difficult it is to get away from Northampton if you are seen in the street after breakfast. The horseleach has three daughters, saying, Give, give: the cry there is, Preach, preach. When you have told them all, you must tell them more, or tell it them over again. Whoever will find tongue, they will engage to find ears. Yet I do not blame this importunity. I wish you were teased more with it in your own town; for though undoubtedly

there are too many both at Northampton and here whose religion lies too much in hearing, yet, in many, it proceeds from a love to the truth, and to the ministers who dispense it. And I generally observe that they who are not willing to hear a stranger (if his character be known) are indifferent enough about hearing their own minister.

Upon the whole, I was not sorry you staid, though I missed your company, for I hoped you would be useful; and Mrs. Bull's kindness was such, as gave me no reason to complain of my visit. I had, however, a little pleasant talk with Mr. Goode\* after tea.

I would have asked you, had you been at home, to come over to-morrow. We would have given you a bit of dinner, provided you would have preached to us at night; and I suppose Mr. Whitford† would have thanked me for engaging you. We are rather upon the preach, preach, here, but we only want to hear those who can tell us about Jesus, and stir us up to live to him. The bit of dinner is still at your service if you will come; and whenever you will come.

I beg you to pray for me. I am a poor creature, full of wants. I seem to need the wisdom of Solomon, the meekness of Moses, and the zeal of Paul, to enable me to make full proof of my ministry. But, alas! you may guess the rest.

Send me "The Way to Christ."‡ I am willing to be a debtor to the wise and unwise, to doctors and shoemakers, if I can get a hint or a nota bene from any one,

\* Afterwards the Rev. John Goode, for many years minister at White Row Meeting, Spitalfields, London; at this time pursuing his studies under the direction of Mr. Bull.

† The Independent minister at Olney.

‡ A treatise by Jacob Behmen.

without respect to parties. When a house is on fire, Churchmen and Dissenters, Methodists, Papists, Moravians, and Mystics, are all welcome to bring water. At such times nobody asks, "Pray friend, where do you hear? or what do you think of the five points?"

Love and thanks to Mrs. Bull, &c.,

JOHN NEWTON.

28th April, '78.

## LETTER VI.

MON CHER MONSIEUR BULL,

HEREWITH I send my-sheep's clothing, as an earnest of my purpose to follow it on Tuesday morning, to beg a breakfast with you, if the Lord permit.

My friend Captain Scott will pass through Newport, on his way to Olney, on Tuesday. As it is possible I may be then engaged with my betters; and as such persons as he and you must not dine with the "*we preachers*" of the Establishment, when we meet in Pontificalibus, I have invited him to quarter an hour or two at your house, till I am at liberty to call for him, and escort him home.

I have no doubt of a good dinner at the visitation, which you must not partake of; but you shall be welcome to a share of the sermon: I wish it may prove to your taste, substantial and savory. Above all, let us pray for the Saviour's promise. He can teach us to



profit by every thing. Under his influence, the whole creation, and every object, person, and event around us are preaching continually.

With our love to Mrs. Bull,

Your affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 6th June, '78.*

## LETTER VII.

MON AMI,

I HOPE your visit at Bedford was pleasant to you and Mrs. Bull, and that you will return time enough to step over hither, and take leave of us before you go to London. Consider what a long while you are to be out of our reach.

However, for fear you should not come, I send you a bit of a letter I received last night from Mr. Thornton, of Clapham. So much of it as concerns you is thus:—

“My sister Wilberforce told me, Mr. Bull would be with her on the 17th. If you have opportunity, pray bespeak him to come and be my chaplain on Sunday evening, and I will send for him any where about six o'clock, as we begin at eight.”

I hope you will accept this as a providential call. If you knew the man, and the church in his house, you would be glad to go. His family will furnish a tolerable congregation. Mr. T. will send the chariot for you where you please; you must sup and bed there, and be

will return you to town. You may see him at his counting-house, No. 2, Church Alley, Lothbury, between twelve and two, on Tuesdays and Fridays, or thither you must send your note, specifying time and place, for the carriage. As I apply thus early, and before you set out, I shall inform him that I make no doubt that I have engaged you for one of the two Sundays you are to be in town, and that you will let him know which. Or if you can send me word on Saturday, I will put it in my letter by Sunday's post. But I would rather see you here, if but for an hour.

We came safely home, and all well pleased with our visit, and the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Bull. You are now deeply in debt, and we must have your wife and children before we are quit.

My Dear has been but poorly at times since she came home, but, upon the whole, tolerably well. Her head was ill when at your house, but she can carry it off pretty well, if not quite bad, for her spirits are naturally very good, which is a great mercy. Sickness is a bitter pill to the flesh, but good natural spirits sweeten the pill, if I may so say, and make it rather more palatable.

The Lord is good; he knows what we need, and when we need it; and then have it we must and shall, whether it be sweet, bitter, or sour, for he will withhold no good thing from those who fear and love him. He weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; with equal accuracy he adjusts all that concerns us. Worms as we are, he is attentive to everything that relates to our peace and welfare, as though we, each of us singly, were the sole objects of his providential care. At the same time, he is providing for the lions and ravens, supporting all the ants and worms that creep upon the earth; at the same time he upholds and enlightens the

inhabitants of the heavenly world. His eye and his heart are attentively fixed upon you and worthless me. Well may we say—"Who is a God like unto thee?"

With love to Mrs. Bull, for self and partner,

Affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney 1st July, '78.*

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### LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I KNOW not that I have anything to say worth postage, though perhaps had I seen you before you set off, something might have occurred, which will not be found in my letter. Yet I write a line because you bid me, and are now in a far foreign country, and partly because I forgot to tell you to ask for Mr. Crawford, when you call at No. 2, Church Alley, if Mr. Thornton should not just then be in the way. You will find Mr. Crawford a man to your tooth, but he is in Mr. Wesley's connexion. So I remember venerable Bede, after giving a high character of some contemporary, kicks his full pail of milk down, and reduces him almost to nothing, by adding, in the close, to this purpose: "But, unhappy man, he did not keep Easter our way." A fig for all connexions say I, and say you, but that which is formed by the bands, joints, and ligaments the Apostle speaks of, Ephesians iv. 16, *et alibi*. Therefore, I venture to repeat it, that Mr. Crawford, though he often sees and hears Mr.

Wesley, and I believe loves him well, is a good man, and you will see the invisible mark upon his forehead if you examine him with your spiritual spectacles.

Now methinks I do pity you—I see you melted with heat, stunned with noise. Ah! what a change from the books, and bushes, and birds, and green fields to which you had lately access. Of old, they used to enter into the deserts for mortification. If I was to set myself a moderate penance, it might be to spend a fortnight in London in the height of summer. But I forget myself—I hope the Lord is with you, and then all places are alike. He makes the dungeon and the stocks comfortable, Acts xvi. Yea, a fiery furnace and a lion's den. A child of God in London seems to be in all these trying situations—But Jesus can preserve his own. I honour the grace of God in those few (comparatively few I fear), who preserve their garments, undefiled in that Sardis. The air is filled with infection, and it is by special power and miraculous preservation they enjoy spiritual health, when so many sicken and fall around them on the right hand and on the left. May the Lord preserve you from the various epidemical soul diseases which abound where you are, and be your comfort and defence from day to day.

If you would have me write to Mr. Brown let me know, and it shall be done immediately. I believe I shall be very willing to say whatever you wished me, and perhaps something more. I have frequently thought of what you mentioned to me, and it appears to me highly probable, that, if the purpose is of the Lord, and what he designs to give a blessing to, you will be the person appointed. It seems a service just suited for you, and that you have been trained and prepared for just such a service. If I am mistaken there is no harm done, you

will not change your situation without being satisfied of his call, and he will not call you except your removal is to be for your own good and his glory.

Last week we had a lion in town : I went to see him. He was wonderfully tame : as familiar with his keeper, as docile and obedient as a spaniel ; yet the man told me he had his surly fits, when they durst not touch him. No looking-glass could express my face more justly than this lion did my heart. I could trace every feature. As wild and fierce by nature, yea, much more so ; but grace has in some measure tamed me. I know and love my Keeper, and sometimes watch his looks, that I may learn his will. But, oh ! I have my surly fits too—seasons when I relapse into the savage again—as though I had forgotten all. I got a hymn out of this lion, which you shall see when you come to Olney, if you please me.

I beg you to give my love to Mr. Barton.\* We should be glad to see him here. Mrs. Newton unites with love to you : she has been ill, but is better. The Lord bless us all. Amen.

I am, yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*7th July, '78.*

\* A medical gentleman in London, connected with the Rev. Dr. Gibbon's Church, Haberdasher's Hall, near Silver-street.

## LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

I SENT you a pennyworth last post: now comes another. Mrs. Wilberforce desires me to inform you, not only that she expects you at Greenwich, 17th, which you knew; but that you are expected to preach there at the Tabernacle, which perhaps you did not know; and, further, that in dependance upon your coming, the people do not provide any body else.

I find by Mr. Henell that you staid longer at Bedford than you mentioned to me. I hope it was gain to some there; if so, I must pocket my loss, in not seeing you, patiently.

I wish you a good day to-morrow—a good journey on Monday—much good while you are abroad—much comfort when you return home, and shall hope to see you here as soon afterwards as convenient.

Our love to Mrs. Bull; pray for us every day, and believe me affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Saturday Evening, July, '78.*

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## LETTER X.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You see I readily accept your proposal of exchanging another threepenny letter. As we are so soon to meet, I have nothing very important to communicate, and many things occur which might demand my time. I have no other plea to offer either to you or myself for writing again, but because I love you.

I hope nothing prevented your calling on Mr. Thornton, because, from your letter, I looked on it as fixed, and therefore informed him you would be with him, and he would of course expect you; and I take it for granted, Mrs. Wilberforce would not expect you till the 17th.

I pity the unknown considerable minister with whom you smoked your morning pipe. But we must take men and things as we find them. And when we fall in company with those from whom we can get little other good, it is likely we shall at least find occasion for the exercise of patience and charity towards them, and of thankfulness to Him who made us to differ; and these are good things, though perhaps the occasion may not be pleasant. Indeed, a Christian, if in a right spirit, is always in his Lord's school, and may learn either a new lesson, or how to practise an old one, by every thing he sees or hears, provided he does not wilfully tread upon forbidden ground. If he were constrained to spend a day with the poor creatures in the common side of Newgate, though he could not talk with them of what God has done for his soul, he might be more sensible of his mercy, by the contrast he would observe around him. He might rejoice for himself, and mourn over them, and thus, per-

haps, get as much benefit as from the best sermon he ever heard.

It is necessary, all things taken together, to have connexion more or less with narrow-minded people. If they are, notwithstanding their prejudices, civil to us, they have a right to some civility from us. We may love them, though we cannot admire them; and pick something good from them; notwithstanding we see much to blame. It is, perhaps, the highest triumph we can obtain over bigotry, when we are able to bear with bigots themselves, for they are a sort of troublesome folks, whom Mr. Self is often very forward to exclude from the comprehensive candour and tenderness which he professes to exercise towards those who differ from him.

I am glad your present home (a believer should be always at home) is pleasant, the rooms large and airy, your host and hostess kind and spiritual, and, upon the whole, all things as well as you could expect to find them, considering where you are. I could give you much such an account of my usual head quarters in the city; but still London is London. I do not wish you to live there, for my own sake as well as yours. But if the Lord should so appoint, I believe he can make you easy there, and enable me to make a tolerable shift without you. Yet I certainly should miss you, for excepting a friend about twelve miles off,\* I have no person in this neighbourhood, with whom my heart so thoroughly unites in spirituals, though there are many whom I love. But conversation with most Christians is something like going to court, when, except you are dressed exactly according to a prescribed standard, you will either not be admitted, or must expect to be heartily stared at. But you and I

\* John Foster Barham, Esq, of Bedford.



can meet and converse *sans contrainte*, in an undress, without fear of offending, or being counted offenders for a word out of place, and not exactly in the pink of the mode.

I know not how it is, I think my sentiments and experience are as orthodox and Calvinistical as need be, and yet I am a sort of speckled bird among my Calvinistic brethren. I am a mighty good Churchman, but pass amongst such as a Dissenter in principle. On the other hand, the Dissenters (many of them I mean) think me defective, either in understanding or in conscience, by staying where I am, while there is a middle party called Methodists, but neither do my dimensions exactly fit with them. I am somehow disqualified for claiming a full brotherhood with any party; but there are a few among all parties who bear with me, and love me, and with this I must be content at present. But so far as they love the Lord Jesus Christ, I desire, and by his grace, I determine (with or without their leave), to love them all. Party walls, though stronger than the walls of Babylon, must come down in the general ruin, when the earth and all its works shall be burned up, if no sooner. The Lord helped me through another of his golden privileged days. He enables me to speak, I hope, a little to the purpose. I wish I could feel more of the truths I propose to others. But he has wise reasons for keeping me short. He will do what is best for us all.

Mrs. Newton has had a whole week of tolerable health; help me to praise Him. We join in love.

I am sincerely yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

13th July.

## LETTER XI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I THANK you for your last threepenny worth. I rate it rather by the price it cost me, than by the value I set upon it. I did not intend to tax you any farther, but thought it might not be amiss for you to know that this post carries one from me to Mr. Brewer.\* I shall not tell you what I said to him. I intimated you were in London, but said nothing where you lodged, as it might have led him to suppose that I wrote by your express desire.

I suppose you will see him either at Pinner's Hall Cathedral, or at the Spiritual Bee-hive, *vulgariter dictum*, Cole's Coffee House (*quod agmen! quæ Apes!*) I have acted very disinterestedly in this business, for had I consulted the feelings of self, I should rather have tried to prevent than to forward your removal from Newport.

I was with you Thursday and yesterday at Greenwich. I thought you seemed tolerably happy, and that it pleased your very heart to see so much simplicity and spirituality in a lady of fortune.† It is not wealth, but the love of it, and the pride of it, which are hurtful to professors. I know several persons of distinction, who are as eminent for humility and devotedness to God, as for their rank in life. And, through mercy, I have no intimacy with any in a line of life above me but what I think are such. It is the triumph of grace to make the rich humble, and

\* Rev. W. Brewer, of Stepney.

† Mrs. Wilberforce, sister to J. Thornton, Esq., and aunt to the late W. Wilberforce, Esq.

the poor thankful. Oh, the gospel is an admirable expedient, a *panchreston*, equally suited to every condition of life, a universal cordial, a sovereign antidote : they who truly receive it are qualified to live in every situation to which the Lord in his providence appoints them ; though the air be infected, and thousands fall around them, they shall flourish, for the grace of their Lord is always sufficient for them, and the truths upon which they feed keep them from being either elated by prosperity, or depressed unduly by trials. Everywhere, and in all things, they are instructed. They hear the voice of their Beloved, are guided by his eye, animated by his example, and cheered by his presence.

I shall endeavour to meet you to-morrow night at Clapham,\* for I think you will be there. The Lord make it a favoured opportunity.

I love you a little better than I did, because you know and love Dr. Conyers. I am not fond of making comparisons between ministers, and yet am almost constrained to set him at the head, as the first of "the first three" of our line. But I should not do so, upon the account of his gifts as a minister, if I did not know he is little in his own eyes. I estimate a minister's character from combining what he is in the pulpit, with what he is when out of it ; and they stand highest upon my scale, whose conduct is most expressive of the doctrines they preach.

If we cannot attain to "the first three," or to be ranked among "the thirty," still it is a mercy to be on the Lord's side, and to be honoured with an employment in his family, though in a lower place, so we may but be enabled to say, I do a little for him, and to feed a few of the weakest and poorest of his children, for his sake.

\* The residence of Mr. Thornton.

Especially ought I to think so, who was before a blasphemer and a reviler. That I, who once deliberately renounced him, despised his blood, and crucified him afresh, that I should be redeemed and saved from the wilds of Africa, and put in trust with the blessed gospel,—this was mercy indeed. I am ready to say—

“The first archangel never saw  
So much of grace before.”

And yet I am not duly affected with it. Oh stupid, cold creature, to be no more humbled, no more thankful. But time flies—other things call me, and I must say, Farewell. Come and see us as soon as possible after your return. We join in love.

I am sincerely yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 18th July, 1778.*

## LETTER XII.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WAS glad to hear that you were again within a few miles of me, and I would praise the Lord who led you out and brought you back in safety, and preserved all in peace while you were abroad, so that you found nothing very painful to embitter your return. Many go abroad well, but return no more. The affectionate wife, the

prattling children listen for the well-known sound of Papa's foot at the door, but they listen in vain. A fall or a fever has intercepted him, and he is gone far, far away. Some leave all well when they go from home, but how changed! how trying the scene, when they come back! In their absence the Lord has taken away the desire of their eyes with a stroke, or, perhaps, ruffians have plundered and murdered their family in the dead of the night, or the fire devoured their habitation.

Ah, how large and various is the list of evils and calamities with which sin has filled the world!—You and I, and ours, escape them; we stand, though on a field of battle where thousands fall around us, because the Lord is pleased to help us. May He have the praise, and may we only live, to love and serve him.

My Dear has been ill, very ill, and my heart often much pained while you have been absent; but the Lord has removed his hand.—She is much better, and I hope she will be seen in his house to-morrow. I have few trials in my own person; but when the Lord afflicts her, I feel it. It is a mercy that He has made us *one*; but it exposes us to many a pain which we might have missed if we cared but little for each other. Alas! there is usually an ounce of the golden calf of idolatry and dependance in all the warm regard we bear to creatures, *Hinc illæ lacrymæ*. For this reason our sharpest trials usually spring from our most valued comforts.

I cannot come to you, therefore you must come hither speedily. Be sure to bring Mr. Barton with you; I shall be very glad to see him, and I long to thank him for clothing my book. It looks well on the outside, and I hope to find it sound and savoury. I love the author, and that is a step towards liking the book; for where we love we are generally tender, and favourably take

everything by the best handle, and are vastly full of candour: but if we are prejudiced against the man, the poor book is half condemned before we open it. It had need be written well, for it will be read with a suspicious eye, as if we wished to find treason in every page.

I am glad I diverted and profited you by calling you a speckled bird. I can tell you such a bird in this day—that wears the full colour of no sect or party, is *rara avis*—if not quite so scarce as the phoenix, yet to be met with but here and there. It is impossible I should be all of a colour, when I have been a debtor to all sorts, and, like the jay in the fable, have been beholden to most of the birds in the air for a feather or two. Church and Meeting, Methodist and Moravian, may all perceive something in my coat taken from them. None of them are angry with me for borrowing from *them*; but then, why could I not be content with *their* colour, without going amongst other flocks and coveys, to make myself such a motley figure? Let them be angry: if I have culled the best feathers from all, then surely I am finer than any.

“Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo,  
Ipse domi.”

Love to Mrs. Bull, Mr. Barton—the young ones. The Lord bless you all. My Dear says, Amen.

I am sincerely yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

July, '78.

Mr. ROWLAND HILL will be here on Monday. If agreeable to you and Mr. Barton to come and dine with him,

you will find some roast beef and a hearty welcome. You may tell it at Newport, and publish it at Lathbury, that the celebrated and original Mr. Rowley Hill will preach at Olney church, on Monday evening, at half-past six.

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LETTER XIII.

DEAR SIR,

I FOLLOW you with a line, first, to thank you and Mr. Barton for your visit; second, to tell you I do not come on Friday; third, to inform you that I hope to be with you on Monday, and shall bring Mr. Scott\* in my hand, (provided it is walkable weather); fourth, to desire your daily prayers for us; fifth, to beg you to remember us to Mr. and Mrs. Barton and Mrs. Bull.

Possibly this will find you over head and ears in Mr. Sterry. I remember I liked what I could understand of it, fifteen or sixteen years ago; but know not whether I have read a page in it since I came to Olney.

Believe me to be affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, Tuesday, 28th July, '78.*

\* The Rev. Thomas Scott, the Commentator.

## LETTER XIV.

DEAR MR. BULL,

WHAT a calf am I! You mentioned preaching here to-morrow, and I had not wit enough to say, Be sure you dine with us. My heart positively meant it, though my head (which is often wool-gathering) missed the nick of telling you so. I committed the fault, and you must pay the penny.

Is it ever right to look a gift horse in the mouth? If you think it will bear, please to tell Mr. Barton (another business my wise head forgot) that his half-guinea looked well, but when weighed in the balances was found too light—sad emblem, I fear, of the case of too many professors.

We arrived safe and well at home. No rain when we walked, though it marched before us and threatened our rear. It was a hot evening, and we seemed fatigued, so that we had not much pretty chat. We all agreed in the judgment we formed of our visit, that it had been very pleasant, our friends very kind, and that we ought to go to bed very thankful.

When you are with the King, and are getting good for yourself, speak a word for me and mine. I have reason to think you see him oftener, and have nearer access to him than myself. Indeed, I am unworthy to look at him, or to speak to him at all, much more that he should speak tenderly to me; yet I am not wholly without his notice: he supplies all my wants, and I live under his protection. My enemies see his Royal arms over my



door, and dare not enter. Were I detached from him for a moment, in that moment they would make an end of me.

Love to Mr. and Mrs. Bull, Mr. and Mrs. Barton, and all in your house.

I am, as I ought to be, your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

*My birth-day, 4th August, '78.*

### LETTER XV.

BUCKS TO WIT,

You are hereby required and enjoined to appear personally at our episcopal seat in Olney, on the present *Wednesday*, 19th August, to dine with the Rev. Henry Venn,\* and with us. And hereof you are not to fail.

Given at our den—*die supra dicto*.

JOHN NEWTON.

To the Rev. William Bull.

Read *to-morrow*.

You receive it Tuesday night.

\* Vicar of Huddersfield.

## LETTER XVI.

DEAR SIR,

IF the Lord affords health—if the weather be tolerable—if no unforeseen change takes place—if no company comes in upon me to-night (which sometimes unexpectedly happens), with these provisos Mr. Scott and I have engaged to travel to Newport on Monday next, and hope to be with you by or before eleven o'clock.

In such a precarious world, it is needful to form our plans at two days' distance, with precautions and exceptions, James iv. 13. However, if it be the Lord's will to bring us together, and if the purposed interview be for his glory and our good, then I am sure nothing shall prevent it. And who in his right wits would wish to visit or be visited upon any other terms? Or, if we could but be pleased with *His* will, we might be pleased from morning to night, and every day in the year.

I have sent the book, and marked the hymns. Love to Mrs. Bull.

Pray for a blessing upon our coming together. It would be a pity to walk ten miles to pick straws, or to come with our empty vessels upon our heads, saying, We have found no water. Love to Mrs. Bull. Adieu.

Yours,

J. NEWTON.

*Saturday Morning, August, '78.*

## LETTER XVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF the Lord please, we go to-morrow to Stanwick ; return on Saturday. I was unwilling not to leave a line to tell you that we sympathise with you and Mrs. Bull in your trial.\* But, at the same time, I rejoice exceedingly in the Lord's goodness, enabling you to be resigned and satisfied with his will, maugre all the feelings and pinchings of flesh and blood. Had the child lived, the warmest desires of a parent's heart for him could only have been, that he might at last have arrived to that rest and happiness, to which the Lord has now brought him by a shorter cut. Saving thereby *him* from many troubles, and *you* from some occasional heartaches, which must otherwise have been experienced. If you can now believe and say, "He does all things well," with what transport would you say it, if the whole plan of his wisdom and love was unfolded to your view ? He will condescend to unfold it to you hereafter, and it will fill you with admiration. Your tender plant is now housed, out of the reach of storms. It is a consummation, if not devoutly to be wished, (for we are not worthy or able to judge for ourselves), yet to be cordially rejoiced in, when the Lord, who careth for us, intimates his will by the event.

What a blessing to be a Christian,—to have a hiding place and a resting place always at hand ! To be assured that all things work for our good, and that our compassionate Shepherd has his eye always upon us, to support

\* The death of an infant.

and to relieve. The flesh will feel, but faith and prayer will lighten the burden, and heal the wound. Daily your sense of the Lord's goodness will increase, and the sense of pain will abate, so that you will have less sorrow, and more joy, from day to day.

Mr. Barham was here yesterday; he returned in the evening. I told him your case, and showed him your letter, so that if Mr. Venn should be at Bedford to meet you this morning, he will have your excuse ready.

Mr. Jones\* has taken his flight Bristol-ward for a while; has sent a deputy to Clifton, by name Page, whom I have but looked at yet. Mrs. Jones set off on Wednesday. So, instead of visiting Clifton, you are to double your visits to us. I shall look for you soon after our return.

The Lord favoured us with a tolerable day yesterday, and I hope he was in the midst of us, yet, upon the whole, we have but slack times. Oh for a revival, a day of Pentecost, a visible accomplishment of that gracious promise, Ezekiel xxxiv. 16! I trust my soul desires it; but, alas! my desires are faint and cold. My subjects yesterday were, forenoon, Ps. cxlii. 1, 2; afternoon, 1 Cor. x. 12, a watch word. In the evening, a hymn about the sheep and the Shepherd, how he dwells among them, and they lie around in safety at his feet. They are surrounded by wolves, visible and invisible—these growl and thirst for blood; but the Shepherd's eye controls them. He stands and feeds his sheep in the strength of the Lord, and in the midst of their enemies, who grudge and snarl, but cannot prevail against the sheep, helpless as they are, because the Lord is their Shepherd.

\* Rev. Thomas Jones, of Clifton, near Olney, one of the six students expelled from Oxford.

“The bull can fight, the hare can flee,  
 The ants in summer food prepare;  
 But helpless sheep (and such are we)  
 Depend upon the Shepherd’s care.”

Through mercy my Dear’s health is much restored. The maids are likewise better, and we were all able to appear in His house yesterday. We send love and best wishes to you both.

Pray for your poor friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 7th Sept., '78, Monday.*

## LETTER XVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been witness to a great and important revolution this morning, which took place while the greatest part of the world was asleep. Like many state revolutions, its first beginnings were almost undiscernible; but the progress, though gradual, was steady, and the event decisive. A while ago, darkness reigned. Had a man then dropped for the first time into our world, he might have thought himself banished into a hopeless dungeon. How could he expect light to rise out of such a state? And when he saw the first glimmering of dawn in the east, how could he promise himself that it was the forerunner of such a glorious sun as has since risen! With

what wonder would such a new comer observe the bounds of his view enlarging, and the distinctness of objects increasing, from one minute to another: and how well content would he be to part with the twinklings of the stars, when he had the broad day all around him in exchange! I cannot say this revolution is extraordinary, because it happens every morning; but surely it is astonishing, or rather it would be so, if man was not astonishingly stupid.

Such strangers once were we. Darkness, gross darkness, covered us: how confined were our views! and even the things which were within our reach we could not distinguish. Little did we then think what a glorious day we were appointed to see—what an unbounded prospect would, ere long, open before us. We knew not that there was a Sun of righteousness, and that he would dawn and rise and shine upon our hearts. And as the idea of what we see now was hidden from us, so at present we are almost equally at a loss how to form any conception of the stronger light and brighter prospects which we wait and hope for. Comparatively we are in the dark still: at the most we have but a dim twilight, and see nothing clearly; but it is the dawn of immortality, and a sure presage and earnest of glory.

Thus, at times, it seems a darkness that may be felt broods over your natural spirits. But when the Day-star arises upon your heart, you see and rejoice in his light—you have days as well as nights; and, after a few more vicissitudes, you will take your flight to the regions of everlasting light, where your sun will go down no more. Happy you, and happy me, if I shall meet you there, as I trust I shall. How shall we love, and sing, and wonder, and praise the Saviour's name!

Last Sunday a young man died here of extreme old age at twenty-five. He laboured hard to ruin a good

constitution, and unhappily succeeded, yet amused himself with the hopes of recovery almost to the last. We have a sad knot of such poor creatures in this place, who labour to stifle each other's convictions, and to ruin themselves and associates, soul and body. How industriously is Satan served! I was formerly one of his most active under-tempters. Not content with running the broad way myself, I was indefatigable in enticing others; and had my influence been equal to my wishes, I would have carried all the human race with me. And doubtless some have perished, to whose destruction I was greatly instrumental, by tempting them to sin, and by poisoning and hardening them with principles of infidelity; and yet I was spared! When I think of the most with whom I spent my unhappy days of ignorance, I am ready to say, I only am escaped alive to tell thee.—Surely I have not half the activity and zeal in the service of Him who snatched me as a brand from the burning, that I had in the service of his enemy. Then the whole stream of my endeavours and affections went one way: now my best desires are continually crossed, counteracted, and spoiled, by the sin which dwelleth in me. Then the tide of a corrupt nature bore me along: now I have to strive and swim against it. The Lord cut me short of opportunities, and placed me where I could do but little mischief; but had my abilities and occasions been equal to my heart, I should have been a Voltaire and a Tiberius in one character—a monster of profaneness and licentiousness. “Oh to grace how great a debtor!” A common drunkard or profligate, is a petty sinner to what I was. I had the ambition of a Cæsar or an Alexander, and wanted to rank in wickedness among the foremost of the human race. When you have read this, praise the Lord for his mercy to the chief of sinners, and pray that I may have grace to

be faithful. But I have rambled. I meant to tell you, that on Sunday afternoon I preached from *Why will ye die?* Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11. I endeavoured to show poor sinners, that if they died it was because they *would*, and if they *would* they *must*. I was much affected; for a time I could hardly speak for weeping, and some wept with me. From some, alas, I can no more draw a tear or a relenting thought than from a millstone.

You bid me either write or come. Come, I cannot; and therefore I obey you in the alternative. Partly, because it is my bounden duty to obey Mr. Bull; and partly to coax you out of a letter, which will be very acceptable, especially if it be a good long one. The Lord has watched over us night and day since you were here, and we are in health and peace. We join in love to you and Mrs. Bull. Come and see us as soon and as often as you can, and always think of me, and pray for me, as your very affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 27th October, '78.*

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LETTER XIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is now my turn to speak, but my speech must be a short one. If you please, you may make your reply, *vivâ voce*, provided you come soon. But I do not wish for you on Wednesday, because I go early in the



afternoon to Weston, where I am to preach in the evening. Suppose you trot over on Friday ?

You are a better expositor of Scripture than of my speeches, if you really inferred from my last that I think you shall die soon. I cannot say positively you will not die soon, because life is at all times uncertain ; however, according to the doctrine of probabilities, I think—and always thought—you bid fair to outlive me. The gloomy tinge of your weak spirits, leads you to consider yourself much worse in point of health than you appear to me to be.

In the other point I dare be more positive that, die when you will, you will die in the Lord. Of this I have not the least doubt ; and I believe you doubt of it less, if possible, than I, except in those darker moments when the atrabilious humour prevails.

I heartily sympathize with you in your complaints, but I see you in safe hands. The Lord loves you, and will take care of you. He who raises the dead can revive your spirits when you are cast down. He who sets bounds to the sea, and says " Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further," can limit and moderate that gloom which sometimes distresses you. He knows why he permits you to be thus exercised. I cannot assign the reasons, but I am sure they are worthy of his wisdom and love, and that you will hereafter see and say, " He has done all things well." If I was as wise as your philosopher, I might say a great deal about a melancholy complexion ; but I love not to puzzle myself with second causes, while the First Cause is at hand, which sufficiently accounts for every phenomenon in a believer's experience. Your constitution, your situation, your temper, your distemper, all that is either comfortable or painful in your lot, is of his appointment. The hairs of

your head are all numbered; the same power which produced the planet Jupiter, is necessary to the production of a single hair; nor can one of them fall to the ground without his notice, any more than the stars can fall from their orbits. In providence, no less than in creation, he is maximus in minimis. Therefore, fear not, only believe. Our sea may sometimes be stormy; but we have an infallible Pilot, and shall infallibly gain our port.

I must now end my speech, and begin my supper. We wish you and Mrs. Bull a good night. The Lord be with you, and with your poor friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 2 Nov. '78.*

## LETTER XX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I TOOK it for granted, a summons to Bedford prevented me the pleasure of seeing you at the time fixed. I have since heard of Mr. Palmer's\* dismissal from this state of sin and pain. Though old people must die, the stroke will be felt by near friends whenever it comes. But the loss of those who die in the Lord should not be long or deeply mourned. They are gone a little before us, and we hope to meet them soon again, and upon far better terms, when there will be no abatement of joy, and

\* Mr. Bull's father-in-law.

when joy shall have no end. You have told Mrs. Bull to this purpose already, tell her so now from me, and that I hope Jesus, the everlasting Father, who never dies, will comfort and bless her under all changes and events.

I hope your weak spirits, strengthened by the great and good Spirit of the Lord, have happily surmounted what you have lately had to go through, and that you rejoice to think that in less than a hundred years *your* turn will come to go and see your Beloved, and that in the mean time you will preach, and act, and speak for him as much as possible. When will you come and tell me something about him? Let me expect you on Friday, or any day but Wednesday, because I shall then be at Weston. My Dear is tolerably well at present, but sometimes complaining a little; I should say, ailing; for I hope she is sensible she has no reason to complain. I write in great haste. Adieu; the Lord bless you.

I am yours entirely,

JOHN NEWTON.

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### LETTER XXI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letters are always welcome,—the last doubly so for being unexpected. If you never heard before, of a line of yours being useful, I will tell you for once, that I get some pleasure and instruction whenever you write to me. And I see not but your call to letter writing is

as clear as mine, at least when you are able to put pen to paper.

I must say something to your queries about 2 Samuel xiv. I do not approve of the scholastic distinctions about Inspiration, which seem to have a tendency to explain away the authority and certainty of one half of the Bible at least. Though the penmen of Scripture were ever so well informed of some facts, they would, as you observe, need express, full, and infallible inspiration to teach them, which the Lord would have selected and recorded for the use of the church, amongst many others which to themselves might appear equally important.

However, with respect to historical passages, I dare not pronounce positively that any of them are, even in the literal sense, unworthy of the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, and the dignity of Inspiration. Some, yea many of them, have often appeared trivial to me ; but I check the thought, and charge it to my own ignorance and temerity. It must have some importance, because I read it in God's book. On the other hand, though I will not deny that they may all have a spiritual and mystical sense, (for I am no more qualified to judge of the deep things of the mind of the Spirit, than to tell you what is passing at this moment at the bottom of the sea); yet if, with my present modicum of light, I should undertake to expound many passages in a mystical sense, I fear such a judge as you would think my interpretations fanciful, and not well supported. I suppose I should have thought the Bible complete, though it had not informed me of the death of Rebekah's nurse, or where she was buried. But some tell me that Deborah is the law, and that by the oak I am to understand the cross of Christ ; and I remember to have heard of a preacher who discovered a type of Christ crucified in Absalom hang-

ing by his hair in an oak. I am quite a mole, when compared with these eagle-eyed divines, and must often content myself with plodding upon the lower ground of *accommodation* and *allusion*, except when the New Testament writers assure me what the mind of the Holy Ghost was. I can find the gospel with more confidence in the history of Sarah and Hagar, than in that of Leah and Rachel; though without Paul's help, I should have considered them both as family squabbles, recorded chiefly to illustrate the general truth, that vanity and vexation of spirit are incident to the best men in the most favoured situations; and I think there is no part of Old Testament history from which I could not (the Lord helping me) draw observations that might be suitable to the pulpit, and profitable to his people. So I might, perhaps, from Livy or Tacitus. But then, with the Bible in my hands, I go upon sure grounds. I am certain of the facts I speak from, that they really did happen. I may likewise depend upon the springs and motives of actions, and not amuse myself and my hearers with speeches which were never spoken, and motives which were never thought of, till the historian rummaged his pericranium for something to embellish his work. I doubt not, but were you to consider Joab's courtly conduct only in a literal sense, how it tallied with David's desire, and how gravely and graciously he granted himself a favour while he professed to oblige Joab. I say in this view you would be able to illustrate many important scriptural doctrines, and to show that the passage is important to those who are engaged in studying the anatomy of the human heart.

But *sat verbum sapienti*. I have said enough or too much. I could, after all, preach very willingly upon God's devising means to bring his banished home again,

and take occasion to lisp my poor views of that mysterious and adorable contrivance, without taking upon me to say that either Joab or the woman of Tekoa thought of the gospel when they cooked up that affair between them, or that even it was the express design of the Holy Ghost, in the place. These points are always true, and always to be remembered, asserted, and repeated :—

1st. That man, by the entrance of sin, is a banished creature, driven far away from God, from righteousness, from happiness.

2nd. That he must have remained in this state of banishment for ever, if God had not devised to bring him home again.

3rd. That these means are worthy the Divine contriver, full of glory, holiness, wisdom, and efficacy ; ergo,

4th. Man, who was far off, is by faith actually restored and brought nigh by Jesus Christ.

Had it not been for Joab's courtly conduct, we should not have been favoured with this expression, so apt and suitable for the basis of a gospel sermon ; nor could I have been gratified with your thoughts upon the subject, or have had the pleasure of presenting you with mine.

I am sorry for your bodily complaints, but hope I may ascribe a part of them to low spirits ; I am therefore unwilling to think you so bad as you think yourself. We are pretty well. Love to Mrs. Bull.

Believe me most sincerely yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

Write and come as often as you can.

15 Dec. '78.

P.S. Absalom had assassinated Amnon, and David knew he deserved to die. Yet he desired to recall and pardon him. But he was sensible it was wrong, and therefore ashamed to avow his wish openly. Joab, like a true courtier, flattered his weakness by seeming to take it upon himself. Absalom's return issued in his destruction, and caused David much trouble; he was driven from Jerusalem, etc. In this connexion, I think chap. xiv, considered as a history, is very important and instructive, and worthy a place in a book Divinely inspired.

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## LETTER XXII.

DEAR SIR,

I SHALL expect you with earnestness on Tuesday, and I hope the weather, and especially illness, will not prevent you; and I beg you not to listen too much to that lowness of spirits which would persuade you, I suppose, to confine yourself always at home; because I am satisfied, that when you can muster strength to withstand this depressing, discouraging solicitation, and force yourself to ride and chat with some friend, you take the best course for relief; and, among all the friends you may think of treating with your company on such occasions, be sure none will be more glad to receive you than your friend at the Vicarage, Olney, Bucks.

*“Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.”*

I think my feelings will warrant me to make that line

my own. The Lord has been pleased to put some grains of sympathy into my constitution ; and the turns of life I have passed through have not been unuseful to give me some apprehension what impression afflictions make upon other people. It is true, I have not been much exercised with nervous complaints myself, but my situation here has afforded me a sort of second-hand experience of this kind, for I have lived almost fourteen years among a people dear to my heart, many of whom, to their other various trials, have that of a delicate and agitated nervous texture superadded, (owing in great measure, I suppose, to their sedentary and confined occupations,) which has given much scope to my observation and compassion. I understand something of your complaint, and know how to pity you ; but, since you say all is well, and shall be well—since you are in the wise and merciful hands of One who prescribes for you with unerring wisdom, and has unspeakably more tenderness than can be found in all human hearts taken together, I shall sorrow for you as though I sorrowed not ; and I hope you will do the same for yourself. He weighs all your dispensations with consummate accuracy, and you shall not have a single grain of trouble more, not for a single moment longer, than he will enable you to bear, and will sanctify to your good.

As to our death, let it suffice us that it is precious in his sight. The how, the when, the where—every circumstance, is already planned by infinite wisdom and love. Satan may suggest, the hour will be terrible ; but Jesus promises to be with us to lead us through the dark valley ; and when we come to the brink of the river, I trust we shall find the ark there before us, to keep the waters down.

I have been preaching from a text to-night which I



recommend as a suitable cordial for you in your present situation, Isa. xli. 17, "When the poor and needy seek water," etc. May the Lord himself apply and fulfil it to your comfort. Meditate upon it till you come, and then tell me more of it than I have been able to speak about it, which you may easily do, for I have only skimmed upon the surface and edge of what has neither bottom nor bound.

I am running on as if you were on the other side of the Atlantic, or as though I had given up the hope of seeing you so soon as Tuesday. Come, if possible. I will endeavour to be alone, and will no more blab my expectation of your company, than I would if I had found a pot of honey, and was afraid of my neighbours breaking in upon me for a share.

Mrs. Newton joins in love, and will be glad to receive you, and will excuse you if you should be but poorly. Our respects to Mrs. Bull. The rest when we meet. May the Lord come with you, then it will be a good visit.

I am affectionately and sincerely your friend, brother, and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 18 Dec., '78, nine in the evening.*

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## LETTER XXIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You say you hate controversy, so do I; and therefore I beg nothing that passes between you and me, in our friendly researches after truth, may be included under so frightful a name. You and I may propose, debate, and sometimes differ, but I think it unlikely that we should ever dispute.

I am glad the fever is gone; hope the sore throat has followed it before now; that all dark, unpleasant thoughts will vanish like mists before the midsummer sun, and that you will have a cheerful Christmas, a comfortable close of the old year, and a happy entrance upon the new.

I have not yet time to think of Christmas texts for this year, but I send you two old ones, if you can pick a hint or two it is well, and I and my hints will be honoured. I could say something about sending coals to Newcastle, but it is my duty to obey your orders without presuming to tell you they are improper. My Dear was very ill, indeed, last Wednesday night. After suffering about eight hours, the Lord relieved her. It seemed to me as if it might have been fatal in eight more. What a mercy to have an infallible Physician always within call, always in the house! Oh! what a precious present help in trouble. Help us to praise him. She is tolerable, but has not yet recovered the shock. She thanks you and Mrs. Bull for your love and returns it.

Adieu, in great haste, but always your most affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Dec. 22.*

Mr. Robinson is gone, and I cannot come.

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LETTER XXIV.

DEAR SIR,

THANK you for the dish which you sent me in your last, I hashed it up my own way, and set it before my people on Christmas morning, and hope some of them fed heartily upon it. In the evening I preached from John x. 10.

What have you for New year's day? I am not yet provided for the old folks in the forenoon. To the youth in the evening I think to preach from Jer. iii. 19. Chiefly to resolve the difficulty which occurs in putting sinners amongst the children, considering them 1. as guilty—2. as obstinate. Sovereign grace alone could surmount these difficulties. Grace has provided a Saviour to take away the guilt, and the agency of the Holy Spirit to overcome the obstinacy, to give ground, liberty, and power to call God, Father: then all is easy. This is the principal thought I have in view. Pray for me, that I may open my mouth to speak boldly, plainly, affectionately, and successfully. We are tolerably well.

We wish you, and Mrs. Bull, a comfortable close of this year, and a happy entrance upon the next. And so with our joint love we bid you hearty farewell.

Yours in the best bonds,

JOHN NEWTON.

*29th Dec. Even.*

You must not tell the bearer, or any body else, what my text will be. This is always a profound secret in Olney till the moment of explosion.

*Saturday Morning.*

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### LETTER XXV.

MY DEAR MR. B.

MRS. WILBERFORCE has written that she sleeps at Dunstable, and will not be here till Wednesday afternoon. I thought you would like to know this.

My Dear is ill again, a most violent pain in her head has lasted about thirty hours and, still continues. Pray for her; I wish you not to expect me either Tuesday or Wednesday. Mr. Scott and his wife are both very ill of a putrid fever. He caught it by attendance on the sick poor. A noble wound! Shall soldiers risk their lives, and stand as a mark for great guns, for sixpence a day, or for the word honour? and is it not worth venturing something in imitation of Him who went about

doing good, and when the good we aim at is for his sake? However, by his illness, and while it remains, I shall be confined at home that I may be within his call.

Love to Mrs. Bull. I am in great haste, and with great sincerity,

Your affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

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LETTER XXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ON Saturday, and not before, I heard you had been ill. Had the news reached me sooner, I should have sent you a line sooner. I hope you will be able to inform me that you are now better, and that the Lord continues to do you good by every dispensation he allots you. Healing and wounding are equally from his hand, and equally tokens of his love and care over us. I have but little affliction in my own person, but I have been often chastened of late by proxy. The Lord, for his people's sake, is still pleased to give me health and strength for public service; but when I need the rod, he brings it upon Mrs. Newton. In this way I have felt much without being disabled or laid aside. But he has heard prayer for her likewise, and for more than a fortnight past she has been comfortably well. I lay at least one half of her sickness to my own account. She suffers for me, and I through her. It is indeed touching me in a tender part.

Perhaps if *I* could be more wise, watchful, and humble, it might contribute more to the establishment of her health than all the medicines she takes.

In the midst of many interruptions and engagements, his good hand with me enabled me to finish the hymn book.\* It went to London last week, and has perhaps by this time found its way to the press.

I somehow neglected to confer with you about the business of the fast day. Shall be glad to know your subjects. Mine were as under.

Forenoon, Zech. xii. 10; afternoon, Isa. lxiii. 15; evening, Deut. xxxii. 15. The last of my three sermons, when I had, as I expected, the largest congregation, was a sort of historical discourse from Deut. xxxii. 15; in which, running over the leading national events from the time of Wickliffe, I endeavoured to trace the steps and turns by which the Lord has made us a fat and thriving people, and in the event blessed us beyond his favoured Jeshurun of old, with civil and religious liberty, peace, honour, and prosperity, and gospel privileges. How fat we were when the war terminated in the year '63; and how we have kicked and forsaken the Rock of our salvation, of late years. Then followed a sketch of our present state and spirit, as a people, both in a religious and political view. I started at the picture while I drew it, though it was a very inadequate representation. We seemed willing to afflict our souls for one day, as Dr. Lowth reads, Isa. lviii. 5; but the next day things returned into their former channel. The fast and the occasion seemed presently forgotten, except by a few simple souls, who are despised and hated by the rest for their

\* Olney Hymns.

preciseness, because they think sin ought to be lamented every day in the year.

