

May 18th, 1793

Letter from John Newton to John Campbell, May 18, 1793

John Newton

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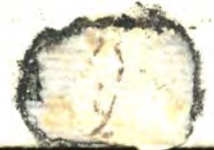
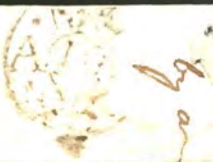
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London Eighteenth
May

Mr J Campbell
Grass Market

Edinburgh



Dear Sir

I have hardly time to acknowledge your letter, but know not when I shall have more. As you desire it, I wish send you my thoughts very briefly.

So far as popery may concern the civil state of the Nations, I apprehend no great danger from it. Infidelity & Secularism seem to me the spreading Popery at present. The Spirit & Strength of Popery seems quite broken, & the Pope himself I think is little more regarded by the bulk of the Roman Church, than by the Protestants. The heavy penal laws, formerly in force, however politically necessary, do not appear to me consistent either with the letter or the spirit of the New Testament.

In a Religious view I cannot see, why a Papist has not as good a right to worship God according to his conscience, tho' erroneous, as to educate his children, as I have myself. I am no friend to persecution or restraint in matters of Conscience. The step made in 80, at a time when Protestants were gaining more liberty in Popish Countries, I thought was a reproach to our National Character, both as Britons, & Protestants. And I was not surpris'd at the Events, by which I thought the sword pointed contempt upon it. I hope we shall never see such a time again, upon such a pretext. I cannot see that an unprincipled or wicked Protestant is a whit better, than a bigotted Papist. Yet these of all sorts are tolerat'd

The Spirit of the times is quite altered since Times
were lighter in Smith's field. And humanly speaking I think
it morally impossible, things to revert into that channel.

Therefore what was liberty, the ~~the~~ Papists may
obtain by law, that of sitting in Parliament chiefly excepted,
with give me no pain.

Perhaps if I had lived in Scotland, the opinion of
many wise & good men, might have outweighed my private
judgment, & given it a different bias. The Jews while a separate
people & under a Theocracy, had a peculiar rule, the applica-
tion of which to Christian Societies, I think has been productive
of much mischief & misery; & quite unsupported, as I find
by any precept or precedent in the New Testament.

I am glad your late dis-appointment has opened
to your satisfaction. But I have only to me to add my
best wishes - The Lord bless you & bless us all with his precious
peace, & that philanthropy which his example teaches
I am your sincere friend & servant
John Newton.

18 May 93.