

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**THE REV . JOHN NEWTON**

LATE RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF  
ST. MARY WOOLNOTH AND ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH-HAW,  
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CONTAINING  
AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE, &C., LETTERS ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, CARDIPHONIA,  
DISCOURSES INTENDED FOR THE PULPIT,  
SERMONS PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF OLNEY,  
A REVIEW OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, OLNEY HYMNS, POEMS,  
MESSIAH, OCCASIONAL SERMONS, AND TRACTS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
**MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, &c.**

BY THE REV. R. CECIL, A. M.

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**COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.**

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**EDINBURGH**

*Printed at the University Press, for*

**PETER BROWN AND THOMAS NELSON.**

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1830.

## LETTERS

TO MRS. P——.

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### LETTER I.

*May —, 1774.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE had sudden notice that I may send you a hasty line, to express our satisfaction in hearing that you had a safe though perilous journey. I hope I shall be always mindful to pray that the Lord may guide, bless, and comfort you, and give you such a manifestation of his person, power, and grace, as may set you at liberty from all fear, and fill you with abiding peace and joy in believing. Remember that Jesus has all power, the fulness of compassion, and embraces with open arms all that come to him for life and salvation.

I know not whether Mrs. ——'s illness was before or since my last. Through mercy she is better again; and I remain so, though death and illness are still walking about the town. O for grace to take warning by the suffering of others, to sit loose to the world, and so to number our days, as to incline our hearts to the one thing needful! Indeed that one thing includes many things sufficient to engage the best of our thoughts and the most of our time, if we were duly sensible of their importance; but I may adopt the psalmist's expression, "My soul cleaveth to the dust." How is it that the truths of which I have the most undoubted conviction, and which are of all others the most weighty, should make so little impression upon me? O I know the cause! it is deeply rooted. An evil nature cleaves to me; so that when I would do good, evil is present with me. It is, however, a mercy to be made sensible of it, and in any measure humbled for it. Ere long it will be dropped in the grave; then all compliments shall cease. That thought gives relief. I shall not always live this poor dying life. I hope one day to be all ear, all heart, all tongue; when I shall see the Redeemer as he is, I shall be like him. This will be a heaven indeed, to behold his glory without a vail, to rejoice in his love without a cloud, and to sing his praises, without one jarring or wandering note, for ever. In the mean time, may he enable us to serve him with our best. O that every power, faculty, and talent, were devoted to him! he deserves all we have, and ten thousand times more if we had it; for he has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. He gave himself for us. In one sense we are well suited to answer his purpose; for if we were not vile and worthless beyond expression, the exceeding riches of his grace would not have been so gloriously displayed. His glory shines more in redeeming one sinner, than in preserving a thousand angels. Poor Mr. —— is still in the dark valley, but we trust prayer shall yet bring him out. Mighty things have been done in

answer to prayer; and the Lord's arm is not shortened, neither is his ear heavy. It is our part to wait till we have an answer. One of his own hymns says,

The promise may be long deferr'd,  
But never comes too late.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Mr. T—— of R——. This is apparently a heavy blow. He was an amiable, judicious, candid man, and an excellent preacher in a great sphere of usefulness; and his age and constitution gave hopes that he might have been eminently serviceable for many years. How often does the Lord write Vanity upon all our expectations from men. He visited a person ill of a putrid fever, and carried the seeds of infection with him to London, where he died. Mrs. —— is a very excellent and accomplished woman, but exceedingly delicate in her frame and spirits. How can she bear so sudden and severe a stroke! But yet I hope she will afford a proof of the Lord's all-sufficiency and faithfulness. O Madam, the Lord our God is a great God! If he frowns, the smiles of the whole creation can afford no comfort; and if he is pleased to smile, he can enable the soul under the darkest dispensations to say, All is well. Yet the flesh will feel, and it ought: otherwise the exercise of faith, patience, and resignation, would be impracticable. I have lost in him one of my most valued and valuable friends; but what is my loss to that of his people?

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord increase you more and more, you and your children. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you his peace. I thank him for leading you to us, but especially for making your visit there in any measure agreeable and profitable to yourself. If I have been an instrument in his hand for your comfort, I have reason to remember it among the greatest favours he has conferred upon me. And now, dear Madam, once more farewell. If the Lord spares our lives, I hope we shall see each other again upon earth. But above all, let us rejoice in the blessed gospel, by which immortality is brought to light, and a glorious prospect opened beyond the grave.