Who would envy Cassandra her gift of prophesy, upon the terms she had it, that her declarations, however true, should meet with no belief or regard? It is the lot of gospel ministers, with respect to the bulk of their hearers. But blessed be the grace which makes a few exceptions. Here and there one will hear, believe, and be saved. Every one of these is worth a world, and our success with a few should console us for all our trials.

Come and see us as soon as you can, only not to-morrow, for I am then to go to Turvey. My Lord, the great Shepherd, has one sheep there, related to the fold under my care. I can seldom see her, and she is very ill. I expect she will soon be removed to the pastures above.

I was at Bedford last week, when we talked of you. Somebody told Mr. Barham you had been lately in town. I told him I believed it was a mistake, and he was willing to think so. Had it been true, he hoped he should have seen you. Our little friend\* and his great family were well, all but the maid.

Our love to Mrs. Bull and family.

Believe me yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*23rd Feb., '79. Tuesday.*

\* Rev. Mr. Simmonds, of Bedford.

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## LETTER XXVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

MAY I not style myself a friend when I remember you after an interval of several weeks since I saw you, and through a distance of threescore miles? But the truth is, you are neither absent nor distant from my heart a day. Your idea has travelled with me—you are a kind of familiar, very often before the eye of my mind. This, I hope, may be admitted as a proof of friendship.

Hither the Lord has brought us, and hitherto He has helped us. I have seen abundance of kind friends, partook of abundance of good fare, and preached plentifully in my journey. I called on brother Addington,\* slept in his house, and hanelled his school-room. It was a pleasant, sociable visit. The Gospel thrives at Leicester—several mouths preach it, multitudes hear it, and I believe a good number of hearts are opened to receive it. At this place, likewise, the Lord has done much. The good seed looks green, and is growing tall; and is much in that state in which the tares, if the enemy has sown

\* The Rev. Dr. Addington, who then resided at Market Harborough, but afterwards removed to London. This excellent man was a pupil of Dr. Doddridge, and was settled at Market Harborough in 1753, where for some years he kept a boarding-school. In 1781 he undertook the charge of a church which assembled in Miles's Lane, London, but is now extinct. He was the first tutor of an academy for the education of young men for the Christian ministry, which is now known as Highbury College. Dr. Addington died Feb. 1796.—ED.



any, may be expected to show themselves; but the infallible Husbandman will take care of his crops.

I know the Lord loves you, and you know it likewise: every affliction affords you a fresh proof of it. How wise his management in our trials! How nicely adjusted in season, weight, continuance, to answer his gracious purposes in sending them! How unspeakably better to be at his disposal than at our own! So you say, so you think, so you find. You trust in him, and shall not be disappointed. Help me with your prayers, that I may trust him too, and be at length enabled to say without reserve, What Thou wilt, when Thou wilt, how Thou wilt. I had rather speak these three sentences from my heart, in my mother tongue, than be master of all the languages in Europe.

But I must stop; I have written this in company, and have robbed myself of conversation by so doing, which I cannot afford to lose any more of. Come to Olney as soon as possible after the 8th of May, and then I hope you will be sure to see your affectionate

JOHN and MARY NEWTON.

Love to Mrs. Bull.

*Melton Mowbray, April 23, '79.*

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## LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE longed to hear that you and Mrs. Bull had a comfortable journey and visit to London, and returned in safety and peace on Saturday. Perhaps you will come over to day to tell me so. You have been often upon my mind during your absence, and it gives me pleasure to think you are now again within five miles of me.

Can you provide a breakfast on Wednesday morning, between seven and eight o'clock, for two hungry parsons? Mr. Scott and I think to call upon you about that time, on our way to the visitation at Stratford.\* Perhaps you will get your grey horse ready from Bury field, and take a ride with us.

On Saturday morning I made a present of Miss Foster's hand to Mr. Webber. They set off soon after for London. My Dear has been very ill again, but is now better. We unite in love to you and Mrs. Bull.

The rest when we meet ; till then believe me yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

July 6, '79.

\* Stony Stratford.

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## LETTER XXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AMONG the rest of temporal mercies, I would be thankful for pen, ink, and paper, and the convenience of the post, by which means we can waft a thought to a friend when we cannot get at him. My will has been good to see you at Newport, but you must accept the will for the deed. The Lord has not permitted. My poor Dear has been so ill that I could not leave her. I have still a desire to breakfast with you to-morrow; but I must see what to-morrow will bring forth before I can determine. If I can, I shall endeavour to be with you by eight o'clock. I have a desire likewise that she may follow me, behind Mr. Dumville, to dine with you. But this is still more uncertain. If she should be well enough, if the weather be neither too hot nor too cold, and if she can muster courage enough to mount the great horse, are three weighty points which cannot be determined to day. If neither of us come, I wish you to trot over hither.

I have been troubled of late with the rheumatism in my left arm. Mine is a sinful and vile body, and it is a mercy that any part of it is free from pain. It is virtually the seat and subject of all diseases; but the Lord holds them, like wild beasts in a chain, under a strong restraint. Was that restraint taken off, they would rush upon their prey from every quarter, and seize upon every limb, member, joint, and nerve at once. Yet though I am a sinner, and though my whole texture is so frail and exposed, I have enjoyed for a

number of years an almost perfect exemption both from pain and sickness. This is wonderful indeed, even in my own eyes.

But my soul is far from being in a healthy state. There I have laboured, and still labour, under a complication of diseases; and but for the care and skill of an infallible Physician, I must have died the death long ago. At this very moment my soul is feverish, dropsical, and paralytic. I feel a loss of appetite, a disinclination both to food and to medicine, so that I am alive by miracle. Yet I trust I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. When I faint, he revives me again. I am sure he is able, and I trust he has promised to heal me. But how inveterate must my disease be, that is not yet subdued when under his management!

Well, my friend, there is a land where the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick. There my eyes will not be dim, nor my ears be heavy, nor my heart hard.

“ One sight of Jesus as he is  
Will strike all sin for ever dead.”

Blessed be his name for this gracious hope. May it cheer us under all our present uneasy feelings, and reconcile us to every cross. The way must be right, however rough, that leads to such a glorious end. Oh for more of that gracious influence which in a moment can make the wilderness soul rejoice, and blossom like the rose. I want something which neither critics nor commentators can help me to. The gospel itself, whether I read it in Hebrew, Greek, French, or English, is a sealed book in all languages, unless the Spirit of the Lord is present to expound and apply. Pray for me. My present experience answers to Book iii., hymn 34 ;

and no prayer seems more suitable to me than that of the Psalmist, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name."

We love you and Mrs. Bull. Tell her so. And, once more let me beg, that if I cannot come to you, you would come to me to-morrow: who knows but the Lord may make you a messenger of God to your poor friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 19 Aug., '79.*

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### LETTER XXX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I COULD have wished for a more favourable account of your complaint, but you are in the Lord's hand—in the hand of Him who loves you better than I do, better than you can love yourself. He will therefore order all things concerning you, and give you strength according to your day. This great Physician can support and heal, when other physicians are found to be of no value.

I am waiting with suspense for a further account of the fleets. You will hear sooner than we. If the news prove unfavourable, it will come soon enough to us all. Now perhaps is the crisis, or perhaps before now the blow is struck. My soul wait thou only upon God, he directs the storm, and he can hush it into a calm. He loves his people, and numbers the hairs of their head. Whatever may be his purpose towards the nation, he says to his own people, it shall be well with them.

Here I was interrupted by a visit from Mrs. Foster ; she has just left us, and I am just going to the *great house*,\* and therefore cannot fill up my paper as usual. I wish the bearer may bring me a better account of you. May the Lord fill you with his peace. We join in love to you and Mrs. Bull. I am constrained to subscribe myself in haste,

Affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 7 Sept. '79.*

\* What is called the *great house*, was an ancient mansion, then unoccupied, and now pulled down, in which Mr. Newton rented a room, where meetings were held for prayer, and exposition of the word of God. In this room my father sometimes preached for Mr. Newton. I have by me a list of names, in the hand-writing of the author of these letters, of the persons who engaged in prayer ; and it is interesting to observe among them the frequent recurrence of the name of the poet Cowper, from the year when he came to reside at Olney, to the year 1773, when a dark cloud came over his mind, and peculiar views of himself unhappily prevented him from entering a place of worship to the end of his days. So strictly conscientious was this interesting man, that I have frequently seen him sit down at table when others have risen to implore a blessing, and take his knife and fork in hand, to signify, I presume, that he had no "right to pray." "Prove to me" (he writes, in a letter to my father) "that I have a right to pray, and I will pray without ceasing, even in the belly of this hell, compared with which Jonah's was a palace, a temple of the living God."—Southey's "Cowper," vol. iv. p. 235.

Two of the "Olney Hymns," "On opening a place for social prayer," one composed by Mr. Newton, and the other by Mr. Cowper, were most probably used when this room was first set apart for this purpose.—See "Olney Hymns," book ii. hymns 43, 44.—The following names occur in the paper above referred to :—Raban, Cowper, Kaye, Samples, R. Stamford, J. Harris Chater, Hull Clifton, Percy, B. Nind, Halward, Jones (curate of Clifton), Trinder (Northampton).—Ed.

## LETTER XXXI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WISH you may be able to send us word by the bearer that your complaint is removed, or at least abated. If not, still I hope He favours you with soul peace and resignation to his will.

Had you removed to the Weigh-house some time ago, we should soon have been neighbours again. My race at Olney is nearly finished. I am about to form a connexion for life with one Mary Woolnoth, a reputed London saint in Lombard-street. I hope you will not blame me; I think you would not if you knew all circumstances. However, my conscience, through mercy, is clear, and my path, in my own view, and in the judgment of several of my most spiritual friends, is plainly the path of duty. I hope and beg you will pray for me. Indeed I am not elated at what the world calls preferment. London is the last situation I would have chosen for myself. The throng and hurry of the busy world, and noise and party contentions of the religious world, are very disagreeable to me. I love woods and fields, and streams and trees; to hear the birds sing, the sheep bleat. I love retreat and rural life, such as I have been happy in here for more than fifteen years past. I thank the Lord for his goodness to me here. Here I have rejoiced to live; here I have often wished and prayed that I might die. I am sure no outward change can make me happier, but it becomes not a soldier to choose his own post.

On Tuesday we purpose going to Northampton, and

to return by Newport on Thursday, take a bit of dinner, and change a few expressions of love with you and Mrs. Bull, and home early in the afternoon, because I am to preach in the evening.

It is a weeping time with us at Olney, my people feel each one for themselves; but I must and do feel for them all. But I trust the Lord will provide them a pastor after his own heart.

Adieu. Pray for us. May the Lord bless you, both you, and your children.

I am most affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, 25 Sept. '79.*

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### LETTER XXXII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Do not say, do not think, I have forgotten you. I have waited to tell you some news, till I can wait no longer. The Lord gave us a safe and comfortable journey, and my Dear has been comfortably well since we came here. I delivered my presentation to the bishop's secretary on Friday last, and on Sunday I received notice that a caveat was lodged against my institution by some person or persons who pretend to dispute Mr. Thornton's right of presenting. This counter-claim causes a delay or suspense, but, it is thought, will soon appear to be groundless.



However, through mercy, your poor friend feels himself very easy about the event. The affair is where I would have it—in the Lord's hand. If He fixes me here, I humbly hope and believe he will support me, and it shall be for good. If He appoint otherwise, I trust it will be no grief of heart to me to return to Olney, where I shall be within five miles of dear Mr. Bull. I am, however, glad I accepted the offer, whatever the issue may be.

This noisy place, and unsettled, hurrying kind of life, is not quite to my tooth; and I believe if I settle in London, I shall entreat Him, in whose hands all my affairs, the greatest and the smallest, are, in his good providence, to prepare me a habitation somewhere about the outskirts of the town, where I may enjoy some measure of privacy, fresh air, and see the green fields and trees at no great distance from me. This will be the more feasible, as the parsonage house is occupied by the post office, which seems to furnish me with a fair excuse for not residing in the parish.

Though many things will occasionally force themselves upon my thoughts, I trust, in answer to your prayers for me, the Lord will help me to remember that *one thing is needful*, and, comparatively speaking, one only. It matters little whether I live and die in Olney or London, in the city or the suburbs, provided I am where He would have me be, favoured with his light and grace and consolation, and qualified, by his holy anointing, to honour, love, and serve him, in whatever circumstances his wisdom may appoint.

Mr. Foster is now at Olney, and I have entered upon his services, which amount to eleven sermons in a fortnight. Upon my first coming up, I preached from 1 Thess. v. 25, "Brethren, pray for us;" when, after giving them

some account of the difficulties and trials attending the ministerial office in general, I endeavoured to engage the prayers of many in my behalf, with respect to the new prospect before me. Surely I shall need a singular communication of wisdom, zeal, meekness, and fortitude, in a London situation. Brother, pray for me, and may the Lord enable you to pray in faith. My weaknesses are many. I am but a child to go in and out before a great people, and to stand in a conspicuous and important post. But the Lord is a good and all-sufficient Master, and I should wrong his goodness and faithfulness were I to question his promise of strength according to my day. Should this removal take place, I hope the event will show it is the Lord's doing. Had not the proposal come to me unexpected, unsolicited, I think I may honestly add, undesired, and so circumstanced, that neither my own judgment, nor the advice of some of my most spiritual friends would permit me to decline it, without a fear of opposing His will—I say, could I not view it in this light, I should be uneasy, and afraid of the experiment. But now I can trust that if he brings me hither, his presence will be with me. My poor mistaken people, by their hasty refusal of Mr. Scott, have given me a pain which I did not expect. But I cannot help it. May the Lord overrule it for good, and provide better for them than they can expect.

While we can meet daily at a throne of grace, and exchange a letter when we please, let us not think ourselves far asunder. Your company has been pleasing and edifying to me, and I shall sensibly miss it. But our friendship will be inviolable. You have a near and warm place in my heart, and will retain it as long as life continues. I confidently expect the same on your part. I long to hear how you do—shall be thankful to know

you are getting better, and especially to be told that all your dispensations are evidently sanctified, and that you have that peace which can subsist and flourish in affliction. My Dear joins in love to you and Mrs. Bull, and your two young plants. May the Lord make them plants of renown; may they increase in wisdom as in years, and grow up to his praise and your comfort.

Adieu. Send me a letter soon. And believe me to be most affectionately your faithful friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

14th October, '79.

### LETTER XXXIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEING to go out of town to-day, I started up before light to write to you, and hoped to have sent you a long letter, when, behold, I could not get at any paper. I am now waiting for a peep at Mr. Barham, at his lodgings, who came to town last night, and I shall write as fast as I can till I see him.

I feel for you a little in the same way as you feel for yourself: I bear a friendly sympathy in your late sharp and sudden trial.\* I mourn with that part of

\* Mr. Newton refers to a severe trial through which his correspondent had passed three days before, in the sudden death of an interesting child, five years old, after her parents had been bereaved of four other children, one only surviving.

The following is an extract from Mr. Bull's letter, dated Oct. 23, announcing this painful event:—

you which mourns ; but, at the same time, I rejoice in the proof you have, and which you give, that the Lord is with you of a truth. I rejoice on your account, to see

“ Oh how glad, and yet how sorrowful, I feel ! I tremble and rejoice. Dear sir, pray for me. My bodily pain is great, the sorrow in my heart is real ; but the love of the Lord is the same. Oh ! how I rejoice in him this day, while I grieve in self. I seem to long to be where Polly is ; and, blessed be my God, I shall go there some day, perhaps soon. My dear lamb has discovered a peculiar sweetness of temper these three or four months, and a fondness for reading quite remarkable. For five or six weeks she had got up before me in the morning to read a chapter to me while I was dressing ; and one day she cried very much because I put her by, getting up before her. She gave me great delight by this practice, and it was her own. This is a pleasant tale to me, and you can excuse it. The lamb looks exceedingly beautiful now she is laid out ; but, oh ! my faith sees her spirit in the hands and heart of God my Saviour, and that delights me. My dear wife is very poorly ; and poor lonely Tommy is tolerable, and is kept for some future trial.

“ Since I have been writing I have received a letter from Mrs. Wilberforce ; thank her for it, and tell her my great trial. I know she respects me, and will pray for me, and her prayers will do me good. Ask her to pray that I may behave well ; that I may be still, and if any ask, ‘ Is it well with the child ? ’ I may say, ‘ It is well.’

“ You know I sometimes speak as if I loved the Lord ; and I think I do ; but you know, too, that words and actions should hang together, and therefore I wish that I may silently rejoice in my Saviour for cutting off all sources of comfort but himself. Indeed it does look as if he would have my whole heart, and would make every thing else taste bitter that he may taste the sweeter. So lately as yesterday the dear child read me Psalm xxv. before I was up. Oh ! how little did I think affliction and death were so near !

“ I have been preaching in my poor way on Heb. xii. 6. The Lord was with me. I never before experienced more sensible delight in him ; and I am just now come home exceedingly refreshed and comforted.”—ED.

you supported and comforted, and enabled to say, "He has done all things well." I rejoice on my own account. Such instances of his faithfulness and all-sufficiency are very encouraging. We must all expect hours of trouble in our turn : we must all feel in our concerns the vanity and uncertainty of creature comforts. What a mercy is it to know, from our own past experience, and to have it confirmed to us by the experience of others, that the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and that he knoweth them that trust in him. Creatures are like candles ; they waste while they afford us a little light, and we see them extinguished in their sockets one after another. But the light of the sun makes amends for them all. The Lord is so nigh that he easily can, so good that he certainly will, give his children more than he ever will take away. When his gracious word reaches the heart, "It is I, be not afraid ; be still, and know that I am God ;"—when he gives us an impression of his wisdom, power, love and care, then the storm which attempts to rise in our natural passions is hushed into a calm. The flesh continues to feel, but the spirit is made willing ; and something more than submission takes place—a sweet resignation and acquiescence, and even a joy, that we have anything which we value to surrender to his call.

I know no more of the caveat than when I wrote last ; all is still in suspense ; but it will be known in the right time, and determined the right way. My part is only to wait the Lord's will, and it will be time enough for me to know what I am to do when he pleases to tell me.

Mr. Barham is come down. Time presses, and I must conclude. Mr. Barham sends his love and condolence to you and Mrs. Bull. May the Lord comfort

you both, and fill your hearts with a cheering prospect of that bright approaching hour which will put an end to all changes, pains, and sorrows, and place us where we shall see Him without a veil, and be happy in his love without abatement or interruption for ever.

My Dear is tolerably well, and joins in love and best wishes to you and Mrs. Bull with your most affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Bartlett's Buildings, Oct. 26th, '79.*

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LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

How are you? and what are you about? I saw a proof under your hand at Mrs. Wilberforce's that you were alive lately; but I am afraid that either your spirits are grown weak, or your memory fails you a little. Pluck up your courage; then remember how much you are beloved by a sojourner in the Old Jewry, at Dr. Ford's, and send him a letter, or at least a note; if it be but three lines, he will gladly pay three-pence for them to the post-man.

Molly Woolnoth and I are not yet married. I told you somebody forbade the bans, and the prohibition is not yet taken off. Nothing has been done, or attempted to be, within these two days; but I believe we shall soon hasten *into the midst of things*. The Lord still enables me to abide by the surrender I made of the affair

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into his hands, and I wait the event with a tranquillity almost approaching to indifference. To wed Molly is in some respects pleasing ; but then to be divorced from Olney will be in many respects painful. Again, to leave Olney will free me from many known and sharply-felt inconveniences ; but then, to live in London may expose me to other trials, which though at present unknown, may be equally sharp to my feelings. What a comfort this, that when " I am in a strait between two, and what to choose I wot not," the Lord will mercifully condescend to choose for me ! What a comfort that when we are quite dead as to consequences, He has promised to see for us, with his infinite and unerring eye ! However, in my private judgment, it appears much more probable that the bar will be removed, and the match take place, than the contrary. But till it is determined, I wish to consider it as an uncertainty.

Tell Mrs. Bull we love you both, have felt for you both, and shall be glad to hear you are both pretty well. The Lord loves you likewise, and therefore he afflicts you. He has given you grace, and therefore he appoints you trials, that the grace he has given may be preserved and manifested to his praise. He has made you a good soldier, and therefore he appoints you a post of honour. You are not a mere Beefeater, to walk about in a soldier's coat, at a distance from the noise and danger of war, and to brandish your firelock without any risk of meeting an enemy ; but he sends you down to the field of battle. You feel as well as hear that our profession is a warfare ; and you feel as well as hear, likewise, that the Lord is with you, fights for you, and supports you with strength, and covers your head in the day of conflict.

Accept this love token, and pay me in kind. I have

not time to enlarge. I wish you a good night and a good morrow. To-morrow ! It is the Lord's day. May we be in the Spirit. I think to be a hearer in the forenoon at the Brethren's Chapel ; that is, to hear Mr. Latrobe, if he preaches. In the afternoon (if I do not alter my mind), I shall say something myself about a treasure, and the earthen, worthless, brittle vessels the Lord is pleased to put it in, even into such a foul piece of clay as your very poor, but very affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*London, Nov. 20th, '79.*

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LETTER XXXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I MUST write a short letter to day, for many of my friends will expect to hear the event of my long waiting in town. The Lord's hour came in due time, and yesterday the Bishop gave me institution to St. Mary Woolnoth, and to-morrow I am to be inducted—that is, put into possession of the key and the bell-rope, and thereby installed in all the rights, uses, and profits of the living. So that the curate of Olney is now transplanted and placed in the number of the London rectors. How little did I think of this when I was living, or rather starving, at the Plantanes !\*

“ The sport of slaves,  
Or, what's more wretched still, their pity.”

But the Lord is Sovereign and Almighty. He

\* See Mr. Newton's Narrative.



chooses and does what is well-pleasing in his sight. Whom he will, he slays; whom he will, he keeps alive. What cause for praise, that it pleased him to extend his mercy to you and me.

Many wish me joy. You, I believe, will pray and wish for me, that I may have much grace and be favoured with wisdom, fidelity, zeal, and meekness suited to the demands of my new and important situation. Through mercy I feel little in this new preferment to elate me. I hope I see the Lord's hand and call in it, and so far it pleases. My concern at leaving many whom I love dearly at Olney, and my solicitude about them, will in a good measure qualify things in the change which otherwise are not disagreeable to flesh and blood. But I need not repeat this in a short letter, when I believe I have written to the same purpose already.

Thank you for your letter. Not having it about me, I cannot answer it particularly. In general I know you are afflicted and comforted, sick and well, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. This checker-work will last while life lasts, but it will not last always. Deliverance is approaching, and in the meantime we know all things are dispensed to us by infinite wisdom, in number, weight, and measure, with a far greater accuracy than your friend Mr. Barton can adjust his medicines to the state and strength of his patients. My Dear has a head-ache to-day, but I hope she will be better. When I tell her that I have joined her love with mine to you and Mrs. Bull and Tommy, I am sure she will confirm it.

I hope to see Newport and Olney next week. I am in all places, and at all times, most affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Old Jewry, Dec. 7th, '79.*

## LETTER XXXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

MANY an eager look I darted through my study-window this morning, in hopes of seeing you and your grey horse. I need not tell you I was sorry to miss my expected pleasure; but I was more sorry to learn the cause of your not coming, though I suspected it before I received your note. I long with a great longing to have you here, yet not so as to wish you should make the attempt at the price of pain and inconvenience to yourself. Supposing the Lord relieves you, and you are pretty well to-morrow, what think you of coming in the diligence (if there be room), and returning when you have quite enough of us for one time? If I should be weary of you first, I will tell you so. Only bring a large stock of Orinoco with you, for I believe there is none in Olney. Well, if it is right, I should be gratified; you will be enabled to come some time or some way. Till then I have two thoughts to comfort me: 1st, that we love each other; 2nd, that though we do we are not necessary to each other. Your Lord and mine is equally near to us both; and a visit from him is *instar omnium* is sufficient to comfort either of us, though we were in the solitary situation of Robinson Crusoe. Yet I mean (with submission to his will) to entreat him to send you, because he usually sends me by you, a mixture of the *utile* and the *dulce*.\*

\* The editor, it is hoped, may be excused in introducing in this place the following extract from a letter of the author of the "Task" to his friend Mr. Unwin. Speaking of Mr. Bull, he says, "You are not acquainted with him; perhaps it is as well for

Indeed, supposing you really have the stone, and that your pains are sharp and frequent, I would rather encourage you to submit to the operation than dissuade you from it. But I understood that since you had changed your medicine, you were, in general, free from pain. I should hope that He whom you serve would support you under the operation, and bring you safely through it. If you judge it expedient, therefore, remove to London, and consult an able surgeon; but by no means commit yourself to a country practitioner. I hope soon to be in town. How glad shall I be to visit you in your confinement, daily, if possible; at least, often! You will ask counsel at a throne of grace, and then do as the Lord shall determine your mind. If it be his will, you need not regard the expense or consequences. The Lord will provide. The enclosed came yesterday, and I hoped to deliver it you to-day with my own hand. My Dear sends love to you, and Mrs. Bull and Tommy. She is but poorly, Peggy quite ill, and Sally gone to Aldwinkle; so that though we talk of a speedy removal, we as yet can make no preparations

you that you are not. You would regret still more than you do that there are so many miles interposed between us. He spends part of the day with us to-morrow. A dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; a master of a fine imagination, or, rather, not master of it,—an imagination which, when he finds himself in the company he loves, and can confide in, runs away with him into such fields of speculation as amuse and enliven every other imagination that has the happiness to be of the party: at other times he has a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way \* \* \* He can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection. Such a man is Mr. Bull; but—he smokes tobacco. Nothing is perfect!

Nihil est ab omni  
Parte beatum."

for it. I believe I must return to London without her ; for I promised to be there before the 16th, and must keep my word if possible. The paper bids me leave off, but I will not till I have once more assured you that I am very sincerely and affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, Jan. 3rd, '80, Evening.*

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LETTER XXXVII.

MON TRES CHER AMI,

I MUST send this messenger to inquire after your welfare, to inform you of my own, to thank you for all your love, and to charge you to believe that you have a warm place in my heart.

Through mercy, I am well and comfortable ; feel a little left-handed and awkward for want of my Dear, as I usually do in her absence ; but *cætera lætus*. 'Tis true, I have cause enough for grief and humiliation for what passes within ; but then I have a Friend, a rich, compassionate, powerful, unchangeable Friend ; and the thought of him, who he is, where he is, what he has done, and what he is doing, somehow composes my mind and maintains my peace. Could he be taken from me, or my expectations founded upon him fail, I should instantly sink to the bottom of the bottomless pit of despair.

My entrance to St. Mary Woolnoth is hitherto as

favourable as I could expect ; indeed, more so. Some of my new parishioners are rather pleased, and some who do not quite relish what I say, seem to believe that at least I speak from my heart and mean well. In my next parcel to Mrs. Newton (to-morrow), I will endeavour to send you my first address to them. I sent one of them to every house. It was in general well received, though the printer in my absence made a mercenary blunder, by printing them for sale, when I did not intend one should be sold, and fixing the price at sixpence for a single sheet, worth at the most but two-pence. We shall divide the spoil between us ; he will get the money, and I shall get the blame. It will furnish a handle to some for representing me as very ostentatious in publishing my *first* sermon, and very mercenary for fixing the price so high. What cannot be cured must be endured. The Lord knows my intention in printing it, and he is able to secure my character. I have endeavoured to clear myself to a few, chiefly those in my own parish ; but I cannot run about to tell everybody, nor is it needful. Mr. Self has been not a little mortified, but I tell him to sit still, and leave his cause in the Lord's hands.

I know not when my Dear will come up, but I hope it will be in the Lord's best time. I would willingly hope to see her on Friday, but I hardly expect it. I hope you have been, or will go to see her, if you are pretty well, and she stays after you receive this. If not, I wish you to treat her with a little letter by Friday's post. She desired me to ask you to write to her, but I forgot it. She loves to see you, and to hear from you.

Write to me, and if you can tell me you are pretty well, and free from pain, I shall rejoice ; if you say you are coming to town, I shall rejoice more. I expect, however, you will inform me that the Lord stands by,

strengthens and comforts you ; this will, or should rejoice me most of all. My time is expended ; I am going to read prayers at Mary Woolnoth's, if there shall be any people come—frequently there is not one. I try them a while, and if they do not attend, I shall give up the Friday prayer-day and preach a sermon on Wednesday. I shall do so by and bye, but not yet. I must make no hasty innovations. You know if a man has but a horse to break, he does not jump immediately upon his back, and make him feel the spur the first time he sees him. He begins softly, strokes him, feeds him, shows him the bridle before he attempts to put it on, and brings him forward by degrees. Poor sinners, and especially poor sinners that are rich, are at least as untractable and wild as horses and mules, and must be humoured a little in matters where conscience is not directly concerned. I know that you will pray for me, that the Lord may give me true wisdom and humble boldness.

With hearty love to Mrs. Bull and little Tommy,

I remain, my dear Friend,

Your most affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

Direct for me at No 2, Church Alley, Lothbury.

19th January, '80.

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## LETTER XXXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I ONCE thought to defer writing a little longer, for the pleasure of telling you, that I sent you the very first letter I wrote in my new habitation; but then I must have waited another post, and possibly you are sufficiently angry with me already. If you have been in cheerful spirits, I knew your candour would prompt you to make large allowances for the unsettled state in which I have been; but if your thoughts have been of the gloomy cast, then my silence has appeared to you through an unfavourable medium, and bore, in your view, a strong resemblance to those frightful figures, apathy and ingratitude. Prone as we are to indulge hard thoughts of the Lord, we have no right to be offended if our fellow-worms, even our dear friends, think hardly of us, and therefore I forgive you, unasked, and beforehand, all the peevish and ill-founded surmises which may at any time have found a place in your pericranium concerning me, as if I did not dearly love you, or greatly care for you, or set a high value upon your letter, because I have not yet answered it.

Nay, I cannot answer it now, for I cannot find it; it is in some of my books, or cases, or drawers, of which yesterday deprived me. For then, and about that time, some persons came, and, by main strength, took all the apparatus of my *μυσταίον* in Lothbury, and lodged them in a house in Charles' Square, Hoxton, and thither it seems I must go after them, if I intend to have any further use of them. At the same place and day there

arrived a waggon from Olney (larger, I trow, than any of the waggons sent to Jacob from Egypt) accompanied with a cart, both full of the baggage of one, who, some years ago, could have carried all his baggage in his pocket, from Dan even to Beersheba. Those words, "With my staff I came over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands," suit me almost as well as they suited him who first spoke them. I wish I could use them with equal sensibility. My removal, indeed, should affect me with double thankfulness, if compared with his; for I had no angry Laban to harass my rear, nor threatening Esau, to dispute my passage, and terrify me in front. All has been made as easy as possible. Our new Bethel (for it is already consecrated to be God's house) bids fair to be a pleasant and convenient abode. Perhaps we shall sleep in it to-night. All things about us will be at sixes and sevens for a few days; but when I write next I hope to be able to tell you that your room is fitted up for your reception, and then you must come and take possession of it as soon as possible. I have lately seen somebody who lately saw you, and had the pleasure of hearing that you were pretty well.

I forwarded you yesterday, a letter from Mrs. Weber. By hers to me I learn she was well, had a safe and good journey to Petersburg, and that she hopes you received the German Doctor\* safe, and begs your acceptance of it. She wrote in great haste, having but very short notice of the courier that was to take her packet, and therefore I must wait a little longer for a fuller account of her peregrination, and for any account of the spiritual part of her concern. I hope she and her companion jumbled

\* Geoffrey Arnold's "History of the Church and of Heresies," published in German, at Leipzig, 1700.



into a good understanding of each other upon the road, for she seems well satisfied. I wish she may be happy, and not too happy. In a former letter to Mr. Foster, she says, the gaiety and dissipation of Petersburg can hardly be conceived of, by those who are only acquainted with such a faint expression of them as can be observed in London. I hope the grace of our Lord will make her a very salamander, for it seems she is to live in the midst of the fire. I both fear and hope for her. I know he is able to over-power all the glare of the world, by one glance of the light of his countenance ; but how few are able to subsist, much more to thrive and grow in such a situation !

Mary Woolnoth is tolerably well attended on levee days. Through mercy I feel myself quite at home there ; and though I consider the state of my auditory, and avoid as much as I can giving unnecessary disgust, I am enabled to speak very plainly to them. Some hear with patience, some I think with attention, some refuse to hear any more at present. Of these a part go elsewhere, and a part nowhere, but the Lord can bring them again. I hope my heart longs for their salvation, but the means are my part, success is in the Lord's hands. I wish to be earnest, but not anxious.

I shall hope to hear a good account of your health, as I trust we are united in the strongest bands. I often think of you.

We join in hearty love to you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy. Pray for us ; pray for Olney and Mary Woolnoth. The Lord bless us all.

I am, your very affectionate, obliged brother,  
servant, and scholar,

JOHN NEWTON.

Direct your next, No. 2, Church Alley, Lothbury.

## LETTER XXXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

COME magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Be it known to you and Mrs. Bull, that I am very well, though on Tuesday morning I had a fall, and dislocated my shoulder. It was soon replaced, and since the operation I have my arm in a sling, and have kept house hitherto, but hope to be at St. Mary Woolnoth's to-morrow.

Many leagues I have travelled by land and by water, many falls I have had, and many vain fears have I felt in apparent danger, but at this only time of my receiving hurt, danger was quite out of sight and out of thought. I was standing at my own door, put my foot carelessly back against a stone, which tripped me up, and threw me over a short post. I rose instantly, had no other hurt, bruise, or strain, only the os humeri had slipped out of the socket, and had taken post under my arm-pit. A surgeon was with me presently, and after being sometime pulled about by four men, the Lord mercifully recalled and guided the bone to its proper station, and I have felt no pain since, but eat, sleep, and converse as usual. When you have thanked the Lord for his goodness to me, add your prayers, that this and every other dispensation may be sanctified to us. Thanks are due likewise on my Dear's account. I felt and feared more for her than for myself. She was much alarmed, especially as I was a good while under the surgeon's hands, before she could see me or know what hurt I had received. You know what frightful pictures imagination

can draw in an hour of suspense, and how it starts and stands aghast at its own portraits. But the Lord supported her, and she is now pretty well.

I told Mrs. Wilberforce the other day, that your talents, turn, and temper, would make Kennicot's Bible, or the study of it, more frequent, pleasant, and profitable to you than to me; and that as she had made you heir to it after my decease, it was my desire (if she consented) to put you in full possession of it during my life. As she had no objection, the book is now your own, your name in the subscription is just right, and the receipt (if I do not send it you before) shall be lodged with Mr. Buckland, whenever the second volume appears.

I do not mean to compliment you by calling myself your scholar. The Lord can teach by whom he pleases, and I am sure none can teach me without him. Nay, I doubt not but he can teach even you, and even by me. His power makes all instruments much upon a par; and Balaam's ass was as well qualified to reprove his master, as Moses himself could have been. However, this I know, that I am, or ought to be, thankful that my acquaintance with you was renewed, and for every opportunity of smoking a pipe with you since that time. Let the advantage and pleasure of friendship be ours, let the praise for every benefit received be wholly given to the Lord, for we can only be to each other what he is pleased to make us.

I can write no more at present, but our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, and request your prayers for me, and my Dear, and my people.

I am most affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, Hoxton,  
15 April, '80.*

## LETTER XL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

EITHER you or I are a little faulty. I hope it is you, and I chide you for it, but very gently, for fear the chiding should properly belong to myself. However, I must and will chide you, for supposing (which I will not allow without proof) that you wrote last. You might have written again before this time. You have not such a multiplicity of subjects and objects to engross you as I am beset with.

The Bibles you received probably came from me; or rather from the Lord, through my hands. And, if he sent them, I trust you will find he sends a blessing with them. He will, likewise, direct you how to dispose of them.

The cure of my arm happily advanced without interruption, and it is now in a manner well; a little stiffness only remains, and it answers the purpose of a barometer, to give me notice of change of weather. Some tell me this will be an abiding property, and I need not be sorry for a little occasional pain, if it should, at the same time, remind me of the Lord's goodness in preserving me from worse consequences. Mrs. Newton has comfortable health in her new situation. She sends her love with mine to Mrs. Bull and Tommy. I am sorry to say that we have not yet got our spare bed up, but I hope before long to inform you it is ready for you.

I write this to go by Mr. Wilkinson,\* who purposes

\* The late Rev. W. Wilkinson, chaplain at the Haberdashers' Alms-houses, and lecturer at St. Bartholomew's, in the city of London.

seeing Olney with his bride on Thursday. He is settled within about a hundred yards of me, which is a very agreeable circumstance.

We go on quietly and comfortably at Mary Woolnoth. I feel myself at home there, and have lately set up my Sunday evening lecture. My stated service now is three weekly sermons, and one monthly. I believe my parishioners make the smallest part of my auditory, but at this time of the year most of the principal folks are in the country. But I stand upon my post, and the Lord can persuade them to hear me whenever he pleases. In the mean time the church is tolerably well filled without them.

“ Nunc frondent sylvæ, nunc formosissimus annus.”

I feel the loss of my retired rural walks, but I hope I am where I ought to be; and He whom I serve can compensate all seeming inconveniences. I have less time and less opportunity for secret waiting upon Him than formerly, but he is pleased to keep me in some measure alive. I would learn to count nothing an interruption, because if I am broken in upon from morning till night when at home (as is frequently the case), I have reason to believe nobody comes to me, but those whom he sends; and I wish to be in such a frame of spirit as to feel myself equally present with him, and engaged in his service, whether at home or abroad, alone or in company. This is the true secret of religion, not to wish that incidents and events were at our own disposal, but to have wisdom to improve them as they arise, and, like the mariner, so to suit my sails, as to avail myself to the utmost of every wind that blows. Oh for more of that simplicity and singleness of intention, which, like the much talked of alchemist's stone, turns all to gold, and

sanctifies and converts every action of common life, into a part of that religious service which we owe to Him who bought us with his blood! Excepting the want of woods, and streams, and walks, where I may hide myself from the noise and throng of men, my situation is very comfortable. A good convenient house, a tolerably open place, not much enveloped in the smoke of London. A walk of a mile or more to church is rather healthful than otherwise. I have exercise enough with an evil heart, but the enemy is not permitted greatly to harass me. I have seen some tall cedars sadly shaken, and almost overturned, by the storms of temptation which frequently blow here; but, I, though a shrub, am still sheltered and preserved.

The last of this month is fixed for the publication of the book\* so much talked of. I feel a sort of trembling

\* The book referred to was called "Thelyphthora, or a Treatise on Female Ruin;" and the author, the Rev. Martin Madan. Mr. Madan was brought up to the law, but afterwards going into orders became chaplain to the Lock Hospital, and was for some years a popular preacher amongst those who at that time were designated by the general name of Methodists, whether in or out of the Established Church. He was the intimate friend of Mr. Newton, and related to Mr. Cowper; hence the interest taken in the book by both these individuals, and the frequent reference to it in their letters.

Mr. Newton, in a letter in the Editor's possession, addressed to Mr. Cowper, dated July 2, '80, gives his opinion of it in the following words:—"I have now read the first volume. It is specious certainly, and well calculated to convince those who have hitherto felt a conflict between their passions and their consciences. They are now at liberty. There is no such thing as adultery, but with a married woman: no such thing as fornication, but with a common prostitute. A man may likewise leave his wife, or put her away, if she be cross or ill-tempered to a certain degree—of which degree he is the proper judge—without harm; only that he is an-

for its appearance. Much has been attempted to prevent its coming abroad—but in vain. The world are expecting it with an air of triumph; and, in a few weeks more, I suppose it will require some grace not to be ashamed of the name of Methodists. Let us pity and pray for the author. He ran well in time past, though now, alas! hindered and turned aside. Let us fear and pray for ourselves. We are not so wise but we may be misled, nor so strong but we may be thrown down, if left to ourselves. If the Lord maintain in us an humble, dependant spirit, we shall cry to him to hold us up, and so we shall be safe, but not otherwise. For my part, I dare not throw a stone at any one, but may well take occasion, from the fall of others, to admire the grace which has hitherto preserved me from making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. I am shocked and wearied with what I hear from time to time of the advantages Satan gains over great professors.

answerable to conscience and to God for the justness of the cause: and all this with such plausibility of argument, such abundance of scripture, such appeals to what Warburton calls the Hebrew verity; that though I wonder any spiritual person should approve the book, I do not wonder that many should think themselves unable to answer it. \* \* \* However, if his book be true, he need not fear any charges. If all, and more than all, that has been whispered to his disadvantage should be proved and published before the noon-day sun, for aught I know his scheme may justify him. *Quis talia fandæ temperet a lacrymis?*''

In another communication to Mr. Cowper, August 19, '80, Mr. Newton informs his friend, that he had received two criticisms upon this book, the one from Mr. Bull, and the other from Mr. Barham; and, he adds, I am sure their verdicts are just. Mr. Bull says:—“I have just read, with the utmost attention, the first volume of ‘Thelyphthora,’ viewed and reviewed it with all the candour, generosity, and penetration I can possibly exert. It is an amazing combination of sound learning and abominable sophistry—evident truta

Blessed be God, though your spirits are weak, and your health infirm, you have not given occasion for the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Oh, it is better to be sick, or lame, or dead, or burned alive, than to be of the number of those through whom offences come. Pray for us, and be assured that whether I write or not, I always feel myself to be your obliged and affectionate friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, Hoxton, 22nd May, '80.*

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and disguised falsehood—fine criticisms, and foul applications of them—good talents greatly abused—a clear head and a most corrupt heart—in short, it seems to me as deep laid a scheme of Satanical device to catch the reigning corruptions of mankind, as any I have read, from the Koran of Mahomet down to the book called ‘Christianity not founded in argument!’ ‘The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure’ could not more promote the ruin of souls, than this pretended defence of Divine truth bids fair to do.”

Mr. Cowper, in reply to Mr. Newton, says of it:—“I have read the second volume, and had some hopes that I should prevail on myself to read the first; but endless repetitions, unwarranted conclusions, and wearisome declamation, conquered my perseverance, and obliged me to leave the task unfinished. I began his book at the latter end, because the first part of it was engaged when I received the second: but I had not so good an appetite as a soldier of the Guards, who, I was informed, would, for a small matter, eat a cat alive, beginning at her tail, and ending with her whiskers.”—*Southey's Cowper*, vol. iv. p. 142.

Mr. Cowper satirized this work in a Poem called “Antithelyphthora;” and Mr. Newton, in a faithful letter, declined all further connexion with the author.—ED.



## LETTER XLI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR kind, though brief inquiries, must be answered speedily, and, therefore, almost as briefly as you propose them. We have had a terrible storm, but our infallible Pilot has supported and brought us, thus far, safely through. The winds and waves have likewise subsided at his mighty command; and now all is tolerably calm. We have a war-like sort of peace.\* The city is full of soldiers; but the discipline and decency of conduct they observe, is truly admirable, beyond what I could have conceived possible to be maintained by so large a body of men.

Charles Square was full of people on Monday the 5th, but they behaved peaceably, made a few inquiries, and soon went away. We were apprehensive of their return, as there was a house in the square inhabited by a foreigner, and they were once afterwards at the corner of the next street. But He who has a hook and bridle in the mouths of those who think themselves their own masters, was pleased to turn them another way. We were preserved safe, and only suffered by sympathy with others, from what we heard with our ears and saw with our eyes, together with apprehensions of still more dreadful consequences, if the Lord did not interpose. The devastations

\* This letter refers to the No-popery riots, in which so much property was sacrificed, and so many lives lost:—

“When the rude rabble’s watch-word was Destroy,  
And blazing London seemed a second Troy.”

on Tuesday and Wednesday nights were horrible. We could count from our back windows six or seven terrible fires each night, which, though at a distance, were very affecting. On Wednesday night and Thursday, the military arrived and saved the city, which otherwise I think would, before this time, have been in ashes, from end to end. So soon, so suddenly, can danger arise; so easily, so certainly, can the Lord set bounds to the wickedness of man, in the height of its rage, and say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further."

I believe multitudes went to St. George's fields, in the simplicity of their hearts, not aware of the consequences, not aware that many, with very different views, would avail themselves of the occasion, and meet with them. So children sometimes play with gunpowder, and think themselves safe, till a spark sets all in a flame about their ears. The Lord permitted it, and he is wise and just and good, and knows how to bring good out of seeming evil.

Mrs. Newton was marvellously supported while things were at the worst, but the incessant alarms we were in had some effect, and she began to droop, when the greatest danger was over. Through mercy, she is now revived, and pretty well again, as, likewise, Sally and Peggy, who, poor things! were little prepared for such awful scenes.

