

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

LATE RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF  
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LOMBARD STREET, LONDON.

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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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## LETTER XXXV.

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT,—THINK ON THESE THINGS. Phil. iv. 8.

DEAR SIR,

THE precept which I have chosen for my motto is applicable to many particulars, which are but seldom and occasionally mentioned from the pulpit. There are improprieties of conduct, which, though usually considered as foibles that hardly deserve a severe censure, are properly sinful; for though some of them may not seem to violate any express command of scripture, yet they are contrary to that accuracy and circumspection which become our profession. A christian, by the tenor of his high calling, is bound to avoid even the appearance of evil; and his deportment should not only be upright as to his leading principles, but amiable and engaging, and as free as possible from every inconsistency and blemish. The characters of some valuable persons are clouded; and the influence they might otherwise have, greatly counteracted by comparatively small faults; yet faults they certainly are; and it would be well if they could be made so sensible of them, and of their ill effects, as that they might earnestly watch, and strive, and pray against them. I know not how to explain myself better than by attempting the outlines of a few portraits, to each of which I apprehend some strong resemblances may be found in real life. I do not wish to set my readers to work to find out such resemblances among their neighbours; but would advise them to examine carefully, whether they cannot, in one or other of them, discover some traces of their own features. And though I speak of men only, counterparts to the several characters, may, doubtless, be found here and there among the women: for the imperfections and evils of a fallen nature are equally entailed upon both sexes.

AUSTERUS is a solid and exemplary christian. He has a deep, extensive, and experimental knowledge of divine things. Inflexibly and invariably true to his principles, he stems, with a noble singularity, the torrent of the world, and can neither be bribed nor intimidated from the path of duty. He is a rough diamond of great intrinsic value, and would sparkle, with a distinguished lustre, if he were more polished. But though the word of God is his daily study, and he prizes the precepts, as well as the promises, more than thousands of gold and silver, there is one precept he seems to have overlooked: I mean that of the apostle, *be courteous*. Instead of that gentleness and condescension which will always be expected from a professed follower of the meek and lowly Jesus; there is a harshness in his manner, which makes him more admired than beloved; and they who truly love him, often feel more constraint than pleasure when in his company. His intimate

friends are satisfied that he is no stranger to true humility of heart: but these are few. By others he is thought proud, dogmatic, and self-important; nor can this prejudice against him be easily removed, until he can lay aside that cynical air which he has unhappily contracted.

HUMANUS is generous and benevolent. His feelings are lively, and his expressions of them strong. No one is more distant from sordid views, or less influenced by a selfish spirit. His heart burns with love to Jesus, and he is ready to receive, with open arms, all who love his Saviour. Yet, with an upright and friendly spirit, which entitles him to the love and esteem of all who know him, he has not everything we would wish in a friend. In some respects, though not in the most criminal sense, he bridleth not his tongue. Should you, without witness or writing, intrust him with untold gold, you would run no risk of loss; but if you intrust him with a secret, you thereby put it in the possession of the public. Not that he would wilfully betray you, but it is his infirmity. He knows not how to keep a secret; it escapes from him before he is aware. So, likewise, as to matters of fact: in things which are of great importance, and where he is sufficiently informed, no man has a stricter regard to truth; but in the smaller concerns of common life, whether it be from credulity, or from a strange and blameable inadvertency, he frequently grieves and surprises those who know his real character, by saying the thing that is not. Thus they to whom he opens his very heart, dare not make him returns of equal confidence; and they who, in some cases, would venture their lives upon his word, in others are afraid of telling a story after him. How lamentable are such blemishes in such a person!

PRUDENS, though not of a generous natural temper, is a partaker of that grace which opens the heart, and inspires a disposition to love and to good works. He bestows not his alms to be seen of men; but they who have the best opportunities of knowing what he does for the relief of others, and of comparing it with his ability, can acquit him in good measure of the charge which another part of his conduct exposes him to. For Prudens is a great economist; and though he would not willingly wrong or injure any person, yet the meanness to which he will submit, either to save or gain a penny, in what he accounts an honest way, are a great discredit to his profession. He is punctual in fulfilling his engagements; but exceedingly hard, strict, and suspicious in making his bargains. And in his dress, and every article of his personal concerns, he is content to be so much below the station in which the providence of God has placed him, that to those who are not acquainted with his private benefactions to the poor, he appears under the hateful character of a miser, and to be governed by that love of money which the scriptures declare to be the root of all evil, and inconsistent with the true love of God and of the saints.