There sits our Saviour thron'd in light,  
Cloth'd with a body like our own.

There at least, after all the changes and trials of this state, we shall meet to part no more.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

— 1775.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I SHOULD have been more uneasy at being prevented writing immediately, had I any reason to apprehend my advice necessary upon the point you propose, which, by this time, I suppose is settled as it should be without me. I smiled at Miss M——’s disappointment. However, if the Lord favours her with a taste for the library of my proposing, she will be like the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, and will count all other books but pebbles in comparison of those four volumes, which present us with something new and important whenever we look into them. I shall be much obliged to her if she will commit the third Chapter of Proverbs to her memory, and I shall pray the Lord to write it in her heart.

You surprise me when you tell me, the incident of my birth-day was noticed by those I never saw. Be so good as to return my thanks to my unknown friends, and tell them, that I pray our common Lord and Saviour to bless them abundantly. His people while here are scattered abroad, separated by hills and rivers, and too often by names and prejudices; but by and bye we shall all meet, where we shall all know and acknowledge each other, and rejoice together for evermore. I have lately read with much pleasure, and I hope with some profit, the history of the Greenland Mission. Upon the whole, it is a glorious work. None who love the Lord will refuse to say, it is the finger of God indeed. For my own part, my soul rejoices in it: and I honour the instruments, as men who have hazarded their lives in an extraordinary manner for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Sure I am that none could have sustained such discouragements at first, or have obtained such success afterwards, unless the Lord had sent, supported, and owned them.

I hope we shall have an interest in your prayers. I trust the Lord is yet with us. We have some ripe for the sickle, and some just springing up; some tokens of his gracious presence amongst us; but sin and Satan cut us out abundance of work as individuals, though, through mercy as a society, we walk in peace.

The toad and spider is an exhibition of my daily experience. I am often wounded, but the Lord is my health: still I am a living monument of mercy; and I trust that word, “Because I live, you shall live also,” will carry me to the end. I am poor, weak, and foolish; but Jesus is wise, strong, and abounding in grace. He has given me a desire to trust my all in his hands, and he will not disappoint the expectation which he himself has raised. At present I have but little to say, and but little time to say it in. When you think of this place, I hope you will think and believe, that you have friends here most

cordially interested in your welfare, and often remembering you in prayer. May the Lord be your guide and shield, and give you the best desires of your heart. I pray him to establish and settle you in the great truths of his word. I trust he will. We learn more, and more effectually, by one minute's communication with him through the medium of his written word, than we could from an assembly of divines, or a library of books.

I am, &c.

### LETTER III.

August —, 1775.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IT is not owing to forgetfulness that your letter has been thus long unanswered. It has lain within my view this fortnight, demanding my first leisure hour; but affairs of daily occurrence have been so many and so pressing, that I have been constrained to put it off till now. I trust the Lord, by his Spirit and providence, will direct and prosper the settlement of your children. I desire my love to Miss M——. My idea of her enlarges. Methinks I see her aspiring to be as tall as her mamma. I hope likewise that she increases in grace and wisdom as in years and stature; and that hearing our Lord's flock is a little flock, she feels an earnest thirst to be one of the happy number which constitutes his fold.

There the Lord dwells amongst them upon his own hill,  
With the flocks all around him, a-waiting his will.

If she has such a desire, I can tell who gave it her, for I am persuaded it was not born with her: and where the good husbandman sows, there will he also reap. Therefore, dear Miss M——, press forward: knock and it shall be opened unto you, for yet there is room. O what a fold! O what a pasture! O what a shepherd! Let us love, and sing, and wonder.