I preached on Wednesday, and had a tolerable auditory; but I cannot describe the consternation and anxiety which were marked on the countenance of almost every person I met in the streets that day. I hope never again to see so strong an exemplification of many descriptions in the prophecies of Jeremiah. All faces gathered blackness indeed. Through mercy, I did not fear much for myself, but I felt for my little family, my neighbours, and especially for the public. The impression made

upon my mind is not yet worn off, and, indeed, I ought not to wish I could quite forget it.

I preached on Sunday forenoon from *Lamen. iii. 22.* "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed." In the evening, from *Ps. xlv. 10,* "Be still, and know that I am God."

Our dear child\* came to town on Friday afternoon. Every stage they came, reports were more and more distressing, and I believe Mr. Trinder was advanced almost as far as Islington before he had full assurance that he could enter the city with safety. But when he came he found all in peace. The Lord be praised.

I hope your next will tell us you are better. We are glad to hear Mrs. Bull and Tommy are well. We join in love to them and to you. Can you contrive to show this to Mr. Scott, for I have not time to write to him at present? Thank you for your prayers; I hope you will continue them. The Lord bless and keep you and yours.

Believe me to be your affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, Hoxton, London, June, 1780.*

\* Miss Catlett, Mr. Newton's niece, afterwards Mrs. Smith.

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## LETTER XLII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I BEGAN to think my last so fully removed all your kind anxieties concerning us, that you did not much want to hear from me any farther. Since you are commenced letter-writer, I beg I may have my place, and my turn among your correspondents.

Yours came last night, and while I was reading it, Mr. Self, who is sometimes a little cross, as well as sly, whispered in my ear, "You would not have heard from him now, if it had not been for the occasion mentioned in the letter part of his latter." But I snubbed him, and let him know that I would not admit any insinuation against Mr. Bull—that I would thank you for writing to me at all: I was determined not to stand upon punctilios.

I went to ——— this morning,\* and saw the old

\* This refers to the case of a young man whose brother lived at Newport, and to whom Mr. Bull was much attached, who was accidentally passing down Snow Hill at the moment the "no popery" mob were in the act of destroying a distillery belonging to a Roman Catholic; and, being prevailed upon to taste some spirits offered to him by one of the rioters, he was seen, and immediately taken into custody. He was subsequently tried, and condemned to death. Mr. Bull writes to Mr. Newton respecting him, "I don't know his parents, but have reason to believe them children of your Father and my Father. \* \* \* I beseech you assist me with your prayers daily, and earnestly, that the Lord may, by his good Spirit, comfort and strengthen this very afflicted family, most of whom are children of God; and that he will prepare for death him who expects it, and who seems much more earnest for the pardon

folks. I did not repent of my visit. I found them submissive and resigned to the Lord's hand, and looking up to him for relief. I had no one to apply to but Mr. Thornton, and there I found you had been beforehand with me. However, his parents told me that affairs are in a hopeful way for the young man's pardon, as the three judges have promised to recommend him to the King's mercy. I would have gone to see him had I been asked; but as there is hope of his escaping, and as Mr. Dyer, the clergyman whose office it is to visit the prisoners, is a serious evangelical man, I thought it not necessary to offer myself. Thus far I have promptly obeyed your commands.

I left your letter with Mr. Thornton, and having read it but once, my memory does not present any part of it that requires a particular answer. From the whole, I learn that you are better and worse as formerly; that if you are afflicted, you find it good to be so; if you have a cross, you are supported under it; and, if your cross is doubled, your strength is proportionately increased. You are enabled to trust the Lord, and you find him faithful. You prefer his wish to your own, and experience proves that he chooses better for you than you could choose for yourself. Thus all is well.

I now invite you to London. The storm I hope is

of his sins than for the preservation of his life. If I had any interest by which I could promote a petition for his life, my heart, afflicted for his parents, would insure the exertion of it to the uttermost; but I have not, and must therefore be silent on this head.

\* \* \* If you have neither opportunity nor interest to serve me outwardly in this affair, I know you have inwardly and spiritually, and I doubt not you will use it at a throne of grace. I could wish you to call, if convenient, on the afflicted parents. They exist in \* \* \* —ED.

past—the tumults over and gone. The executions which justice and a regard to the public tranquillity demand, will soon be finished. Come, for the bed and smoking-room and all things are now ready. Come, and see our *rus in urbe*, which, by dint of a warm imagination, we make to resemble Olney as much as possible. It is the same within doors, for we are the same people. The same Sir and Madam to receive you—the same Sally, Peggy, and Phœbe to help off your boots and great coat. The back parlour looks into a garden; and there is a close with cows in it, which puts us in mind of Banister's close. Islington church is a succedaneum for Emberton. We sometimes meet people in the street, whose features remind us of some whom we know in the country; but such a resemblance of you will not suffice. I must have your original identical person,—therefore take a place, and come up as soon as possible; and may the Lord bless you upon the road, and come himself with you. Persuade Mrs. Bull to come likewise. I long for the time. How snugly shall we sit and smoke our pipes, while we settle the affairs of the state and of the churches!

Do you not rejoice in the prospect of peace and union with America again? How sudden—how seasonable was the turn! how unexpected, at least by me! Indeed I am a shallow politician. But let the wise men say what they will, I say it was the Lord's doing, and we had but little reason to expect so favourable an issue. It was the Lord, but the praise is given by many to the instruments. Oh, wretched people! when afflicted, we murmur—when relieved, we boast. It is well there are a praying few among us, or we should be given up to ruin.

Observe, you are now in my debt again. When you want to hear from me you must tell me; but rather come yourself, that will save paper and postage. Robert

Teedon\*—I thank you for remembering him—I must try to get an abode for him here. I believe he is a good man, and I believe his necessity is very great.

Could you send me three or four of my letters to you, (if you have not burnt them,) to stand among those which are now gone to the press?† One of your youths might transcribe such extracts as you might think fit to mark off, free from such trifles as would be quite unfit for the public eye: none should be later than the close of last year, and they must come soon if at all. The Lord Jesus be with you, and with us all. Love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy. May he increase in grace and wisdom, as in years and stature. Adieu.

I am yours sincerely, affectionately, and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, 18th July, '80.*

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### LETTER XLIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEING resolved to keep you in my debt, I write immediately to inform you that your acceptable letter, with the packet of my own letters, came safe to hand last night.

\* A poor but pious man at Olney, in whose welfare both Mr. Newton and Mr. Cowper were much interested.

† This reference is to "Cardiphonia," the last fourteen letters of which in the second volume are addressed to Mr. Bull.

I shall select eight or ten, or at least a part of so many. Some must be excluded, as containing but three or four lines worth the public eye in the most partial judgment; and none of those which relate to Mary Woolnoth must appear, because I shall only publish by the name of Omicron, and nothing must be in the letters to lead to a certain information who Omicron is.

Though he may be pretty well known, I think it best not publicly to avow himself. Though I can hardly hope to escape the charge of egotism for publishing my own letters, yet we must take things in as soft and modest guise as we can.

Mr. Cowper has helped me to a title-page, which you may read by turning over leaf :

“CARDIPHONIA ;

OR, THE UTTERANCE OF THE HEART.

In a collection of letters written in the course of a real correspondence, on a variety of religious subjects,

“Hæc res et jungit, junctos et servabit amicos.”—

*Hor. Lib. 1, Sat. 6.* BY OMICRON.

There is to be a scriptural motto likewise, which I have not yet fixed upon.\*

A short title, to serve for a handle to take hold of the book by, is convenient, therefore I desired Mr. Cowper to cook me a Greek compound of softer sound, and sweeter sense than “Thelyphthora :” I think he has done very well.

I am just returned from the new goal, my third visit there; and I had more liberty and pleasure this morning, than in either of the former. I hope the Lord is at work

\* “As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.”—Prov. xxvii. 19.



upon some of them. They are always attentive, and all thank me for coming. Mr. — tells me his brother will be reprieved. I wish it may be to lead a new life, and I hope it will.\*

My Dear has what I call a comfortable measure of health—a few needful mementos of frailty, yet permitting her to eat, sleep, and converse with friends. The Lord is very good, and I have still a favoured lot. Peace in the heart, in the parlour, in the kitchen, and in the house of God. Our whole little household love you, and desire to be remembered to you and by you.

I find you have still pains and indispositions, but as they are sanctified and sweetened, your case makes me sorry and glad in the same breath. I am not so apprehensive of your constitution breaking up, as you seem to be; I hope you will live to a good old age, and your lips still feed many. If you are quite poorly, come and try the air of Charles Square, Hoxton. I think it would do you good, and that even the journey would be of service to you. I would talk to you, my Dear would nurse you, and you shall have orinoco as much as you please and as often.

However, I can venture to promise you, you shall live till your work is done, and I am pretty sure when the time of dismissal comes, you will rejoice in the summons. The Lord will smile upon you, and then you will smile upon death; for when he has lost his sting, he has an angel's face. Dr. and Mrs. Ford, of Melton, are just

\* This hope was fully realized. The individual referred to was pardoned, became a truly pious man, obtained a highly respectable situation, was a constant hearer and friend of Mr. Newton, and to the end of life maintained a consistent character, discovering to the last his deep sense of obligation to those who had befriended him in the day of his calamity.—ED.

come in, they would send their love if they knew you. We are going where we shall all know each other at first sight.

My Dear sends her love to you, and Mrs. Bull and Tommy. We beg many prayers.

I am yours most affectionately,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, 29th July, '80.*

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#### LETTER XLIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM just come from Clapham, and it is now past two o'clock. I ought to sit down, and smooth and sort my thoughts, which are usually tumbled about by a two or three days absence from home, so that my heart upon a return, is something like a country shop on the evening of a fair day, and wants a deal of setting to rights. But then your letter says, pray write, and my heart feels as if I ought to answer *you*. And, therefore, I must let my shop still be at sixes and sevens, till I have chalked you out a short answer to your inquiries.

Though in haste to satisfy you, I am in no haste for rectifying the minister's mistake, in what he thought proper to assert. I remember when I would have flown like a lapwing from house to house, from town to

town, to justify my own dear self's own dear character. But of late I have in some measure learned, one may be tolerably at ease, though other people say more than they ought. And if conscience is on my side—if the matter affirmed be not true, I sit quiet, and do not think myself bound to make every body as wise as myself.

Now for your queries : 1st. I have certainly read Mr. Madan's book : whether I have properly considered it, I dare not be positive, but I was wide awake when I read. 2nd. I never said, I never thought it was unanswerable ; but I have said, I did not wonder he thought it so. Nor do I think every one who may disapprove it, is capable of giving it a clear, solid, and decisive answer. The distinction you mention between the civil and judicial law of the Jews, and the moral law, would be part of the ground on which I should go, were I to answer it ; but I think much might be gained, by a close and careful inquiry into the nature and ground of moral obligation, which I apprehend depend (as to us) not upon any previous fitness of things, but upon the revealed will of God. Were we to judge merely by our views of the moral law, Abraham's intended sacrifice of his son would have been murder, and Jael's treatment of Sisera, abominable perfidy. I would yield to Mr. Madan, that polygamy once was not criminal, but I think it is plain, that our Lord in Matt. xix. gave an answer wider than the question, as he sometimes did. He was asked of divorce, but he took occasion to speak of the primitive institution of marriage, and his design to restore it to what it was in the beginning. Were I to answer the book, it should be by writing notes upon it. But I do not intend to meddle with it. Could I have my will it

should not be answered at all. Though I believe this would mortify the author, yet it would confine the book to fewer readers. The way to spread it and circulate it, will be to answer it. Your censure is just, though some of your expressions are pretty strong. We are all poor creatures, and you and I, if left to ourselves, might write as bad a book, and as little likely to do good.

We are pretty well, and join in love to you and Mrs. Bull and Tommy. I wish that you and I may be so full of the Lord to-morrow, that we may have no leisure to think of Thelyphthora, from morning to-night. Adieu, love us and pray for us.

I am, yours affectionately,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, 12th August, '80.*

Accept my thanks for your kind feelings for me, and your care to vindicate me. But they knew you and I, being both speckled birds, must feel for each other, and therefore, perhaps, they pecked at me to give you pain. A bird in my parlour sings or says that Dr. Benamor is uneasy at not hearing from you.

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## LETTER XLV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF you will neither come nor write, you must please yourself, for I am sure you will not please me. Now you are grown a great letter writer, I must be shut out of your correspondence I suppose. Nay, surely you cannot have the heart to do it. Perhaps your spirits are sunk into your shoes again, and you think you are not able to write. Try, however, as soon as possible, for I want to hear about you. If not, this is the last three-pence you will have to pay for letters from me for a good while to come,

Watchman, what of the night? I think it a long one, and I cannot yet see a streak of dawn. All parties are contriving to prolong a war which they are all weary of. Some attempt is on foot towards peace, but I fear it will not succeed. Sin prevails, and requires a scourge, and therefore war continues, though the voice of interest no less than humanity calls loudly for peace. When either we or our opponents seem to droop, some unexpected advantage revives hope again. When either they or we presume to boast, as though success were almost within reach, some disaster comes to damp the vain confidence, and to show that the battle is the Lord's. These changing events insensibly draw on both sides farther and farther into mischiefs, and make them more and more regardless of consequences. In the meanwhile, an increase of stupidity and hardness at home, keeps pace with the increase of danger from abroad. And though it is now evident to all here that

London was within a few hours of being reduced to ashes, and its preservation was little less than miraculous; that alarming crisis is now almost forgotten, not only by profane but by professor, and things go on much as they might do if there was no war, no danger, or if we had no signal mercies or deliverances to record. I must include myself in this censure.

The mischiefs and abominations attendant on a general election will now be superadded to our habitual course of national sin. Oh, what a train of riot, debauchery, and perjury, is upon the march to overspread the land! What an idea must an American savage form of Christians and Christianity if he were to visit us at such a time as this!

Well, we must sojourn a time in this Vanity Fair, but, blessed be God, it is not our home. We are travelling to another country, and are taught another language, which the people of the fair do not understand. They stare at us as outlandish people, and are displeased because we will not adopt their maxims and customs. They are highly affronted if we presume to pity them. And much the same sort of treatment we might expect if we ventured to pity some people in Bethlehem, and to say to their faces, Alas; poor men you are mad! No, though he mistakes his cell for a palace, his chains and straw for ensigns of royalty, he would face you out that he is in his sober senses, that you are the mad person, and for your pity he returns you pity mixed with scorn. Of course, we are glad to get away from such unreasonable people, and all they can say does but the more confirm us, that they are insane. To be shut up with the mad folks in Bethlehem would be a great trial—how is it we are no more affected with our situation in this great Bedlam, the world? There is hardly

an instance of insanity within those dreary walls, which we may not find parallels to among our acquaintance who are permitted to walk at large. Their spiritual imaginations are so disordered that they call evil good, and good evil; they are fond of their enemies, and start at the sight of a friend. They boast of liberty while they are tied and bound with the chain of sin. They delight in mischief, scattering firebrands and arrows, and say, Am not I in sport? Some are groaning under the weight of a straw, and others in rapturous admiration, viewing bubbles which successively disappear as fast as they can blow them up. Oh, it is a mad world indeed! The Lord quicken our longings for that land where all are in their right minds—and where we, likewise, shall be quite in our senses. For, indeed, the insanity around us is epidemical, and there are few of the soberest but give proof enough they are not quite free from a spice of the general infection.

Cardiphonia is going on, the second volume is half printed, and the whole will be ready about the modish time when the parliament will be meeting and the town filling; but little will the parliament, or the gentry who fill the town, care for what Omicron may publish. One half of me is very well, the other is tolerable. We both unite and send our love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, with one heart.

I hope you continue to pray for us. The Lord keeps me alive. I wish I could say lively. But it is a miracle I am no worse, considering the hurry in which I live. The little leisure I have for retirement indisposes me for the improvement of that little. But I feel I always am,

Affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, 8 Sept. '80.*

## LETTER XLVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEHOLD happy is the man whom God correcteth! As I hope the fever has by this time left you, I congratulate you on its coming, because I take it for granted it brought a blessing with it, and will leave a blessing behind it. I am glad, however, that the information of your being better came at the same time with the news of your having been ill; for though my judgment is well satisfied that the Lord does all things well, yet I am capable of feeling no small anxiety when those whom I love are in jeopardy and affliction.

I dispatched your last immediately to Mr. Barton, and I find he received it in time, though it was late in the evening to send you a word of consolation and a recipe by the return of post. May the Great Physician give a blessing to every means, give you health and ease, and reveal to you the abundance of peace and truth.

I hope this fever will not retard, much less prevent, the pleasure we propose in receiving you under our peaceable roof. What a mercy to have a peaceable roof to rest under! Preserved in outward peace by the kind, protecting, providential arm of the Lord, and favoured with internal peace by the blessing of his good Spirit. This is our present mercy. He makes us of one mind in the house, he is about our bed and dwelling by night, and about our path by day. I am wonderfully favoured with peace, likewise in the business of *His* house. I have as yet met with no incident to try either my faith or my patience as a minister, but all hitherto wears an



encouraging aspect. Whatever the parishioners, or any of them, think, they give me no disturbance. I could wish, indeed, that I had more access to them, and that more came to hear. I was invited to dine with one of them yesterday. It was the first invitation I had received from any who were not professedly serious. They behaved well. I behaved poorly, for I could not at the first sight introduce the best subject. This is often a hindrance to me; but the Lord can give me farther opportunity, and put a word in my mouth some time. Ah! it is a shame to *seem* so earnest and pressing in the pulpit, and then to *be* so cold and mealy-mouthed at table. But I have not the talent of happily introducing the most profitable topics where I am a stranger. Often when I am in company, was what I have said written down and brought to me afterwards, how should I—at least, how ought I—to blush, if I were constrained to read it.

Our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy; bring him with you, by all means. We are going to dine at Clapham; expect to meet Mrs. Wilberforce there; it is probable we shall talk of you before we part. The Lord bless and keep you all.

I am your affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 25 Sept. '80.*

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## LETTER XLVII. ]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AMONG all the reasons your teeming imagination would invent for my not answering your letter, it is likely the true one never came into your mind—namely, that we were at Reading, and did not return home till about twenty-seven minutes past six last night, and consequently could not receive yours sooner.

I was glad of the good news it contained; you will find a hearty welcome; but I charge you upon your allegiance to bring Tommy with you, and not venture into my presence without him.

I intended meeting you at the inn, but as you were not determined whether you should come by the Wellingborough or the Northampton, I knew not where to wait for you. Your best, easiest, quietest way will be to let the coachman call you a coach at Islington, for you will be nearer to us there than at the inn. Order him to drive you to No. 13—Thirteen—in Charles Square, Hoxton. By this means we shall have you an hour or two sooner, and you will avoid the trouble of riding over the stones.

*Quam multa quam varia*, shall we have to talk about; I shall think of you hourly till I see you, as childre count the hours for days before the fair. Then the journey, the prospects, and the new objects, will, I expect, so exhilarate your spirits, that when you come to us you will put us in mind of a bottle of well-corked cider, when the cork is newly drawn. Oh, methinks I see, or rather foresee, how you will sparkle!

Mr. and Mrs. Cardale, Mr. J. and my Dear went to Reading on Monday, and returned last night. I hardly ever knew a more agreeable journey, or week. We read, and sung, and prayed; and the time and the road passed away almost insensibly. We were very happy; likewise, while there; but I hope to tell you more about it soon.

The week before I was at Ramsgate, but I was there a turtle without my mate, which was a little abatement.

And why should *you* be without your mate? I wish Mrs. Bull could come with you; tell her I say so, and that we both send our love to her. But Tommy must come positively.

Farewell. May the Lord be with you in the way, and at your journey's end. I hope he does favour us with his blessing. You will come to a house of peace, and where every face will smile upon you.

I am your affectionate poor brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles Square, Hoxton—No. 13.*

14 October, '80.

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## LETTER XLVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Two letters for one—how kind! I thank you. I would send you one every week if I had time. This you know, and therefore accept the will for the deed.

I have not leisure, nay, I have hardly curiosity to read Dr. Kennicot's curious Prolegomena. I thank you for your offer; but if the book come hither, I must either forward it unread, or keep it a whole year. Therefore, to make short work, I shall give the receipt to Buckland, and desire him to send you the book.

I hope you will see Cardiphonia before long; the whole is printed, index and all. They talk about publishing about new-year's day. A parcel will go to Olney, and a copy from thence will be sent to you.

I have not yet fixed on my texts for Christmas-day. The two candidates which at present seem disposed to offer, are Gen. xlix. 10—12, for the morning, and John ix. 39, for the evening. If they shall resolve to stand, and no powerful competitor interpose, it is probable they may both carry the election, especially the latter. I preached on it one Christmas evening, and have the notes by me. If the Lord please to give me new thoughts to fill up this old plan, and breathe his good Spirit upon the whole, then I may bring forth things new and old to his praise.

Why d'it Christ come?

I. For judgment. Two senses of the word—purpose, or appointment; and manifestation, or trial, Luke ii, 35. The gospel calculated to give sight to the blind, and to

prove that they are stark blind who pretend to see without it, Luke ii. 53, Matt. xi. 25.

II. The blind see. The Spirit, by the gospel, makes the blind both see and feel their guilt and misery ; then shows them pardon, life, and happiness in a Saviour.

III. They who pretend they see, are made blind. These are of two sorts. 1. Such as absolutely reject the truth because it does not suit what they call their reason. Many of the most important doctrines, the more they are examined by fallen proud reason, will appear the more unreasonable. Instance in—First, The Deity of Jesus, will be absurd to those who feel not the need of an Almighty Saviour. So that 1 Cor. xii. 3. Second—Justification by the righteousness of another will be thought absurd. Third—That God, in point of acceptance, pays no more regard to men's best actions than their sins, is deemed another absurdity. Fourth—Even to assert that he has a right to do what he will with his own, is accounted another hard and unreasonable point ; though they claim such a right for themselves in their own concerns.

Thus the gospel reveals the thoughts of their hearts. Their boasted morality (if they have any) is found destitute of the love of God, and of truth. They profess to see, but are quite dark, yea, the light that shines around them increases their darkness. 2. Such as receive the gospel in the notion, and value themselves upon it, but are destitute of the power ; none make a greater parade of seeing than these, none more fatally blinded. They smile at a self-righteousness founded upon works, but are themselves in the very spirit of the Pharisee. An acknowledgment of the doctrines which they misunderstand and abuse, serves them for a righteousness ; and, trusting to this, they despise all who

are stricter than themselves, and dislike close and faithful preaching as they would poison. A minister may preach in general terms, and have their good word; but, if he deals faithfully and plainly with conscience,—if he bears testimony, not only against dead works, but against dead faith, they will think they do God service by censuring and reviling him. Awful case! to be blinded by the very truths they profess and believe. Yet I fear it is too common.

*Hactenus hæc.* We are glad to hear Mrs. B. and T. are well, and you so-so. I hope your cough will mend; we are past the solstice, and shall soon perceive the peep, at least the forerunners of spring. Come, May!—come, June! that we may trot down to Olney, Weston, Newport, Bedford. Ah, wretched creature! will you dare to wish the time away? Rather wish every minute was an hour, while you have so much to do, and can so poorly improve the little space allotted to do it in. Well, I wish to wait patiently. May I improve the interval! June will arrive. Then, if we shall be spared, be alive, well, and have money in our pockets, and the Lord's good leave, away for Bucks; and then I shall hope to share—

A Theosophic pipe with brother B.,  
Beneath the shadow of his favourite tree,  
And then how happy I! how cheerful he!

But though we shall be happy together, we are not necessary to each other, and that's a mercy. The Lord is sufficient. *Solus cum solo.* I wish to leave it with him, where, or what, or how, I am to be next June, or to-morrow. If he be mine, all is well; and if his will be done, all is right.

My Dear is pretty well. Sally but poorly. Peggy very

bad. She has a return of her old nervous complaints, and they are very strong. Her head, like the head of a ship in a storm, is always in motion. The Lord seldom afflicts us all together, but in our turns we are taught to feel for and help each other. Mr. Barton is her doctor, under the great Physician, who, I hope, condescends to take her case in hand. He wounds, and he heals; he does both at the best time. Your cough, I hope, will be silenced and melted away ere long, and you will join with all the spring birds in hymning the praises of the great Shepherd. Yes, let us love, and sing, and wonder, and go singing and wondering on through life, till we join the songs and admiration of the blessed before the throne.

Adieu, your very true friend,

J. M. N.

*December 24th, '80.*

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#### LETTER XLIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN you will have a speedy letter you must make shift with a short one, if I cannot find time to write much. I hope Cardiphonia is with you by this time, and that it puts you in mind to pray for a blessing on the author and the publication.

I gave Mr. Buckland the receipt for Kennicot's Bible, within a day or two after I received it, so your curiosity must blame him, and not me.

I have seen Antithelyphthora, and like it; only it is a little too much out of the common road for ordinary readers. Either Johnson does not know the author, or is not at liberty to tell. When asked the question he shrugs, and bows, and looks very profound. I shall not be the first to extort the secret from him, for I am seldom eager to know more than people are disposed to tell me. Surely I may eat, and drink, and sleep in peace without knowing the author of such and such a book. There are thousands of people on the banks of the Ganges, and a great way beyond it, who never heard even of Thelyphthora, nor, consequently, of the poetry and the prose written against it; and I suppose that ignorance is no abatement of their happiness.

To you who live no farther off than the banks of the anonymous river which waters the dead in Newport churchyard, it may be an important information to be told that the author is fabricating a third volume which he promises to send me, when it comes abroad. I do not want it, but if it comes I must read it. Fame says the examen in the Monthly Review, was written by a Mr. Turner, of Wakefield, and that he is about to publish a round complete answer.

Horrid times indeed! worse and worse, and I fear they will be worse still. But we know who is at the helm. What a mercy to know this! Bishop Reynolds says somewhere, "Jesus will either be your pilot in the ship, or your plank in the sea." This is good news, and therefore we need not fear for ourselves; for should we see a general shipwreck we shall survive it, and get safe to land. While we cleave to such a plank we cannot



sink. But the connexion and union is much nearer still. He is the Head, we the members. Now a man cannot drown while his head is above water. The members of Christ are in floods and depths; waves and billows roll over them, but the Head is on high, their life is hid and secure in him, and in good time the Lord will draw out the members after it. If I were as I wish to be, I would not fear at all for myself. I would say, "My all is in the Lord's hands, and there I leave it. He undertakes to manage and care, and I have only to sit still and admire his wisdom." But I would wish to be much affected for others. Oh, the distresses and calamities which sin occasions! It excited, and it still continues, the war. Ah, what a devouring sword! how many fatherless and widows has it made! how many has it plunged into eternity! What fruitful fields are drenched with blood, and become wildernesses! Sin raised the late terrible hurricanes. What a desolation! Yet we (as a people) are stupid and insensible still, and his hand is stretched out still.

There is a fast day coming. I shall preach two sermons, if the Lord please, and think to print one of them. I thought to have printed a fast sermon at Olney, and I have it by me written at length. With some furbishing and alterations it will do for the present time; and I think my situation here rather requires and calls upon me for a public testimony.

Cardiphonia was to come to you from Olney. Should there be any mistake or delay, a line to Mrs. Unwin will set all right. Peggy is better, goes about the house, but has not yet recovered her voice, not been abroad. Let us hear from you very soon. When do you come to see Mr. Vowel, that we may get another peep at you? Tell Mrs. Bull and Tommy, that we send our

love and our prayers that the grace of a gracious Saviour may fill all our hearts, Amen. The Lord be with them, and with you, with my Dear, my child, my two maids, and all my friends, and with your affectionate.

JOHN NEWTON.

*Horton, Jan. 20th.*

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LETTER L.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I NEED not be so solicitous about writing, now you have a number of my letters always at your elbow, which, excepting incidental and domestic matters, contain the substance of all I can say; yet I shall be glad when I can now and then thank you for writing to me.

I do not envy you your pleasure with Dr. Kennicot, one hundred and fifty folio pages in Latin, and upon a critical subject, would have taken me a year, instead of a month, to wade through. I have lost my acumen for such disquisitions, and perhaps I am as well without it. How many hundreds, yea thousands, of folio pages have I read, of which there is now hardly any trace in my memory! I do not, however, account it all lost labour, for I remember amongst the volumes I have turned over, to have met somewhere this sentence, or to this purpose, *Leges et perlege, aliquid adhaerebit*. Without

doubt many ideas which now occasionally offer themselves as my own, have been borrowed from others, though I have ungratefully forgotten the very names of my benefactors. But at my time of life it is reasonable to say, *satis est*. I now wish to learn of Mary to sit at the feet of Jesus, to make a transition from letter to spirit, from critics and commentators to that Great Teacher, who alone can influence the heart.

While I was writing, enter Mr. Barton. We never meet I believe, but we talk more or less of a friend at Newport. He tells me that he has prescribed something to good effect, and that your pains have retreated before his medicines. If it be for your good I wish them never to return; but if the Lord makes them messengers of grace and blessing to you, I dare not shut the door against them, were I able.

I heard on Tuesday that the Bishop of Lichfield was to preach the sermon to the Society for Propagating the Gospel. Yesterday I purposed to be there, but when the hour came I forgot it. Ah, such a head! The town rings of his sermon. Many dissenters I am told were there. He charmed away their prejudices, and sent them home full of commendations. His text was Heb. xiii. 8. His sermon upon it admirable for sense, composition, and elocution, and the whole strain evangelical. I hear it is to be printed. His point was, as I am informed, to show that Jesus Christ is in all ages, to day, yesterday, and for ever, the same. In his personal glories, in his work of redemption, in his government and law. What a foolish head was mine to forget the appointment!

I am glad Cardiphonia is at hand, to put you often in mind of me. You see me there in my best and in my worst. Or, rather, you see what I am, and you may guess what I would be. It seems likely to sell and spread,

which I shall be glad of, if the Lord be pleased to accompany them with his blessing. If the letters are owned to comfort the afflicted, to quicken the careless, to confirm the wavering, I may rejoice in the honour he has done me, and need not envy Johnson or Robertson. Surely I ought to prefer being useful to one soul, to the applause of twenty nations and ages. I hope I do. The hour is coming when the united commendation of all mankind will be of no more value than the good word of a few dirty boys in the street. I would, if possible, set no more value upon it now than I shall then; but there is much tinder in my heart; and vile, ignorant, and insufficient as I know myself to be, I can but just manage the handsome things that have been hinted in my hearing. How foolish, as well as wicked, is this self-complacence! If a man commended a guinea which I called mine, it would not work much upon my pride, for I neither coined it, nor made the die; and if I am enabled either to write or to speak to the purpose, neither I, nor the sin which dwelleth in me, have any right to praise.

Company prevented finishing my letter before dinner, and now I have dined, I am stupid, and half asleep; which you would soon perceive, without my telling you, if I do not hasten to subscribe myself,

Your affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

*Feb. 17, '81.*

All pretty well, and all send love to Mr. and Mrs. B., and Mr. T. Miss Catlett thanks you for your remembrance of her. I send her name, because you did not spell it right.

## LETTER LI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter has been with me about a fortnight, and must be answered, let who will wait. You threaten me and frighten me with your suspicions; though, when you apprehend that the glow of my friendship turns pale and languid, from a just consciousness of my own feelings, I attribute it rather to the *atrabiliale* in you, than to any change in myself, in hope to convince you, in defiance of all your surmises, that I love you dearly. I know your make, and therefore forgive you.

For your other apprehensions and admonitions, I trust my heart thanks you. My situation is ensnaring, indeed. There is a littleness, a weakness, a wickedness in my mind, which makes me liable to be carried away like a dead fish down the stream, by the things you mention. If I am kept, it is surely by that Power which can preserve a spark alive in a tempest, or in the ocean. But, to the praise of His grace, I am not conscious of my spirit being greatly hurt hitherto.

Though the misery I was reduced to in Africa made no profitable impression upon my mind at the time, I hope the Lord has made the recollection of it useful to me since; and I may praise him that it is seldom, if ever, one whole day out of my thoughts. It occurs to me almost hourly, that the rector, the author, the hymn-maker, who is admitted to the notice of my lord this, my lady that, and to the friendship of Mr. Bull, of Newport, was redeemed from the lowest state of human wretchedness. If it be hinted to me that I have written or said

something pretty or pertinent on religious subjects, I am reminded that the hand which wrote it, and the mouth which spake it, were once employed by Satan—that I was a most horrid blasphemer of the Saviour, whom I now commend. Surely no one has more emphatical cause than I to say,—*Totum muneris hoc tui est.*

Nor is this all. The whole of my experience, since I began to know the Lord, has been graciously suited to keep me from forgetting myself altogether. Ah, what a series of inconsistency and perverseness am I conscious of! Can I be proud of pointing out rules to others which I so sadly deviate from myself? However, it is true, that notwithstanding all I have seen and known, and felt, and said, and done, such a heart as mine would soon be *up* if Almighty Power did not keep it *down*.

I have heard of a playwright who put copies of his comedy into the hands of four friends to revise. When he came to collect the copies afterwards, he found one scene struck out here and there by one, another by another, so that amongst them they had demolished the whole play. The lot of Cardiphonia seems the reverse of this. You speak favourably of all the letters, but think those to the nobleman inferior to the rest. A gentleman of some eminence for name, taste, and literature, at Bristol, writes me his approbation of the whole, but gives a peculiar preference to the nobleman's. Some of them, as you observed, are rather essays, because the subjects were given me, and I was desired to treat them something at large, and because such parts of those letters which had not a reference to the subject were excluded. There is, likewise, a sort of deference when a little man writes to a great man, which will not admit quite so much familiarity as between people on a par. Yet some of them, I think, are as much epistles as

any in the volumes; and the style of them all, I should suppose, epistolary, because I apprehend I am not possessed of any other. However, it matters not whether they are essays, dissertations, sermons, or letters, so they may be useful. If you could tell me which the Lord is pleased to make most acceptable and serviceable to the readers, I would soon tell you which are the best letters in the volumes.

I allow that the address to Mr. or Mrs. ——— is vexatious to the curiosity of a reader. But you are sensible it would have been improper to print the names. Some of the persons are unknown to you, and when that is the case, it seems indifferent whether they were written to John Nokes, or Thomas Styles; however, you shall have a key to the most. Some of them would not wish to be known, and I shall, therefore, leave them, as they are to exercise your sagacity.

Vol. i.—The two first sets you know.\* Then we will proceed—p. 225, Mr. Barham; 261, Mr. Rose; † 277, Mr. Okeley; ‡ 283, Mr. Powley; § 309, Mrs. Gardiner, (whom I think you know not) in Lincolnshire. Vol. ii. d. 39, Mrs. Talbot; 57, Mr. Jones; 81, poor Mr. Whitford; || 129, Mr. Bowman; ¶ 155, John Ryland, jun.; \*\* 185, Dr. Ford, of Melton; 207, Sally Johnson; ††

\* These were addressed to Lord Dartmouth, and the Rev. Thos. Scott.

† Rev. Mr. Rose, son-in-law of Mr. Barham, a clergyman of the Church of England.

‡ Rev. Francis Okeley, Moravian minister at Northampton.

§ Rev. Matthew Powley, son-in-law of Mrs. Unwin, vicar of Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

|| Rev. Mr. Whitford, Independent minister at Olney.

¶ Rev. Mr. Bowman, a clergyman in Norfolk.

\*\* Rev. Dr. Ryland, Baptist minister, afterwards at Bristol.

†† Mr. Newton's servant.

225, Mr. Collins; 247, Mrs. Wilberforce; 291, Mr. Cardale; 311, Mrs. Harvey; 333, Rev. Mr. Bull.

I have a fast sermon in the press, which you will see in good time. My Dear is better and worse, at present tolerably well. Peggy better, but still dumb. Sally so so. Betsy and I quite well. We all love you, and unite in love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy. Believe me yours, not in a languid but in a glowing degree,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 5th March, '81.*

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## LETTER LII.

**MY DEAR FRIEND,**

I AM pleased that you approve the fast sermon; but I ought to be sorry such a picture of the state of the nation, (or rather a sketch, for it is no more,) is so palpably true, that you cannot charge me with over-aggravating the features. I ought to be sorry, likewise, that I am so little affected myself with the subject. I am too little impressed either with the sight of abounding sin, or the apprehension of approaching judgment. I live in the midst of a polluted people, and I am, alas! a sharer in the general pollution; yet do I not lay either the one or the other sufficiently to heart.

A voice at length is heard from the East Indies. The



Lord has begun to plead with us there, and I shall not wonder if the cries of the oppressed at length prevail, for an extirpation out of that quarter of the globe. To an eye of sense, a cloud, portending an awful storm, appears over us, but faith sees the hand that guides its motions, and relies on the promises by which wisdom and love have engaged to bring light out of the darkness. Let us believe, and we shall see the salvation of God.

I hope to see Newport one of these days, but know not when. The time of the Lord Mayor's sermon at Mary Woolnoth, is not yet fixed. I must not be guilty of such a slight to the chief magistrate of the first city of the world, (to speak a-la-mode de Londres), as to be absent when he comes to my church. I must likewise (if I can) be in town on the 24th of May. Possibly the interval between Lord Mayor's sermon and that day, will not be sufficient for any journeying; if so, it must be deferred till after Whitsuntide: how much longer, who can tell? but I hope not a moment beyond the right time. There is a certain day, which, for reasons unknown to me, is the best and fittest in the whole year for me to go to Bucks, and particularly to see Mr. Bull. But I am not almanac-maker sufficient to pick this day out from the rest, *à priori*, by my own skill. I know not whether it is in May, June, or September. But there is One who knows all things, who bids me trust to him, and he will direct my steps—not by an audible voice from heaven, but by the movements of his providence. Something shall still hinder and delay till the right time comes, and then all hindrances shall give way; and bolts and locks, though made of brass, shall fly open of their own accord, without any need of my contriving to pick them with false keys. There is a previous

question, whether the Lord sees it proper I should go at all to Olney and Newport this year? Mr. Self eagerly says "Yes, I hope so." But Mr. Self can give no sufficient reason why he should not be mortified and disappointed, for he knows he deserves no better.

My love to Miss Myers,\* if still with you. May the Lord make and keep her peaceful, humble, spiritual, and give her large amends in grace and comfort for all that her profession has cost her.

I am glad to hear you continue tolerably well. I hope the barometer of your spirits is rather up than down, and that you will bestow a placid smile upon my letter when you read. Mr. Madan has sent me an order for his third volume, but I have not yet seen the book, nor am I eager for it. It would have been better for some people if they had never learned to read or write. Ah, what are talents, if not consecrated to the Lord's service, and under the influence of his Spirit! They are but like a sword in the hands of a madman, with which he indiscriminately wounds his enemies, his friends, and himself. You pity me; I almost pity myself. I could like a little more leisure; but if I am where I ought to be, imagination could not place me better. Yesterday I wandered an hour in the most retired parts of Hyde Park, and though it is but a *rus in urbe*, I thought it pleasant. My Dear's health is variable, like the weather—which is saying, she is not very ill, or long ill at a time. The Lord is good. Love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy. Farewell. Pray for Hoxton.

JOHN NEWTON.

21st April, '81.

\* A converted Jewess, greatly opposed by her friends. she was then on a visit at Mr. Bull's.

## LETTER LIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF the Lord, before whom I walk, is pleased to favour my present views, I think we shall set out for Bedford on Whitsun-Monday. I had purposed to summon you to meet us there; but I find you will be better engaged, for Mrs. Wilberforce will be with you. I shall hope, therefore, to see her and you together, at Newport, on the Friday, but cannot promise it myself as a certainty at this distance of time.

You are very kind to wish us to stay as long at Newport as you did at London. But as you are not only kind but considerate, I humbly submit to you what follows; if you please to put yourself in my place, you will decide rightly for me. I am your friend, but I am the Lord's servant, and it ought to be my desire to do not my own will but his. There is a certain thing called propriety, which I know it is his will I should aim at. One branch of this propriety is, not to be long from my good wife, Mary Woolnoth. Something tells me that I ought not to leave her above three Sundays. There is a propriety in spending as much of the first week as I can at Bedford. My connexion there is very intimate, and it is probable I shall not see my dear Mrs. Barham any more. There is a propriety, likewise, in making Olney my principal quarters. My long interest in the people—their late unsettled state—the possibility of being some-way useful in healing breaches, and helping them to receive the blessing of Mr. Scott's ministry, and the secluded situation of dear Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin,

are so many ties upon me to be as much there as I well can. There is likewise a propriety, which I cannot explain to you, in my going to Leicester, and of course to Northampton. The last propriety I shall mention, is to treat myself with as much of Mr. and Mrs. Bull's company as circumstances will admit. But if my Newport visits should appear to you, as they certainly will to me, very short; and if you should be disposed to be angry, I enter my appeal beforehand from your passion to your solid judgment. If Satan suggests that I would not very gladly spend the whole time of my absence from London at Newport if it were practicable, do not believe him. You know he is a liar. If he would make you think hardly of me for not performing impossibilities, give no heed to him—treat him as the accuser of the brethren ought to be treated. Look not at me through a coloured glass, but remember, if I am not a liar like him, I certainly love you dearly, because I have often told you so, and (I hope) done all in my power to show it.

We came hither yesterday. Should be glad to have you with us, but must be content with talking of you. I hope your Best Friend will be with us, and then we can make a good shift without this or the other particular person. I suppose John was secluded from his friends when at Patmos, and I suppose he hardly missed them. Creatures are candlelight comforts: when they are put out, or burn out, the sun can well supply the place of them all. You are often upon my mind; or, to say it better, you are always in my heart. This is a truth which does not at all depend upon my coming or my not coming to Newport.

The above was written on Thursday; it is now Saturday morning. We are returning home, and shall have the pleasure of Mrs. Wilberforce and Dr. Conyer's com-

pany to dinner. I meant to fill my paper, but the naughty pen will not write. I have had pleasant company, and some outwardly pleasant walks about the park and heath; but something has been wanting. My soul is too much like Gideon's fleece—dry; though I can perceive the dew falling around me.

We join our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, and to Miss Myers, if still with you. As I shall hardly have time to write more to-day, I subscribe myself now most affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Greenwich, 12th May, '81.*

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#### LETTER LIV.

DEAR SIR,

I ANSWERED a letter of yours, by guess, from Greenwich, and I hope I settled matters as well as I could. My progress to Leicester is rather uncertain. If I do not go thither, shall promise myself more of your company than I could otherwise hope for. At present we purpose dining with you, 9th June, if you can find us a bed while Mrs. Wilberforce is with you.

When I returned on Saturday, Miss Myers called, and brought me a little strip of paper. She said she was poorly; made but a short stay, and I have not seen her since. We were glad to hear that though you had been ill, you were then better.

I have reason to be thankful that Cardiphonia seems acceptable among the Lord's people. It has been much called for, but I hear nothing of a new edition being wanted yet. I should think the index at the end of the second volume answers tolerably to what you propose. Most of the letters are so desultory, that it would be difficult to find a title to each which would comprise the whole subject; but more of this when we meet. I shall sit in silence, to hear any remarks you make, in hopes of profiting by them.

We hope to travel to Bedford in the diligence on Whitsun Monday. My thoughts run much upon the interview with my old friends—if the Lord preserves them and us with health and peace, and especially if he be pleased to meet us, and to cause our hearts to burn within us. Otherwise we shall only yawn, and trifle away our precious time. If a parcel of empty pots should meet together, with the charitable design of filling each other, they would all be disappointed; but place them by a fountain, or under a running pipe, there they might first receive, and then communicate. You will pray, therefore, for us,—first, that we may have a safe and prosperous journey to you; and secondly, that we may not come in vain, or alone.

Mr. Madan and I have, at length, closed our correspondence. He desires to be excused reading any more of my letters on the subject. My last I endeavoured should be very faithful, but I think I wrote with affection and respect. But he is as angry as a wasp. Indeed, I do not wonder at it. He says he is baited; and I think so, too; so many have set upon him—some biting him in one part, and some in another. Two answers are still expected, which will give him as much trouble as any that have yet appeared. One, which will be a regular

attack, by the author of the articles in the "Monthly Review;" another, with the droll title of "Martin's Hobby Hocked and Pounded." This is in the press, and I suppose will be out in time for me to bring it down. The author, though he does not affect to write scholastically, is very shrewd; and I think will succeed in cutting the sinews of poor hobby, so that it will be more easy than necessary to pound the creature, after being hamstrung.

I am, however, almost weary of the business, and begin to wish Thelyphthora was in the land of oblivion, as I think it will be soon, when once all the answers have spent their fire. My apprehensions of the mischiefs the book may do begin to subside, but my apprehensions for the author rather increase.

Company is come, and dinner is coming, so no more at present, (but love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy.)

From your affectionate friend, and so forth,

JOHN NEWTON.

*C. Square, May 26, '81.*

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## LETTER LV.

MONSIEUR, MON CHER AMI,

IF I had your leisure, and you had my inclination, we should exchange letters more frequently. You seem determined not to write first, and I am hardly able to write at all. But, if the Lord is with you, and you are pretty well, why should you puzzle yourself about folks that are fifty miles distant?

The Lord is very gracious to us. My Dear is still favoured with very tolerable health, and preaching six or seven times per week (now Mr. Foster is absent) agrees wondrously well with me, this hot weather. I eat heartily, sleep soundly, and I believe continue to grow fat. I am often favoured with liberty in public, which sometimes amazes me, when I consider what I am conscious of in private.