VOLATILIS is sufficiently exact in performing his promises in such in-

stances as he thinks of real importance. If he bids a person depend upon his assistance he will not disappoint his expectations. Perhaps he is equally sincere in all his promises at the time of making them; but for want of method in the management of his affairs, he is always in a hurry, always too late, and has always some engagement upon his hands with which it is impossible he can comply. Yet he goes on in this way, exposing himself and others to continual disappointments. He accepts, without a thought, proposals which are incompatible with each other, and will perhaps undertake to be at two or three different and distant places at the same hour. This has been so long his practice that nobody now expects him till they see him. In other respects he is a good sort of man; but this want of punctuality, which runs through his whole deportment, puts everything out of course in which he is concerned, abroad and at home. Volatilis excuses himself as well as he can, and chiefly by alleging, that the things in which he fails are of no great consequence. But he would do well to remember, that truth is a sacred thing, and ought not to be violated in the smallest matters, without an unforeseen and unavoidable prevention. Such a trifling turn of spirit lessens the weight of a person's character, though he makes no pretensions to religion, and is still a greater blemish in a professor.

CESSATOR is not chargeable with being buried in the cares and business of the present life, to the neglect of the one thing needful; but he greatly neglects the duties of his station. Had he been sent into the world only to read, pray, hear sermons, and join in religious conversation, he might pass for an eminent christian. But though it is to be hoped, that his abounding in these exercises springs from a heart-attachment to divine things, his conduct evidences that his judgment is weak, and his views of his christian calling are very narrow and defective. He does not consider that waiting upon God in the public and private ordinances, is designed, not to excuse us from a discharge of the duties of civil life, but to instruct, strengthen, and qualify us for their performance. His affairs are in disorder, and his family and connections are likely to suffer by his indolence. He thanks God that he is not worldly-minded; but he is an idle and unfaithful member of society, and causes the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Of such the apostle has determined, that "if any man will not work, neither should he eat."

CURIOSUS is upright and unblameable in his general deportment, and no stranger to the experiences of a true christian. His conversation upon these subjects is often satisfactory and edifying. He would be a much more agreeable companion, were it not for an impertinent desire of knowing every body's business, and the grounds of every hint that is occasionally dropped in discourse where he is present. This puts him upon asking a multiplicity of needless and improper questions, and obliges those who know him, to be continually upon their guard, and to treat him with reserve. He

catechises even strangers, and is unwilling to part with them till he is punctually informed of all their connections, employments, and designs. For this idle curiosity he is marked and avoided as a busybody; and they who have the best opinion of him cannot but wonder, that a man, who appears to have so many better things to employ his thoughts, should find leisure to amuse himself with what does not at all concern him. Were it not for the rules of civility he would be affronted every day: and if he would attend to the cold and evasive answers he receives to his inquiries, or even to the looks with which they are accompanied, he might learn, that, though he means no harm, he appears to a great disadvantage, and that this prying disposition is very displeasing.

QUERULUS wastes much of his precious time in declaiming against the management of public affairs; though he has neither access to the springs which move the wheels of government, nor influence either to accelerate or retard their motions. Our national concerns are no more affected by the remonstrances of Querulus, than the heavenly bodies are by the disputes of astronomers. While the newspapers are the chief sources of his intelligence, and his situation precludes him from being a competent judge, either of matters of fact, or matters of right, why should Querulus trouble himself with politics? This would be a weakness, if we consider him only as a member of society; but if we consider him as a christian, it is worse than weakness; it is a sinful conformity to the men of the world, who look no farther than to second causes, and forget that the Lord reigns. If a christian be placed in a public sphere of action, he should undoubtedly be faithful to his calling, and endeavour, by all lawful methods, to transmit our privileges to posterity; but it would be better for Querulus to let the dead bury their dead. There are people enough to make a noise about political matters, who know not how to employ their time to better purpose. Our Lord's kingdom is not of this world; and most of his people may do their country much more essential service by pleading for it in prayer, than by finding fault with things which they have no power to alter. If Querulus had opportunity of spending a few months under some of the governments upon the continent, I may indeed say, under any of them, he would probably bring home with him a more grateful sense of the Lord's goodness to him, in appointing his lot in Britain. As it is, his zeal is not only unprofitable to others, but hurtful to himself. It embitters his spirit, it diverts his thoughts from things of greater importance, and prevents him from feeling the value of those blessings, civil and religious, which he actually possesses; and could he, as he wishes, prevail on many to act in the same spirit, the governing powers might be irritated to take every opportunity of abridging that religious liberty which we are favoured with, above all the nations upon earth. Let me remind Querulus, that the hour is approaching, when many things, which at

present too much engross his thoughts and inflame his passions, will appear as foreign to him, as what is now transacting among the Tartars or Chinese.

Other improprieties of conduct, which lessen the influence and spot the profession of some who wish well to the cause of Christ, might be enumerated, but these may suffice for a specimen.

I am, &c.