I hope the good people at Bristol, and everywhere else, are praying for our sinful, distracted land, in this dark day. The Lord is angry, the sword is drawn, and I am afraid nothing but the spirit of wrestling prayer can prevail for the returning it into the scabbard. Could things have proceeded to these extremities, except the Lord had withdrawn his salutary blessing from both sides? It is a time of prayer. We see the beginning of trouble, but who can foresee the possible consequences? The fire is kindled, but how far it may spread, those who are above may perhaps know better than we. I meddle not with the disputes of party, nor concern myself about any political maxims, but such as are laid down in scripture. There I read, that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is the reproach, and if persisted in, the ruin of any people. Some people are startled at the enormous sum of our national debt: they who understand spiritual arithmetic, may well be startled if they sit down and compute the debt of national sin. *Imprimis*, Infidelity; *Item*, Contempt of the gospel; *Item*, The profligacy of manners; *Item*, Perjury; *Item*, The cry of blood, the blood of thousands, perhaps millions, from the East Indies. It would take sheets, yea quires, to draw out the particulars under each of these heads, and then much would remain untold. What can we answer, when the Lord saith, "Shall not I visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Since we received the news of the first hostilities in America, we have had an additional prayer-meeting. Could I

hear that professors in general, instead of wasting their breath in censuring men and measures, were plying the throne of grace, I should still hope for a respite. Poor New England! once the glory of the earth, now likely to be visited with fire and sword! They have left their first love, and the Lord is sorely contending with them. Yet surely their sins as a people are not to be compared with ours. I am just so much affected with these things, as to know that I am not affected enough. Oh! my spirit is sadly cold and insensible, or I should lay them to heart in a different manner; yet I endeavour to give the alarm as far as I can. There is one political maxim which comforts me, "The Lord reigns." His hand guides the storm; and he knows them that are his, how to protect, support, and deliver them. He will take care of his own cause, yea, he will extend his kingdom, even by these formidable methods. Men have one thing in view, he has another, and his counsel shall stand.

The chief piece of news since my last is concerning B. A. She has finished her course, and is now with the great multitude who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony. Tuesday, the 1st of February, she was in our assembly, was taken ill the next day, and died while we were assembled the Tuesday following. She had an easy dissolution, retained her senses and her speech to the last minute, and went without a struggle or a sigh. She was not in raptures during her illness, but was composed, and maintained a strong and lively faith. She had a numerous levee about her bed daily, who were all witnesses to the power of faith, and to the faithfulness of the Lord, enabling her to triumph over the approaches of death; for she was well known and well respected. She will be much missed; but I hope he will answer the many prayers she put up for us, and raise up others in her room. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Blessed are they who know whom they have believed, and when death comes, can cheerfully rest their hopes on him who died that we might live. B—— had been long a precious and honourable woman; but her hope in the trying hour rested not in what she had done for the Lord, but upon what he had done for her; not upon the change his grace had wrought in her, but upon the righteousness he had wrought out for her by his obedience unto death. This supported her, for she saw nothing in herself but what she was ashamed of. She saw reason to renounce her own goodness, as well as her own sins, as to the point of acceptance with God, and died, as St. Paul lived, determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

The time when Mr. and Mrs. C—— remove to Scotland drawing near, Mrs. —— is gone to spend a week or two with them, and take her leave. She feels something at parting with a sister, who is indeed a valuable person; and from children they have always lived in the most tender intimacy and uninterrupted friendship. But all beneath the moon (like the moon itself) is subject to incessant change. Alterations and separations are graciously appointed of

the Lord, to remind us that this is not our rest, and to prepare our thoughts for that approaching change which shall fix us for ever in an unchangeable state. O Madam! what shall we poor worms render to him who has brought life and immortality to life by the gospel, taken away the sting of death, revealed a glorious prospect beyond the grave, and given us eyes to see it? Now the reflection, that we must ere long take a final farewell of what is most capable of pleasing us upon earth, is not only tolerable, but pleasant. For we know we cannot fully possess our best friend, our chief treasure, till we have done with all below; nay, we cannot till then properly see each other. We are cased up in vehicles of clay, and converse together as if we were in different coaches, with the blinds close drawn round. We see the carriage, and the voice tells us that we have a friend within; but we shall know each other better, when death shall open the coach doors, and hand out the company successively, and lead them into the glorious apartments which the Lord has appointed to be the common residence of them that love him. What an assembly will there be! What a constellation of glory, when each individual shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father! No sins, sorrows, temptations; no veils, clouds, or prejudices, shall interrupt us then. All names of idle distinction (the fruits of present remaining darkness, the channels of bigotry, and the stumbling-block of the world) will be at an end.