My late visit to Bedford, Newport, and Olney, left a pleasant savour upon my mind; and the recollection of incidents which, by the Lord's blessing, may be profitable, remains upon my mind. I was glad to find and leave you so well, for you seemed to me better than at any time since I have known you. I hope you will continue mending, till you are as sound and hearty as an oak. I mean, if so much health may be good for you. But if indispositions, etc., are means by which the Lord designs good for your soul, then I must consent that you be afflicted. It is better to be sick or low-spirited, than to be proud or careless, or to write foolish books, or to do foolish things, to make the church weep, and the world laugh.

Public affairs look darker still, expectation is on tiptoe,



waiting for hourly news from all parts abroad, but foreboding that the news whenever it comes, or from whatever quarter, will be distressing. I am afraid what we next hear from America will not be pleasing. That unhappy country is still likely to be a scene of desolation, and our own people there to sink under the weight of pretended successes. In the West Indies, Tobago is gone, and perhaps by this time some other of our islands. And the cry of oppression in the East Indies seems at length to have awakened judgment there. I think of the words, "In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short." He seems about to cut us short on all sides. Yet the spirit of the nation seems like the thoughtless mariner asleep on the top of the mast, regardless of the danger, which is increasing every day. Yet still I hope there is mercy. The gospel spreads—grace reigns—the number of praying souls are upon the increase, and their prayers I trust will be heard. We are sure that the Lord reigns, that the storm is guided by the hands which were nailed to the cross, and that as he loves his own he will take care of them. But they who have not an ark to hide themselves in, will probably weep and wail before the indignation be overpast.

Blessed be God, for the prospect of a land of peace, where sin and every sorrow will be excluded. There we shall have a day without cloud and without night. The sun shall go down no more, the voice of war shall be heard no more. The inhabitants shall feel pain no more, shall weep no more, shall go out no more. Then no more unsanctified, and therefore no more unsatisfied desires. Oh what a state of love, life, and joy, when we see Jesus as he is! and by beholding, are changed into his image, and made (according to the utmost capacity of our natures) perfectly like him.

Well it shall, it will come, it approaches nearer every hour. Love to Mrs. Bull, Tommy, Mr. Fordham, not forgetting Mr. Goode, when you see him.

I am your sincere friend and brother, servant, and fellow pilgrim, etc.,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 26th July, '81.*

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### LETTER LVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is not for you and me who know that the Lord does all things, and believe that he does all things well, it is not for us to shake our heads and say, Alas! alas! I wish it was otherwise. I trust he has adjusted the time of your coming to London to answer important purposes, and then I ought to be well pleased, though my own humour and feelings be crossed by it. We thank you for your kind intention of spending some of your first days with us, and glad we shall be to have you "from morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve." But at present we cannot lodge you. Peggy has been so ill these ten days past, with convulsions in her head, that we are obliged to have two supernumeraries to assist, so that our house is quite full. Through mercy she is something better, and if you will spend some of the latter days of your time instead of the former, I hope we shall be ready to receive you.

I shall be glad to see you here on Monday to take a dish of tea and a pipe, and then for me to convey you to your lodgings. But for your own sake I ought honestly to give you better advice. It is probable, that after travelling from Newport, when you come to sit down and have smoked your pipe, you will not wish to have farther to go that night. I advise you, therefore, to take a coach at Islington (for you have no business at the inn except you take pleasure in riding over the stones) and repair to John Street, when if I have no unforeseen prevention, I will either be waiting for you or come soon after your arrival, and stay till towards seven o'clock. But if I should be hindered, then you are to wait upon me to breakfast, Tuesday morning. [N.B. the walk will do you good] and we will march from hence to the city—to Stafford Hall, to Cole's Coffee House, or whither you please.

If I knew, to a certainty, by what vehicle you come, and the hour, I would meet you at Islington, but for want of information on these heads, which I cannot receive in time, waiting upon the road would be unpleasant, and therefore I can propose no better than as above. Hoping so soon to see you, I shall only add, at present, my prayers and best wishes for your safe and comfortable journey, and to assure you that we all love you, and long to have a peep at you. Give our hearty love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, and tell Mrs. Bull that so sure as you come in *our* way, we will do all in our power to take care of you, and make you easy.

I am affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, September 1, '81.*

## LETTER LVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR safe return to Newport, your good health and tranquillity, while smoking your pipe and writing, were all pleasing articles of information. When you mourn, I lament; when you pipe, I dance.

Yes, dear Mrs. Barham is gone home. She lived honourably, and died peaceably. Were I to preach a funeral sermon, I should say but little about her; but I would make the people stare, if I could, by telling them what a wonderful Friend she had; one who paid all her debts, and who was so attentive to her, that his eye was never off her by night or day for a long number of years; one who, by looking at her, could sweeten her pains, renew her strength, and fill her with wisdom, grace, and peace. It was to his praise, and not to hers, that she filled up every character and relation of life with propriety, endured pain with cheerfulness, and gave an edifying and memorable example to all around her. It was this kind Friend first introduced me to her, and I was honoured with her friendship because she believed I loved her Friend. Well, she is gone, and I am a loser; but I do not wish her back again. She is gone to see her best Friend; and I hope, one day, to see her with him. If she could speak to us now, would she not say, "Be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises?"

I believe you are indebted to me for Mr. Bridge's visit. I met him at Mr. Wilkinson's, and we happened to talk, amongst other things, of my Newport ale. It seems he

had a mind to taste of it, which I hardly expected, for he is a prodigious high churchman, and rather disposed to stand aloof both from dissenters and methodists. He is, however, a good man, and a faithful preacher; indeed, you were not a little honoured (if you could think so) by his calling upon you.

I can, at length, tell you, there are some hopes of Peggy's recovery. The terrible spasms which used to seize her, whenever she attempted to take either food or drink, are much abated. For about a fortnight, we could not but fear she must have been starved to death. I believe Mr. Barton has seldom met with a case more posing to his skill. But the Lord seems to have led him, in the last change of medicine, to such means as he is pleased to give a blessing to. Mr. Barton's kindness, attention, and frequent attendance, have been very great; and the Lord has provided us, in Molly Parson's sister, a person who fills up Peggy's place, during her confinement, quite to our wish; so that the harmony and confidence of our family is still kept up as before. Thus He mixes mercies with his chastisements—especially as my Dear continues pretty well. I love to see and notice his providential hand in every circumstance of domestic life. Trivial as they may seem singly, they are often of great importance to us in their consequences; and therefore He, in whose sight all the nations of the earth are but as the drop of a bucket, condescends to direct them.

*Truditur dies die.* We are insensibly slipping into the winter season. By-and-bye, we expect frost, snow-storms, and rain; short, lowering days, and long, gloomy nights. A few weeks or months of these inclement changes will prepare us (if we live) to value and welcome the return of spring, which will soon pass away to make room for summer, autumn, and then winter again. Thus

things go round, but every season brings us a stage nearer to an eternal year of perpetual spring—a day without night, where our sun shall be clouded or go down no more. Happy prospect! We shall not always be as we are now. We are now at school, learning to sing the song of redeeming love, and, ere long, we shall be translated to sing it before the throne.

Our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, to Mr. Scott and Mr. Cowper when you see them; and pray go see them soon, then, if you are honest, you will say I sent you.

I think Mr. Scott has a crook in his lot.\*

\* The following extract from a letter from Mr. Cowper to Mr. Newton, will explain this allusion.

“Mr. Bull is an honest man. We have seen him twice since he received your orders to march hither, and faithfully told us that it was in consequence of those orders that he came. He dined with us yesterday; we were all in pretty good spirits, and the day passed very agreeably. It is not long since he called on Mr. Scott; Mr. Raban came in. Mr. Bull began addressing himself to the former: ‘My friend, you are in trouble; you are unhappy; I read it in your countenance.’ Mr. Scott replied, ‘He had been so, but he was better.’ ‘Come, then,’ says Mr. Bull, ‘I will expound to you the cause of all your anxiety. You are too common; you make yourself cheap. Visit your people less; converse more with your own heart. How often do you speak to them in the week?’ ‘Thrice;’ ‘Ay, there it is! Your sermons are an old ballad; your prayers are an old ballad; and you are an old ballad too.’ ‘I would wish to tread in the steps of Mr. Newton.’ ‘You do well to follow his steps in all other instances, but in this instance you are wrong, and so was he. Mr. Newton trod a path which no man but he could have used so long as he did, and he wore it out long before he went from Olney. Too much familiarity and condescension cost him the estimation of his people. He thought he should ensure their love, to which he had the best possible title, and by those very means he lost it. Be wise, my friend; take warning; make yourself scarce, if you wish that persons of little understanding should know how to prize you.’” When

It will be good and charitable in you to see him often, to clap him on the back and say, Be of good courage. The ride will be useful to you, and while you attempt to water others, you will be watered yourself. Do not burn out in waste, like a candle in an empty room ; but ride about for the consolation and edification of your fellow-creatures ; but allow yourself time to write to

Your poor friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

13 Oct. '81.

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LETTER LVIII.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR trusty paper messenger told me every thing that you bid it. I am not surprised that a little of the gloom of November should tinge your spirits ; but I hope as the weather is bright again, your barometer will stand higher when you read my letter than when you wrote your own. However that be, I shall venture to address you with the Angel's salutation, " Hail, thou that art highly favoured ! The Lord is with thee." You live in a strong city, which has salvation itself for

he related to us this harangue, so nicely adjusted to the case of the third person present, it did us both good ; and, as Jacques says,

" It made my lungs to crow like chanticleer."

See *Southey's " Couper,"* vol. iv. 140.—Ed.

walls and bulwarks; your frequent changes are numbering off apace, and the last when it comes (I hope a good round number of years hence) will introduce you to a state of unchangeable and endless peace and joy. With such a home in view, the trials we may meet upon the road are of no great comparative importance. Let us not be weary in doing or suffering the Lord's will, for in due season we shall reap.

I am glad you have a pupil\* to send to Oxford; and I have no doubt but the Lord will support and own you for what you do for *his* sake. I am not competent how to advise you about the disposal of your pupil, being quite a stranger to the maxims and methods of the University. If Basil Woodd, † whom you know, or young Goode, ‡ are there, they can give you better information. The principal of Edmund Hall is a very respectable character; but I am, told, as he is far in years, he does not concern himself much with the business of the college, it lies chiefly with the tutor. I know there are several serious young men in different colleges, but which college is the least expensive, or best calculated to answer your views I know not. I hope He who guided Abraham's servant will direct your choice.

I am glad you have been to see Mrs. Unwin and Mr. Cowper. He sent me an account of what you said to Mr. Scott, coram Mr. Raban. I think it was well said. The truth is, the next time I am young, and begin to preach in a country place, I intend not to do just as I did at

\* Afterwards the Rev. Thomas Bull, late rector of Eldon, Norfolk. He was related to Mr. Bull.

† Afterwards Rev. B. Woodd, late rector of Drayton, Beauchamp, and minister of Bentinck Chapel, Marylebone.

‡ Afterwards Rev. W. Goode, rector of St. Ann's, Blackfriars, London.



Olney. Particularly, I will have all the work to myself in public meetings, except the singing. Our prayer meetings and praying men were, I think, useful for the first seven years, upon the whole ; but afterwards great inconveniences ensued. However, it is all well, and will be well with Mr. Scott. Often the wisdom we acquire by experience, comes too late to be applied to the occasions which first taught it us ; but then it is ready against other occasions after.

I have printed, very privately, a letter to my parishioners, and sent one under cover and seal to every house-keeper. I would have sent you one, if I had a frank. The next time you ride to Mr. Cowper's, you may see it. With our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy,

I remain most sincerely yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

17th Nov., '81.

Commend me to your Lord and mine, when you are with him. I hope I long to know, and love, and trust, and serve him better than I have yet done. They say, whoever looked at the Gorgon was transformed into a stone,—such are the effects of sin. But, oh ! for such a sight of Jesus in the glass of the gospel, as might transform my heart from stone to be a heart all over love to Him who has loved me. My love to the young married folks at Pury\* when you see them, and to Miss Flower, if there.

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\* Rev. John Goode, then of Potter's Pury, Northamptonshire, afterwards of White-row, Spitalfields, London.

## LETTER LIX\*

MY DEAR MR. BULL,

IF I was strictly to do nothing by partiality, I should not answer your letters within six months, having some, and from persons whom I love, lying by me, of a still longer date than I have mentioned. But if I have a strong predilection in your favour, I cannot help it, and I hope it is not sinful to indulge it, so as to take you out of course. Then I consider you, if not as actually an invalid, at least a *malade imaginaire*; and I know that imaginary illnesses are, to those who are affected by them, realities, and call for real compassion. I hope and believe you will long survive all the bad effects of your Oxford expedition.

The great State Ship seems to be getting apace into shoal water, and I fear will be aground soon. Things go on from bad to worse; and humiliation seems as little thought of as ever. But though she should, (like Paul's ship), be broken all to pieces, the Lord's people on board her shall get safe to the heavenly shore. We need not, we ought not, to fear for ourselves; but who can help being affected with the case of the many, who have no ears to hear the Lord's voice, no eye to see his hand, in the awful calamities our sins have brought upon us! May I not rather say, Who is sufficiently affected? I am sure I am not. Trade is much at a stand—bankruptcies increase—the distresses of the poor are likely to be great, especially if the new year should bring us, (as I expect,) a hard frost. Oh, what a mischievous thing is sin! how does it fill the world with variety of woe! But our Lord

says to his people, See that *ye* be not troubled. He will take care of us while here, and by and by we shall be removed to a better soil and a better climate, where we shall never be disturbed by the din of war; and those who are yet unborn will reap benefit from the present troubles. The Lord reigns: he governs the world, and let men contrive and plot as they will, they are all instruments in his hand, and shall in the end bring nothing to pass, but what is worthy of his wisdom and goodness to appoint or permit. Even the wrath of men shall praise him. And what man in his wrath or ambition would do if he could, if it be not a part of the Lord's wise plan, shall fail and evaporate. Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and other boasters, who expected to carry every thing before them according to their own wills, had their bounds and commissions, beyond which they could not pass. When they attempted it, they quickly found a hook and bridle in their jaws, and were stopped, turned, and confounded. It is just so in modern times: when mortals speak proudly, the Lord is above them. He takes the wise in their own craftiness. He blows upon their schemes, and they break like a bubble upon the waters. Let us rejoice that this God, who poureth contempt upon princes, is our God. Whatever storms and floods arise, we are in the ark, which is under the protection and the pilotage of Him that loved us, and gave himself for us.

My Dear is sometimes poorly, but, upon the whole, pretty well. Sally has many complaints, and so has the other Sally, sister to Charles's wife, who supplies Peggy's place; but we live in peace, and do tolerably well. Our little girl and myself are favoured with good strong health. We all send our love to you, love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy. I hope you pray often, and earnestly, for us. You are seldom long out of my mind. In par-

ticular, it is usual with me to pay you a mental visit on a Saturday evening, when I suppose you are thinking about the business of the morrow.

My texts on Christmas-day were Heb. ii. 14, 15 ; and in the evening, John ix. 39. I shall want two for New-year's day, but am not yet provided. The hour of prayer and supper is just at hand (nine o'clock), and therefore I must bid you a good night. The Lord bless you, and your affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

28th Dec. '81.

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LETTER LX.

MY DEAR SIR,

I FOUND your letter last night after I came home, thank you for it. My texts on New-year's day were, forenoon, Ps. lxxi. 9 ; in the evening, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9 ; the latter for the young people, the former for the old, not forgetting myself. I am drawing nearer and nearer to the season which David either expected or felt. I observe that the aged believer has no additional claim upon the Lord, who might have rejected him when he first came, and now at last might justly cast him off, as to any plea he can offer for himself ; for his services have been all defective or defiled, and he must confess himself unprofitable and unfaithful. But his plea, in the name of Jesus, is strong and sure.

Many reasons teach him the need of this prayer. As

his graces are still imperfect, so his powers are feelingly upon the decline. It was but little he could do, at the best, and now less and less.

He feels other props and comforts dropping off apace. When he was young he had warm spirits and pleasing prospects; but now what a change of the friends in which he once delighted! In some he has found inconstancy; they have forsaken and forgotten him, and others have been successively taken away by death. They have fallen like the leaves in autumn, and now he stands almost a naked trunk. If any yet remain, he is expecting to lose them likewise, except he himself is taken from them.

Old age abates, and gradually destroys, the relish of such earthly comforts as might be otherwise enjoyed. Pains, infirmities, loss of sleep and appetite, the failure of sight, hearing, and all the senses, are harbingers, like Job's messengers, arriving in close succession to tell him that death is upon his progress, and not far distant. See Eccles. xii.; 2 Sam. xix. 34, 35. If youth has no security, age has no possibility of escaping. Now if he be not comforted from the Lord, to what other quarter can he look? But though friends fail, cisterns burst, gourds wither, strength declines, and death advances; do not Thou forsake me, and all is well. And this is not a helpless cry, but the prayer of faith, founded upon sure promises, and shall be answered. The Lord will not cast off his people.

This subject does not directly suit you at present; but if you live long enough, you will be old in time, and therefore I sent you a little sketch of my sermon.

I wish poor old England had a heart suited to this prayer. The nation has had a time of manhood, strength, and bloom. But it is now greyheaded, weak, and doting;

and, alas ! its grey hairs are not found in the ways of righteousness. Yet I have a good hope the Lord will not utterly cast off this sinful nation, so as to abandon it to the will of his enemies. He has a remnant, and a work among us, and I hope the word is, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.' We must be brought down, impoverished, and put to shame. His glory requires it ; and if we love his name, we must not be greatly sorry for those dispensations which are necessary to convince the nation and the world that the Lord is God. The bulk of a people called Christian, do not know that the Lord is God ; but it is a truth they must learn, whatever the acquisition may cost.

I wish I could feel as I ought—for myself—for the churches—for the nation. I wonder not that our plans have been wrong, and all our expectations defeated. *Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.* But sin is the cause. If we had not provoked the Lord, he would have presided in our councils ; and so far as war had been necessary and right, he would have given our commanders wisdom, union, fidelity, and success. Still it shall be well with them that sigh and mourn before him, and whose eyes affect their hearts.

May the Lord make this new year a good and happy one to you and Mrs. Bull and Tommy. We join in love.

I am sincerely yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 3 Jan '82.*

## LETTER LXI.

MY DEAR GENTLE BULL,

\* \* \* \* \*

I HOPE Tommy has lost his ague, and Mrs. Bull continues well. Love to both from both your poor friends here. Peggy was so well as to visit us on Saturday; but when I returned her visit on Monday, she was very poorly again.

All the illnesses in Guy's Hospital are but feeble types of the various symptoms of that worst of diseases, sin. The best earthly physicians are still men—feeble emblems of Him who healeth soul and body with a word. His name is Jesus. He comes to the poor as readily as to the rich; he takes no fees; and no case ever miscarried in his hand. To him I commend you, and all your complaints.

I am your most affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, January 24, '82.*

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## LETTER LXII.

MY DEAR SIR,

THEY say the chameleon assumes a variety of colours, according to the colour of different objects near him. Thus changeable are my feelings often when I am reading your letters. One paragraph makes me look bright, for you are pretty well, and in good spirits. Perhaps the very next is almost filled with the words pain, weakness, dejection, and the like; then my heart puts on a sable hue, and assimilates itself to your complaints. But, perhaps, before the letter closes, your complaints are forgotten, your spirits revive, and mine likewise, of course. Upon the whole, cheerfulness predominates with me, because I consider your comforts as real and abiding, and your complaints as rather imaginary and transitory.

We were glad to hear that you and Sir Thomas had a safe and good journey home, and that Mrs. Bull was in less pain than when you left her. My wishes for her are, 1st, that her affliction may be sanctified; and then, 2nd, that, if the Lord please, it may be relieved and removed. He is the best physician and surgeon; he can make the lame walk, and heal a wound, whether it be in the leg or in the heart; yea, he wounds only to heal, and afflicts us that he may thereby take occasion to comfort us. I trust she feels herself safe in his merciful hands, and believes that he will surely do her good. If we suffer, it shall neither be in vain, nor for a long time. Yet a while, and he will change these vile bodies, and fashion them according to the pattern of his own glorious body. What a thought is that! Could we



have dared to hope for so much, if he had not promised it? No; it would have been presumption; but, now God has promised it, it were presumption to question his word.

It seemed high time for me to write, and yet I find nothing at hand to fill up the paper. Shall I touch upon politics? We have revolutions and changes, but the newspapers (my chief sources of intelligence) have told you all the Lord is doing, and will do something worthy of himself; this we may be sure of. As to the particulars, we must wait the openings of his Providence; and, since we already know that the sum total will be, *all is right*, we may wait with patience and confidence. At present, we seem to have some distant prospect, at least, of peace; a blessing which appears to me of such great importance, that I am not very solicitous as to the terms by which it may be attained. It seems, the *outs* are now to be the *ins*, and the *ins* the *outs*; and I suppose a new ministry will be attended with a new opposition; for these things, among us, seem to be as much of course, as that a shadow should be inseparable from the body. In the meantime, my part, as a Christian, is to be quietly subject to "the powers that be;" for they are all (whether they intend it or not) busy in accomplishing the will of my Lord. In the great ship of the nation, I am only a passenger; the mariners will never consult me about the course they should steer, nor regard my advice if I should give it them unasked. If I have any office on board, it is, at most, but that of a chaplain, who, though he has no hand in the navigation, is doubtless engaged, by both character and interest, to pray for a good voyage; and that He, who has the wind and weather at his disposal, may, in mercy, bring the poor tempest-tossed vessel safely through the storm.

Surely man walketh in a vain shew: surely he disquiets himself in vain. What a bustle are a parcel of immortals in about the momentary concerns of the present life! Playing at blindman's-buff, and several being blind-folded for things that will not profit. And while the bandage before their eyes hinders them from seeing they are upon the edge of a precipice, in the midst of their eager play they slip, they fall in succession one after the other—they are inevitably, irrevocably gone, and their places know them no more; but others crowd in to fill up their vacancies, and the play still goes on. With what a mixture of compassion and indignation may we conceive the holy angels beholding what is transacting upon the earth!

Adored be the gracious Saviour, who took the bandage from our eyes, withdrew us from the dangerous brink, to sit in peace and safety at his feet.

Now, if we are wise to know our privilege, all the commotions around us need not affect us any more (as to our own personal concernments) than the rattling of the storm against the wall, when we are sitting snug within doors by the fire-side. Yet it becomes us to pity those who are found in the street exposed without shelter to the fury of the tempest.

I shall be very glad to receive the book of letters you mention, which I should not have sent amongst the rest to Newport, if I had not been inattentive through haste.

Love from us both to Mrs. Bull and Mr. Tommy. Continue to pray for us, and may the Lord bless you and yours.

I am your affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 23rd March, '82.*

## LETTER LXIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THANKS for your letter, and I will thank the Lord for putting out the St. Anthony's fire, for relieving Mrs. Bull, and for removing Tommy's fever. He is a tender plant; I can conceive something of your feelings when he is threatened. I hope he will be spared for your comfort, and am sure he will if it be upon the whole best; if otherwise, I doubt not but He who has supported you under former trials, would still give you proofs of his all-sufficiency, and enable you to acquiesce in the appointments of his wisdom.

Mr. Clayton lately called upon me, to tell me, that many persons are seriously thinking of establishing a new academy, upon a liberal ground, for preparing young men for the ministry—in which the greatest stress might be laid upon truth, life, spirituality; and the least stress possible upon modes, forms, and non-essentials—that it must be at a moderate distance from London—that, in fact, Newport was the place fixed upon, for the sake of one Mr. Bull, who lives there, and who it was hoped would accept the superintendency. He said some talked of a much larger sum, but that he himself made no doubt but so far as 500*l.* per annum would be readily subscribed to promote so good a design.

He then said it was his request, and the desire of many of his friends, that I would draw up a plan for the forming such an academy, and likewise that I would write to you upon the subject.

The design met my hearty approbation, as it stood

connected with Mr. Bull, who I said appeared to me the most proper person I could think of, to undertake it. As to my drawing up a plan, I half promised to write my thoughts of it—that is, I mean to tell Mr. Clayton, by letter, how I should sketch out such an institution, if I lived in Utopia or Otaheite, and could have the management of things my own way. If they can pick any hints worthy of notice from such an attempt, they shall be welcome to them; but to draw a formal plan how an academy should be regulated in this enlightened age and country, and to hit such a medium as might unite and coalesce the respectable Dissenters and Methodists, who seem willing to promote this business, might savour too much of presumption in one who was never either at university or academy himself, but rather spent the time which other young men employ in study, in the wilds of Africa.

However, feeling myself rather awkward as to the service assigned me, I told Mr. Clayton I should wish to hear from you first, expecting that a sketch from you would, in a measure, illuminate me, and qualify me for the undertaking.

I wish, therefore, to know something of your mind and views, and the sooner the better. It is a service I have long wished to see you more fully engaged in, and am not willing to see that time which might be better employed, taken up in the instruction of boys.

There is much thirst for the gospel in Lancashire: people willing to hear, and actually more congregations formed than preachers can be procured for. A Mr. Gardiner, from Lancaster, has been long in town. He seems a lively, understanding man. A part of his business is to procure preachers, if he can; but the situation is so distant, and the service not over pleasing to flesh and blood. Grace, humility, zeal, self-denial, and ex-

tempore speaking, are requisites. He says there are now two congregations, in particular, that afford a good prospect : in the one, if the minister can live upon 100*l.* per year ; in the other, if he can live by faith in the promises. He desired me to ask if your Mr. Fordham is ready to take the field ; if he would like such a service ; if you think it would suit him, etc. I must just add, Love, love, love, and wish you all a good night.

I am always and very much your

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 17th April, '82.*

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#### LETTER LXIV

MONSIEUR, MY DEAR FRIEND,

MY little portion of retired time is so much engrossed by the academy business, that I can hardly afford ten minutes to write a line by Mrs. Wilberforce. Yet I would wish you to know that I am not unmindful of you. My work grows upon my hands, and is likely to be a volume ; and, after all, not what Mr. Clayton asked for—an academy for England, but for Utopia. But if the Lord enables me to drop some hints that may be useful to the design, I shall be thankful. Some people may perhaps think it a satire upon present academies, but this was not my intention. I think one more writing forenoon may bring me to a conclusion ; but then I must transcribe it. For though my first thoughts are usually my best, in the main, yet it is so

carelessly and badly written, with so many carets, so many words interlined, and scratched out, and put one for another, that few people but myself can cleverly decipher it. I will go on, with my best speed : indeed, I must, for I cannot comfortably attend to anything else till it be finished. This week Dr. and Mrs. Ford, of Melton, honour us by residing under our roof, notwithstanding which, I have written daily, excepting yesterday. To-day I shall be out from morning to night, and what to-morrow will permit I know not ; but I know that we love you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, and that I must hasten to subscribe myself,

Yours, affectionately,

JOHN NEWTON.

*2nd May, '82.*

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### LETTER LXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I FINISHED the task Mr. Clayton assigned me about ten days ago, and put it into his hands. I understand it has passed from him, and is passing into other hands. Your curiosity to see it, I am told, is upon tip-toe ; but it must wait awhile. I suppose it will not return to me for some time.

I have had the pleasure of pleasing my employer, at

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least ; and perhaps a few of every party may like it ; but I expect many of all the parties concerned will not much admire my plan. I have given my sentiments undisguised and at large, without much caring who is pleased or displeased ; for as I live in Utopia, it is of no importance to me what the people who live at such a distance as London are pleased to think of me.

The most flattering sentiment I form of my performance is, that though I have filled seven sheets of post paper with very close writing, I have a good hope there will hardly be found a single period which will meet with your disapprobation. Your good opinion is of more consequence to me than that of others, because you are a nearer neighbour to me ; for you live, or at least frequently reside, in Utopia as well as myself. Though you and I are both originals in our way, have our separate and distinct peculiarities, and, consequently, cannot be exactly alike, yet it appears to me, (*absit invidia,*) that I have the honour to think more with you, upon the whole circle of our professional subjects, than with any minister I know ; and accordingly, I expect that you will approve in a manner of the whole and every part of my plan ; whereas I can hardly think of any other friend of mine who may not find something to object to here and there. But if I should be disappointed in this my sanguine expectation, and have not come so near your views as I think, you must let me down as softly as you can, for fear the mortification should hurt me, and I should feel too much when constrained to say, *Ah miser ! quanta spe decidi.*

The scene of my play is laid in Utopia ; the acts, or heads, are four :—

I. The situation, why not too near the metropolis,

nor too far from it, but about a moderate day's journey of fifty or fifty-one miles.

II. The choice of the tutor. I will not tell you that it is your picture drawn from the life. It is sufficient if I have hit off a general idea of what you wish to be.

III. The choice of pupils. Why they must be serious, capable, and having desires already towards the ministry upon just and solid grounds.

IV. Their studies and line of conduct. What they are to learn and do; and what they are not to learn nor do. If this part should be thought a satire upon some academies, I can honestly say I did not intend it as such. I do not mean to meddle with any body's affairs but my own, I set out with a simple desire of tracing the clue of truth whithersoever it might lead me.

Mr. Clayton seems to hint it must be printed. I shall not be unwilling, if it be proposed. I suppose he does not mean *published*, but a number of copies to be taken off for the perusal of friends. If so, it will come abroad under the signature of Omicron.

It is an important subject, and I care not who knows my opinion of it, as I seemed providentially called to it. That a Dissenting minister should be sent by Dissenters to me for a plan of an academy seemed so extraordinary, that after a few fears lest my shoulders should be too weak for the burden, I complied with readiness, almost as if Gabriel had been sent to set me to work.

Tell Mrs. Bull and Tommy that we love them. My Dear is at present but poorly: Sally Johnson is poorly; Sally B. but poorly; and poor Peggy still in the hospital, and very poorly. Miss Newton, as we sometimes call her, and her Papa are, through mercy, in full health.



Praise the Lord for his goodness to us, and pray him to sanctify our comparatively light crosses.

Believe me always and affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles' Square, 25th May, 1782.*

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### LETTER LXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SET about the task Mr. Clayton gave me with good spirits, from a persuasion that though you and I might possibly differ about some subordinate parts of my plan, I should in some good degree meet your idea upon the whole, otherwise I should not have attempted it. I am glad of your approbation, because I hoped for it, and aimed at it. I believe as you say, that I think more nearly with you on the subject, than with any other person I am acquainted with.

Mr. Clayton and Mr. John Wilson my neighbour are now both out of town. The latter is expected home tomorrow. I understand the present tutors of the Evangelical Academy\* have proposed to resign their charge, and I believe some of the supporters of that institution thought of you as the properest person to undertake it. But my plan will not suit with their design, which seems to be chiefly to give a little assistance to persons who

\* The institution referred to in letter xxvii.

have already begun to preach. But Mr. Wilson told me, that he did not doubt but there were people enough, both willing and able, to carry my scheme into execution; that is, to give a number of promising young men a regular education, and that there was not a doubt but you were the proper person to engage in it. Here the matter must rest at present, till his return, and for a few weeks afterwards. If it should proceed, it will be perhaps desirable to print a few copies of the Utopian plan, not for publication, but to distribute amongst friends, as it would take a long time to circulate a single manuscript. If it should be printed, you will of course have a copy among the first. If not, I will endeavour to send it you again, that you may get it transcribed, if you think it worth while. I have done my part, and you have done yours, by signifying your willingness to listen to the proposal, if it should be made to you. The rest is in the Lord's hands; if it be agreeable to his will, and a service which he will deign to smile upon, he will bring it forward. If not, we are but where we were, and I trust we do not wish to see anything brought forward, but under his auspices and influence.

This will seem an awkward business all round to some persons. What apology can Mr. Clayton make to many Dissenters for applying to a clergyman for a plan of an academy? And what can the poor cleric say to some people in his line, for chalking out the plan of a dissenting methodistical academy? How will the staunch Tabernacle folks like his inuendoes against some of their popular, loud, powerful preachers? I think this poor speckled bird will be pecked at by fowls of every wing. But it is well, that though he does not wish to offend any of them, he is mighty indifferent as to their censures. If we act with a single eye, and are desirous to serve and please the

Lord, we may be easy as to consequences. When the conscience is clear and the heart simple, neither the applauses nor the anathemas of worms are worth twopence per bushel.

Your letter is a curiosity in its kind, for you have not found room for a single line respecting either health or sickness. From which I am willing to infer, that you were not very ill, or in very great pain, when you wrote it; or you would not have omitted a subject so familiar to your pen. I was indisposed a few days, but not confined or stopped in my public work.

I have some reason to think of the apostle's words, "As poor, yet making many (at least some) rich." I seem to speak with liberty, and to be heard with acceptance and profit. I cannot but hope the Lord enriches some of my hearers by my ministry, but, at the same time, it is certain I feel very poor to myself. If they are feasted, it is otherwise with me. Through mercy I have just bread enough to keep me alive, and this is more than I deserve. In the pulpit, and while the eyes of my fellow-creatures are upon me, I seem to be in earnest, and talk big. Perhaps some that hear me think, You lead a happy life. But if they knew how and what I am at home, they would pity me. Ah, what a poor cold, confused, inconsistent creature! A poor servant, indeed! and my only comfort springs from thinking (which yet I do too seldom and faintly) what a Master I serve. We join in hearty love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy. I trust you believe me to be your very affectionate friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Horton, 20th June.*

## LETTER LXVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

MR. JOHN WILSON is now returned. He is my intimate friend, warmly disposed to forward our Utopian plan, and for his character, connexions, his ability, and generosity, a proper person to move in it. Thus far we have made a good beginning. He is the only one with whom I have talked about it, except Mr. Clayton, who will not be at home till the end of next week. In the mean while Mr. Wilson wishes the plan may be printed just as it is, not published; and I mean soon to send it to the press, and take off two hundred and fifty copies, to be distributed amongst those who may be expected will promote the design.

The only preliminary we have as yet settled, and which is the *sine qua non* of the whole business, is that Mr. Bull is to be the tutor.

But Mr. Wilson thinks we had better form the *actual* plan, before the affair is publicly talked of. He says, if otherwise, a number of people are called together to consult about it, each one will probably have some proposal or nostrum of his own; the aggregate of which may diverge so far from the original scheme as to overturn it, and render it unworthy either of your acceptance, or of our endeavour to promote it; whereas, if the plan is previously fixed, in such a manner that no just objections can lie against it, it may go down the more glibly, and save abundance of labour.

The good opinion we have of you, makes us desirous that you should be under as little control as possible.

The whole management will be left to yourself : yet this power must be delegated to you by some proper authority ; and they who support you in it, will have a right to know how it is exercised, and likewise to be occasionally consulted.

A principal difficulty that occurs to us, is concerning the admission of students. We would not have any forced upon you, or to continue with you, if you find that their temper, conduct, or want of capacity or application, should render them improper persons. On the other hand, if the negative or the exclusion should rest wholly upon you, it will put you in an invidious situation. Those who are excluded will, of course, think themselves injured ; and it is probable the fathers, mothers, brothers, and cousins, and so on, of such aggrieved persons will rise up against you, as an austere and unreasonable man. We must have your thoughts upon the best method or medium for obviating this difficulty.

My plan, you will observe, proposes a certain annual stipend for the tutor, whether the pupils be more or fewer, with a reasonable allowance for the board of each beside. It takes for granted, that the labourer is worthy of his hire, on the one hand ; and, on the other, that the tutor, for the sake of serving the Lord, and training up a number of youths for the ministry, who are to be supported by subscription—that is, by charity—will, by the proposals he makes, show a disinterestedness worthy of the cause he serves, and of the character he bears in Utopia. You might probably make more money of half the number, if you confined yourself to the sons of gentlemen who can afford to pay handsomely. On this point, I must get you to speak for yourself, and propose your own terms, as I believe your friends would rather you should mention what you think right, than

undertake to judge for you. I request you, therefore, according to the hints which I have dropped, to take a good pen, good black ink, then light your pipe, and write me such a letter, expressive of your views and wishes, as will be proper for me to show to any persons whom it may concern. After all, both you and I may have our labour for our pains; but this I know, that if the thing is of the Lord, it shall prosper. Some great affairs have grown from as small beginnings; and, at the worst, whether He is pleased to bring this about or not, when we mean simply and humbly to serve him, he will graciously accept of the intention.

I saw Mr. Monk at church to-day, and invited him to come to see me. There is, it seems, an honesty about him which I like. Poor, wise, foolish, evangelical, self-righteous people of Olney! Too many there seem more solicitous that the minister should preach the gospel, than to profit by the gospel themselves.

Our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy.

I am much and always yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*3rd July, '82.*

I showed Mr. Wilson this letter. He approves all but what I say of him. He thinks you will overrate his consequence. His personal good-will and service you may depend upon, but he says his influence is not worth mentioning.

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## LETTER LXVIII.

DEAR SIR,

THIS will come to you *viâ* Olney, for it will be too short to deserve postage. I expect some Utopias on Tuesday, but my Olney friends now with me talk of going on Monday. If so, you must wait a little longer for them.

I believe something will come of our plan, that a proposal will be made to you, such as I judge, from your letters, you will not refuse. But, as yet, things are in embryo, and not sufficiently ripe for particularizing. I was lately sent for unexpectedly by some gentlemen, with whom I had not exchanged a word upon the subject, excepting with Mr. Clayton, who was present; but the invitation did not come from him (he is but just returned from Scotland). There will be a second meeting in less than a fortnight, when I may perhaps be able to tell you more.

It seems generally agreed that you are to be the man. As to Newport, the only objection (which yet may be overruled) is to the distance. Some think a subscription will languish if the object is so far off, and especially that no committee will undertake to travel so far. For these reasons a situation within twenty miles of London would be preferable. I expect the question will be asked,—Can Mr. Bull be prevailed on to remove to some place within these limits? If you would put an answer into my mouth, you must write in the course of the week. You will ask the Lord, and he will tell you what to say. It should seem you could hardly go to a place where your

ministry would be less regarded than where you are. But notwithstanding this, you will not go without his leave. If it be his will, he will prepare your mind and your way.

You know the Lord does all things right, and not a hair of his children's heads falls to the ground without him. You know he can bring light out of darkness, and has wise reasons for all he does, and for all he permits to be done. Dwell a minute upon these thoughts before you read further.—Now you are prepared, I proceed to tell you, that a friend of yours and mine was grievously hurt by an ox on Monday last. Mr. Sharp and two other surgeons attend him. They tell me there are no symptoms at present to forbid the hopes of a recovery, though they have not been without fear of a fracture in his skull. But from present favourable appearances, they hope it is not so. Our friend lives not far from Barbican, and his name is Barton.

I am with him every day. He is perfectly sensible, and spoke yesterday very comfortably. I shall see him again by and by. Mrs. Barton is very composed and comfortable.

A single ox, you see, can hurt the shell of a believer; but, blessed be God, all the bulls of Bashan, if collected, cannot touch his kernel. He is safe, for his life is hid with Christ in God.

I know three Bulls at Newport, which I believe are all very harmless, and therefore I send my love, and Mrs. Newton's, to them.

Yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*27th July, '82.*



## LETTER LXIX.

MONSIEUR MON CHER AMI,—

Mr. BARTON showed me your letter, and desired me to inform you, that though he does not think himself competent for writing, yet he hopes he is in a fair way of doing well, and gets forward daily, though slowly. I can tell you that his situation has been highly precarious, but the Lord watched over him. A small addition to the momentum with which the beast struck him must have fractured his skull: as it was, it put his head so much out of sorts, that he was at first, for a time, senseless, then delirious for another period, and so confused and mazy for a long time, that he could hardly think at all; his eyes, likewise, were affected—he could scarcely bear the light. But when your letter came he was able to read it. He is now cheerful, can smile, and smoke a pipe; has been abroad in a coach several times. I hope to see him about the streets, as usual, in a fortnight's time. But Mr. Sharp wishes him to come forward very gently. I believe, nay, I more than believe, the Lord has been with them both. Mrs. Barton has been wonderfully supported, so as to sit up with him (when needful) night after night. I visited them daily; she was always the same—composed, resigned, and speaking only of the Lord's goodness. They send their love to you.

You will soon receive an official letter from the chairman of the Utopian Society, inviting you to London. I hope you will come up as soon as you can, and fix the time in your official answer. We had but one additional member last night, but I think the Lord sent him—a man

of weight, both of character and fortune. He offered hearty concurrence and assistance, upon two conditions : 1. That the academy might not be fixed nearer than thirty miles to London (if fifty, he thought so much the better). That the number of students might be small, not exceeding twelve ; and, to make short of it, he moved that it was desirable the proposed academy should be formed as near as may be upon the plan lately printed and signed Omicron—this was carried. 2. That Mr. Bull be desired to undertake it. Two resolves to this purpose will be transmitted to you in form ; the next meeting will depend upon your coming to meet with them. Now put yourself in the Lord's hand, and make no unnecessary delay to come over and help us.

My brother and sister are with us, and it is uncertain how long they will stay, therefore we cannot lodge you ; but shall be glad of as much of your company as you can afford. Your city friends will be glad to take you in, and your business will now lie in the city.

I have not time for more at present, but love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy from my Dear, and from your affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

21 *August*. '82.

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## LETTER LXX.

DEAR SIR,

I WRITE because you desired me, otherwise it seemed unnecessary; but I may send my wishes for your safe and comfortable journey to us. We shall be glad to see you on Tuesday morning, by eight o'clock, if you can.

Before I received yours, Mr. Thornton had kindly engaged me to visit Hastings. I took my place by his direction a week before hand, as there is seldom room at a short notice. I go down on Thursday next. The meeting of the Utopian Club is to be on Tuesday evening. I heard you were to stay in town to preach on Sunday for Mr. Clayton, but it seems you do not. I wish we could go down together, but I much question if you can take a place in time by the same diligence. My stay at Hastings will be but a few days.

I thought you would collect from what I wrote, that the prevailing desire amongst us is, that you should *not remove* from Newport. It will depend upon yourself. You have only to say firmly that you do not choose to remove, and that point will be settled. I am of opinion the design will fail, or at least will not answer our wishes, if it be brought nearer than Newport; and, I believe, Mr. Welsh, and others think so too. Therefore, if you relax upon this article, we shall be disconcerted, and perhaps divided. Thus much, perhaps, it may be proper to hint to you before you come to town, as it is possible you may talk with somebody or other upon the subject, before I see you.

Love to Mrs. Bull and the little Bull. My brother and sister are with us, so that we cannot lodge you in the house ; but you have a snug corner in the heart of your affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

31st August, '82.

### LETTER LXXI.

REVEREND AND DEAR PROFESSOR BULL, U.D., *i. e.*  
DOCTOR OF UTOPIA,

MR. VANITY has been hinting to me your impatience and uneasiness ; how you have been watching the post, and counting the days, and thinking it a vast while since you heard from me. But I say, how can vanity be so vain ? However, though I ought to suppose you can make a good shift without me, I am not willing to be forgotten by you, and therefore I will just enclose you a line of thanks for your last.

I hope all your complaints are subsided—that you will not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord to the Utopians. I suppose Mr. Clayton told you how, and how far, we went on at the last meeting. It therefore had an auspicious beginning, the subscription was tolerable, considering the number present ; and the mode of admitting students, etc., was settled in a way which I hoped would be satisfactory to you. Next Tuesday a little abridged account of the design is to be agreed upon,

to be printed, as a sort of bill to put into the hands of inquirers, which will save the trouble of telling the same thing over and over. I was desired to draw up something, and I have it ready to lay before them. I have little doubt but the subscription will soon be sufficient for the support of the first four, if we knew where to find them.

I went last time to take leave and withdraw, now I had seen the society formed, and the business actually on foot; but just before we broke up, a motion was made, and passed without a negative, that Mr. N —, be desired to attend the next meeting. I seem to be hooked in, and perhaps shall not be able to force myself out, without breaking through proprieties; if not, I shall stay and make myself as easy as I can. Some of the wags have called us the Utopian Society; and I believe we shall assume it as our own voluntary description, and wear the reproach (if it was so intended) as our honour. But indeed I cannot complain of reproaches or persecution in this business. Having had only civil things said to me about it hitherto. Even a friend of ours, not far from Tooke's Court, thanked me for the plan, which he said he much approved in the main. I did not expect he could approve that part which glances upon church order—but he showed no disposition to dispute about it.

Mr. Webb\* is gone—fully ripe I doubt not, like a shock of corn in due season. I saw him two or three times in the former part of his illness; afterwards he was a while out of town, and the first time I called after

\* The Rev. James Webb, for many years pastor of the Independent church, meeting at Fetter-lane, founded by Dr. Goodwin, in 1660,—Wilson's History of Dissenting Churches, vol. iii. p. 460.

his return, he was too low to speak with me, and sent me his love and farewell by message, down stairs. I loved and respected him greatly, and thought him among the first, if not the very first, of his denomination. I speak not of him as a scholar or divine. He probably was not inferior to his brethren in these characters. I knew him chiefly as a Christian; as such I thought him eminent, solid, humble, spiritual, peaceful in himself, and of course a friend of peace. Grace reigned in his heart, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. He seemed to have no leisure to speak much of other subjects, and there was a savour in all that he said. His manner of speaking showed that he knew himself. I knew no man who had less of what I call the *don* about him. He shone without affecting to blaze or sparkle; and while others considered him as a teacher, he seemed to consider himself as a learner. In his last illness he did not speak of any remarkable consolations, but expressed an edifying, encouraging example of a calm, unshaken confidence in Jesus Christ crucified, as the alone and sufficient ground of his hope. I have lost for a season a valuable friend, but I hope by and by to see him again. Blessed are the dead who die thus in the Lord, they rest from their labours and conflicts, and are now before the throne.

We are much as usual; upon the whole pretty well; what we chiefly want is more gratitude and sensibility to the Lord of our life. I trust, however, the desire of my heart is towards him. We join in love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy. Pray for us, and believe me to be yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 16 Nov., '82.*

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## LETTER LXXII.

DEAR AND REV. BULL,

ON Monday, part of a pig-hog came to our door; and though it brought no recommendation, nor could speak a word for itself, we, according to our accustomed kindness and hospitality to such strangers, gave it a friendly welcome. It was doubly welcome when the postman called afterwards, and informed us from whence it came. We thank Mrs. Bull for thinking of us, and you for seconding her motion.

My brother and sister have left us about a fortnight. But just now we are under a cloud. Sally Johnson has been very ill. I hope she is better: in the medical phrase, out of danger. But we were apprehensive of losing her. She has had a violent pain in her breast, and we were much afraid an inflammation would take place. It is a disorder of which her mother, and several of her family, have died, which circumstance alarmed us rather the more. If the Lord should please to take her to himself we shall feel it. She has lived long with us, has been always affectionate and faithful, and for a number of years we have considered her rather as an intimate friend, or a relative, than as a servant. She is in the Lord's hands, all whose appointments are right, and we hope he will enable us to think and say so under every change he may allot us; but I now seem to hope she will not die, but live to declare his wonderful works. I hope before the time you have fixed, she will be restored. If we have a sick house, I shall not invite you to be an inmate. But as we shall otherwise be very glad to re-

ceive you and yours under our roof, I expect that before you come up, you will inquire whether we can conveniently take you in or not. We will be very free upon that head, and if we cannot, you may go to John-street,\* or where you please; but I have a right to the first offer.

We are kept in long suspense about the peace. I know we shall have one if the Lord sees fit to give it us; and at any rate, there is a peace passing understanding, of which the politicians cannot deprive us. I cannot but long that a stop may be put to the horrid effusion of blood, which sin has so long occasioned. However, it shall verily go well with them that fear the Lord. May he abundantly bless you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, and your house, and your congregation, and all your concerns. We unite in love to you all.

I am very much yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton 20th Dec., '82.*

\* John-street, Bedford-row, the residence of Mrs. Wilberforce.



## LETTER LXXIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM glad when I jump in judgment with Mrs. Bull about you, because she knows you well. You will please to do what I strangely omitted in my last. I mean to tell her that we shall be very glad to see her with you here, as one bed will hold you, and we can find some auger-hole to squeeze Tommy into.

My house will be at your service for the whole time, if you please. We love your company, and shall not be weary; but I do not mean to chain you: you shall be quite at liberty to please yourself if you can, and I will do my best to please you likewise. It would be strange if the men of this world were to have no fling at Utopians. But you know the fable of the Dog and the Moon. Let them bark, let us shine. Let them scold us, and let us pray for them. If we are in the Lord's way in the path of duty, a bushel of our fellow-worm's opinions, either *pro* or *con*, can do us neither good nor harm.

I hope you will preach away all your cough and pain, and come to us lusty and strong as an eagle. However, we shall expect you to complain a little of course, and you will allow us to smile at you a little as usual. We meet to-night to examine the merits of the first candidate for the academy. Mr. Odel's guinea will be welcome, and deserves thanks. Farewell! Love and a good journey to you all from

J. & M. NEWTON.

14th Jan., '83.

I advise you, by all means, to take coach at Islington, and come directly to Charles-square, where you will find a dish of tea, a pipe and some orinoco, and a hearty welcome, all ready waiting for you.

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## LETTER LXXIV.

REV. PROFESSOR AND DEAR FRIEND,

FOR once I consult your pocket and my own. It will cost you nothing to receive my congratulation for your escape out of the ditch, and your thanks to me, for it may return to me as cheap. Well, the Lord is to be owned and praised in all things. We live always upon the brink of innumerable dangers; for the most part they are invisible, and while we do not see them we talk of being in safety; but if one is permitted to appear, then we account our preservation marvellous. Whereas, the real wonder is, that we are preserved a single hour in any situation. I am glad the horse was not permitted to destroy the hopes of Utopia with one blow of his foot. I hope you are spared for some good purposes, and, amongst others, to prepare the ministers, who shall in due time prepare the sermons, by which the Lord will graciously prepare the hearts of many sinners to seek his face.

I hope soon to give you joy of a very promising pupil, recommended by Mr. Foster.\* I cannot doubt but he

\* The Rev. Henry Foster, rector of St. James's, Clerkenwell.

will please and encourage you as a first fruit, if he be admitted. A meeting was called for his admission on Monday last, but there were only Mr. Adams, Neale, and Plummer present; and no minister being there, the gentlemen chose to defer the determination till Monday next. I was at Clapham, and therefore not in fault; nor can I attend next Monday; but I have told Mr. Neale my full satisfaction in the candidate, who, I hope, will soon be under your orders.

I showed Mr. Neale your last letter, in which the rules are; indeed, I left it with him; but this is only *inter nos*. You must send a copy to him officially. He thinks with me that they are all very proper and necessary, and, so far as we know, may be sufficient; but you must be the best judge of what is requisite to establish a good police in your republic. But a thousand rules will not secure cheerful and affectionate obedience from your subjects, unless you have the Lord's special blessing to conciliate their hearts, and to keep them stedfast in the pursuit of the grand design of the institution. The society seem, one and all, at present, disposed to treat you with the fullest confidence, and to second all your wishes; and if, when the subscribers increase, there should any persons be added who are not equally liberal-minded, still the committee, I doubt not, will be cordially disposed to make your service as comfortable as possible.

People will talk as they please, and it is a mercy to sit loose to their opinions, and let them talk on—provided we can do it in a right spirit. I mean, from a humble consciousness that our views are upright before the Lord, and that we are simply aiming to serve him. If he smile, it little signifies who is displeased. But we

will pray for grace, that we may do nothing that can give just displeasure to anybody.\*

Our new institution† at the Castle and Falcon promises

\* This institution thus formed was designated the Newport Pagnel Evangelical Institution for the Education of Young Men for the Christian Ministry. For several years it was supported by voluntary contributions. Amongst its subscribers was the late excellent John Thornton, Esq., who so much approved its plan, and the manner in which it was conducted, that in January, 1786, he generously offered to undertake the entire charge of its maintenance. Alluding to this subject in a letter to Mr. Bull, he says, "When you want money remember I am your banker, and you may draw freely." By his will Mr. Thornton bequeathed to Mr. Bull a certain sum for the support of the Academy as long as he should have the care of it. In the year 1786, as stated in another note, the Rev. Samuel Greathead was appointed to assist Mr. Bull in the work of tuition; and upon his undertaking, in 1789, the charge of the Independent congregation at Woburn, Beds., the Rev. Thomas P. Bull succeeded him, being united with his father in the superintendence of the Academy till the death of the Rev. W. Bull in July, 1814. From that period to 1831 he had the sole charge of it.

As the benefit resulting from Mr. Thornton's legacy was to cease on the demise of the Rev. William Bull, the friends of the Evangelical Institution, at Newport, were anxious to use means to prevent its dissolution. A meeting was accordingly held in London, in March 1812, when it was resolved to employ suitable measures for its perpetuation. These efforts happily succeeded, and the Academy has been supported to the present period, by the contributions of the religious public.

In 1831 the Rev. Josiah Bull, M. A., was associated with his father in the work of tuition, and the institution was conducted under their care till the year 1842, when the Rev. John Watson was appointed to the office of tutor. More than eighty young men have passed through the college since its establishment; and there are at present more than fifty of its students who are preaching the truth in this or other lands. The number of students is eight; the terms of study four years; and the annual expenditure of the institution a little above £500.

† See Letter 80.

well. We are now six members, and voted in a seventh last night. We begin with tea ; then a short prayer introduces a conversation for about three hours upon a proposed subject, and we seldom flag. Mr. Bates usually sits silent the first half hour, and perhaps takes the second to himself in a continued discourse. The light he throws upon the subject, and the precision with which he treats it, are admirable ; and so are his humility and ingenuousness. You can form no right judgment of him from the metaphysical dispute between him and Mr. Isaac Milner.\* He is indeed a main pillar in the society, and I hope those meetings will prove a benefit to us all. I think they are the most interesting and instructive conversations I ever had a share in. Perhaps it may gratify your curiosity to be told the points we have hitherto discussed. Take them as follows :—

1st Meeting. What is the proper idea of growth in grace ; and what are the best evidences of such growth, both in ourselves and others ? Proposed by J. N.

2nd Meeting. To what is owing the different reception of the gospel amongst professors, so that in some it thrives, and in others seems to produce no good fruit ? Proposed by Mr. Foster.

3rd Meeting. Is the decalogue a compact summary of the law of God to man ? Or, how far had it a peculiar respect to the state of the Israelites at that time ? Proposed by J. N.

4th Meeting. How far is it the duty of a minister to accommodate himself to the weakness, the taste, or the prejudices of his hearers ?

The subject for the next meeting is to be, What influence has natural temper and constitution upon religion ?

\* Afterwards Dr. Milner, Dean of Carlisle

Thus far for the history of our Royal Society, which, perhaps, deserves that name more than that which meets at Somerset House; as, with us, I trust the members are all of the royal family, and the King himself condescends to meet with us.

Considering my little leisure, I have written a long letter; shall only add our joint love to you and yours, a request for your prayers, and an assurance that I am yours very affectionately,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Feb. 28, '83.*

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LETTER LXXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR suspicions about what you term my long silence rather grieve me, especially as I know not how to remove their cause in future, for, as I am circumstanced, it is morally impossible for me to write as often as I would. I should hope our friendship is too strong to be affected by punctilios. If I was not to hear from you for a great while, though I should be deprived of a pleasure, I should impute the delay to a hundred causes—to any cause, rather than indulge an apprehension that your regard was abated. Judge of me the same way, and be assured that I love you dearly, whether I can find time for writing or not. When I can, I am sure I always do myself a pleasure. At present, I do not think myself

much to blame, for I believe it cannot be three weeks since I wrote last.

I suppose Mr. Neale has already informed you that Mr. Gardiner was unanimously accepted, and that the society only wait for a letter from him, in compliance with the rules, and do not wish to give him the trouble of a journey to London. Your recommendation of any person upon your personal knowledge, will, I believe, be always accepted ; only, to save time, it should be accompanied with a letter from the candidate. Had Mr. Gardiner written when you did, the business would have been finished at once, and upon the spot. I hope you will, upon inquiry, find that he is able to support himself as to the incidental expenses of clothes and books, as that expense does not properly fall within the society's plan. But should it be otherwise, my good offices will not be wanting. I take it for granted, he will not wish to be dependent, if it can be avoided.

Mr. Armstrong will be ready for you in about two or three weeks. He could not quit his office till quarter-day ; that is, till to-day. And then he will want a little time to settle his affairs. I trust he will prove a promising first fruit, and do not doubt of your loving him as soon as you see him. You will presently perceive that he is modest and spiritual ; and I expect that, upon further acquaintance, you will find that he has a turn for study and improvement.

It is a time of feeling with us. My sister Cunningham, whom we expected from Scotland this month, to live with us, was taken ill a little before the purposed time of removal ; and we have little room to hope for her recovery. She buried her husband in May last, and her daughter, aged fourteen, in October. Her surviving child, a girl of twelve, is now with us,—a sweet,

amiable creature ; but it is probable she will not survive long, as she has a hectic, and other symptoms of decline. She drinks asses' milk, and I think is better since she came from Scotland. She has been with us three weeks.

You know something of my Dear's turn, and will judge that, with a sick sister at a distance, and a sick child before her eyes, she is tried. However, she is supported, and I trust she will be supported. The Lord is very gracious : we have found him so. He has already brought her through many of these family trials, and some of them have been very sharp. Having had such proof of his goodness in times past, why should we not say, " I will trust and not be afraid ?" For he is the same ; his arm is not shortened, nor his ear heavy, neither can his compassions fail.

Mr. Ribright languished until last Monday morning, and then died. I trust his end was safe, though his path was not comfortable. I attend his funeral this afternoon. He is to be laid in the ground belonging to the late Mr. Wallin's Meeting.\* To-morrow evening I am to preach a sermon for him, from Psalm xlv. 10. Now may the Lord bless you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, and all yours, and me and my Dear, and all mine, and bring us at last to his eternal joy. In the mean time, as often as we are permitted to meet upon earth, may it be to our mutual comfort. We send love for love. I am yours indeed,

JOHN NEWTON.

\* Maze Pond.

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## LETTER LXXVI.

MY DEAR MR. PROFESSOR,

MR. ARMSTRONG breakfasted with me the other morning. I find he cannot be with you so soon as he proposed. He could not quit his place before yesterday; nor can he receive his pay, and complete his affairs at the office, till Tuesday next. On Wednesday he hopes to be at Newport. I feel a pleasure in anticipating the pleasure you will have in receiving him. I think he bids fair to be an honour and an encouragement to you. Mr. Neale is out of town. In his absence, Mrs. Neale sent Mr. Gardiner's letter to me, and I transmitted it, inclosed in a letter of my own, to Mr. Adams, who was not at the meeting when your recommendation was read, confirmed by your humble servant, and unanimously approved by all present. We are to meet on Monday next, when I doubt not the whole business will be settled. Your second edition of "house rules" will then be reviewed, and, I suppose, of course confirmed.

If I have any unanswered letter of yours, it is mislaid; but I rather think I wrote last. At any rate, I make no apology, because I am either so busy or so indolent that I know not when I can amend. But I can promise to love you, and think of you.

I continue to creep on. I preach to others with some marks of acceptance. I attempt to preach to my own heart likewise, but it is very dull, and not easily impressed. It is a strange heart; it needs to be emptied and filled, to be broken and bound up, to be softened and consolidated, at the same time. And this I suppose

is not peculiar to my heart only. Every heart that is spiritually alive, has its own complaints, and one great Lord attends to them all. He is not embarrassed by the variety of applications and cases: not one is overlooked, not one but is incessantly under his care and management; and though the cure is gradual, it is sure. None are refused who apply; none who are once received are given up as incurable. But yet, alas! my disorders prove very lingering, though under his hand. I know the cause: I too often trifle with him. I am not duly faithful to his prescriptions; I presume sometimes to prescribe for myself. How often have I thrown myself back by my own folly, when I seemed rather in a hopeful way! No physician but he could bear with such a patient. That I am no better, I may thank myself: that I am not worse, that I am still alive, and that I am still encouraged to hope I shall not die but live, is wholly due to his mercy and compassion.

I am sometimes almost weary and ashamed either to write or preach any more, there is such a vast difference between what I am in myself, and the idea the Lord has given me of what a believing sinner ought to be. Our conversations at the Castle and Falcon, which are still carried on once a fortnight, are suited to lead me deeper into the study of human nature and of my own, than is perhaps very common even among good people. I find, upon consideration, that the appearances of grace are in general far beyond the reality; and that when proper abatements are made for constitution, association, imitation, situation, and other circumstantials, what remains that is truly genuine and sterling would be but like a few grains of gold extracted from a heap of ore and rubbish. Or rather we are a made metal, of a golden colour, and some gold in the constitution, but not much. With re-

gard to what we call experience, the adage will hold,  
*Non omne quod micat aurum est.* \*

I believe I told you my sister Cunningham, in Scotland, is near her end—very happy in the Lord, and rejoicing in the prospect before her. She was living when we heard last, but there is no probability of her recovery. We are now set up with two children, having received her daughter as an additional trust. She is about a year younger than Betsy—a pretty, amiable child. She brought the symptoms of a consumption with her, but she is much better, and we entertain hopes of the Lord's sparing her. If he does I shall be glad, because I hope I did and do sincerely give her up to his will, though I love her dearly, as I think every body must love her that sees her.

I am now near the bottom, having just convenient room to send our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, and then to tell you in three or four short lines, according to fashion, that I am, dear sir, with great respect,

Your affectionate, obliged, and obedient  
 friend, servant, and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*25th April, '83.*

I have found your letter of the 9th, and am reminded to congratulate you on the chirping of your Oxford chicken. I hope, (as old Honest says,) he will prove a cock of the right kind, and crow to some purpose.

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## LETTER LXXVII.

DEAR SIR,

MR. SECRETARY NEALE being out of town, (though expected home in the course of this week,) I was desired by the committee to transmit to you the information on the other side.

Mr. Gardiner's letter was highly approved, and confirmed your recommendation and mine, which, however, would have been sufficient, but that it was necessary to comply with the rule which requires a letter from the candidate. It only remains now for you and Mr. Gardiner to fix between yourselves the time of his coming to Newport. When he is with you, you will please to inform Mr. Neale.

Mr. Whitwell's letter was very orthodox, but very short; if he writes again, he is wished to be more particular. He is thought to be a member of Mr. Saunders' church, at Bedworth, whose recommendation therefore will be necessary, and it should speak not only to his moral character, but as to the probability of his turn and capacity for the ministry. He sometime since applied for admission at Homerton, but was refused as being under age; their age, it seems, is eighteen—if he is under seventeen, he is inadmissible with us.

Mr. Armstrong has resigned his place, but no officer is appointed in his room. He expects one to-morrow, but cannot therefore be with you to-morrow as he intended. And Thursday is a holiday. But you may

depend on him as soon as possible. He is on tip-toes to see Newport.

Having two students in hand, the money will soon begin to be collected, and new subscriptions applied for. And thus the business into which we were providentially and unexpectedly led to engage, is at length coming to maturity. I trust the hand of the Lord is in it, and that his blessing will forward it. The character of the two first students appears to me a favourable omen. I do not expect any two can be proposed who will be more likely to do honour to the undertaking. I shall be often with you in spirit, rejoicing in beholding your order and proficiency.

What a comfort to think that as we are by office teachers, so it is our privilege to be learners and pupils under the great Doctor and Head of the church, of whom it may well be said, There is none teacheth like him! What a dunce should I have proved under any other instructor! Nay, with all the advantages I have, I am a poor creature still. How long in learning a single lesson from him! And then, how often and quickly do I forget, and have to learn it over again! Yet he bears with me, and I humbly trust he will make something of me at last.

I have only time and room to wish you good success in the name of the Lord, that his blessing may rest upon tutor and pupils; upon Mrs. Bull, and Tommy; your heart, your house, and congregation; upon all you preach to at Newport, Sherrington, Woburn, and everywhere else.

My Dear is pretty well, her sister still on this side Jordan, but in daily expectation of a passage over to Canaan's shore. Our new child has still the hectic on

her, so that, though she is in some respects better than when she came to us ; her state is very precarious. Love us, and pray for us ; adieu.

Yours entirely,

JOHN NEWTON.

29 April, '83.

*From the Utopian Gazette, Tuesday, 29 April.*

Last night, at a committee summoned for the purpose, Mr. Gardiner, of Hanslope, was unanimously admitted a student of our academy.

At the same time, a letter, addressed to the secretary, from Mr. Whitwell, of Coventry, was read ; but as there was no recommendation accompanying, from some minister or person of character, and as Mr. Whitwell's age was not specified according to rule, the application was deemed informal, and such as the committee could not with propriety attend to. However, Mr. John Wilson undertook to acquaint Mr. Whitwell, by letter, of these particulars ; and to intimate to him, that, if he chose to apply in the prescribed form the committee wished, it might suit him previously to ride over to Newport, and converse with the tutor, whose judgment upon the case they would wish to be favoured with. The house rules were read ; and a copy ordered to be sent round to the members of the committee, for their consideration at home. A meeting will soon be appointed to consider them carefully previously to their being printed.

## LETTER LXXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

TILL just now, I hoped the silence and the blame were all on your side; but how did my crest fall when, looking in the drawer among my unanswered letters, I found one from you. And is it possible that I have not yet thanked you for it? (though dated the 3rd May;) and is it possible I have not thanked you, both in my own name and Mrs. Newton's, for your kind remembrance of her? Should this be the case, yet now I ask your pardon, and begin to amend the moment I am sensible of my fault, and hope you will forgive me.

A rumour has lately reached me, I know not how, that you either are, or have been, indisposed; I hope it will prove but a rumour, and that the messenger I inclose with this will speedily return, with an information either that you have been as well as usual, or, at least, that if you were ill, you are now better. If you suffer, I can feel for you, and pity you; but, at the same time, I must remember, that you are in good hands; that your afflictions are numbered, weighed, and measured with the nicest accuracy by Him that loves you better than I can do; and that they are all tokens of love, and appointed to work for your good. Such considerations, of course, must moderate my sorrow.

We are both much obliged to you for your letter to my Dear. As little as she loves writing, I believe she would be bound to thank you herself, if she did not keep a secretary. Since I have had the honour of that office, she seldom writes, *propria manu*. But we are especially

bound to thank the Lord for so graciously supporting her under a trial, which, in its own nature, was very affecting, and which, when viewed at a distance, and as approaching, threatened as if it would be almost too heavy for her ; but the Lord is all-sufficient. Long expectation of the event, in some measure, prepared her to receive the news. The known character of the deceased, her faith and hope in life and death, the consideration of where and with whom she now is, all these thoughts suggest relief. In a word, we see it is the Lord ; and hope we can say, It is well.

Eliza, our new dear child, was likewise prepared for her part of the loss. She had been with us two months, long enough to be satisfied that we were disposed to do our utmost to supply the place of her parents. Perhaps I am but merely repeating what I have said before. Her hectic state continues, but she is no way worse than when I wrote last ; and we might perhaps indulge more hope of her recovery, were it not that her abiding symptoms are so exactly similar to those of her brother and sister, who died of the same disorder, and at nearly the same age. But the Lord will do that which is best.

I hope Utopia College is now opened, and that the Lord smiles upon the commencement. It will not be open long, as the vacation is at hand. About that time (the 30th instant, I think) will be our quarterly meeting, which perhaps you may be present at, in your way to Tunbridge Wells, where I understand you are expected. At that meeting I suppose measures will be taken for making the academy more public, by printing the rules, and perhaps by reprinting and publishing the Utopian plan. There is but little increase of the subscriptions yet, but I trust money will come in as fast as proper students offer. Is Mr. Gardiner yet with you ? If he is,



give my love to him, as well as to Mr. Armstrong, who, I hope, answers the character I gave of him.

I am glad you were so well pleased with your visit to Yardly. I hope Mr. Raban has been useful at that place upon the whole. I wish that in his attempts to water others, he may be also watered himself; and that the Lord may, for his reward, give him a heart and wisdom to promote the peace of Olney, and strengthen the hands of Mr. Scott. If Christ is preached successfully, I ought to rejoice, though I cannot approve of every step that has been taken.

We are still favoured with many mercies. My Dear is tolerably well. Mary Woolnoth, my other Dear, seems pretty well likewise, and has a good deal of company on levee days. I have many pleasant and kind connexions; but I have a troublesome inmate, a lodger, who assumes, as if the house was his own, and is a perpetual incumbrance, and spoils all. He has long been noted for his evil ways, but though generally known, is not easily avoided. He lodged with one Saul of Tarsus long before I was born, and made him groan and cry out lustily. Time was when I thought I would shut the door, to keep him out of my house, but my precaution came too late—he was already within—and to turn him out by head and shoulders is beyond my power, nay I cannot interdict him from any one single apartment. If I think of retiring into the closest corner, he is there before me. We often meet and jostle, and snarl at each other, but sometimes (would you believe it?) I lose all my suspicion, and am disposed to treat him as an intimate friend. This inconsistency of mine I believe greatly encourages him, for I verily believe he would be ashamed and afraid to be seen by me, if I always kept him at a proper distance. However, we both lay such a strong

claim to the same dwelling, that I believe the only way of settling the dispute will be (which the Landlord himself has spoken of) to pull down the house over our heads. There seems something disagreeable in this mode of proceeding, but from what I have read in an old book, I form a hope that when things come to this crisis, I shall escape, and my enemy will be crushed in the ruins.

Love to Mrs. Bull, and the little Bull, from my Dear, and from your most affectionate, if not your most humble, friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 7th June, '83.*

### LETTER LXXIX.

MONSIEUR MON AMI, ET MON CHER TAUREAU,

OUR journey hence was very safe and pleasant, and we found all well. I continue taking bark, have had no return of the fever, preached three times on Sunday, and my health, strength, and appetite, seem no worse than formerly. Blessed be the Lord my healer.

My Dear likewise is charmingly well, able to come down stairs to breakfast every day, which she had seldom done for a twelvemonth before. Eliza is in good spirits. I hope the late jaunt has done us all good. It was indeed a very pleasant month to me, no part of it more so than the time I spent in Bedford, notwithstanding the fever, for it was a very pleasant fever. . . . .

One of the first questions I asked Mr. Foster, was about Mr. Armstrong. I was glad to hear that he was gone to Newport; as the proposal that detained him came from Mr. Foster, I could not wonder that he listened to it.

I am getting into *statu quo*, and seem to feel the adage "Home is home." It is a great mercy to have a comfortable home, to which we can think with pleasure of retreating, while we meet with much kindness and many pretty things abroad. I was very comfortable at Olney and at Bedford, and the one day I was at Newport, but Charles Square is more *homish* still. And then Mary Woolnoth, that is a pleasant home indeed. I feel myself there upon my own ground, and when I look round, I see my own family about me.

I hope the recollection of the late gentle visitation is, and will be, useful to me. The value of health and time when improved for the Lord, the vanity of earthly things, their insufficiency to help and comfort us in an hour of trouble,—our absolute dependance upon God, and many other points which might be mentioned, were brought home to my mind in the fever. I was likewise favoured with great peace and composure; I saw and felt that the foundation on which I had built was fully able to bear me. The gospel appeared to me to be indeed the wisdom and the power of God; and I was enabled, like a little child, to commit myself without anxiety or reserve to Him who promised to care for me.

My dear friend, may the great and glorious name of Jesus, be deeply engraven on your heart and mine, and on the hearts of all dear to us. Whether we consider him as our Surety, our Advocate, or our Lord, how precious should he be! His favour is life, his service is perfect freedom. The knowledge of him is safety,

wisdom, and happiness. A discovery of the glory of God in his person fills the understanding with heavenly light, the affections with divine love, and unites the will to our proper good. This knowledge is, indeed, *Organum novum*. How many things utterly impossible to a man's natural strength, are practicable and easy by the right application of mechanical powers! Without them a stone of a few hundred weight is immoveable, but with them he can raise a stone of many tons to the height of St. Paul's. But there are no powers comparable to those which are furnished by the gospel machine, if I may so speak. Thus assisted, a weak worm can do, endure, and overcome all things. He can draw near to a holy God, sinner as he is, with confidence; no wonder then that he can face a frowning world without dismay, and smile at Satan's rage. He goes on from strength to strength, and sings the song of victory while on the field of battle. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

I hope this will find you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, in good health. We unite in love to you all. I shall often be with you in spirit. Give my love to your pupils. May the Lord fill you with that meekness of wisdom which is from above, and make you a successful instrument in training and preparing them for his service. Mr. Neale tells me that the young man in Paternoster Row, is about to renew his application to the Newport Society.

Mrs. Gardiner has been much better, but two or three days ago she had a relapse. They thought she would have died, but she is reviving again. I am going to see her this morning; I suppose she can not be long for this world.

I mean to inclose the preface. My time is now

expired. The Lord bless you and yours. Pray for me and mine, and believe me to be always your affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 11th Sept. '83.*

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LETTER LXXX.

DEAR AND REVEREND BULL,

THOUGH I have not much to offer, I must write for three reasons. 1st. To thank you, (if I have not yet done it) for the wild beast and two partridges you sent by the Northampton coach. 2nd. To prevent your thinking in a low-spirited hour that I have forsaken or forgotten you. 3rd. To draw a letter from you.

A fourth student will be with you soon. He is gone into the country to kiss his father and mother, and then means to put his hand to the plough, and away to Newport. It is Mr. Armstrong's acquaintance in Paternoster Row.

It seems there have been many long faces made about you in Essex. Mrs. Wilberforce, when she returned, was quite uneasy, lest your character should be hurt by the sad things said of you. I said, I hoped they would not hurt your spirit, and then I was not afraid for your character. She wished me to write to Mr. Storry, which I did, and may perhaps send you his answer for

your amusement. If Mr. F \* \* \* \* \* had not been so honest as to tell you his mind, under his own hand, you should not have heard a word of the business from me. However, I congratulate you upon having an opportunity of showing to others what a Christian, when misrepresented, ought to do;—not to hang down his head like a bulrush, but rather to rejoice if the charge be false, and if it be for the Lord's sake, Matt. v., 11, 12. Not to wear out his shoes with running about to justify himself, but simply and patiently to commit his cause to the Lord; who, if and when he sees good, will find a way to clear us, better than we can ourselves, Psalm xxxvii., 5, 6. Not to render railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; being reviled, to bless; being defamed, to entreat, 1 Peter ii., 23; 1 Cor. iv., 12, 13. Our rule in such cases is beautiful and plain. Happy are they who, knowing these things, can practice accordingly when occasions arise! We know who suffered reproach before us, and for us, and who was called a Samaritan, a madman, a glutton, and a drunkard; and we know how he wept and prayed for those who knew not what they did, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.

I wish people could learn to keep their tongues quiet; but since they will talk, and show their displeasure, I hope it is a token for good to the Newport Academy; for I take it for granted, that this undertaking has given rise to much of the stir that has been made about you. It is said you are a mystic, but a cunning one; for that whenever I, or other of your friends, called upon you, your mystical books were presently hurried out of sight. This, so far as it related to myself, I could, and did, flatly contradict; and as to others, you might do it, and

with propriety. If some good folks were to catch me reading Shakspeare, I would rather hide the book than offend them; for they, being no judges of Shakspeare, or of my motive for reading him, would be hurt if they saw a play-book in my hand. I would not wish them to think more favourably of play-books than they do, or to think unfavourably of me on Shakspeare's account; for indeed I have not leisure to look in him sometimes for a year together.

If we declare war against bigotry, those who choose to defend it must, of course, oppose us. And of these, some may mean well. Early prejudices and long habits are not easily overcome. Systems and parties squeeze some people into a narrowness of thinking which they can never outgrow. If we have more liberty and comprehension of mind, we may be thankful, but we have no right to be angry with them. We should remember, too, that there are extremes on both sides, and that we, as well as others, may verge too near the one, in endeavouring to avoid the other.

I believe our Eclectic Society has been increased since I mentioned it last, by the addition of two members whom we value greatly—Mr. Clayton and Mr. Latrobe. Our number is now eight: we can admit but one more, and shall therefore endeavour to be very careful whom we choose. We think the Lord has favoured us; we are all unanimous and pleased with each other. We are one as to essentials, and our smaller differences of sentiment are such as only conduce to give the conversation a more agreeable variety, and tend to illustrate our subjects to greater advantage. The spirit of the design is kept up, and every member seems to find it well worth his while to attend punctually. I hope I find some real

advantage, and have reason to number it among my chief privileges. Help us with your prayers, that life and love, peace and truth, may flourish amongst us.

Our domestic affairs are much as usual : some trials, many comforts. Mrs. Newton is frequently ailing, which is but saying, in other words, she is frequently pretty well. Eliza is but so so. I do not expect we shall have her very long, nor do I think she is in immediate danger, or much worse than when at Olney ; but she certainly is not better.

We unite in love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy. The Lord be with you all, and with us also. Give my love to Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Armstrong, not forgetting Mr. Inglis, though I have not the pleasure of much personal acquaintance with him.

I am affectionately yours,

JOHN NEWTON.

*31st October, 8 Evening.*

Please to forward Mr. Scott's letter when you have a safe conveyance ; though I should be better pleased if you carry it over yourself, and make it the occasion of paying him the visit you promised. You remember what you forbid me to tell him, and said you would find a time to tell him yourself.

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## LETTER LXXXI.

MON CHER AMI,

You do me justice in believing that you would have had an invitation to our house, if the illness of Eliza, a supernumerary attendant on her, and Miss Catlett's recess from school, had not rather filled us; yet we should have tried to make shift, if I had not found you previously engaged—I had like to have said engrossed—elsewhere. We shall be very glad to see you on Wednesday, next week, if we must not see you sooner. Come with us from church, as you have said, and make your account to lodge in Charles-square that night. You will find a bed with us, and the next morning we may return together (if you please) to John-street, as it will be my day of meeting there.

Thank you for all your expressions of love. We return them sincerely to you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy.

I have had a cold and hoarseness—have kept house pretty much, when necessity has not called me abroad; however, the Lord strengthened me; so that, last week (including the two Sundays), I preached ten times. I may speak well of Dr. Pulpit, and think that I may be said, not in the worst sense of the word, to live by my preaching. I am now nearly well. Three doses of Dr. Pulpit yesterday did me good, and almost removed my hoarseness.

Eliza is much as when you saw her, only that, within these few days, she has a cough. Miss Catlett is as hearty as a buck. Mrs. Newton has been kept within doors about a week by a cold, cough, and hoarseness; but I

hope she does not get worse. The rest of our family are as usual.

I preached yesterday morning from Psalm xc. 9. "We spend our years as a tale that is told." A dry, dull, worn-out tale it would be, if the Lord had not mercifully taught us to aim at his service, and given us a vista—a prospect of life and immortality, through the dark shades which surround us.

We join in love. It gives me pleasure to assure you that I am sincerely and warmly your

JOHN NEWTON.

I have been so busy of late writing about something else, that I have had no time for letters.

*December 29th, '83.*

Mr. Inglis breakfasted with me this morning, and desired me to mention his dutiful respects.

Mrs. Newton is come down, and desires me to tell you that there will be a bed positively provided for you at No. 13 in Charles-square, and therefore I shall expect you to occupy it.

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## LETTER LXXXII.

DEAR SIR,

THE papers told me that the Wellingborough diligence, which went down the day you did, was robbed. I infer from your letter, that either the report was not true, or that some other vehicle had the honour of conveying you to Newport. For I suppose, if you had fallen into the hands of the Moabites you would have mentioned it. It pleased me to hear that you had a good journey, found all pretty well at home, and that, though you yourself are but so so, you were not very bad when your letter set off.

I find Mr. Sparks, who called upon me to-day, and who, I expect, will soon be with you, seems to have made up his mind already, and to have no other view but to the church. Perhaps you may have some who would rather receive the Lord's Supper with Mr. Scott, than as Dissenters; and as we all preach but one Lord, and mean one thing, I hope you will not only allow them to go, but give them your frank approbation. If otherwise, I am afraid disagreeables might, in time, take place. I speak not from my attachment to church, but from my love of liberty, my desire to see the academy flourish, and particularly from my great regard and affection for you, which induced me from the first to embark my reputation and interest in the same bottom with you.

The frost has been long and severe. This morning the Lord has bid the gentle south breath upon the ice and snow, and the waters begin to flow. How soft, yet

how powerful, is the influence of a general thaw! It operates equally and universally in every place, and does more in an hour than the united efforts of mankind could effect in an age. I consider it as a beautiful emblem of the effects of his Spirit upon the heart, upon many hearts at once. It silently but invisibly softens the strongest prejudices; makes the spirit which before was hard as the rock, tender and yielding. It brings on a spring, and the desolate, dreary wilderness, becomes the garden of the Lord. Oh for such a thaw in my heart! for though I talk away in public, I know much of wintry and frosty seasons within me. I trust my leading aims and desires are right, but all that is right is so faint, so cold, so debased by something inconsistent with it, so defective and so defiled, that I should be at my wits' end, if my hope and dependence were not, in a good measure, brought to a point. If I am saved, (I trust I shall) it will be freely and absolutely, in a way of sovereignty; with a *non obstante* to a thousand things which should seem, humanly speaking, to make salvation next door to impossible. But when I am beaten from every thing else, it still remains true that Christ has died, that he now lives and reigns, that "he is able to save to the **UTTERMOST**," and that he has said, "Him that cometh I will in **NO WISE** cast out." In **NO WISE** and to the **UTTERMOST** are great words, they have an extensive signification, and take in all varieties of cases, characters, and circumstances. Upon such unlimited sovereign promises, I cast my anchor, and they hold me, otherwise I should be the sport of winds and waves. Dr. Watts' motto shall be mine, it is big enough for him, me, you, and for thousands that approve it, "*In uno Jesu omnia.*" In him I have an offering, an altar, a temple, a priest, a

sun, a shield, a saviour, a shepherd, a hiding place, a resting place, food, medicine, riches, honour, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, in short, every thing. The paper would not contain an inventory of the blessings, and treasures, the unsearchable, inexhaustible blessings and treasures which are hidden in him, and communicated by him to poor sinners who believe in his name. But though I am, I trust, an heir, I am as yet a minor, and in my actual experience, am too often more like a servant than a son, Gal. iv. But there is a time appointed of the Father. I hope one day to be of age, and to come to the full enjoyment of my boundless inheritance.

Mrs. Newton and Eliza are much as when you saw them. We send our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, and mine, if you please, to the Utopians. Be assured that I love you dearly, and feel an interest in all that concerns you, and feel much pleasure in a persuasion that you are and will be thus minded towards your affectionate friend,

OMICRON.

21 Feb. '84.

Mr. Sparks will now be the bearer of my letter; may he be a comfort to you.

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## LETTER LXXXIII.

MY DEAR MONSIEUR TAUREAU,

By Mrs. Stamford, of Olney, who came lately here, I send you *Apologia*, my new publication ; it waited on you in a blue cover, because I had none bound by me. I mean by and by to present one to the academical library. Last Tuesday a copy was sent to Messrs. Brewer, Gibbons, Fisher, Davies, Barker, and Winter, who, by their office as preachers at the Merchant's Lecture,\* I consider as the heads and epitome of the Independent interest. Mr. Clayton got one as a member of the Eclectic Society. The other dissenting ministers must either buy or borrow, if they wish to know my reasons at large for being where I am. They are rather too many to send a copy to each of them, and I did not know where to draw the line without giving offence, otherwise than by confining myself to the Pinner's Hall gentlemen. I suppose I have been pretty well talked over among them by this time. But their verdict has not yet reached me, nor am I solicitous about it. I trust I meant well, and had no allowed motive for publication,

\* This lecture was founded in 1672 during the operation of King Charles's Declaration for Indulgence, and was intended to support the doctrines of the Reformation against the prevailing errors of the day. The first lecturers were the Rev. Drs. Bates, Owen, Manton ; the Rev. Messrs. Baxter, Collins, and Jenkyn. It was held at Pinner's Hall on a Tuesday morning, and continued there till the lease of the building expired, when it was removed to New Broad Street, where it now continues.—See Wilson's *History of Dissenting Churches*, vol. ii. p. 254.

but a desire of being useful. I cannot expect that the high church folks, either on my own side or on yours, will be highly pleased, but I hope I have given them no just cause of offence.

You will observe that it is not so clear to me as it seems to you, that the Dissenters hold the right of private judgment. So far as my private judgment coincides with theirs, they will indeed allow I have a right to use it, but few of them will allow me to go farther. They will rather think they have a right to judge for me, and to condemn me when I stop short of their standard. However, I love them if they love my Lord, and am glad to think we shall, ere long, see eye to eye, and be all of one mind.

I think many circumstances that led to the institution of the Newport Academy sufficiently warrant my hope that the thing is of the Lord. If so, he will give his blessing to it; and if so, again, I need not wonder if it occasions some stir, dislike, and opposition. If there is good to be done at Newport, Satan will not stand and look on with the indifference of a mere spectator. He will do what he can to disturb the peace of the academy within doors, and to misrepresent it abroad. The tutor and the pupils, too, had need be angels, to keep quite out of his reach and influence; and as his own name is legion, so he has a legion of instruments, of various talents, in his service—some to invent—some who would not go so far as to invent a falsehood, are yet very well pleased to circulate it, and if they can say, *I was told so*, think they are quite safe and right. The skill of others lies in exaggerating, of others in colouring and misrepresenting, which they do so cleverly, that though the substance of what they say be truth, it shall have all the effects of a lie. Others are masters in the way of sur-

mise and insinuation. They will not say *it is so*, but *it is well if it be not so*, or *I wish it may not prove so*, which, with weak and credulous folks, answers the purpose no less than if they had proved *it certainly was so*. Again, others, when a word or an action is capable of two constructions, have an admirable dexterity in taking it by the wrong handle. No wonder if the continued efforts of so many arts and so much industry should make a great noise abroad, and be sensibly felt at home. But simplicity and integrity, under the Lord's blessing, though they may be sometimes jostled, cannot be overthrown. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*. If the Lord gives you grace and wisdom to do your part, you may depend on it he will do his, and fulfil that promise. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper."

Utopia is in the press, and will be published with a list of subscribers, the state and regulations of the academy, etc., next month. By that we hope the list will be something enlarged.

I have had a cold, but it is quite gone. Mrs. N. is pretty well, excepting now and then a head ache. Eliza much as usual. We begin to think the winter long, but we expect summer will come, because we have a promise, Gen. viii. 22. Equally sure are the promises of his grace.

He will not fail, he cannot change. We must expect cloudy and wintry seasons, but there are times when the believing soul hears, sees, and feels according to the beautiful description, Solomon's Song, chap. ii., 10—13. I hope it will be spring with you when this letter arrives; if not, wait a little, and it will surely come.

Our love to Mrs. Bull, and the young Bull, who I hope thrives and grows in a good pasture. You may



tell whom you please that I am always glad to avow myself your affectionate friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

*April 3,' 84.*

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LETTER LXXXIV.

MON AMI,

SOME people would give three-pence to hear that they can have bed and board at London for as long as they please ; but you will receive the information, as you will the entertainment, without money or price. Time was when you might have had all this in Charles-square, but you cannot now. Our two children, and Mrs. Phoebe, a servant of the church in Olney, possess the room with which we should be otherwise glad to accommodate Mr. Bull.

But the inclosed will inform you where you may have all good and necessary things ; and your company (it seems) esteemed a pleasure, and an honour into the bargain. What fine plum-pudding days do we Methodists, Presbyterians, and Utopians, live in !

I have seen Mr. Armstrong. He speaks well of Newport. I was at first sorry to see him, as you mentioned his unwillingness to come to town ; and, somehow or other, two months' board might have been accommodated without ruining us. But he soon told me, he came up upon invitation and choice.

I judged, from the close of your letter, that you would not come up soon ; but he tells me your purpose of not going to Tunbridge is overruled ; that a summons

is sent, and you must go. I wish you a good journey. I know indeed that our friend had reckoned much upon having you there, and consequently, that the disappointment would have been as much if you had not gone. I hope she is the Lord's messenger to constrain you to go where he has something for you to do.

I wish you much comfort and credit in your new associate, the Rev. Mr. R. Seriously, I hope he may do well. He certainly will, if the Lord is pleased to give him humility and circumspection. But I have thought him rather wanting in softness of spirit, and his business exposes him to many difficulties and snares.

Hoping to see you soon and often, (for Mr. and Mrs. Neale must not engross you,) I remain, with love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, in behalf of self and partner, your tutorship's most obedient and respectful, and so forth,

JOHN NEWTON.

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LETTER LXXXV.

MY DEAR SIR,

\* \* \* \* \*

ENOUGH of this. I wish I could find a more pleasing subject for a close. This is a state of trial and exercise. At present, such things are needful; but they will not be needful always. We are passing through conflict to triumphs—through sufferings to glory. Even at present, many things which tease us appear to our better judgment so trivial, that we are ashamed to find they can

make such impression on our minds. How very trivial, then, will they be deemed when we shall be translated into the world of light! It is owing chiefly to imagination and self-will that they now owe their supposed importance. Ere long, death shall be swallowed up of life, and the concerns of time will be lost in eternity, as a pebble sunk in the depths of the ocean. The first moment of our joining in the songs and joys before the throne of God, will make us abundant amends for all the difficulties we meet with in the wilderness. We shall not then say, as we often do now, when we have obtained what we earnestly desired, *Is this all?* Fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore, with the entire exclusion of every evil, will be a mighty all indeed. We are now comparatively asleep; the greatest part of our life is spent in a succession of dreams, of which more are of the distressing than of the amusing kind; but, ere long, we shall awake, and be satisfied with his image. The tears will be wiped from our eyes, and we shall weep no more.

Eliza has been for some time under the care of Dr. Benamor, and we hope (though an alteration is hardly discoverable) she is rather better than worse. Her spirits are rather better, and we think her looks are likewise. If the Lord be pleased to restore her, I trust it will be to our great comfort; if otherwise, I hope and believe her end will be peace. I think I have given her up to him, and shall be enabled to say, He doth all things well. But it is certain I love her dearly, and her life, in my short-sighted view, appears very desirable; though, because I am short-sighted, I dare not positively ask it.