The description you give of your present residence pleases me much, and chiefly because it describes and manifests to me something, still more interesting, I mean the peaceable situation of your mind. Had he placed you in an Eden some months ago, it would hardly have awakened your descriptive talent. But he whom the wind and seas obey has calmed your mind, and I trust will go on to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. It is no great matter where we are, provided we see that the Lord has placed us there, and that he is with us.

I am, &c.



#### LETTER IV.

— 1776.

So, my dear Madam, I hope we have found you out, and that this letter will reach you in good time to welcome you in our names to London. We are ready to take it for granted that you will now most certainly make us a visit. Do come as soon, and stay as long, as you possibly can. Methinks you will be glad to get out of the smell and noise as soon as possible. If we did not go to London now and then, we should perhaps forget how people live there. Especially I pity professors; they are exposed to as many dangers as people who live in mines; chilling damps, scorching blasts, epidemical disorders, owing to the impure air. Such are the winds of false doctrines, the explosions of controversy, the blights of worldly conversation, the contagion of evil custom. In short, a person had need have a good constitution of grace, and likewise to be well supplied with antidotes, to preserve a tolerable share of spiritual health in such a situation.

And now, how shall I fill up the rest of the paper? It is a shame for a Christian and a minister to say he has no subject at hand, when the inexhaustible theme of redeeming love is ever pressing upon our attention. I will tell you, then, though you know it, that the Lord reigns. He who once bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, is seated upon a throne of glory, and exercises all power in heaven and on earth. Thrones, principalities, and powers, bow before him. Every event in the kingdoms of providence and of grace are under his rule. His providence pervades and manages the whole, and is as minutely attentive to every part, as if there were only that single object in his view. From the highest archangel to the meanest ant or fly, all depend on him for their being, their preservation, and their powers. He directs the sparrows where to build their nests, and to find their food. He over-rules the rise and fall of nations, and bends, with an invincible energy and unerring wisdom, all events; so that, while many intend nothing less, in the issue their designs all concur and coincide in the accomplishment of his holy will. He restrains with a mighty hand the still more formidable efforts of the powers of darkness; and Satan, with all his hosts, cannot exert their malice a hair's breadth beyond the limits of his permission. This is he who is the head and husband of his believing people. How happy are they whom it is his good pleasure to bless! How safe are they whom he has engaged to protect! How honoured and privileged are they to whom he is pleased to manifest himself, and whom he enables and warrants to claim him as their friend and their portion! Having redeemed them by his own blood, he sets a high value upon them: he esteems them his treasure, his jewels, and keeps them as the pupil of his eye. They shall not want; they need not fear; his eye is upon them in every situation, his ear is open to their prayers, and his everlasting arms are under them for their sure support. On earth he guides their steps, controls their enemies, and

directs all his dispensations for their good; while in heaven, he is pleading their cause, preparing them a place, and communicating down to them the reviving foretastes of the glory that shall be shortly revealed. O how is this mystery hidden from an unbelieving world! Who can believe it, till it is made known by experience, what an intercourse is maintained in this land of shadows between the Lord of glory and sinful worms! How should we praise him, that he has visited us; for we were once blind to his beauty, and insensible to his love, and should have remained so to the last, had he not prevented us with his goodness, and been found of us when we sought him not.

Mrs. — presents her love. The bite of the leech which I mentioned to you has confined her to the house ever since; but I hope she will be able to go out tomorrow. We were for a while apprehensive of worse consequences; but the Lord is gracious: he shows us, in a variety of instances, what dependent creatures we are, how blind to events, and how easily the methods which we take to relieve ourselves from a small inconvenience may plunge us into a greater. Thus we learn (happy, indeed, if we can effectually learn it), that there is no safety but in his protection, and that nothing can do us good but by his blessing. As for myself, I see so many reasons why he might contend with me, that I am amazed he affords me and mine so much peace, and appoints us so few trials. We live as upon a field of battle; many are hourly suffering and falling around us, and I can give no reason why we are preserved, but that he is God, and not man. What a mercy that we are only truly known to him, who is alone able to bear us!

May the Lord bless you and yours; may he comfort you, guide you, and guard you. Come quickly to,

Yours, &c.