Our other child is at home from Highgate; has something of a cold at present; otherwise, she is very well, and the picture of health. My Dear is in her usual so so

way. We have many and great mercies, both as individuals and as a family; and a few of these mercies come in disguise, under the appearance of trials.

We hope it is well with Mrs. Bull and Tommy, and that, notwithstanding all you have met with, you are still alive, and likely to live, and can smile and smoke your pipe as usual. I am your most obsequious, observant, obedient, obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

*3rd June, '84.*

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LETTER LXXXVI.

MY DEAR MR. TAUREAU,

I HEAR you were lately seen in London; but how am I to know when you are near, without information? I will write, however, to Newport. Our late journey was brimful of mercies, and the Lord brought us home in peace, the 3rd September. Since then, expectation has been often on tip-toe for a letter from you.

I mean to send this under cover to Mr. Cowper, and if you transmit yours to him likewise, we may still correspond *gratis*. I have begged Mr. Samuel Thornton to let Mr. Cowper and I change letters through him; but it is, perhaps, the only favour of the kind I shall ask, for the new regulations make franking more troublesome to the members than before; and it does not become my insignificance to be too troublesome.

I hope you went home, and still continue strong, lusty, contended, and in good spirits. Your long holiday did you good, I hope, both in body and mind. Send me a copy of your journal. You should have mine, if I had kept one. I was happy at Priestlands with Mr. ——. O pretty garden! O pretty man! He is a little reserved at first; but when, by degrees, we became acquainted, we were intimate indeed. I found the Lord had already taught him all I wished to teach him, if I were able. I had heard a bird sing, that he was a well-meaning, friendly man, but as *blind as a stone*. It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise to find that the blind man could see as well as most of us. His views of the person and atonement of our Lord; his sense of himself as an unworthy sinner; his comfortable persuasion of acceptance in the Beloved; his hope of perseverance through grace; and the general tone of his whole conduct, gave me as full satisfaction as I have of most people whom I know—that he is not only a real, but an eminent Christian. It is true he does not deal much in shibboleths, and he likes the service of the established church, and attends his own parish, which I thought I would not find fault with, till I could point out where he might go to mend himself. It is true there are Dissenters in L——, but the manner in which they speak of one another (I mean some of them), is not likely to make him a convert to the meeting house; nor do I think it would add either to his usefulness or his comfort, if he became a Dissenter tomorrow in that neighbourhood. For the rest, I judge him a humble, spiritual, benevolent man; and though not laced up in a system, yet of a very thinking and judicious turn. He has studied Bishop Butler, and seems to have his Analogy *ad unguem*; which I mention as a specimen of his cast. However, he sees beyond Butler;

and understands, embraces, and admires the gospel of salvation. He told me that he was sixty-five years of age—that he has feared the Lord, and walked much in the way he does now, for many years; but could never make an acquaintance to whom he could freely open his mind before I came to him. So much for Mr. —.

I could tell you as much about Southampton, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Kingsbury, etc., if I had time. I was very happy there; preached in two churches on the Lord's days, and frequently in the evenings in Mr. Taylor's house. What with walking, talking, riding, sailing, and a little smoking, O Time, how pleasantly and how swiftly didst thou pass! But now I must break off at once, for my time is elapsed; and I can only add that I am very well, my Dear pretty well, Eliza has been rather better for bathing, and farther, that we join in love to you, to Mrs. Bull, and to Tommy. I am yours indeed,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, October 1, '84.*

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LETTER LXXXVII.

MON CHER,

If you stand upon turns, I shall hear but seldom from you: I must decline all letter writing for a good while, except what is absolutely necessary. I have a writing task before me, purposing, if the Lord please, to treat you and the public with two volumes [on the

“Messiah”], which I suppose will, in quantity, be equal to Cardiphonia. Not one of these is yet written, but all to be drawn from short stamina notes, which I put down as I go on. To do a little daily in this business, which I mean to begin with about the New Year, I must do nothing else with my pen. My leisure is so very scanty at present, while I can I will write a few annotations on yours of the 19th. I shall take your paragraphs *seriatim* as they lie.

It is not worth inquiring when Mr. Cowper writes. If you send your letter to him, I shall have it when he writes, which is regularly once a fortnight; and if it stays with him a few days, it is no great matter, unless you write on business that requires an immediate answer; in which case, I will gladly pay the post. As to academy business, Mr. Neale is your man.

Thank you for your being glad that we had a safe and comfortable journey. I likewise am glad that yours was pleasant, and useful to yourself and others; and I hope since your return, you can say with me, “Abroad is pleasant; but home is home.”

We are disciples—Jesus is our Master. The world we live in is his school, and every person and event is under his management, designed to forward us in the great lessons he would have us learn,—such as the denial of self-will, a distrust of creatures, and an absolute dependance upon Himself. In this view, mortifications are mercies, losses gains, hindrances helps, and all things, even those which seem most contrary, are working together for our good. Creatures smile or frown, caress or disappoint us; friends grow cool, and enemies become kind, just as his wisdom sees most expedient to promote our progress. Where we look for most, it often comes to little; when we look for nothing, we often obtain

most. Our wisest plans and best endeavours at one time produce great troubles ; at another time, what we do at random, and what we account the most trifling incidents, are productive of happy, lasting, and extensive consequences. It is well for us if, by a long train of such changing, crossing experiences, we at length attain to some proficiency, and can say with David, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God ; for my expectation is from him." The heart possession of two maxims of Mr. Henry, is well worth all that the acquisition can cost us. The one is, "That every creature is that to us which God makes it ;" the other to much the same purpose : "That we cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God." In this school I am placed, these lessons I am aiming to learn ; but I am a poor scholar and indeed any master but He who condescends to be my teacher, would turn me off as an incorrigible dunce.

Mrs. Newton has been unwell of cold, but is, through mercy, a little better. I am well, all but a rheumatism, which has made a lodgment in my left arm, and possibly may take up its winter quarters there. The Lord might have quartered it in my head or my stomach, but he is merciful to my weakness. I have not strength or patience to bear much violent pain, and therefore he is pleased to deal gently with me. We hope Eliza rather gains ground ; upon the whole, we have great cause for thankfulness. He still gives me liberty in the pulpit, which is the chief thing ; and I believe no minister can be more comfortable and happy with his people than I am. Mr. Whitfield used to call his pulpit his throne. When I am upon my throne, I can look down upon the poets, philosophers, artists, archbishops, cardinals, popes, and kings of the earth with pity. If they know not my Lord and Saviour, they are to be pitied indeed. I



would not exchange the honour of proclaiming his glory and grace, and preaching his gospel to sinners a single day, for a whole life of what they account the best and the greatest. We join in love to you, to Mrs. Bull, and Tommy. Write if you please, and when you can; but whether you write or no, remember to pray for your truly affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 6th Dec., '84.*

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LETTER LXXXVIII.

MON CHER TAUREAU,

I SUPPOSE Mr. Scott has before now told you that I sent the certificate for Busby's lecture, and that on the very same day the secretary decamped, which has deranged the business of that trust for a time. However, Lord Dartmouth has told me, that the application is properly entered upon the books, and that there is no reason to doubt of Mr. Thomas Bull's having an appointment next year, if he should not have it this.

And now permit me to thank you for the nice Irish leave you took of us. The next time I went to Mrs. Wilberforce's, I said very simply to Charles, "Is Mr. Bull at home?" Answer—"Yes, sir; he is at home at Newport, and has been there these ten days." I was a little disconcerted at having discovered myself to be such a stranger to your motions; perhaps it hurt my vanity, which may have been formerly tickled by those

who took it for granted that I, to be sure, was a sort of privy counsellor with you. Otherwise it did not hurt me at all. My friendship does not stand upon punctilios, and therefore though I had your company (I mean by our two selves) but once during the three weeks you were in London, I flatter myself that you love me no less than if you had called every day, and that you would probably have called oftener; had not your head quarters been in John-street. You see I give you fair credit, and make fair allowances.

You will please to accept this letter, even though it should be short, as a special favour. I cannot write much nor often, while I have the "Messiah" in hand—and this excuse for silence will last me I suppose during the present year. But I was willing to send you a line now that if you hear from me but little in future, you impute it not to silence, but necessity.

Your letter has slipped out of my reach just now; and the contents have slipped out of my memory, therefore though I acknowledge the receipt of it, I cannot properly answer it. I am glad you have a prospect of students, and wish we may have a prospect of money to support them. But I expect not to know much about the affairs of the academy, till Mr. Neale returns from Staffordshire, which I am told will be in about a fortnight.

Easter is a busy preaching time in our line. My texts on Good Friday were John xix. 30; 1 Peter iii. 18. I did not interrupt the course of the "Messiah" on Sunday morning, but instead of his resurrection, I preached upon the grand event consequent upon it, which is yet to take place, Rev. xi. 15. Yesterday I put Mr. Johnson in my pulpit, (who I think gives us an earnest of a judicious good preacher); to day I hope to see Mr.

Foster in it ; to-morrow and Friday I mount it again. Blessed be God, whatever else be dear in London, the gospel is good, cheap, and in great plenty. And now what can I say farther than what you know, and what we have said to each other over and over ? The Lord is good. This truth, though often acknowledged, should, like his repeated mercies, be new to us every morning. Great, wise, holy, just, and gracious, he hates and punishes the sin, he saves and loves the sinner. May we sit at the foot of the cross ; and there learn what sin has done, what justice has done, what love has done, what the soul is worth, and what plenteous forgiveness flows from the fountain which was there and then opened, that we might wash and be clean, and drink and live.

I wish Mrs. Bull peace, patience, and healing. I wish Tommy to grow in grace, as I suppose he grows in Greek. I wish the students at Newport, humility, diligence, and proficiency. I wish their tutor much light, unction, and influence. I wish myself to be willing to be what, and where, and how the Lord would have me be—to cast all my care simply upon him, and to be always satisfied in my mind that he assuredly careth for me.

I farther wish you to think often of me and mine, and to remember us in your prayers ; and I wish you a good night, so no more at present, but our joint love to you and yours, from your most obedient,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 28th March, '85.*

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## LETTER LXXXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE agreed not to tease each other with letters, and I have kept my agreement pretty well. If I could write with both hands at once, you might hear of me oftener—but my right hand is so engaged and engrossed, that I must be excused.

But it costs me no time to love you—to love you and lift up my heart to the Lord to bless you, when you are upon my mind, is almost all that I can do for you. Only Sally is now going to Olney, I send this that you may think of me.

I have almost finished *preaching* the “Messiah”—only two or three sermons more. The *writing* goes on slowly, but I have finished thirteen out of fifty.

My Dear has been ill—in great pain, confined to the house more than a month, and most of the time to her room. The Lord has relieved her, and last Sunday evening she was at church. Eliza keeps pretty much at a par, but when the Lord sees it fitter for her to be better it shall be done. He speaks, and it is done.

We join in love to Mrs. B. and Mr. T. Remember mine to the young men who stand in your professorship’s presence daily. May the Lord do you good, and do them good by you. My love to Thomas Bull. I rejoice in the prospect of his preaching the gospel. Tell him from me what I trust he knows, and will know with an increasing evidence as he goes on, that it is not worth while to preach, unless we preach Jesus and him crucified. Ah, his name is powerful and precious indeed!

May he be our theme in the pulpit and in the parlour, living and dying. Let the world take the rest.

Happy they who can say, His I am, and Him I serve. I commend you all to his blessing. Pray for us. I am yours indeed,

JOHN NEWTON.

*15th June, '85.*

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LETTER XC.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I THANK you for your very kind letter, which, notwithstanding my eagerness to seize all the time I can for the "Messiah," must be answered. The translation of our sweet Eliza was so comfortable, so glorious, that I thought it my duty to record it in writing; and my mind soon prompted me to print it, that I might the more easily inform my friends. At that time my heart was so soft, and my feelings so strong, that I could not trust myself to write a narrative for the public inspection. But when we are talking by the fire-side with an intimate friend in whom we can confide, we can indulge ourselves in a thousand little sensibilities, and, what other people would call, weaknesses, which we should not choose to utter, if we were to speak with an audible voice upon the Royal Exchange. Therefore I have written and printed only for my friends. Not one will be published or sold. A copy will come to you in due time. I wrote from my feelings, and almost dropped a tear for every word. But I would not have you think there was one sorrowful tear among them. That would

have been foolish and ungrateful indeed. Blessed be the Lord, I can hardly name one of the many merciful dispensations with which he has favoured me in the course of my life, which my heart is more satisfied with, or which calls more loudly upon my gratitude, than this last. A trial it doubtless was, to part with such a child; but I have not been permitted for a moment to wish it had been otherwise.

Mr. Welsh, the banker, some time ago, told me there was a very important opening for a minister at Birmingham, in the meeting which was once Mr. Wild's: I forget the name of the present or late minister. What he said, and what I know of the situation, led my thoughts to Mr. Greatheed.\* I mentioned him, and

\* Afterwards the Rev. Samuel Greatheed, F.A.S. At this time Mr. Greatheed was one of Mr. Bull's pupils. He was originally in the army, and attached to the corps of engineers. While engaged in service in British North America he became sensible of the importance of religion, chiefly through the instrumentality of a brother officer, (afterwards Lieut.-Gen. Mackelcan). Before this he had led a dissipated life. In a letter to the editor, he says, "I feel more than you what I owe to the grace of God, through Christ Jesus, in extricating me from the way of transgressors, for I don't suppose there was a greater profligate than I was at eighteen." Having tasted of the grace of God he was anxious to bring others to the knowledge of that Saviour whom he had found, and resolved to devote himself to the work of the ministry. For this purpose he willingly gave up all his prospects of promotion, and entered the Institution under the direction of Mr. Bull. Having finished his studies, he for a time assisted in the work of tuition. He subsequently married a lady of Newport, where he resided for nineteen years, being during part of that time pastor of the Independent church at Woburn, Beds., which was raised principally by his instrumentality. Mr. Greatheed was a man of great ability and very extensive reading, one of the most active founders of the London Missionary Society, and the first editor of the *Eclectic*

promised Mr. Welsh, at his desire, that I would mention the affair to you when I wrote next.

Mrs. Newton is pretty well; you know she can feel, and will expect that she did upon the late occasion; but the Lord has mercifully supported her. We join in love to you and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy; and Betsey joins with us. We thank you for your sympathy and prayers. We buried dear Eliza on Wednesday evening last; and I preached her funeral sermon on Sunday evening. The church was crammed. The text she chose for herself, Rev. xiv. 13. I was a good deal affected, but was enabled to restrain my emotions so far, that I was

*Review.* Possessed of a large fortune, he devoted a considerable portion of it to benevolent purposes. His friend, the poet Cowper, speaks of him as "a man of letters and taste, meek and learned as Moses." Mr. Greatheed was particularly attached to those institutions which admitted the co-operation of good men of different denominations, hence he was principally concerned in forming the "Bedford Union of Christians," an institution founded on this principle.

When, after a second marriage, he left Newport, and resided at Bishops Hull, Somersetshire, he was very active in establishing a Bible society in that county, to which he became secretary. This effort was made notwithstanding a considerable degree of bodily infirmity, which at last confined him wholly to his house for a long period before his death. Though a man of indefatigable industry, and continually engaged in writing, Mr. Greatheed published but little. Three sermons, one of which was preached at the establishment of the London Missionary Society, and another on the death of the poet Cowper; and a learned and curious Dissertation on the Origin of Nations, printed in the *Transactions of the Antiquarian Society*, were all that he gave to the public. He, however, left behind him several manuscripts, including a History of Missions, and a Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. Mr. Greatheed died at Bishops Hull, Feb 15, 1823. His end was peace.—Ed.

composed and master of my thoughts, and discovered no more to the audience than was suited to impress them likewise. I think I was favoured with liberty, and have reason to hope it was a good time.

You will excuse me, if for once I send a shortish letter. I have much to attend to at present. Whether I write long or short, seldom or often, I love you dearly, and mean more than many words could express, when I subscribe myself your affectionate and obliged friend,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Horton, 19 October, '85,*

I could not get my letter ready to go by Mr. Scott. If you please to inclose your letters for me, under cover, to Samuel Thornton, Esq., they will come free. I shall generally get them to frank what I send to you. But I shall have occasion to trouble them for so many franks, to cover dear Eliza's narrative, that for this time I spare them.

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LETTER XCI.

MON CHER TAUREAU,

YOUR letter was very welcome, and I thank you for it. It is true, we are both travelling towards that land from whose bourn no traveller returns; but I am many miles before you on the road, that it is probable that I may finish my journey first. Be that as it may,



our times are in the Lord's hands. I trust we shall meet there at last. In the mean time, may we be enabled to live while we do live. We are agents for the Lord in a foreign country, where we have properly no business of our own, but are to manage for him. We are to do what we can to-day; for our recall will be soon, and may be sudden. Oh for grace to have all done! all ready! loins girded up, lamps burning! that, when he sends for us, we may be ready and glad to go home. Wonderful grace, that he encourages us to hope, that, unworthy as we are, he will condescend to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Is it possible? His judgment is according to truth; and my conscience tells me that I am, in a sense, an evil and slothful servant. But I am not under the law, but under grace. He accepts the will for the deed. He has taught me to aim and to wish to serve him; and though my best is imperfect, defective, and defiled, he pardons for his own sake. Lord, be it unto thy servant according to thy word. Ballarmire and I agree, in one point, *tutissimum est*, to plead guilty in myself, and to rest all my hope upon the blood which is able to save the chief of sinners.

Did you possess the gift of foresight, and think to save your credit upon easy terms, when you promised to lodge in Charles-square next time you came to town, if we could receive you? I no more thought of removing into the city, when I saw you last, than of going to Bengal; but sure enough, I have taken a house in Coleman-street Buildings. It will be mine at Ladyday. But, first, we cannot go into it sooner *than we can*: there is some painting to be done, and then we must wait awhile for the smell of the paint to go off a little. Second, there are reasons why we must go in as *soon as we can*. And from these premises, taken together, I am ready to

infer—or, at least, to fear—that if you come up in the Easter week, you will find us either in the very hurry of removing, or so entirely unsettled, that we shall not be able to take you in. If it should prove so, I shall be very sorry; but I must be patient, for I cannot help it. If we are in town, at your vacation, you will find a prophet's chamber; but it is possible, much about that time, we may be at Southampton, or somewhere else. We must then wait for the Christmas season, if we are all spared so long. I can only say, that whenever it suits you, and we are upon the spot, you may be assured of a hearty welcome. Coleman-street Buildings is about half way between London Wall and King's Arms Yard. It is an airy, lightsome situation (for the City); and No. 6, which we are going to, is a very good house. N.B. There is a clever, snug smoking-room. I was providentially led to this house, and have it remarkably cheap. It is nearer to all my connexions by a mile, and within seven minutes' walk of my church. I trust you will pray that the Lord, who has shown so much of his goodness at Charles-square, will afford us his gracious presence in Coleman-street likewise; for without him, a palace would be but a dungeon.

The "Messiah" is nearly printed off; I think it will be finished this week. But we must wait awhile for an index, without which I do not think a book complete. I suppose about the time you are published in London, the "Messiah" will be published in Paternoster-row and St. Paul's Church-yard. Here, again, I intreat your prayers that the Lord may be pleased to breathe his blessing upon a service, which I trust he himself put into my heart. Indeed, if it had not been much impressed upon my mind, I should hardly have had firmness and perseverance to finish it, in the midst of the

many engagements and avocations which call upon me daily. Considering that I have greatly lost my habit of rising early, I almost wonder that besides other writing, visiting, and being visited, I should be able to write for the press, so much as will fill nearly a thousand octavo pages in print, in less than ten months. If the Lord is pleased to make it useful, it would be foolishness in me to be much concerned what my fellow-worms may think of the performance. I expect to appear, as I am, a speckled bird, in the eyes of the religious world; and in some places I have expressed myself with a freedom, which will not be very pleasing to some of my superiors. I have not designed to give offence, but some truths will offend some people. I hope simplicity has been my aim, but I know my heart is deceitful. However, I would be very thankful that the Lord has enabled me to finish this work, which I consider as my most important publication, and it will probably be my last, except a fugitive paper for a magazine or so. I certainly could not take leave of the press with a more noble subject. It will likewise have some novelty, and much variety, to recommend it.

I could easily get the letters I send you franked, but I think till you inclose mine (as I have repeatedly desired you) under cover, to Samuel Thornton, Esq., I must make you pay postage, by way of *fine*. I much value your letters, and would not grudge postage, if necessary. But it is so very easy to inclose them to Mr. Thornton, that the money seems thrown away, and therefore I must tax your pocket, that your pocket may refresh your memory. If you should receive this free it will positively be the last that will come so, unless you adopt my mode of conveyance.

P—— is a good man, but young and warm; he knows little more of the world than if he had lived all

his days in a wood. Help him with your advice. I hear he intends setting up Wednesday and Friday prayers in Olney church. Poor man, he is little aware that such an attempt will be sufficient, in such a place as Olney, to set up his name as a heretic and a pharisee. If you can dissuade him from being over churchish, at least while he stays there, you will do him a kindness.

My letter is as long as yours, but yours is worth half a dozen such. But you have what offers: when I can send you better I will. My Dear has been often ill of late, but I praise the Lord she is pretty well now. Betsey hearty. You have the love and good wishes of our whole family. Love to Mrs. Bull, and to Tommy the Grecian. Be assured that I am sincerely and always

Your affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Hoxton, 13th March, '86.*

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## LETTER XCII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

METHOUGHT I saw them fall!\* Poor Mr. Foster first, then Mr. Bull upon him. He had the best of it. How soft he fell! like downy doctor upon a downy bed! Then the chaise upon both; so they lay well packed—

“ Like two round nuts close squeezed in one strait shell.”

When I found that these two valuable bodies of divinity had only a little dirt upon their binding, and had received no harm, I could not help smiling, to observe how they looked upon themselves, upon each other, and upon the chaise, when they were safely upon their legs again. I was reminded of the old adage, *ne sutor ultra crepidam*. To preach the gospel acceptably to thousands, is one thing; to drive a one-horse chaise through the streets evenly, so as not to spill the contents, is quite another thing, and requires very different gifts and talents.

But, seriously, I would be very thankful that neither of you were hurt. Such catastrophes, as this may properly be called, have often been attended with dislocated or broken bones, a fractured skull, or instant death—so frail is man. Often, when he thinks himself safe, and is dreaming of his own importance, as if he were a necessary part in the complicated movements of Divine Providence, he falls like grass before the scythe; not by

\* The circumstance referred to occurred as the Rev. Henry Foster was driving Mr. Bull in a gig through the streets of Norwich.

the hand of a giant, or the fangs of a tiger ; the veriest trifle is sufficient to destroy him. How many loose stones do we see in the road ; it seems no great matter where they lie ; yet any one of them, by changing the direction of a wheel, is sufficient to confound all the plans of this mighty creature ! One throws him down ; he falls with his head upon another ; in that very moment all his thoughts perish. But the Lord gave his angels charge over you and brother Foster ; therefore you fell unhurt, and are still alive to praise and serve him. I see so much of the uncertainty of life, and how little I can either foresee or prevent what the next moment may bring forth, that I should be a very great coward—afraid not only of riding in a chaise, but of walking across a room—if I was not in some degree enabled to confide in the Lord's protection. I am at Southampton, or near it. I have been at Lymington and Portsmouth. I am going to-day to Salisbury ; to-morrow to Bath ; and shall be the next day at Bristol, if the Lord permit. In the course of next week, we hope to return to beloved home. We have had a merciful excursion hitherto. Health, safety, kind friends, good accommodation, pleasant rides and walks, Christian converse, opportunities of hearing and preaching the good gospel. Fresh air and salt water have agreed well with me. My Dear has been tolerable ; and Betsey, who was rather poorly before we set out, looks like a country girl again. But I am still a poor creature, and know not whether my causes for thankfulness or shame are most abundant. It is well that I am permitted to look to Him who lived and died for sinners.

I must defer the long letter you ask for till another time. We are packing up, and must set out soon. Accept this as a token of love. Continue to pray for me. Love to Tommy, ditto to Mr. and Mrs. Storry, when you

see them. I can feel for them in the death of another child. But he is well disposed of; and all things are right and good for those who love God. Adieu.

Yours indeed,

JOHN NEWTON.

5th Sept., '86,

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LETTER XCIII.

MON CHER TAUREAU,

You have set me a good example, and I am willing to follow it; therefore, though your letter has not been with me two hours, I begin an answer. I am glad to hear that all is well and peaceful with you, and it is so with us likewise; such is the Lord's goodness to us. I sometimes express myself in Herbert's words :

“Thou, who hast given so much to me,  
Give one thing more,—a grateful heart.”

I believe what you disapprove, about not applying passages in the Old Testament to the Messiah, without express authority from the New, is in the twenty-third sermon of the first volume; for, in the first sermon of the second to which you refer, I can find nothing like it. I have met with such trash from some who pretend to *spiritualize*, and obtruded with so much confidence, that I thought it right to enter my protest against the practice, especially as I think it obtains most amongst rash and injudicious preachers. And though sometimes wise and good men give a little into it, I think it is rather countenanced than justified by their example.

For instance, I remember to have heard one Mr. Bull preach a sermon, and a very good one, from Exodus, iv. 14; but though the sermon was a good one, I thought the points which he enlarged upon were no more deducible from that text, than from the first verse in Genesis. Mr. Bull, however, knew what he was about; but when such men as Mr. Page\* attempt to preach from Gen. xxxv. 8, that Deborah is the law, the oak under which she was buried, the cross, etc., etc., they make wild work of it. I have allowed the propriety of preaching, by way of accommodation, and *I think I have not said that we should apply no passages to Jesus unless quoted in so many words in the New Testament*; but that when we propose our own sentiments, which are not so supported, we should do it under great modesty (page 406), which, perhaps you will readily allow. After all, if, in this point, the observation that doctors differ, should apply to you and me, I have still the comfort of thinking, that there are not many doctors who differ less, or in fewer particulars, than we do. *I like to have the proofs of the subject lie plainly in the text*; but if another preaches solid scriptural gospel truth from *Higgaion, Selah*, I am content. My censure is only intended against those who affect to please, and to show their superior sagacity by the singularity, quaintness, and novelty of their conceits, and who think they can discover mysteries in a text, when, perhaps, they do not understand even the literal sense of it.

A minister who should go to Botany Bay without a real call from the Lord, and without receiving from him an apostolical spirit, the spirit of a missionary, enabling him to forsake all, to give up all, to venture all, to put

\* Rev. Mr. Page, for a short time curate at Olney.



himself into the Lord's hands without reserve, to sink or swim, had better run his head against a stone wall. I am strongly inclined to hope Mr. Johnson is thus called, and will be thus qualified. He is humble and simple-hearted. I think he would not have thought of this service had it not been proposed to him; for some time he wished to decline it, but he could not, he durst not. I believe he has now made up his mind, and several incidents have concurred to encourage him and me likewise in the hope that the thing is of the Lord. I should not advise him to consult with you upon the point. Your appointment is to smoke your pipe quietly at home, to preach, and to lecture your pupils. You are not cut out for a missionary; and nothing perhaps would have been done, either in the Danish West India Islands, or in Greenland, if the attachments and feelings of all men had been like yours and mine. I must have my tea, my regular hours, and twenty little things which I can have when my post is fixed. I should shrink at the thought of living upon seals and train oil. I have not zeal to sell myself to be a slave for the opportunity of preaching to the slaves, while I was working with them; but the Lord inspired the Moravian missionaries with resolution to court hardships like these, so that they might win souls, and he gave them success. Oh, if Johnson is the man, whom the Lord appoints to the honour of being the first to carry the glad tidings into the southern hemisphere, he will be a great and honoured man indeed. Let the world admire Columbus, Drake, and Cook. Johnson will in my view be unspeakably superior to them all. I do not think he has those popular talents which are so much run after amongst us; but I believe he has good plain sense, solidity, humility, and steadiness: these are the truly great talents, these are

indispensably necessary, and these only, where he is going. I believe with his simple views, the Lord will not permit him to mistake his will in an affair of such vast importance; and therefore, if he does go, I shall hope for a happy event. If I am not mistaken, sooner or later the gospel *must* be preached in the South Seas; if so, there must be a beginning. Perhaps this is the time. Perhaps this is the final cause of our attempting a settlement in New Holland. Often when politicians have one thing in view, the Lord has another; and their plans succeed in order to the accomplishment of his.

*Olney Hymns and Olney Homer!* I understand you; when shall I come to my *Nil admirari*. I find after all my supposed acquaintance with the human heart, there are windings and depths in it, of which I know no more than of the dark unfathomable caves of ocean. When I have puzzled and grieved sufficiently about things which I cannot account for nor remedy, then I try to leave them with the Lord. He alone can make the crooked straight. It is singular indeed—and we may say of this turn, as of all that went before it, God moves in a mysterious way!

My regard for Mr. Barham and his family will make me always glad to serve him. You must, however, excuse me from speaking positively about the Testimonium. When he brings it to me, signed by Mr. Rose, I shall be able to judge better; but I do not choose to bind myself by an absolute promise before I see him, and converse with him. You may be sure it would give me great pain to refuse him. But as to finding a third, it is quite out of my reach. I know no minister who has been acquainted with Mr. Barham these three years last past. I believe I have seen him but once or twice myself within that time. The testimonial will express that I verily

think him a proper person for orders. If I should really think so in my heart, I shall be glad to subscribe it with my hand.

With love to Mrs. Bull, Tommy, and the Utopians, I remain your affectionate brother and servant,

JOHN OMICRON.

27th Oct., '86.

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LETTER XCIV.

MON CHER AMI, MONSIEUR TAUREAU,

How many questions may a curious, impertinent child ask, which a wise man cannot answer to his satisfaction—especially if the subject be above the child's capacity! Verily, we are children. We stand by the Lord, if I may so speak, while he is working; and at every turn are prone to discover our ignorance—too often, I fear, our presumption—by our inquiries, How is this? and Why is that? Mr. Latrobe dead! Surely not. Why he was a great man—a useful man. Oh! how he will be missed! Who can supply his place? We thought that, if he had been apparently drawing his last breath, the Lord would have restored such a man in answer to prayer. So children have talked; and I at one time talked thus childishly myself; at least, I thought so, if I kept my mouth shut. But, perhaps, from what I have hinted, I can assign the cause of his death better than the surgeons who opened his body. When once we con-

sider a man as great and useful, as one who cannot be spared, and whose loss cannot be easily replaced, we may consider him as standing upon dangerous ground. Do we not provoke the Lord to jealousy, by holding an instrument so high? Do we not sometimes render it proper and fit for him to show us, that he standeth not in need of a sinful worm? If the Lord is pleased to raise up a servant, to honour him with an eminency of gifts, graces, and usefulness, and then take him suddenly away, we are ready to say, What a dark Providence! How mysterious are his ways! But where is the mystery of all this, if it be only to show us that he can carry on his work very well without him? One such instance may do more to wean the rest of his servants from that idea of self-importance, to which we are all liable, than a thousand sermons on the subject. And so far as it has this effect, the death of a Latrobe may be more useful than his life.

Dear Mr. Unwin \* moved in a less extensive sphere, yet the loss of him will likewise be felt in his connexions. But the Lord can make up all. He was with me an hour that morning he set off with Mr. H. Thornton, and he told me that he had seen Mr. Latrobe more than once while he was confined at Teston, and seemed much impressed with what he had seen and heard. Little did he or I then think that they would both die on the same day! May we be always ready! And let us remember in the midst of our preaching and teaching, that though the Lord is pleased to employ us for a while, he can carry on his designs without our assistance. Mrs. Unwin the widow, has been very low, but is now better;

\* Rev. W. Cawthorne Unwin, rector of Stock, Essex.

I breakfasted with her at Clapham yesterday. She set off soon after to a friend's at Leytonstone, and will return to Stock in a few days. But how different will her house look now! Lately, it was her home; now, she must soon leave it. Lately, she could find her husband in the rooms or in the garden; but now, the place which knew him knows him no more. But she has hope in the Lord; and he, I trust, will support her. The same sun still shines at Stock, and God is at all times and in all circumstances equally near to those who trust in him. But what avail to have a good house well furnished, large and pleasant gardens, etc., when one unexpected stroke can so suddenly throw a gloom upon the whole, and change our Eden into a wilderness. Having food and raiment, and moderate conveniences, let us be content, let us be thankful. Many have not so much. None can properly make use of more.

Mrs. Newton hopes your head is better, and your spirits pretty good. If not, send her word how you are, and how you feel, that she may sympathise with you.

Mr. R., of B——, has indeed had some sceptical qualms about his situation in the church, and some thoughts of seceding or dissenting from us, but I hope they are blown over. I shall be sorry if he scruples himself out of a sphere of usefulness. But I never heard that he wavered as to the doctrines of the gospel. I hope it is no more than what I have mentioned, misrepresented or misunderstood. But I cannot answer for him, nor even for myself, unless I am upheld. We are all poor weathercocks if left to ourselves. I have always thought him an upright good man, though not the most

judicious. My love and our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy.

Pray for us ; and believe me to be your affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

22 Dec., '86.

Be so good as to send the inclosed immediately by some careful hand at your market. Should it not be received to-morrow, several poor folks at Olney will miss their Christmas dinner.

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LETTER XCV.

MY DEAR TAUREAU,

You have already heard from Mr. Neale, and are prepared to receive Robert Cottam, whom I introduce to you by this line. He is a pretty looking and pretty spoken lad. I hope you will like him, and that, by the Lord's blessing, you will have the honour of forming him to the good work.

My Dear has been quite ill ; is still poorly ; and I am not so well as usual. A cold, hoarseness, and a touch of the fever, made me feel the service of yesterday ; but I got well through.

I hope this will find you an athletic in health and spirits ; labouring mightily, cheerfully, and successfully for the Lord. Love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy.

Yours always,

OMICRON.

15th Oct.

## LETTER XCVI.

DEAR MR. TAUREAU,

I AM now monstrous busy ; but my Dear says, I must tell you that, because you said you liked hams, she sent you last week the only one she had in the house, per Newport waggon, carriage paid. She hopes it arrived safe, and will prove good.

It is pretty well with us at present—very well indeed, considering we are sinners. We have a measure of health, at least, by intervals. We have food, raiment, and fire. We have hams for ourselves, and can spare one to send to Newport. We have the Bible, the Gospel, the throne of grace, the means of grace, the hope of glory. Ah! what cold language is it for such sinners, so favoured, to say, It is *pretty well* with us! Whereas we ought to say, His mercy is greater than the heavens.

With our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy,

I remain your affectionate

OMICRON.

4th Dec.

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## LETTER XCVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU have behaved like a mighty good Bull, as you are, in trotting over twice to Weston. I could not see you at Newport while you were in London, nor while I myself was at Northampton.

A great object with me was Creaton, where I preached twice on Wednesday. Surely the Lord dwelleth in that place. But who that judgeth by outward appearances would look for Him in so small and obscure a village? Yet that little village is more truly glorious than all the mountains of prey—than all the Babylons and Romes that ever existed—though a detail of the madness, tyranny, and profligacy of those cities engages the attention of the learned, and is dignified with the name of history.

I have had eight doses from Dr. Pulpit this week, and am to take the ninth this evening. They agree perfectly well with me, only that their operation, together with the warmth of the weather, have left me a little in the lazy way.

We intend visiting you and Mrs. Bull on Tuesday next. I shall be sorry to leave Mrs. Newton behind me, and therefore, if her headache, which cannot be foreseen till it comes, should disable her from waiting on you then, I shall defer it till Wednesday. But I hope the Lord will permit us to be with you on Tuesday, provided that day be convenient to you, and we mean to be at Newport about noon.



The rest when we meet. Only love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy, from my Dear, and Betsey, and your affectionate,

OMICRON.

*Weston, 1st August, '88.*

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### LETTER XCVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is probable our dear child will be in a better world before morning, but I begin writing to night because your kind letter deserves our early notice and thanks. On Thursday she walked with me a little while in Moorfields, her burden seemed lighter, and though her talk was not comfortable, there was a gracious savour in it, which gave me comfort and satisfaction. But in the afternoon she said, "Oh it is coming again! Oh what have I to go through!" The gloom increased, and the two next days we could hardly draw a word from her, but her whole manner showed a grateful attention to our kindness, and that her not being able to express it was some addition to her trouble. On Saturday, about five in the afternoon, she was seized with a violent convulsive agony in her head, which lasted an hour. Dr. B. thought it might possibly return in about twelve hours, and that if it did, she would hardly survive it, but it did not return. From that time she has been more quiet and composed, and though I do not think she is yet freed from those terrible assaults of the enemy, her gentleness and ready compliance with whatever is proposed, is

equal to what might be expected from a mind in perfect peace. I am hoping and praying, that if it be the Lord's pleasure to take her to himself, he will yet enable her to speak words of peace to his praise ; but however desirable this is, if the violence of her disorder should prevent it, I shall be well satisfied without it, that she is gone to praise him in a better world. There are marks of grace, very satisfactory to me, when from reserve or other reasons much has not been said in the experimental way. Her love to the Lord's ordinances and people, the tenderness of her conscience, her strict regard to truth and peace, the manner in which she walked and conversed, her rich acquaintance with the Scriptures, her cheerful and voluntary renunciation of the baits which the world holds out to young people, her kind, affectionate, obedience to her mamma and me, her habit of benevolence and tenderness, studying to be useful and obliging to all about her—in these things she was exemplary, and she knew and felt herself a sinner, and placed her whole dependance, I doubt not, upon Him who died for sinners. While her disorder was more moderate, oh with what sweet simplicity she prayed ! With delight I heard her again and again, remind the Lord of transactions that had passed between him and her soul, and commit herself into his hands for mercy. Simplicity was indeed her characteristic, in this I think no person of her years could exceed her.

The morning is now come. She lay quiet through the night—is still alive, and there is no great visible alteration in her since the evening. My feelings are sharply tried, but I trust I do not wish to recall the surrender I have made of her into the Lord's hands. I know we do not suffer by chance, and I hope we shall not suffer in vain.

I have much to attend to to-day, abroad and at home, shall therefore close with our united love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy. Your prayers, I believe, are already engaged for us. The Lord bless you and yours.

I am your affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Dec. 23rd, '88.*

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### LETTER XCIX.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

SOME time on Tuesday the fever began to take what I may call a more placid turn. The Lord has removed the heavy gloom from her spirits, and the dreadful storm is, I trust, overblown. But still it is a fever which affords little ground to expect her recovery; since it has ceased to prey upon her nerves, and become more of an inflammatory kind. She has taken James's powders seven times in the twenty-four hours, but without any sensible effect. She has had no sleep for about forty-eight hours. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that her mind wanders. But her wanderings are gentle. She knows everybody about her; what is said when spoken to; and can ask for what she wants. At intervals she has prayed, repeated apt texts of Scripture, and some lines or verses of hymns, which sufficiently indicate which way her mind looks, so far as the malady permits

it to act ; and He who searches the heart, knows and hears what we cannot. Her mind is open to him when it is shut to us. She is still in his hands, and there, through mercy, I am still enabled to leave her, I hope, without anxiety, though not without some acute and painful feelings.

Mrs. Newton's feelings are, as you may suppose, sharply tried ; but she is mercifully upheld. We thank you for your kind sympathy and prayers. Were you our only kind friends, I would certainly write to you every day. But the Lord has given us many. I have many messages, notes, letters, and visitants, which must be attended to. But I will supply you with intelligence as often as I can ; when I cannot, I trust you will excuse me.

With our love to Mrs. Bull, and all your family, I remain

Your affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

26th Dec., '88.

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## LETTER C.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR kind letter must be answered, whoever waits. I should have written more early in the week, but for a strange notion which got into my head, that Mr. Thornton's intended journey into the north would bring you to London. I found out to-day, by my own sagacity, that it is not unlikely he may call and take you up in his way.

Our dear Betsey is, we hope, upon the recovery; but the transition from health to sickness is usually more rapid than the return from sickness to health. I think she gains strength, though slowly; she sleeps more, and better; and though the enemy still shoots his fiery darts at her, I think they neither fly so fast, nor wound so deeply, as they did. If the Lord is pleased to restore strength to her nerves, and to raise her spirits, which have been much depressed, I hope she will soon find herself upon peaceful ground, and that she will live to praise him. After what she has gone through, it seems almost miraculous that she is so well as she is; and perhaps the gradual and slow progress of her recovery may give a better hope that it will be complete and permanent, than if it had been more speedy.

Mrs. Newton has been much exercised; sometimes I have feared she would be overdone, but the Lord has mercifully renewed her strength; and I do not know that her health, upon the whole, has been much worse, during the last trying month, than for any equal space of time since our return from Weston. But we are growing older, and may expect that as years increase

infirmities will increase also. To those who are not cut off by a sudden stroke, or by some violent acute illness, sooner or later, days will come which the flesh will account evil days, in which little comfort will be found, but what the Lord is pleased to afford immediately from himself. We are in his hands, and they are merciful hands. Many a time he has known our souls in adversity; heard our prayers, and granted us relief from pain and sickness, from sorrow and perplexity; and though we are unworthy of his goodness, and have been unfaithful stewards of his manifold blessings, yet his word still gives us encouragement to trust in him, and call upon him as long as we live. May his Holy Spirit give us liberty and humble confidence to improve the liberty his promise allows of casting all our cares upon him, with a persuasion that he careth for us. May his grace be sufficient for us, and our strength according to our day, and then all shall be well. The time is short, and the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. A happy end will make amends for all we can meet by the way. Oh that we could learn to live with the Lord by the day, and leave the unknown to to-morrow, and all its wants, with him. The trials of yesterday are gone, to return no more. Those of to-morrow are not yet come. The Lord mercifully parcels out to us our lot of afflictions by minutes and moments, that we might not be overburdened; but we, foolishly looking back to the past, and forward to the future, load ourselves with an unnecessary and unprofitable weight; no wonder, therefore, that we are often weary. The heaviest part of our trials is owing, not so much to the dispensations which cause them, as the self-will and unbelief of our hearts; and our relief depends more upon the cure of our wrong

inward dispositions, than upon any change of our outward circumstances.

At my first setting out in life, my wickedness and folly plunged me into a variety of wretchedness. But since the Lord was pleased to find and call me in the waste howling wilderness, my path has been comparatively smooth, and my lot (myself being judge in my own case) a highly favoured one. He led me about into various places and situations; in every place he did me good, and gave me favour amongst my fellow-creatures; and every change his Providence appointed me, was for the better, both as to personal comfort and to usefulness. Vile as my heart has been, he has preserved my character, he has kept me from gross errors in judgment, and from gross miscarriages in conduct. He has preserved to me my dear partner, and preserved our mutual affections unabated for near thirty years since he first joined our hands and hearts. At present I am happy in many kind friends, and endeared connexions,—happy in the exercise of my ministry, among a numerous, affectionate, and attentive people, many of whom are of the first rank for real grace and practical godliness. As yet my bow abides in strength, and he has not yet taken his holy word out of my lips. Shall I not then praise him for all that is past? Ought I not to trust him for all that is to come? I have indeed occasionally had my trials, and some of them have been sharp; but their sharpness, as I have hinted, has been chiefly owing to my want of faith and submission, and I have reason to say, *Nisi periissem, periissem*. I have reason to praise him for my trials, for, most probably, I should have been ruined without them.

I am not willing to close our correspondence so soon as you speak of. I shall hope to hear from you when you are in the north, and will endeavour to pay you in

the same way. May the Lord, the good Shepherd, be sun and shield to you and to dear Mr. Thornton, throughout your journey, and bring you home full of grace and peace. Remember our love to Mrs. Bull and Tommy. I trust you continue to pray for your affectionate friends,

JOHN AND MARY NEWTON.

16 *Jan.* '89.

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LETTER CI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I THANK you again. The prayers, advice, and sympathy of Christian friends, compose a cordial very acceptable in an hour of trouble. Though our effectual help be in the Lord alone, such friends are not like Job's miserable comforters, they are his instruments to us for good. I thank him for them (for who would smile upon me unless he gave me favour in their sight), and I thank them for their kindness.

Our dear child has passed through so many changes, that I knew not what to say all last week, particularly on Saturday; we were hourly expecting her dismissal. When I went to church on Sunday morning, I no more expected to find her alive at my return, than to find her well, yet she is living still, and apparently not so likely to die soon, as she was for many days past. Neither do I see any favourable symptoms to warrant the expect-



ation of recovery. But I have little to do with appearances and symptoms. She is in the hands of Him who loves her better than I can. He does all things in wisdom, mercy, and faithfulness. We are allowed to trust in God, who raiseth the dead. I cannot be sufficiently thankful, that she is freed from the dreadful assaults of the enemy. I have not asked for her life—I dare not; but I have found liberty to pray that she might be in a measure composed, and she is as much so as can be expected, considering the nature of her malady, and her great weakness.

When you are inclined to trot over to Weston, you will take, perhaps, my letters with you, and then you will probably see one that I send to day to Mrs. Unwin which may contain some particulars not to be found in yours.

I cannot say that I was sorry to hear of Mrs. Wilberforce's release, though I loved her, and believe she loved me, and though she will be missed by her family and dependents greatly. Yet she suffered so much, that I was rather glad than sorry to hear that she was entered into the rest and joy of her Lord. May the same grace enable us to persevere, and make us willing if such be our Lord's pleasure, to suffer afflictions for a while, since they are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

With love to Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, and your family,

Your affectionate and obliged brother,

OMICRON.

30th Dec.

Through mercy I am enabled to go through my public services with liberty and comfort.

The doctor is just come down stairs, and says dear Betsey is certainly better at present.

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## LETTER CII.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHETHER you returned to Clapham with Mr. Thornton yesterday, or stopped at Newport, as yet I know not. The latter is possible, but in either case you will receive this, to congratulate you on the completion of your journey, to thank you for your letter from York, and to express my hope that you found Mrs. Bull, and all at home, well and in peace.

Dear Miss Catlett is very much recovered. She has not fully regained her strength, but her health is greatly restored, and her spirits are better. The Lord enabled her to go to church on Sunday, the 8th instant, in the evening, and she has been there twice since. She has been several times abroad in a carriage, and walking in Draper's Garden near us. To-morrow she goes, if the Lord pleases, to spend a few days with a friend at Stoke Newington, for a little change of air, and better opportunity of exercise.

When she first appeared at church I preached from Psalm cxvi. 1, 2, as a thanksgiving sermon. I am persuaded that many of the congregation had prayed earnestly for her, and were glad to see her again. A

revival from the state in which she lay for several days seemed a kind of resurrection. Such proofs of His power and goodness in answer to prayer, justly demand returns of gratitude, love, and praise; and give us fresh encouragement to call upon him as long as we live. I hope we shall not call upon him only when we are in trouble, but keep closer to him, and more sensibly dependent upon him, if he sees fit to afford us an interval of ease and prosperity. And we may expect more changes; clouds will return, new troubles will arise, but, blessed be his name, we know where to apply for help in every time of need. He who has delivered, and who does deliver, will support and deliver to the end.

Pray for me, my friend, that the late dispensation, which was not joyous but grievous, may be sanctified to myself and to my dear Mrs. Newton. Though the Lord mercifully upheld me in my public line, I was conscious of a languor in my private walk, and in the inward frame of my spirit before him, which must have stopped my mouth from complaining, had he sent a still more severe visitation to arouse me. It is a mercy not to be deserted and put to shame before the people. But the exercise of gifts and of grace are different and distinct things. Pray that I may not have suffered in vain, but may have reason to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

Pray likewise for the dear child. She likewise is afraid lest she should lose the sense of what the Lord has shown her and done for her. Those jealous fears which arise from a sense of our own weakness, and the snares and dangers that surround us, and which urge us to cry to him, who alone is able to keep us from falling, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe," are rather to be encouraged than suppressed. In this sense it is said,

"Happy is the man that feareth always." But I have a well-grounded hope, that she has been drawn by his grace, truly to yield and entrust herself to him, and that he has taken such fast hold of her heart, that nothing shall be able to separate her from his love. He will permit neither force nor fraud, to pluck those out of his hands, whom he has once enabled simply and sincerely to commit their all to him.

Mrs. Newton continues much as usual. She had been confined from church some weeks before Betsey's illness, and has not been there yet. But she is not confined to her bed, nor often to her room. Last Thursday we entered the fortieth year of our joint reign. At our time of life it is less to be wondered that one of us should be ailing, than that either of us should be well. My health hitherto seems as firm as ever, and I feel little abatement of my powers either of body or mind, so far as concerns my ministry; which ought to be, and I hope is, the chief consideration which makes health or life valuable in my view. But at the age of sixty-four I cannot expect to get on thus a great while. No matter, my times are in His hands who doeth all things well. Only may he enable me to live to him while I do live, and to serve him while I can do any thing; and when he calls me or disables me, to retire with a good grace and a good hope, rejoicing that I am no longer wanted, and that he has other instruments coming forward to carry on his merciful designs, I hope with greater zeal and success than I knew in my best times.

Mr. Atkins, the blind man, desired me to speak to Mr. Thornton, on behalf of the youth (Cottam,\* I think, you call him), whom Mr. Neale sent to Newport. I thought

\* Afterwards the Rev. Robert Cottam, incumbent of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

I would, but upon second thoughts, which are sometimes best, it seemed better to refer the business to you. I verily believe Atkins is a good and benevolent person. He respected this young man (who had lived some time with him) and wished to assist him in his views to the ministry. John Ryland, sen., according to the known warmth of his spirit, pushed him on. "Never talk of prudence, trust in God, he will incline your friends to assist you in the necessary expense. Faith jumps over mountains, or removes them, etc." Mr. Atkins hastily followed his advice, and he found friends to assist him at first, but they have dropped, and they have left poor Atkins in a difficulty. He is unwilling to desert the young man, and unable to support him. If you think the young man deserving, and choose to mention him to Mr. Thornton, as he is under your care, I judge it will come with more propriety from you. Let me know your mind when you are at leisure.

We all join in love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy.

I am sincerely yours,

OMICRON.

17th Feb., '89.

I have not time to treat on the particulars of your letter.

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## LETTER CIII.

REV. AND DEAR TAUREAU,

THE nice half pig (not the half nice pig) which you sent, arrived safely : coming from you, it was sure of a welcome. Thank you for pig and letter, and for every token and expression of your love to your old friends.

My Dear thanks you for your kind concern about her ; and so do I. Though she has now and then, and here and there, a pain or complaint, she is, in the main, and upon the whole, tolerable ; and, compared with what she was at this time last year, we have great cause for thankfulness.

I have already written more than the three lines you asked for ; but when writing to you, would time permit, I would send three sides, or three sheets. I will at least keep on till the barber or the breakfast stops me.

This is Mrs. Newton's birthday. For many years I used to keep the anniversary of her birth and my own, and of our marriage, as fast days. Not that I was sorry that we were born, or sorry that the Lord brought us together ; but I observed it as a day of solemn prayer and praise. How very different must the history of my life have been, if she had not been sent into the world after me ! Then ; most probably, I should neither have known Guinea nor Mary Woolnoth. She is evidently the hinge on which my whole life has turned. She was the occasion, though not the cause, of that series of foolish conduct on my part, which plunged me into the misery of African bondage ; and when I was there, I

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was so infatuated and degraded in my spirit,—so riveted to my chains, that I think nothing but the attachment I felt for her, which remained when every other moral or prudential sentiment was effaced from my mind, could have induced me to return.

You will find an abridgment of my life thus far in Deut. xxxii. 10 to 14 (I have but too much reason to take the 15th verse into the account). You may find another in Isaiah xlii. 16. I meet with several passages in the Psalms, likewise, which seem so suitable to my case, as if written on purpose, particularly in the 71st, which came in the course of my reading this morning. I have been a wonder to many, and may well be a wonder to myself.

The 12th inst. will be my wedding-day. Just forty years ago we joined hands, and entered together upon the world's wilderness. We knew not the right path across it, but seemed disposed to take the first that offered. But we had not wandered far, before the Lord, whom we little thought of, was pleased to give us some sense of our need of a guide; and from that time, he has taken upon himself the care and cost of our journey. He himself has been our guard and guide, our sun and shield, our physician and provider, our counsellor and our comforter. Oh that we had more regarded his counsel, and more prized his comforts! Very different has been the path by which he has led us, from that which we should have chosen, if permitted, for ourselves. Many situations we have been in, many changes we have seen; but having obtained help from God, we continue to this day. Again we are spared to set up a new Ebenezer. The greater part of our journey is accomplished: how much farther we have to go, He knows,—we know not. But I humbly hope he will still be our guide and guard,

even unto death. The shadows of evening are lengthening upon us ; the night cometh ; I hope it will be but a momentary night, ushering in an everlasting day. Pray for us : I will try to pay you in kind. But I must break off. Mrs. Newton and Catty join with me in love to you, Mrs. Bull, and Tommy.

The Lord bless you and yours abundantly. Amen.

I am yours truly affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

2nd Feb., '90.

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#### LETTER CIV.

MY DEAR MR. TAUREAU,

How vain are all things here below ! So we read, so we preach ; is it a wonder that so we find it ? The Lord giveth, or rather lendeth ; when he recalls his own, shall we not say, Blessed be the name of the Lord !

Our meeting last night was short, and not over joyous. Had you found me alone I would have kept you a little longer, or accompanied you to Mr. Neale's. But I set out with you this morning, we are now (at past seven) not far from the foot of Highgate Hill. I mean to see you now and then on the road—and on your arrival at Newport. Thus I shall be present in spirit to-day, and to-morrow I hope to wait upon you in the shape of a letter. Perhaps we both need a cordial. If writing should prove one to me, and reading what



I write should comfort you, I shall be glad. Well then, to begin, if possible, at the right end, I will tell you though you know it, that the Lord reigns ; and that this Lord is our Lord. He to whom we have been invited, and enabled to commit all our concerns, has all power, and doth what he pleaseth among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. Consequently he is both able to help us, and to shield us from harm.

Again his goodness is equal to his power, and his goodness has extended unto us. Were we not cast upon him from the birth ? Was he not our hope upon the breast ? Did he not care for us in infancy, childhood, and youth ? He not only *spared*, but *preserved* us, when we were sinning against him. Whither should we have wandered if he had not stopped us, and led us into his own fold ? From that time what a good Shepherd ! Yea long before, for he laid down his life for his sheep. His blessing has signally been with you and me, in our personal, domestic, and public concerns. He hath given us many comforts, and some usefulness. He has led us about, permitted us to speak of his name in many places, and honoured us with the friendship of some of his most favoured people.

Once more, his wisdom is perfect. He doth all things well ; in time, manner, and circumstance. He does not indeed always inform us of his reasons, but we have good ground to be sure that they are always worthy of himself. If then he is wise, good, and almighty, to wish the slightest alteration in his plan and management, must be equally presumptuous and foolish. Lord, help us to say, Thy will be done !

We ascribe the death of believers to falls or fevers, etc. These are but the second causes. You will find the true cause in John xvii. 24. When the hour comes that he

will have them with him to behold his glory, should we wish to delay them if we could? But some of them have been so useful! Surely they will not be useless where they are going; though we know not particularly the services appointed them there. I cannot doubt, but they will be much more noble, extensive, and important than any thing they could attempt while here. Mr. Thornton has been long a burning and shining light; he is eclipsed by his present decline, but death will not extinguish him. And He who has the residue of the Spirit will never want instruments to promote his own cause, and to comfort his own people. I think it probable that no one man in Europe, in private life, will be so much missed at first; but I trust his place will be well supplied, even by those of his own family.

You know something of my peculiar obligations to him. I hope my respect and affection were in some degree proportionable. To him, under the Lord, I owe all my consideration and comfort as a minister. It was a pleasure to me if I only saw him passing by. I believe I shall see his face no more here, but hereafter. Oh what a hope! what a prospect!

Mrs. Newton has been at no time worse than yesterday. She has had a better night than I could have expected, only, as we have so many tokens of the Lord's compassion in this affliction. We are in his hands—He knows what I feel, and what, with submission to his will, appears desirable to me; but he knows likewise, and has in some degree apprized me of my utter unfitness to choose for myself, Lord, I *would*, I *do* submit.

With our united love to Mrs Bull and Tommy,

I remain, your very affectionate,

OMICRON.

13 Oct. '90.

## LETTER CV.

MY DEAR BROTHER BULL,

FRANKS at present are suspended, as the three gentlemen\* are all at Bath. I must, however, write a line, and you must pay for it.

The pork came safe last week ; thank you, for it. Mrs. Newton was pleased with your kindness, and eat two or three mouthfuls of it the two days following. It is the only butcher's meat she has eaten for some weeks, except a mouthful of pork yesterday, for a similar reason—because Judith sent it. More pork is come from you to-day. I thank you for this likewise ; and my Dear has again talked of eating a bit, because it is yours.

She has outlived the doctor's expectation four or five days ; but he thinks she can hardly hold out above a day more. She lies for the most part very quiet ; sleeps a good deal ; seldom has much pain ; but the extreme weakness of her body seems to have given the enemy some advantage. Her mind is locked up, and there is no drawing one comfortable word from her concerning herself. But her patience under the Lord's hands has been wonderful ; and she discovers no symptoms of terror, or great distress. If the Lord is pleased to smile upon her, that she may smile upon and in death, when it approaches, I hope I shall be thankful. I humbly ask this as what seems to me very desirable ; and I rather hope it will be so ; but I have no right nor reason to

\* Messrs. Samuel, Robert, and Henry Thornton, who were attending, at Bath, the dying bed of their excellent father, John Thornton, Esq.

*claim* it. I trust I have sufficient warrant to say, that she knows herself to be a sinner, and knows Jesus to be the Saviour. I cannot doubt but she has many a time, in the course of this long trial, committed herself to him. During her confinement, she studied the Bible with such attention, that she has marked almost every important passage in it from Genesis to Revelation with a pencil. She has gone through Dr. Watts' Hymns and Psalms, and the Olney Hymns, in the same manner; so that very few are left unmarked, and frequently there is a cross annexed to every verse.

The Lord is very gracious to me. My health was never better. My feelings at times have been severely painful, but they have not affected my appetite nor my sleep; nor, so far as I can judge for myself, been any hinderance to my public service. Yesterday was a day of trial, but it was a day of liberty likewise. I think I have seldom had more in the pulpit, especially in the forenoon, when I preached from 2 Cor. xii. 9. Our affliction, though heavy to the flesh, has been attended throughout with many merciful alleviations. And to this minute, though she is so extremely weak, her spirits are good.

Through the Lord's mercy, my mind is calm and resigned. I have not one allowed wish to alter his appointment, were it possible. His choice and his hour must be the best. Instead of complaining that she is to be taken from me now, what reason have I for admiration and praise, that she has been spared to me so long, when I have justly deserved to forfeit her every day of my life, since he first gave her, or, rather, lent her to me! How few in the married state live together upwards of forty years! Still fewer, who preserve their mutual affection unabated for so long a term! Had not

his blessing cemented us, we might, yea, we should, have been weary of each other long ago. I hope to say, He has done all things well. At my time of life, if I weep, it ought to be as though I wept not: the end of my own pilgrimage cannot be very distant. May we meet again *then*, in his presence to stand among the redeemed before the throne; and we shall have done with sickness, pain, sorrow, and sin, for ever!

The letters from Bath give but little hopes of Mr. Thornton's recovery; the physician says, *It is possible*. Lady Balgonie's account is rather more favourable than Mr. Henry's, though both written about the same time. I cannot say, that I expect to see him again in this world. There, my heart has another wound. My best friend and benefactor, to whom, under the Lord, I owe all that I have or am; but what is my private loss, compared with that of the public! But it is the Lord's doing. If it be his pleasure to have his servant with him where he is, to behold his glory, we cannot detain him, nay, we ought not to desire it.

Now, I wish you a good night. I know not what the morrow may bring forth; I know not, but the *Lord* knoweth.

Tuesday is come, it is much like Monday. She is still living. Both her body and mental state are much as yesterday. Her stay cannot be long; but I still pray, and hope, and trust, that the Lord will break the force of the temptation, and bring her out of the pit, and put a new song in her mouth, before she goes. He can put it into her heart, whether I hear her sing it or not; but if he is pleased to show her a token for good, so that she can show it to us, I hope I shall not be unthankful. The treasure of both the Indies would be a trifle in my view, compared with the granting of this desire. She

seems not to be so much harrassed concerning her own interest in particular, as concentering the truths themselves, which she has formerly known and believed, and are the very foundations of hope. I am distressed, but not forsaken. The Lord is here. His mercy is great, his power infinite. He can break her fetters by a word, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and give us the oil of joy for mourning. She would send her love, if she knew of my writing; I am sure she loves you.

Love to Mrs. Bull, Tommy, etc., from

JOHN NEWTON.

I wish you could either trot over to Weston, or send this letter thither. I cannot yet write myself, but my heart is often there.

26 October, '90.

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## LETTER CVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE the receipt of this will not cause your spirits to droop, or your head to hang down, when I, who am most nearly interested, can begin with telling you, all is well. I am supported, I am comforted, I am satisfied. The Lord is good indeed! I can think without regret, of the day when the Lord first joined our hands, (excepting when I reflect on my folly and idolatry); and now I feel not much more regret, when I think of the day which separated us for a season. I trust we shall soon meet to part no more.

Perhaps the papers have already informed you of her release from her sufferings, on Wednesday evening. For three days before, she gave little sign of life, but by breathing. Her departure was so gentle, that she was gone before we were well aware, though we had our eyes fixed upon her. This event, when it took place, was not an addition to my trial, rather a great deliverance. It freed my heart from a thousand pains and anxieties, which I could not wholly avoid, when I thought of the trying situation in which she had long lain.

The dark cloud which hung over her was mercifully dispersed, above a month before her removal. Though she had not spirits, or freedom to speak much to me, it was evident from that time, that the frame of her spirit was gracious. Her patience was most exemplary, not one complaining expression passed her lips. She was rather ingenious, when her sufferings were the greatest,

to fix upon something for which she had cause to be thankful, that she was preserved from agonizing pain ; that the Lord laid no more upon her than he enabled her to bear ; and though she could not move her body, she still had the use of her hands. These she spoke of as great mercies. Her reluctance to dying was entirely removed. She spoke of it with great composure ; and having mentioned some domestic affairs to me, and given some directions about her funeral, particularly desiring that Mr. Foster might bury her, she said, " Now I have done with this world," though she lived near a month afterwards.

I trust I am well warranted to consider her now as a happy spirit before the throne, (and perhaps still looking at me, for our ideas of local distance are not applicable to that world). It cannot be long at my years, before I shall be summoned to follow her. Had she gone to Newport one day, and had I gone after her the next day, and found her safe at your house, the separation of a single day would have been no great matter. A thousand years are as one day to the Lord, because he inhabits eternity, and, for a like reason, they should be so to us, since we are designed for an eternal state, and hastening to it.

But I trust what has taken place will not make me weary of living, till the Lord's hour shall arrive. His time is, and must be, the best. I am his, and not my own. My principal tie to the earth is broken, but opportunities of preaching the gospel, of proclaiming the Saviour's glory and grace, and being some way instrumental to the good of my fellow-creatures, ought to engage me as a stronger tie to be willing to live, while he has anything for me to do, or to bear for his sake,



though it could be to the age of Methuselah. The rest that remaineth will make amends for all; and eternity, itself, will hardly afford us such opportunities as we enjoy now, of acting for God, and exercising those graces which were more eminently the mind that was in Christ Jesus, while he submitted to the evils of life, and endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, for our sakes.

Oh the promised Comforter If his influence was so great as to make it expedient and desirable for the disciples to lose the personal presence of their Lord, because otherwise the Comforter would not come; how much more should we think it sufficient to make us amends for the removal of any mere creature, however dear! Can our attachment be stronger to our friends, than that of the disciples was to their dear Lord who conversed with them so kindly, was their teacher, friend, and provider? Yet, when they saw him ascend, they departed rejoicing. If they could be happy and comfortable without him; cannot the same Comforter make us so, though we no longer see the wife, or child, or the friend whom we loved?

Yes, he is all-sufficient. It becomes me to bear testimony to his goodness. Doubtless, I feel the wound still, but it was made by a faithful friend, who will perfectly heal it, in his due time. And, in the mean time, I am not disqualified either for the duties of my ministry, or the comforts of society.

The Lord bless you, and Mrs. Bull, and Tommy, and all dear to you, your heart, your house, your church and congregation, and all your stated, and occasional services. Amen. Dear Miss Catlett joins in love; the stroke made more impression upon her spirits, than

upon mine ; but through mercy she is pretty well again. All our family are well. We shall all be glad to see you when you come to town.

I am always, your affectionate brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

18th Dec. '90.

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LETTER CVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BROTHER ROBINSON\* undertakes to convey a little book to you, which will speak for itself. I wish I may have time to accompany it with a few thanks for your kind letter of yesterday.

I am much as when you saw me ; through mercy, no worse ; and I think not a whit better, if by *better* is meant being less sensible of my loss. In this sense, I hardly expect, nor do I indeed desire, to be better than I am. She is always present to my waking thoughts, and I cannot wish to forget her. Innumerable calls for thankfulness, and causes for humiliation, are connected with the remembrance of her, for she was the Lord's chief earthly blessing to me ; and, through the evil of my heart, proved the occasion of disclosing the strongest proofs of my

\* The Rev. T. Robinson, vicar of St. Mary's, Leicester.

ingratitude and depravity. How often has the gift hidden the Giver from my sight! How often has my excessive idolatrous affection been a snare to us both!

That she was spared to me so long, and that at last her removal should be made so tolerable to me, are striking instances of that goodness of the Lord to me, which has run like a thread through my life, and has made my history singular, if not unique in the annals of mankind.

Her idea is always with me, as I have said, excepting when I am asleep, or perhaps some times when I am in the pulpit; yet I am by no means uncomfortable. My health and spirits are good: I eat and sleep well. I preach, write, and converse as usual. I hope in spirituals I have been rather a gainer by my loss than otherwise. I think, likewise, that in the time of my trial and since, there has been an additional blessing going forth in the public ordinances. The church is more thronged than formerly, and there seems an attention and earnestness in the hearers, which is very encouraging.

I thank you for wishing me fifteen years more, because I know you meant well. I can only say that I desire to leave my times and my all in my Lord's hands. His I am, and, I trust, him I desire to serve. I am a sentinel upon my post, which I would not wish to quit, till my Commander is pleased to relieve me. I have not lost my relish for the many comforts and mercies which are still afforded me; yet, methinks, I see nothing pertaining to this world worth living a single day for. I may say it to my shame, I seem dead to the world, but, alas! not so much by the cross of Christ, as by the death of a wife: while she lived, and was in tolerable health, I was too much content with setting up my tabernacle here.

If I am not short of creature comforts, I am at the same time delivered from a thousand cares and anxieties, which so long as she had lived, would probably have cleaved to me, as close as my skin to my flesh.

It will, however, be well worth while to live while the Lord is pleased to enable me, for the preaching of the gospel, and to own me in it; and should he see fit to lay me aside, I hope still to be willing to live my appointed time. May his grace make me so! If I could exercise submission, patience, and thankfulness, I might be still useful, even if bedridden. I have no notion of a minister outliving his usefulness, provided he is preserved in a right spirit. Might not I sit quiet in a corner, and rejoice to see others coming forward to serve the Lord better than myself, when I could serve him no more? Might not I bear private testimony to his goodness, and his truth, when I could no longer speak for him in public? I have observed sometimes that caprice, peevishness, jealousy, and other evils have stained the old age even of good men. My chief prayer now respecting myself is, that I may be preserved from indiscretion and folly; and that if it please the Lord, my evening of life may be consistent with my profession, and that I may set without a cloud.

When I think how signally he strengthened me of late, so as to preach when my Dear lay dead, and to preach her funeral sermon, in answer to my prayers, I feel encouraged to hope that he will hear me in these petitions also.

I trust he will likewise hear my heart-prayers for you, for Mrs. Bull, Tommy, your house, and your ministry. Then it will be well with you in all respects. Betsey is pretty well, and a great comfort to me. I am sure she means her love, but is not at home to send it. I shall

be very glad when you can contrive to smoke a pipe with your affectionate and obliged friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

*30th March, '91.*

Write again soon.

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### LETTER CVIII.

MON CHER TAUREAU,

As to the Colchester business, it was settled when you were here. I was fully satisfied then, and therefore cannot be more so now.

I sit down to write upon a more important subject. Mrs. Neale told me when I was there on Thursday evening, that Tommy was poorly. I entered plump into your feelings, and therefore now I must write. Whoever waits, Mr. Bull must be served.

But what can I say to you? Were you a stranger to the strong topics of consolation, with which the good word of God abounds, I could soon fill my paper. I could tell you that all your concerns are in the hands of Him who is infinitely wise, good, and powerful; that to him belong the issues from death; that diseases come and go at his command; that he does all things well; that he can sweeten the most bitter medicines; his wisdom prescribes for our good; that he is so near, so kind, so

all-sufficient, as to enable us to rejoice under our heaviest trials ; that the time is short ; and the Lord will make amends for all, etc, etc. But to write in this strain to you, would be, as they say, to carry coals to Newcastle. For all this, and more than I can tell you, you already know. Yet the Lord, who is the only Comforter, is often pleased to use us as His instruments to comfort one another. I may, if he pleases, drop some hint, which may touch your heart, not because it comes from me, but from Him ; and, therefore, I will write on.

One thing, indeed, you could only know from me, but this likewise, I have told you before, yet I will tell it you again. I have not only *read* these gracious promises, and *believe* them to be true, but I have tried them, and *found* them to be true. I never was, strictly speaking, a father, though I think I have come tolerably near the feelings of one ; but I have been a husband, and I think, in that relation, I have known all the tender feelings, both pleasing and painful, of which the human heart is susceptible. I have often thought that though I loved my friends well while living, and wished them to live as long as possible, yet if the Lord saw fit to remove them, and I had hope that they died in the faith, I could pretty well make up my own loss, by considering to whom they were gone, and how they were employed, when I could see them no more. Thus the removal of Mrs. Barham, Mr. Thornton, and others, though dear to my heart, cost me little more than a sigh upon my own account. I thought, now they are safe and happy ; now neither sin, sorrow, nor Satan, can touch them. They are escaped from the turbulent, tempestuous sea of this world, and are entered into the haven of eternal rest. These, and such kind of considerations, soon and perfectly reconciled

me to part with them for a time, expecting, before very long, to receive them again for ever.

But when my foreboding mind has anticipated the possibility of surviving my dear Mary, the question, How I could bear it? how I could ever expect to see another cheerful hour? involved a difficulty which could only be solved by referring it to the mighty power of God—of Him that raised the dead. I did indeed hope that he would grant me grace to be silently submissive to his will, but that I should be able to watch hours by her bed-side for her last breath; that I should think, write, and speak of her with so much composure after she was gone; that I should sleep soundly in the room, in the very bed, where she suffered so much and so long; that I should still prefer my home to any other house, and still retain a relish for all my remaining comforts, was more than I knew how to hope or to conceive.

At length, the trial which I most dreaded came upon me. Suspense was long; sensations were keen. My right hand was not chopped off at a stroke (I would be thankful, however, that it was not). It was sawn off by slow degrees; it was an operation of weeks and months; almost every following week more painful than the preceding. But did I sink? did I despond? did I refuse my food? did sleep forsake my eyes? was I so troubled in mind or weakened in body that I could not speak? Far, far from it. The Lord strengthened me, and I was strong. No part of my public service was interrupted; and, perhaps, I never preached with more energy than at that period. It was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in my own eyes, and in the eyes of my friends. Indeed, some who knew me not said it was overdone, and charged me with a want of feeling. Indeed, I felt as

much as I could well bear, but not too much; and to this hour I only stand because I am upheld. Were I left a little to myself, there is enough in my heart still to make me very wretched under a sense of my loss.

However, I hope and pray with respect to Tommy that his sickness may not be unto death, but to the glory of God, and his and your future comfort. Give my love to him, and assure him that I shall be often with him in spirit. My love to Mrs. Bull; and I sympathize with her likewise in her part of this trial, and in all her trials, so far as I know them. My dear Betsey joins me in love and best wishes. She knows that you thought of her, and prayed for her, when she was brought very low. When I think how low, I know not how to give up any case as desperate while life remains. The Lord our God can do great things in answer to prayer; but we are sure he will do all things well, for those who love him. Put your trust in him, and you shall not be disappointed.

I heard with great pleasure that Mr. C.'s son is respited. How different is his trial from yours! The Lord has given you, or lent you, a dutiful, hopeful, and affectionate son; and if it be most for his good and yours, he shall be long continued to you.

Believe me to be your affectionate and obliged friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

10th Dec., '91.



## LETTER CIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is time to thank you for your pork, and especially for your letter ; likewise, to answer your kind inquiries in the affirmative, by saying that, through the Lord's mercy, we are all favoured with health and peace at No. 6 ; and all join in love to you and yours.

Since the termination of my great trial, I have been remarkably favoured indeed. I have hardly had any trial, either from within or without, the inward warfare excepted, of the size of a button. My health, spirits, and my strength for public service, have suffered no considerable abatement, my table is well spread, my appetite good, and my sleep sound and refreshing.

But my clock, which struck sixty-six last August, reminds me that it will not always, nor probably long, be thus with me. No matter. Not only the precious promises, but the long experience I have had of the Lord's mercy and goodness, encourage me to trust him for the uncertain remainder of my span ; that as he has done me good all the way, led me about, and kept me as the pupil of his eye, so he will be with me to the end, even unto death. Did he not redeem and deliver me from Africa, take me up from the dunghill of sin and misery, put me among the princes, even his own children ; tame the tiger in my heart, and give me a name, a place, and service in his house ? Has he not preserved me from gross errors, from gross misconduct, from the wiles and power of mine enemy, though *he* was always watchful, and often found *me* asleep ? Has he not known my soul

in adversity, and helped me when the help of creatures would have been utterly in vain? And does he not still invite me to cast my care upon him, and assure me that he careth for me? I am little aware of what is yet in my heart; I know that after all this, I am still capable of distrust and repining. But he permits me to cry to him to hold me up; and as I know him to be a hearer of prayer, I trust I shall be kept in safety.

“ Unsustained by thee I fall :  
Send the help for which I call.”

It is true, I still miss my right hand, sensibly as on the first day. But when it was taken from me, I was at once freed from a thousand anxieties, which otherwise would have pained me to this hour. I think, when she died, the world died with her. May the Lord prevent it rising again in my heart!

Yes, we hope for a transition in due time, from a throne of grace, to stand upon a throne of glory; to see Him who sitteth upon it, the Lamb that was slain, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood! Him, whom having not seen, we have obtained grace to love. Indeed, he is to be seen now, but only with the eye of the mind. He is the sun of the soul, and without him we should be like the earth if deprived of the light of the sun in the firmament. There is a spiritual sunshine of which I can speak but faintly from experience; but I would be thankful for daylight, by which I can see my way, and get a glimpse of my journey's end. Hereafter there will be a morning without clouds, a noon without night, a long, an everlasting day. Eternal sunshine!

Mr. Adams has been apparently near death; but by blistering his legs, they have drawn off much water, and relieved him greatly. His appetite recovers, and he can

now sleep four or five hours at a time, which he could not lately. The doctors think he may possibly live some time, but they do not think he will ever be well. I saw him to day. He is in a comfortable frame, willing either to live or die, as the Lord shall appoint.

Mr. S—— is in town; has been with me two or three times. I believe he is a good man, and I must love him. As he said nothing upon the subject of the letter which I showed you; neither did I. The best way of managing some things, is to forget them. Let them die in silence. The fire in my study would have been out before now, if I had not stirred it up. I told you that what was said or written made no impression upon me, and you believed me. What need, then, of any further *eclaircissement* ?

Sometimes when I read books or letters, I am almost ready to think the writers were angels; but I suppose, if I lived with them, I should find them flesh and blood, like myself. If I was more sensible of my own inconsistency, I should less wonder at that which I observe in others. Wonderful is the patience of the Lord, who can bear with us all at once. We, alas! can hardly bear with each other one at a time.

When I was assured that Mr. Wilberforce would renew his motion in the House this session, I preached (as I did last year) about the slave trade. I considered it not in a political but in a moral view, from Jer. ii. 34. I think myself bound in conscience to bear my testimony at least, and to wash my hands from the guilt, which, if persisted in, now things have been so thoroughly investigated and brought to light, will, I think, constitute a national sin of a scarlet and crimson dye. A motion since made in the Common Council for a petition to Parliament on the subject, has been negatived. If the city

wanted a motto, I would furnish them with *Virtus post Nummos*. If the business miscarries again, I shall fear not only for the poor slaves, but for ourselves. For I think if men refuse to vindicate the oppressed, the Lord will take their cause into his own hands. And the consequences may be dreadful both abroad and at home, whatever mischiefs may arise from hurricanes, insurrections, etc. etc., I shall attribute to this cause.

In the mean time, I would retreat under the thought that the Lord reigns. He has wise reasons, though often inscrutable to us, both for what he appoints, and for what he permits. Hereafter we shall know more. In the mean time, may we be found among those who are secured by a mark, because they sigh and mourn for what they cannot prevent. Ezek. ix. 4—6.

With love to all your house, and to Mr. and Mrs. Greatheed, and my prayers that the Lord may bless you indeed, and give you peace always by all means.

I remain, your affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

24th March, '92.

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## LETTER CX.

MY DEAR MONS. TAUREAU,

ANOTHER letter already! You will say, Yes, but it is about business.

You desired us to look out for a student. Mr. Bacon\* has found one, his name is James Higgs. He has already been a preacher three years in the Tabernacle line. Mr. Bacon heard him occasionally during his residence at Hampstead, last summer, thought he had right views, a good spirit, and promising natural abilities. But he wishes for such improvement as he thinks your tuition might afford him. He is in some business, but would prefer devoting himself entirely to the service, and with a view of some time undertaking a stated and pastoral charge.

He is already twenty-eight years of age. He breakfasted with me this morning. I seem to like him very much. His knowledge of Latin and Greek are equal; that is, he knows not a tittle of either; and I suppose it is too late to make him a nice classical scholar—nor did John Bunyan. But he may pick up with you many useful things in his mother tongue. He seems to be humble, modest, and sensible. And perhaps you may provide for the future service of souls, by helping him forward.

I told him I would write to you to-day, and that perhaps I might have an answer by Saturday. If you give him encouragement he will come down to Newport to see you, and to let you see him. For I advised it as

\* John Bacon, Esq., R.A.

best, that you should converse together, and know each other's minds, before anything was finally determined.

I have nothing to add to my former letter, but more love and good wishes to you and yours, and to tell you we are still favoured with health and peace.

The abolition business comes on next Monday. Help us with your prayers, that He who has all hearts in his hands may give a happy issue. On one side humanity, conscience, and the sense of the nation, are engaged against interest and influence on the other. But interest is blind, and mistakes its own cause. However, the battle is the Lord's. I preached on the subject on the evening of the 18th, from Jer. ii. 34, and charged all who do not express their detestation of this traffic, now things are so thoroughly investigated, and notorious, with blood-guiltiness. Lord, lay not the sin to our charge.

I am in mighty haste; but whether in haste or leisure, always your affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

*27th March, '92.*

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## LETTER CXI.

MY DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

I WISHED to wait upon you in the shape of a short letter (I have less time than ever for long ones) while Mr. and Mrs. Neale are with you, that I might meet you all together. If they stay their proposed time, I am not yet too late. I tried hard to smoke a pipe with you, when in town, but you were not at leisure one time, and the next not at home. Had it been necessary, without doubt we should have met.

May we meet in glory! I trust we shall. He who has invited and inclined us to seek him, will not disappoint the hope himself has raised, nor the taste to which only he could form such minds as ours. Such a state of happiness as the word of God describes—a state of wonder, love, and praise, surrounding and admiring Him that sitteth upon the throne, would not have pleased me once. I should have preferred a pig-sty to it. Now I hope I can say, nothing in earth or heaven in comparison of Thee. And you can say the same. Let us, then, rejoice, and lift up our heads. He has said, Surely I come quickly.

No one has more reason to be willing to live than I. I am still strengthened for the comfortable exercise of my ministry, and heard with acceptance, have many kind friends, abound in all temporal accommodations, and have a pleasant home. It is true *she* is gone; but it is true the Lord, who can do all things, enables me to go on tolerably well without her, and her removal freed me from many anxieties and cares.

Yet were it not for his will, and what belongs to my profession and my ministry, I think I should now feel but little attachment to this poor world. I should be ready to say, *Occidit crambe repetita*. It is thought a great matter when the same play will fill the theatre for thirty or forty nights running. The drama of human life, presented to my view, not for days, but for months and years, affords so little variety, more than variety of woe and wickedness, that I seem to have seen enough of it. But if the Lord is with me, I shall thankfully wait his appointed time. All is adjusted by infinite wisdom and love. Do you ask how I am employed? I am making extracts from love letters—not to a sweetheart, but to a wife. I have quires of these by me, which I wrote when I used the sea, and at other intervals of absence from home. Perhaps I shall find enough to make a *Cardiphonia* volume, which may bear reading when I am gone hence. This job cannot be performed by a substitute: it will engross most of my little leisure from other business, and will, therefore, I hope, be accepted as a plea, if I should be tardy in correspondence.

This is a voluntary offering, for I do not owe you a letter, and yet I am a little mercenary, for I mean by it to draw a return from you.

Our love to your guests, to Mrs. Bull, Tommy, and all your family; not forgetting the silent young gentleman,\* with whom I was much pleased when I saw him at Newport. The Lord bless you all. Amen.

I am yours indeed,

JOHN NEWTON.

19th Oct., '92.

\* A young man, totally deaf and dumb, who was introduced into Mr. Bull's family under very peculiar circumstances, and resided with him for some years.



## LETTER CXII.

MON TRES CHER MONSIEUR TAUREAU,

YOUR very kind letter deserved a more early acknowledgement, but I thought I would wait till I could tell you, as I do now, that my book is finished. I sent part of it to the press a fortnight ago, and have had two printed sheets to revise. I have since been writing a preface and an appendix. I put the last hand (as I hope) to the whole this morning, and the first letter I attempt, after feeling myself a little at liberty, is to you. I hope and desire your prayers, that the Lord may be pleased to breathe his blessing upon the publication. I am not a proper judge of a work in which I am so nearly concerned. In some respects, it will be new; in some parts it may be amusing: but, oh that it may be useful! I am to be pitied, if I have employed a chief part of the winter in picking straws.

It will appear in two volumes, 12mo, about the size of Cardiphonia, but not so much print. The type must be larger, the paper finer, and the page less crowded, to induce those who think themselves the better sort of folks (for whom I chiefly intend it) to read it. Many people judge of books as they do of men,—by their dress and appearance. My authorship's patience has usually been tried on former occasions, by delays of the printers. I am promised, however, that it shall come abroad before August; about which time, if all is well, and the Lord favours my design, I have thoughts of visiting Southampton.

The 29th.—This morning Mr. Cleaver, husband of the quondam Mrs. Bennett, called on me, to inform me a

minister or preacher in the Dissenting line is wanted, at or near Newport, in Essex, where he lives. He says that about £90 per annum is already subscribed by seven people, and more will probably be added, if they can meet a man of sound doctrine and sound manners. He was advised to apply to me, that I might apply to you. I told him that I knew you had several olive plants in your nursery, which I hoped would prove fruitful. But whether any of them were fit for transplanting, or whether they would choose to grow in the Newport soil, I knew not; any more than what the soil of Newport is: but that I would mention it in a letter I had began to you. I have now fulfilled my promise.

Through mercy, I and my dear family are still preserved in health and peace; and I hope it is tolerably well with my family, or rather the Lord's, in Lombard-street. I trust he sometimes visits us. I love my friends. I hope I love more than my known friends. But my chief willingness to live another day in such a world as this, is upon the account of these two families. I have now no other strong tie to this life. My presence is not so needful to any other friends (whom I hope one day to meet in a better place) as to these.

My times are in the Lord's hands. This is a comfortable thought. When he appointed the time and manner of my coming into the world, he likewise appointed the time and manner of my leaving it. What I have known of his wisdom and goodness as to the former, warrants and requires me to commend the latter also to him. And I may be thankful that there is no need for wasting my time, by any cares or contrivances of my own. Yet when I began to write my sermons upon the "Messiah," I could not help feeling and expressing a desire that I might live to finish them. This desire the Lord granted.

I felt and prayed to the like purpose while I was preparing "The Letters to a Wife." I have been indulged a second time. I hope I shall not always go on framing excuses for wishing to stay here. May the Lord make me always willing to stay my appointed time. But I long to feel a prevailing and abiding desire to depart and be with him, which is πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρείσσον.

We return joint love to you and Mrs. Bull, and to Tommy, who, I think, is now big enough to be Mr. Thomas; or, the Rev. Mr. Thomas is in my mouth. However, go by what name he may, I pray the Lord to bless him, and to make him a comfort and a blessing to you and to many.

I trust you will likewise continue to pray for us. This mutual prayer is one valuable branch of the communion of saints. This clause, as it stands in our creed, is repeated daily by many who know no more of the meaning than a goose does of algebra. Nor should we have been wiser than they, if the Lord had not condescended to be our teacher. May all the praise be ascribed to him, by you and by your very affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

23 April, '93.

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## LETTER CXIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND

I THANK you for your kind letter, which I accept as a full compensation for any or all the censures I may meet from snarling critics. I cannot expect that any publication will be approved by those who have not feelings to qualify them for understanding it. But yours is not the only encouragement I have received.

I thank you likewise for your punctual remembrance of my memorable day. It did not return unnoticed, nor unfelt by me. Though, in this respect, every day since she left me has been nearly alike. Her idea is constantly with me, as at first; but, through mercy, it gives me no pain. I am perfectly satisfied of the wisdom and goodness of the Lord in all his appointments, and particularly in that bereavement. I know that in very faithfulness he afflicted me. I hope it has been good for me. And perhaps, in some respects, my last three years have been the best and happiest of my life.

What I say to my people, is usually drawn more from my own experience, than from great books, (the great book of God alone excepted), and as the fifteenth of December fell this year on a Lord's-day, I preached from 1 Peter i. 24, 25. It was something to the purport of my former funeral sermon, from Hab. iii. 17, 18. How striking is the contrast between the transient state of grass and flowers, of fig trees and flocks, and the abiding word of the Lord! How much is contained in scripture particles! An although, a but, or a nevertheless, is often worth a world in an hour of trouble. The

longer I live, the more I pity those who, when deprived of their earthly comforts, can find no cheering resources in the sure word of God. It is no wonder that so many defy the Lord, like Pharoah, or that so many sink under their burden, and die of a broken heart. The natural issue of heavy troubles is wild rage, dark despair, or despondency, unless they are sanctified. But when the Lord employs them as a means of grace, though not joyous for the present, but grievous, they afterwards yield the fruit of righteousness and peace.

My health and spirits are good, my wants well supplied, my friends kind, my powers for public service not yet sensibly impaired, my auditory at peace among themselves, affectionate to me, and I hope in the main in a thriving state. The ordinances are, I trust, accompanied with an unction — and though I see and feel enough to abase one in the dust before the Lord, yet, through mercy, I have peace of conscience through the great Saviour. What want I more? Blessed be God I have not a wish to form, but for more of his presence and image, for grace to serve him while I can, and that I may be found ready to meet his will in future life, and at the prospect of death. To-night I am neither weary of life nor afraid to die. I cannot answer for to-morrow; in myself I am unstable as water, and changeable as a weathercock. But he permits me to live with him by the day, and to leave to-morrow to his care.

I hope January will bring you to town, and therefore I content myself with what, when writing to you, I deem a short letter. I am much engaged at present, and therefore I chiefly write to prevent you from thinking me negligent or ungrateful. Dear Miss Catlett is well, and joins me in love to Mrs. Bull, my reverend friend Tommy, and all in your house. May the presence of the Lord

dwell in it, fill your heart and crown your ministry with his blessing. Let us work while it is day, for the night cometh. Let us watch while it is night, for the morning is at hand, the day is about to dawn to which no night shall succeed, and when our sun shall go down no more. A few hills and dales more, and we shall be at home; there the wicked shall cease from troubling, and there the weary shall be at rest. I am truly and always your affectionate friend and brother,

OMICRON.

20th Dec., 1793.

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LETTER CXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I BELIEVE I thanked you for your last kind letter, but I am not sure. I know I intended it. For fear of the worst, I write again.

It may be some time before my leg is quite well. But it is well enough for the present, as it does not interfere with necessary duty. I walked to church las Wednesday, and home again, and hope to do so again to-day. When the distance is greater, or the streets very dirty, I have a carriage in waiting in almost every street.

If I wrote, I told you that my texts on the Fastday, were Jonah iii. 9; Job xxxiv. 29. My forenoon sermon

is gone to the press. On such occasions I choose to print not what I might have said, but what I did say, and therefore I wrote it from beginning to end, (as I did in the year '82). I held it up boldly, and read it in the face of the congregation. I afterwards transcribed it, that it might be printed from a fair copy. This business superadded to the indispensables, engrossed my whole leisure till it was printed.

My confinement gained me little time, I had so many kind friends calling upon me from morning till night. But I remember when it was otherwise. When I had not one friend in the world to interrupt me, or to look upon me. Who hath given me all these ?

Though, perhaps, many infidels have been converted, and many profligates reclaimed by the power of grace, I have reason to think my case upon the whole is a *unique* in the annals of the church, considering *what* I was and *where* I was, when the Lord interposed to save me from the misery into which I had plunged myself, and from the destruction which I seemed to court; and what he has done for me, and how he has borne with me since. He has made me a wonder to many. Why am I not more a wonder to myself? That 71st Psalm, now I am old, I call my *peculium*. It seems written purposely for me. I have seen great and sore troubles; I have been brought up as from the depths of the earth; and I am permitted to hope, that now I am old and greyheaded, He will not forsake me. He justly might forsake me at last, if his justice were not on the side of his mercy by the gospel, for I have been vile and ungrateful through life. What I most value in this life will forsake me. My senses and faculties will fail. My friends are successively dropping off like leaves from the trees in autumn. Ah, when I stand like a naked trunk upon a hill, exposed, defence-

less, to every storm, if the Lord was to forsake me likewise, what could I do? But he will not. He cannot disappoint the hope which only himself could raise in my heart, Ps. cxix. 49. And, through mercy, poor as I am, it is the leading desire of my soul, while I remain here, in his strength to go forth, and make mention of his salvation and his righteousness from day to day.

Though I am comfortably accommodated on every side, and have not a wish to form as to temporals, I see that to live in such a world as this, abstracted from a regard to his will and service, would be a dull and tasteless affair. I thank him that I seem willing to wait my appointed time; but it is a pleasure to think I am not to remain here always, nor very long. The when and the where I desire to leave to him. My times are in his hands; and as he has graciously promised to care for me, I have no need to care for myself.

But I must attend St. Mary. My love to Mrs. Bull, the Rev. Thomas, and all your house. Miss Catlett, who is well, joins with me.

May the Lord bless you all. Poor dear Mr. Cowper. Let us pray for him! and pray for

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

5th March, '94.

I shall send you my Fast Sermon, when published.



## LETTER CXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I read your complaints of a cough and hoarseness, etc., I pitied you a little, for though I believe you may be poorly, you have accustomed me to think that you are, at least, no worse than you describe yourself to be. I hope when the Lord shall be pleased to send the frost quite away you will find relief. This severe weather must be trying to valetudinarians.

I sympathized with you in the death of your student.\* But now the Lord has declared his will by the event, I hope you will think it rather a subject for joy than sorrow, that your young plant is safely housed, where no storms or changes can affect him.

But when I came to your son's dangerous return from Bedford, and the many circumstances which concurred to heighten and lengthen your anxiety; I pitied you very much. A state of suspense in a point where the heart is much interested is very painful. I know, by repeated experience, how busy imagination is at such a time in contriving and foreboding the worst that can happen. I joined with you in praising the Lord for his preservation, and I congratulate him, Mrs. Bull, and you, on the event. I, likewise, join in your prayers, that a life so spared may be wholly devoted to the Lord, and prolonged for a blessing to many.

\* Mr. Thomas James, an amiable and promising young man, cut off, Feb. 3rd, 1795, at the age of twenty, while pursuing his studies. See an account of him in the Evangelical Magazine for 1795, p. 118.

Though rubs and alarms of this kind are not joyous, but grievous for the time, yet afterwards sanctified reflection upon them may do us good. They quicken our attention to the hand and providence of God, and bring us to a closer dependance upon him. When the comfort we feared to lose is returned to us again, we feel it doubly; and we are likewise reminded of the precarious tenure by which we hold all earthly things. Blessed be the name of our Lord, it is not so with our spiritual concerns. Our best blessings are in safe and sure hands. Neither frosts, nor floods, nor flames, nor heights, nor depths, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Psalm cxvi. 1, 2, there is a process described, which, perhaps, has been verified to you and to me more than once. Trouble excites prayer, prayer brings deliverance, deliverance produces praise, and likewise teaches and encourages us where to go for help next time—yea, as long as we live. We do not come to the Lord upon a mere peradventure whether he will hear us or not, for he has heard us often; nor can we, nor need we say, that if he will help us but this one time, we will not trouble him again. We shall always need his assistance, and he is always ready to afford it. While we live in this poor world, trials of one kind or another will come in succession—*sicut unda impellitur undá*; but as he has delivered, and does deliver, we may humbly trust he will deliver to the end. His good word, “My grace is sufficient for thee,” “As thy day is, so shall thy strength be,” is as a plank sufficient to bear us up in safety in the deepest water.

I took your letter yesterday to No. 8, when I found they had just received one from you. Mr. Jones, who

succeeded you at Surrey, fell in the street on Wednesday, and broke his thigh. Two ministers, he and Mr. Winter, have been thus visited; and yet I am still upheld, and go out and come home in safety.

Farewell for the present. May the Lord be with you, and all yours. We join in love. I am your affectionate and obliged friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON.

20th Feb., '95.

LETTER CXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

\* \* \* \* \*

MY ears have been failing for two or three years past, but lately a cold in my head almost wholly sealed them up. For about a fortnight, I could not hear a syllable of what passed in company. But the Lord has been pleased to relieve me, and my hearing, though still dull, is tolerable—sufficient for all necessary purposes. So far as my deafness proceeds from increasing years, it would be a weakness to expect amendment. May I hear the voice of the good Shepherd speaking to my heart; then I may well submit to an abatement of creature converse.

I may be thankful that I am not dumb. He still permits me to make mention of his name with acceptance to

my hearers, and I hope with some accompanying impression of his influence. He might justly take the word of his truth utterly out of my mouth, and might have done it long since; but he is long-suffering and gracious. I trust he knows that the chief thing for which a continuance in this poor world appears to me desirable, is that, while I can speak at all, I may speak of his glory and grace to my fellow sinners.

We are still comfortable at home. Crabb's cold, and Phoebe's lameness by a fall, are the chief abatements, and I hope both are in a mending way. Dear Betsey is in good health; and my cold did not prevent me from preaching at Easter seven times in five successive days.

We are comfortable likewise at St. Mary's, though I feel my recollection decaying, often in a day: it does not yet fail me in the pulpit. Perhaps I never had more liberty and command of thought than at present; and I trust the Lord favours us with his presence. Yesterday we had a confirmation. I marched to the bishop at the head of forty-seven of my flock, mostly lambs; and my previous converse with them gives me ground to hope that, at least, forty of them are truly enlightened and awakened.

It is a part of my daily employment to look back to Africa, and to retrace the path by which the Lord has led me, for about forty-seven years, since he called me from infidelity and madness. My wonderful unsought deliverance from the hopeless wickedness and misery into which I had plunged myself, taken in connexion with what he has done for me since, seem to make me say, with peculiar emphasis, "Oh to grace how great a debtor!"

All in our house join in love to you, to Mrs. Bull, the Rev. Thomas, and all your family. May you and yours

be as a garden watered by the Lord, always green and flourishing, and as a spring of water for communicating blessings to many.

I am your affectionate

OMICRON.

*22nd April, '95.*

### LETTER CXVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR two guineas are included in the £51. 4s. I seem satisfied in my mind that you paid them to me when you were last in town; and unless you are more certain that you did not, than I can pretend to be that you did, I cannot take them, lest I should cheat you by taking them twice. I cannot be quite positive, but I think if I had not received them, they would sometimes have occurred to my mind as unpaid. When this comes to hand, you may take it for granted that I have paid the money to your account, for till then I shall not send it. So much for gold and silver.

You wonder I do not mention my Dear when I write. Indeed it would be a gratification to me to make her the t o of a paragraph in every letter I write to my friends who knew her, or to talk of her to them by the hour. My feelings on this head are little less lively and abiding now than they were, when I had lived but a week after her. But my fourth anniversary has informed you, that

I cannot command my sensibility, unless I was conscious that my thoughts of the Saviour were at least equally constant and equally warm.

He is the best *Friend*, he was the greatest *Sufferer*. And that I am capable of thinking more of her than of Him, is certainly both an effect and a proof of my depravity.

On the other hand, I cannot wish to forget her quite, because there is no other earthly object in my memory so well suited to excite gratitude to the Lord, and that humiliation of heart which becomes a chief sinner.

I find it difficult to draw the line between *too much* and *too little*. Indeed, every thing is difficult and impracticable to me if left to myself; but so far as the Lord is pleased to strengthen me, I can do and bear all things that occur in the path of duty.

However, it is still a truth, that, whether I show it or not, at all times and in all places (except now and then in the pulpit) I miss my right hand. The Lord made me willing to part with it. I feel not the remotest wish to have it (if possible) again, but I still miss it. The idea of my dearest Mary is seldom absent from my mind for five successive minutes. The time is short. I hope to meet her again to unspeakable advantage, and I am perfectly satisfied. I am rather pleased than otherwise that she is gone before me. For, as the aspect of the times is stormy, and I know not what the Lord may do with us, I find comfort in thinking that she is safely arrived in the haven of rest. As dear Mrs. Thornton observed to me upon the death of Eliza, "I have now one care less upon earth, and I trust one more treasure in heaven."

As to my own continuance or removal, I have nothing to do with it. Through mercy, I have no more desire than I have right to choose. I shall live while infinite

wisdom and goodness see fit ; and when He appoints, I shall depart. I hope both you and I are, in a measure, useful in our places, but, certainly, neither of us are necessary. If I had never been born, or if I had perished in my sins, he would not have wanted instruments to carry on his work. I know that dying times require dying strength ; and I rely on his promise for it *when* wanted. At present, while I am in health, the *when*, the *how*, and the *where* and the *when* of my dismissal, does not cost me a moment's anxiety ; only may he enable me to be faithful while I live, and waiting and ready for my summons. I hope to die like the thief upon the cross. I have no hope, no comfort in myself ; but he remembered me in my low estate, and I trust will remember me to the end.

I chiefly admire in Riccaltoun,\* his *Essays on the Human Constitution*, in vol. i., and his *Commentary on Galatians i. 20*, in vol. ii. Indeed, I admire him throughout, as the most original thinker and writer that I have met with. Some of his sentiments are rather singular and new ; but when I suspend my full assent, I am not able to refute his arguments. The account of him which I published in the magazine is likely to be useful to his son, who is a man of good character, with a large family, and much encumbered by engagements he entered into in behalf of his father. A friend, not far from St. Paul's, sent me £10 for him, and the Edinburgh ministers are talking of a subscription for him. My correspondent says, they wonder that a minister of the church of England should be his first advocate, and that *they feel*

\* The book referred to is entitled "Works of the late Rev. Robert Riccaltoun, Minister of the Gospel at Hobkirk, containing *Essays on Human Nature, the Doctrines and Plan of Revelation, and a Treatise on the Epistle to the Galatians,*" 3 vols. 8vo.

it. Next to the hope of perfect happiness hereafter, the chief mercy seems to be honoured with some usefulness here. I would not be like dear Mr. Cowper's sensitive plant in his fable, to feel exclusively but for myself.

With love to Mrs. Bull, Thomas, and your nieces, from myself and Miss Catlett, and my prayers for your peace and comfort in all things, I remain your affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

*2nd May.*

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LETTER CXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A PIG came to our house on Monday; and, though he neither brought an introductory letter, nor could tell us who sent him, we, being something in the habit of receiving strangers, bid him welcome. In return, he entertained us, Mr. Bacon, and Mrs. Gardiner, very agreeably at dinner, yesterday (Tuesday), but he was gone before yours came. I can only thank you now for both pig and letter.

Though your spirits are weak, I am glad to find that your faith and resignation are strong. Yes, all will be well in the end; and all is well by the way, if we can but think so, and be satisfied that the infinite wisdom and love, to which we have committed ourselves, upon the warrant of his faithful promise, will assuredly take care of us, and lead us in the right path. We are not to expect that the Lord will miraculously interpose to change our constitutions, or to overrule the connexions



he has established between causes and effects ; nor is it needful. If he is pleased to give strength according to the day, and to support us under our appointed trials, it is upon the whole better for us than if we were quite exempted from them, for

“ Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer,  
Trials lay us at his feet,  
Lay us low and keep us there.”

I thank you for promising to remember me on my anniversary. She is continually present to my mind as at the first. Yet I hope I may say, to the praise of the Lord's goodness, the wound is healed. The remembrance of the event is not painful. And if sometimes a sigh escapes me, it proceeds from a certain tender feeling, which I am unable to describe, but I cannot call it sorrow. I rather account the last five years, taking all things together, the happiest part of my life. The comforts arising from our union and affection, I still think were more valuable than any of the world's poor playthings. Yet I paid dearly for them in anxieties and inquietudes from which a single day was seldom free. And, too, too often the gift hid the Giver from my eyes. By her removal I was relieved at once from a thousand cares and snares which had beset and followed me through life. I am thankful that she was spared to me so long ; for, though I have often thought that, if she had left me twenty or thirty years sooner, I should not have entered into a new connexion, I might have thought otherwise if put to the trial ; but, at the age of sixty-five, a second marriage would have been ridiculous, though my regard for her and her memory had been much less than it was. And though the loss could

not be made up in kind, it is as well repaid as the nature of the case will admit. No widower can be more happy in domestic life than I am. Such is the attention and kindness of my dear child and my affectionate servants, that nothing occurs at home to ruffle my thoughts the year round. My wants are all supplied. I am surrounded with friends. My ministry is comfortable to myself, acceptable, and I hope useful, to my hearers: in a word, I can think of nothing which I have not, worth wishing for, if a wish could bring it. Surely, the Lord has dealt wonderfully and bountifully with me!

My health, likewise, is so remarkably confirmed, that I scarcely know, but by the date of the year, that I grow older. I feel no inconvenience from the changes of wind or weather; and though I have taken no journey into the country this year, I am as well as usual. The air of Coleman-street agrees as well with me as the air of Hampshire. Thus it is as yet; but it will not, it cannot be so always, nor, perhaps, long. But this is no concern of mine. My times are in His hands, who has led me, and done me good thus far; and he helps me to trust the rest to him. I have only to pray, that while I do live, I may live to him; and that when he shall call me hence, I may be found waiting and willing, and that in the mean time, he may preserve me from staining the decline of my life by any gross impropriety or folly. I still feel enough within to convince me that, unless he holds me up, I cannot be safe—no, not for an hour.

My dear Betsey joins me in love to you and yours. She likewise has been favoured with health till lately. I hope she is mending, though slowly; she has been confined to the house seven weeks, cannot yet go to church, which I believe is a chief part of her trial, for the Lord has taught her to love to be where his people

are met in his name. I trust her complaint will be sanctified, and in his best time removed.

We hope one day to have done with sin, sorrow, and pain, and to join with those who are singing before the throne the praises of Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins *in his own blood*. When we meet there, we shall part no more. Give our love to Mrs. Bull, the Reverend Thomas, and all friends, particularly to Mr. and Mrs. Greathead. May grace, mercy, and peace be with you, and your affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

My letter has waited three or four days, that I might send this year's anniversary. I was afraid of overloading the frank, or you should have had two or three more.

15 Dec. '95.

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### LETTER CXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SHOULD not have been two letters in your debt, if I had not waited to send the Anniversaries (which I hope you have received); for my last was written some days before the 14th. I must thank you for your kind, reasonable, and acceptable favour of that date, which will give me the opportunity of sending two more copies, one of which expressly belongs to my friend Thomas.

If he locks it up, perhaps in the course of forty years, (should he live so long), he may understand it better than he can at present.

I may say, as Isaac, I am old, and know not the time of my death; nor am I anxious to know it. My judgment accords with what you say of the grave; but I believe you can contemplate the subject with more sensible pleasure than I do. To me, at present, the passage seems dark; yet I am not startled, because I humbly hope the Lord will be with me there, and then I am sure it will be broad light all around me. His people generally find it so, if their last illness leaves them in possession of their senses, and declare it to be so, if they can speak. While the tabernacle is taking down, a light of a different kind from what they experienced in health, seems to break in: they see invisibles, and hear unutterables, and breathe the air of the heavenly state, before they leave the body. What is death to a believer? Not that spectre and skeleton which a terrified imagination represents it. To a believer, it is a messenger to open the gate into life eternal; or rather it is the hour when the Saviour, who is now preparing a place for his people, will come, according to his promise, to receive them to himself.

Through mercy, I do not feel myself afraid or unwilling to die. But the prospect is at some distance; and I believe, unless I had new strength given me in the interview, were death actually to stare me in the face this minute, I should tremble. It is a great, unknown, untried transition. I often attempt to realize the moment after death; but my thoughts are overwhelmed. I can form no conception how I shall be, and what I shall meet, when I cease to breathe, and while those around my bed, if I die in a bed, are saying, "He is gone."

But though I am at a loss for particulars, I have a book which informs me of as much as is needful to know: that they who die in the Lord are blessed; that they shall be like him, and with him, for ever; that all tears shall be wiped [from their eyes, and they shall weep no more, for sin and sorrow shall not be able to follow them. I thank the Lord for this precious book, and for enabling me to believe what I read in it. Otherwise, how miserable must I be now, flesh and heart are upon the point of failing!

But I have not much time to run on. I wish you much of that holy unction, that oil of joy, which is the best cordial for low spirits, and wonderfully strengthens weak nerves. Betsey's complaint is not removed, but it is so far relieved, that she was twice at church yesterday, after more than eight weeks' confinement to the house. This is a chequered life, but the suspension of our common comforts is designed to make us more sensible of their value, and more thankful for them when restored. For unless we meet with some interruptions, we are too apt to look upon them as matters of course.

The Lord bless you all—father, mother, son, nieces, tutors, and students, servants, and all. May your house be a church, and your heart a well-watered garden for yourself, and a spring of living water for your people. Amen.

I am always your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

21 Dec. '95.

## LETTER CXX.

MY DEAR BROTHER BULL,

I AM a little balked that the time of your coming to town and my leaving it so nearly coincided, that I could but just see you. But as I know the ways of man are not in himself, and believe both your movements and mine are under a wise and gracious guidance, I hope it was all right. A baulk has done me good before now. If we live till the Christmas vacation, I hope to be made amends.

We spent ten weeks pleasantly abroad, and returned safely, and found all well at home, the 14th of September. We go on now in our old track; we had a nice time at Reading. I believe Mr. Eyre accepted the living of St. Giles' the very day I went thither, and he was expected almost every day while I staid, but did not come till I had left it. The people were hungry, the Lord made me able and willing. The time was short, so we made the most of it. I never preached so often in an equal space; five times in the church; twice in Mr. Young's school; every morning at Mr. Rings, and every evening in a large room of one or other of our friends. I call it all preaching, for the rooms were crowded, and I spoke nearly as long and as loud, as if I had been in a church. I trust the Lord was with us, and I trust he will be with them. I have found good individuals in many places. But perhaps I have no where met with a *body* of professors so compact and united, so lively and yet so solid, judicious, and free from wild fire, as the bereaved people at Reading. The two dissenting ministers like-

wise, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Holloway, are such as I have seldom seen. They were generally present with their wives at all our meetings, when not engaged themselves. I staid with them a fortnight, and left them with regret.

Mr. Gunn fully supplied my place at St. Mary's; he is a nice curate. He pleases the people, and he pleases me. Though very popular, he is very humble, and remarkably punctual and attentive. The Lord has granted my desire. Expecting to be laid by soon, or at least thinking it very probable at my time of life, I have long wished and prayed for an assistant who might keep the people together and in peace, while the pulpit remains mine. I thought myself suited first with Buchanan, but he soon went to India. Then Benamor seemed just the thing, but in one month he was translated to nobler employment in a better world; but now I hope Mr. Gunn will answer my wishes. And though he seems more obnoxious than any of us to the clergy in general, the Lord Bishop of London licensed him to my curacy without the slightest hesitation.

Indeed, I have reason to hope that the Lord favours us with his presence and blessing at St. Mary's. The church is often nearly full on a Wednesday, quite crowded on the Lord's-day, and we have a large and increasing number of inquiring young people. While we go on thus, though I have seen enough of the world for myself, and know that while I remain here I must groan under a body of sin, I have great cause to be thankful that my life and health are prolonged. We may be glad to work while it is day, for the night cometh. And I apprehend eternity itself, will not afford such an opportunity of preaching and exemplifying the gospel of the grace of God, to the glory of his name and the salvation of souls, as we are favoured with here. Every added day of life,

if so improved, is of great value, and an over-balance for all the trials we meet with in our pilgrimage.

I told you I had a young man in view to send to Cambridge, and that I meant to send him to you for a time. His name is Morris; he was with us the last time you drank tea with us at number six. And from what he then saw and heard he longs to be with you. I hope you will be able to receive him on your *foundation*, for I wish to make Mrs. Ekins' money go as far as I can. At any rate, he must be in your house. I have no doubt of your liking him when he comes. I cannot see into the heart; but so far as I can judge from repeated conversations, I have no doubt of his being truly serious and gracious. He seems likewise to have strong natural abilities, and I believe would make a tolerable preacher at present. But he is to be in the church (if he comes safe through the ordeal of a dissenting academy) and therefore he must go to the university, and therefore he must come to you. If he were an angel, he might be refused ordination, unless he came from college—then a little grace will do if he carry Greek with him—but grace without Greek is in small repute at Cambridge.

Mr. Morris gives up his counting-house to-day, and goes on Monday to take leave of his friends and connexions at Dover. He will return in about a fortnight, before which time I hope to be in possession of your *mandamus*, for his admission to Newport College, with such instructions and admonitions as you may think needful.

Admiral Duncan and his brave tars have much praise for the late victory; and the gratitude of the nation at large is shown by illuminations, gluttony, drunkenness, and singing "Rule Britannia." Had the Dutch fleet been permitted to reach Brest, I think it probable



that an invasion would have been attempted. I hope some people give the praise to the Lord of Hosts, who disappoints the designs of our enemies, and does not yet take vengeance of such a nation as this. He has a remnant amongst us, and therefore He still seems to say, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.

Company comes in one upon another: I can only add my love and dear Betsey's to you, Mrs. Bull, and my brother Thomas; and my prayers that the Lord bless tutor, students, family, church, and congregation, in body soul, and spirit. Pray for us.

I am your very affectionate friend, brother, and much obliged and obsequious servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

28th Oct., '97.

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LETTER CXXI.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I AM sensible you have many infirmities: so it has been ever since I knew you, yet you are still alive, and I think still likely to live a good while. It seems probable I shall go before you, but that will be as the Lord shall appoint. May it be our care and prayer—to live to him while we do live, and leave the rest to him who does all things well.

I am certainly favoured with a measure of health and strength, not common at my years. I never could preach with more ease and liberty than at present, yet I feel I grow older; the shadows of the evening are advancing upon me. I am to leave the how and the when and the where of my dismissal to the Lord. I would only pray (and I hope you will pray for me) that when the summons shall arrive, it shall find me ready, willing, and waiting.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Yesterday and to-day I have not been quite well. I thank the Lord I am better again. When he sees it needful, he gives us some intimations of our frail state. Mine, indeed, have been few and slight. My judgment is satisfied, that when the Lord shall call me home, it will be unspeakably better to depart and be with Jesus. I have no painful doubts about the event. Surely I know whom I have believed. Surely I have committed my soul, my all, to him. I do it daily and hourly. And I am sure that the good word on which he has caused me to hope, shall stand firm when the frame of nature shall be dissolved. And yet, somehow, clouds and veils hang over the prospect. When I think of the moment after death, my mind is startled at the change that will take place, so new, so inconceivable. But the Lord has said, As thy day is, so shall thy strength be. I humbly hope, therefore, I shall find a dying strength reserved for a dying hour.

He bids me cast this last care, as well as all my other cares, upon him, and he promises to care for me; therefore, I would say, Welcome, life, with all its trials; welcome, death, with all its apparent gloom.

May the Lord support you under all your infirmities. In this uncertain state, we know not whether we shall

meet upon earth ; but I trust we shall soon meet where sin, sorrow, pain, and care, shall never intrude. Oh for the ear of faith, to listen to the songs of the harpers ! Loud as from numbers without number—sweet as from blessed voices !

My dear Miss Catlett joins in love and best wishes to you, Mrs. Bull, and Thomas ; and always I am your very affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

6th Nov., 1797.

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LETTER CXXII.

MY DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

ALL is well, and I ask your pardon ; I ought to have been more explicit. It is true, and I believe I told you so, that I have liberty to appropriate a part of Mrs. Ekin's money to prepare a young man for the college, as well as to support him there. And I am ready to do so ; only, as you desired me to procure a foundation student, if I could, I thought I might as well propose one of my own as a stranger, and the saving might enable me to send one more to the university. It will be time enough to talk of the foundation when there is a vacancy ; nor shall I then wish for it, if it interferes with your intentions in favour of another. But if there should be a vacancy, and while you have no one in prospect whom you prefer, I shall be thankful for the help.

Mr. Morris had left London before your first letter came, and is not yet returned. I believe him to be a valuable and promising young man, but I have only seen him a few times at breakfast. You will be a better judge than I when you have him under your roof. If he behaves well, you will flatter him now and then by a smile, or a kind word, by mentioning him as my friend. I do not mean to ask anything extraordinary out of the common line for him, but only such little notices and attentions, as, though they cost nothing, are much prized by a generous and feeling spirit.

I thank the Lord I am as well as an old man can be. I think and I hope that the Lord bears testimony to the word of his grace at St. Mary's more than ever, which makes health doubly valuable. May he make me willing to resign it at a moment's warning; and to sit quiet in my chair or my bed, and rejoice that his work is prospering without me, and that others are serving him better when I can serve him no longer! A sentence in Dr. Cotton Mather's life struck me more than fifty years ago, and has been often upon my mind from that time,—  
*“My usefulness was the last idol I was willing to part with, but now I can part with that, and am content to be laid aside and forgotten, so that he may be glorified.”* He would not have wanted instruments, though I had left my bones in Africa, or had been food for the sharks. Oh for grace to retire at his bidding, like a thankful guest from a full table! I have had a long and highly favoured day. But the night cometh; pray for me, that my decline of life may not be stained with foolishness, impatience, jealousy, or any thing that might disparage my profession or ministry.

The dark prospect of the times affects me much, as it

does you. And, like you, I have often questioned, how shall I behave if such and such things should take place? But *latet anguis in herba*. This seemingly humble diffidence, I am afraid, implies a supposition that I can do pretty well *at present*, and while things remain no worse than they are. Whereas, I am satisfied in my better judgment, that the Almighty power which sustains the stars in their orbits is equally necessary to carry me with safety, honour, and comfort through the smoothest day of my life. Let it suffice that he knows where we are, and what we are, and can increase our strength according to our days, to any assignable degree. We do not want shoes of iron and brass while we walk upon a carpet; but should the road become very rough and thorny, these shoes are always at hand, and if we ask for them, we shall have them. Faithful is He that has promised, who also will do it.

Wednesday last brought news of the death of my brother at Leith. *Our* branch of the noble family of *Newton* will soon be extinct, for I am the only survivor. He was a sober, moral man, an excellent sea officer, and much respected and approved in the post Mr. S. procured him as agent for the transport service. He was friendly to the gospel, and constantly attended it. I do not know how far he was wrought upon by it; but his deportment upon his dying bed gives us hope that the Lord prepared him for the change, though he said but little. His widow is a gracious woman, and I doubt not but He who ever liveth will still be a husband to her. This is one concomitant of old age to see our friends and relatives drop off before us, like leaves from the trees in autumn, till we are left naked trunks. But Jesus lives. With more love *from us* to Mrs. Bull and

*Thomas* [pray mend the rhyme], and our best wishes and prayers for you all, I still remain and hope always to be,

Yours affectionately,

JOHN NEWTON.

11th Nov. '97.

I expect Mr. Morris will be in town this evening, and that he will probably wait upon you in the course of a week or two.

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LETTER CXXIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THOUGH I have but little time for writing, I must thank you for your letter. I am very glad Mr. Morris pleases you. I had no doubt but you would think him a promising plant. He informed me himself of the advice you gave him. I am in hopes that my letter will confirm both, and make him willing to do nothing in the preaching way without your express direction. I think you might exert your authority in this case, were it needful, without any fear of grieving the Holy Spirit; but I trust a little persuasion will suffice. He must not be a village preacher, if he means to go to Cambridge.

I preached yesterday from Hosea xi. 8, 9. The church was very full, and I hope we had the Lord's presence. In the morning, my apprehensions how the day might close were rather dark; as I know there is much discontent abroad, and many people busy in fomenting it, and making bad worse. I was afraid lest such a concourse

of persons might lead to some riotous proceedings ; but through the goodness of Him who ruleth the winds and the seas, all went off very smoothly. I hope the Lord smiled upon the design. On the king's part, I believe it was a sincere acknowledgment of God's power and providence over us at a time when the French government and nation renounce and defy him ; and it gave many believers an opportunity of uniting in public worship. Though infidelity and profligacy overspread the land, yet the Lord has a remnant amongst us—a people dear to him—who stand in the breach night and day, pleading for mercy. These are the chariots and horsemen of our Israel ; and for their sakes I trust he will still prove the Holy One in the midst of us, and that we shall not be given up to the cruel ravings and insults of the modern Rabshakeh.

I would relieve all your complaints if I could. The Lord, who loves you much better than I do, easily could, but he does not ; *ergo*, he sees it best for you to have them. Infirmities must ordinarily increase with increasing years. I seem, at present, to be an exception to the general rule ; but my time cannot be very distant. Oh, to be able to say, from the heart, in the hour of trial,

“ How weak this prison where I dwell,  
How frail this tottering wall,  
The breaches cheerfully foretel.  
The house must shortly fall !”

The Lord, who can exempt us from troubles, can do much more ; he can support and can comfort us under them. He could have prevented the young men from being cast into the furnace, or kept Daniel out of the den ; but his power and faithfulness were more signally displayed by suppressing the effect of the flames, and by

shutting the mouths of the lions. Is he not all-sufficient?  
 Has he not promised us strength according to our day?  
 Let us boldly venture upon his word, that cannot fail.

\* \* \* \* \*

20th Dec. '97.

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### LETTER CXXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THOUGH my thanks for your nice pork, and for all your kindness, are very sincere, they are scarcely worth fivepence; but franks are so scarce, that I do not ask for them, except when I have a packet to enclose. And something whispers in my ear (I hope it is not the voice of vanity) that as it is long since you heard from me, you will not be unwilling to pay postage for a letter.

I am sorry that you are weak and poorly; but knowing that you often touch the mournful string, I am willing to hope you are a little better than you think yourself.

If we take the report of *sense*, the times are dark indeed. But what says *faith*? What would become of us if the Scriptures were not true? And if they are true, there must be such times, because they are foretold, and not one jot or tittle can fail. Perhaps *dark* times are the *brightest*; for they are usually seasons when the Lord's people are stirred up, and when many who would not hear him in prosperity, are glad to seek him. I think the gospel is spreading amongst us, and I hope the prayers of the true remnant will so far prevail, that our enemies will not be permitted to swallow us up.



They are at war not with us only, but with our God. He is taking his own wise measures, to plead his own cause, which ought to be the dearest concern of our hearts: surely we cannot wish him to lose it? Yes, the times are *dark*; for though his hand is lifted up, they will not see it. Dissipation and folly are as rampant as if the nation were in perfect peace and security. Can we assign any reason why such a nation as this, which has abused greater light and privilege than any in Europe, should be exempted from the general shaking?

Do not think that my faith is very strong. While I smoke my pipe peaceably, I can talk or write, according to what I read in the Bible; but were the French actually permitted to come, if I was left to myself, perhaps I might flee into the woods, or creep into a cupboard. However, I am aiming to rely upon Him, who has said, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." The Lord is faithful, and if this promise is fulfilled, we shall do very well. Why should not we take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, and count it an honour to lay down our lives for his sake if called to it, as others have done before us? They were no better in themselves than we, nor had they a better gospel than ours. Is not He who supported them able to support us also? Their feet were as tender as ours; but when the way was very rough, he gave them shoes of iron and brass; and I trust there are more such shoes upon the shelf for our use likewise, if we should need them.

I cannot be poorer than I was when the Lord brought me from African Egypt, from being a servant of slaves. Nor can I be in more apparent danger than I have often been at sea in a storm; even the French are not more irresistible or more inexorable than the raging billows in a tempest. The Lord has delivered me from the paw of many a lion, and of many a bear; why then should I

be afraid of this atheistical Philistine, who has defied not only the armies of the living God, but the living God himself?

Indeed, I trust they will not be suffered to execute all their malicious rage and threatenings against us. But they will probably alarm us. And then, like Israel at the Red Sea, we shall cry to the Lord, and I hope like them we shall be heard and preserved. He could have easily prevented Pharaoh and his army from following them; but, had he done so, Israel would not have known that glorious display of his power and goodness on their behalf in dividing the waters and drowning their enemies.

All these things shall eventually promote the glory of his name, the good of his church, and the spread of the gospel. The French, like the Jews when they crucified the Messiah, will only execute what God has already appointed to be done. I wish to watch, and pray, and mourn for the abounding of sin, and the abounding woes with which sin has filled the world. Nor would I forget my own sins, which contribute to fill the national cup; for the rest, I know that He doth and will do all things well. And when you and I shall meet on one of the green and flowery mounts, which Dr. Watts speaks of, we shall see it more clearly. Till then may His peace rule in our hearts. Give our joint love to Mrs. Bull, brother Thomas, Mr. Morris, and to all your family. Pray for us. We shall be glad to see you in London. May the Lord be a sun and a shield to you and to us.

I am yours very affectionately and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

*26th April, '98.*

## LETTER CXXV.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

THOUGH the flame of our affection is not much supported by the fuel of frequent letters and converse, I trust it still burns brightly, for it is fed from a secret, invisible, and inexhaustible source. If two needles are properly touched by a magnet, they will retain their sympathy for a long time. But if two hearts are truly united to the Heavenly Magnet, their mutual attraction will be permanent in time and to eternity. Blessed be the Lord for a good hope, that it is thus between you and me. I could not love you better if I saw you or heard from you every day.

Dear Miss Catlett, and I, and all the dear family we are with, consisting of about twenty persons, are well. We lie down and rise up, go out and come in, in peace and safety. What a wonderful mercy, in such a world as this, when so many are suffering and falling around us, and we, though upon the same field of battle, remain unhurt!

But the almanack tells me that if I live till Monday next, I shall enter my seventy-sixth year. I believe you will pray for me on that day. My eyes, ears, and legs likewise admonish me that I grow older. My writing days seem almost over; I cannot well see to write; but I make an effort to send you one letter more, which may probably be the last you will receive.

I have requested your prayers: shall I tell you what to ask for? You need not pray for my sudden removal

for I have as little reason as most people to be weary of life, and, through mercy, I feel at present quite willing to live my appointed time. Nor need you pray for my long continuance here, for I see little except my profession and ministry worth living for another day. But pray that I may be enabled to leave the time and manner of my dismissal entirely in the Lord's hand. That if he sees fit to summon me suddenly, I may be willing to go without delay; and that if he is pleased to lay me aside, I may be as willing to retire and wait his time.

Pray likewise for me, that no gross imprudence or misconduct may stain the latter part of my life, but that I may be enabled to exemplify in myself what I have laboured to inculcate upon others from the pulpit. I have observed in some good men and good ministers, improprieties in their latter days, which I have been willing to ascribe rather to the infirmities of old age, than to a defect in real grace. I pray daily to be preserved from these, and I request your assistance. I have known good men, in advanced life, garrulous, peevish, dogmatic, self-important, with some symptoms of jealousy, and perhaps envy, toward those who are upon the increase while they feel themselves decreasing. Do, my friend, pray earnestly that it may not be so with me, but that I may retire, if laid aside, like a thankful guest from a plentiful table, and may rejoice to see others coming forward to serve the Lord, (I hope better and more successfully,) when I can serve him no longer. May I never forget that the Lord brought me from Africa, where I was the servant, the scorn, and the pity of slaves, what he has done for me since, and what a long and highly favoured day I have had since he was pleased to put me into the ministry. Such likewise shall be my desire and prayer for you, if you should be spared

to old age; for as yet I consider you rather as a youngish man.

Miss Catlett loves you, and sends her love. Pray for her likewise. I know, what as yet you know not, that the loss of a good wife, after a connexion of many endeared years, can only be made up by the Lord himself.

But when he removed mine, he left one in Miss Catlett, the best substitute the nature of the case would admit. Her tenderness and attention make my heart shrink sometimes, when I think what a trial she will have if it should be her lot to close my eyes. Do join me in prayer for her, that He to whom all things are easy, may give her strength according to her day.

Give our love to Mrs. Bull, brother Thomas, and all who are dear to you, to dear Mr. and Mrs. Neale, who, I suppose, are either returned or near it. I long to hear of or from them. Love to Miss Neale, Mrs. Tippin, and more than I can name, who come often to No. 8. I shall expect to hear from you likewise.

The Lord bless you and yours, in body, soul, and spirit. Amen.

I am your affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

*Southampton, Aug. 1st, 1800.*

## LETTER CXXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

MY head, hands, and heart have been so full, that I could not write when I wished. I can answer your kind inquiries about my dear Eliza in few words. Her present state is very similar to dear Mr. Cowper's during the first two or three years of his illness. She is in a deep melancholy, and her distress is probably aggravated by the dreadful suggestions of that enemy who, when he is permitted, is always ready to worry those whom he may not destroy. In all that concerns herself she is quite deranged; but I thank the Lord she is mild and quiet, and can pay some attention to what passes around her. She expects to die every hour, though her bodily health is not amiss; and she thinks that the moment after-death will sink her into the pit without hope, for that all her religious profession was but hypocrisy, and that now the Lord had detected her, and cast her off for ever.

Do you ask how I feel for her and myself? Through mercy, I can say, Though cast down, not destroyed. My trial is great, but the all-sufficient Lord is my support. I am sure this affliction did not spring out of the ground. I trust the event will be to his glory and our good. I am enabled to preach as usual, and when thus employed, I am helped in a good measure to leave my own personal cares behind me for the time, though they often return with weight when the service is ended.

How often have I made a surrender of myself and my all to the Lord? How often have I aimed to say, I

hope with sincerity, Lord, *when*, and *where*, and *what* thou wilt! He is now pleased to take me at my word. I have told many that the post of trial, if supported in a right spirit, as becomes a sinner and a believer, is a post of honour. This honour is now assigned to me. May his grace be sufficient for me! May he give me strength according to my day! I humbly hope he will; and then the hard will be easy, and the bitter bud will produce a sweet flower. He has designs by this dispensation, which, though beyond my reach, I am sure must be worthy of his wisdom and love. I am a short-sighted creature; I cannot tell what worse things this trial may prevent, or what blessings it may produce. My chief desire for myself is, that He may preserve me from dishonouring my profession by despondence, impatience, or any wrong tempers.

I scarcely know a person of her years, who has given more satisfactory, uniform, and abiding proofs of a real state of grace, than my dear child. Her walk has long been not only unblameable, but highly exemplary. About a month before this awful gloom overwhelmed her, though she was then very disconsolate, the Lord was pleased suddenly to break in upon her mind with such power, light, and love, as she said she had never before experienced, nor ever expected. Then her apprehensions of dying were overborne, and she was heartily willing, had such been the Lord's pleasure, to have gone home. Though short, it was a precious view. It lasted but about a quarter of an hour. Now, she says it was a delusion. But it was a cordial to me, as showing me how easily and quickly the Lord can say to the troubled mind, 'Peace, be still!'

For His time, which must be the best time, I am now to wait. You and yours, I know, will pray that I may

be enabled to wait with faith, hope, patience, and resignation. I trust all will be well at *last*, and if so, all must be well *now*!

I believe either you or my good friend, Mr. Thomas, have seen dear Mr. Ring's cottage. It is a delightful spot. There my dear Eliza is under the care of faithful Crabb. There she has every advantage that fine air, extensive prospects, convenient walks, and the best medical advice can afford; and there she must be for a season, till we see more of the Lord's will. She is in safe hands.

I could write on, (though my eyes are very weak;) but Mr. Ring wants to write on the other side. A letter from you now would be great charity. Collect all the prayers for us that you can; and may the Lord bless you and yours, in your heart, house, ministry, and make you a blessing to many. My warm love to you all.

I am your affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

*Reading, 20th May, 1801.*

## LETTER CXXVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AT length I have the pleasure of a letter from you to answer. My poor weak eyes will try to thank you for it, but they cannot allow me to write much at one sitting.

I have paid three visits to my dearest Eliza. The first was an interesting interview indeed. But I trust



the Lord was with us. We behaved pretty well. We were mutually afraid of overdoing each other. This suppressed, in a measure, many emotions on both sides, for I had not seen her for about eight months. The second and third time we were calm. Her derangement still continues, but my great trial is alleviated by many mercies. The horrors which, once overwhelmed her mind are removed. She long thought that the Lord had detected and would punish her as a hypocrite, and that death, which she hourly expected, would sink her down to be a companion with Judas.

But, now, through mercy, when her mind is diverted from her own case, she is, in all other respects, as composed and correct as at any former time. She and her three friends are always together, and she attends the sick and distressed like a nurse; her benevolent feelings are all revived, and she goes about doing good according to her power, as blessed be the Lord she did before the storm came upon her. On the Lord's day evening, she is usually a sort of chaplain to those (of her ward) who will attend, and I suppose has sometimes a dozen hearers. To them she reads a chapter, and often throws in a word of her own by way of explanation. She then reads a sermon, and gives out a hymn. As Mrs. C—— was prepared to receive her, so I hope the Lord has sent her for the good of others. She has, in some cases, been very useful, as I shall tell you, if I live to see you, when you come to town. She is respected, beloved; and kindly treated by all in the house, and many of the rules of the place are dispensed with as much as possible in her favour.

Yet my trial is great. But I know it did not spring out of the ground. I believe not a sparrow, or even a hair from our heads, can fall without His notice. I believe

that no creature can give us either pleasure or pain, but as instruments of his will; and that they who fear and love him, will, sooner or later, number their sharpest trials among their chief mercies. And, as I am well satisfied that her soul is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord, and as I believe, though a chief sinner, I am, I trust, pardoned and accepted in the beloved; I aim to resign her and myself into his hands, and to hope that all will work for his glory and our final benefit. He has made me in a degree willing, but I find the flesh is weak. But this he knows likewise. He knows what I feel, and, through mercy, I am supported, though not by sensible comforts, or lively frames. But I am enabled to trust in his written word.

It is some addition to my trial that I cannot fill up my time with writing and reading as formerly. But he knows this also; and should I be quite blind, I ought to be thankful that I had the use of them seventy-six years, and not to complain that they failed at last. Lord, I, and all I have is thine. Thou canst take nothing away but what thou first gavest.

My recollection, likewise, is so faint, that I often forget what I said or did two hours before. Yet it seldom fails me when in the pulpit, or when expounding in the houses of my friends. Perhaps I never preached longer, louder, or more frequently than at present. Perhaps I was never heard with more attention or acceptance. (Phillip. i. 29.) If he enable me to suffer as a Christian, this post of trial may be a post of honour, and may encourage others in their affliction to trust in him when they see his faithfulness and goodness in my case. He does, he will do, all things well. May I say from my heart, Not my will, but thine be done.

Love to Mrs. Bull, to brother Thomas, to your students, and to all who love the Saviour. My eyes

have let me run on longer than I expected. Perhaps because I am writing to you. *Ora pro nobis*. I am, indeed,

Your very affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

4th June, 1802.

Mr. Raban's death seems to have been very sudden. I should like to hear more about it. I have written to his widow. May we be always ready.

### LETTER CXXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF my eyes will give me leave, I must thank you, however briefly, for your very kind letter of the third. As my anniversary was on a Wednesday, I preached about Mr. Self, from the case of the demoniac in Mark v., which so nearly resembled my own, and particularly from verses 18, 19.

I am now two days in my seventy-eighth year. My health and strength are remarkable for my age; but I feel some symptoms of declining years. The day of opportunity wears away, and the night is approaching when no man can work. But while the Lord enables me to preach, and the people are attentive and willing to hear me in my poor broken way, I ought to be willing to live to the age of Methuselah, if I might but promote his glory, and be any way useful to my hearers. I am bought with a price; *ergo*, I am not my own. I wish to say from my heart, Lord, grant that the short uncertain remnant of my time may not discredit my profes-

sion, by pride or any evil tempers ; and that when the summons shall come, it shall find me ready and waiting. To this purpose I have been permitted and encouraged to pray for many years past, and our God is a hearer of prayer.

My dear child joins with me in love to you and yours, and in thanks for your kind prayers and wishes on our joint behalf. I have much to be thankful for on her account. The Lord has done great things for us, and I am waiting and praying for complete relief. But, however he may dispose of us while here, I am sure that he does all things well, and that his choice for us will be eventually better than anything we can choose for ourselves. If there is any alteration since you saw her, I think it is for the better, and I am not without hope that a full deliverance is gradually approaching ; but I trust we are both under the direction of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, and there I would leave all, and say, (Oh that I may say it from my heart !) Not my will, but thine be done.\*

Now my eyes bid me hasten to a close. The Lord bless you, in your person, family, and ministry, and return you sevenfold into your own bosom, all that you have desired and prayed for us.

I am your very affectionate,

JOHN NEWTON.

*5th August, 1802.*

Love to Mrs. Bull. Brother Thomas Bull made us a kind and very acceptable visit yesterday, an hour and a half long.

\* Miss Catlett, after this, returned home, gradually recovered, and was, some time previous to Mr. Newton's death, married to Mr. Smith.

## LETTER CXXIX. 3

MY VERY DEAR BULL, :

You will not expect me to write much; but I must tell you that I have seen your letter to Mrs. Neale.\* It awakened my most tender sympathy for you and yours, and my concern was mingled with joy to find the Lord so graciously supported you. Faithful is he that has promised.

For want of eyes, I refer you to Matt. vii. 24—27, which occurred in my reading this morning. How shall the house upon the rock be proved to be upon a sure foundation, if it was not assaulted by the same rain, storms, and floods which swept away that which was built upon the sand?

I could fill the sheet if I could see; but I cannot. My dear Miss Catlett cordially joins in all that I mean, when I subscribe myself, your affectionate and sympathising friend and brother,

JOHN NEWTON. .

*9th March, 1804.*

Time how short! Eternity how long!

\* On occasion of the death of Mrs. Bull.

THE END.









