

December 4th, 1798

# Letter from John Newton to John Campbell, December 4, 1798

John Newton

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## Recommended Citation

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Lucy  
Lynn

Copy

Londonspliderys

Mr John Campbell  
Grays Marks

Dunlough

Mr Morris



My dear Sir,

It is high time to bring you into my debt again as you were before I received yours of 7. November. I am glad to find that you are more & more engaged in useful services, even tho' it should render your letters, which I always receive with pleasure, shorter & less frequent than formerly. I know not <sup>that</sup> my business is much upon their increase, but my ability to manage it is certainly upon the decline. I once could set many hours in the day at my pen, now two hours weary me. I begin to feel a want of that energy & application, which I have sometimes possessed. And I am afraid lest I exculpate myself too easily, by charging the whole blame upon Old-age. Yet I cannot reasonably expect to do as much at 74 as I could at 50.

I cannot with truth plead guilty to the charge of Woful Indolence; yet upon a review of almost every day, it seems to have passed in a sort of busy Idleness. We are directed even if we have done our duty to confess ourselves, unprofitable Servants. What then must I say, conscious that I come so lamentably short in all things, & my <sup>best</sup> attempts are both defective & defiled?

On Friday of 23. when rising, after a good night, & in perfect health I fell down. I felt several times before I was convinced that I could not stand. The strength of my left leg was withdrawn, without any pain or numbness. I was for a time led about the room, not being able to walk across it, without support. I kept house on the Lords day. But means were used, & the prayers of my affectionate people & friends prevailed for a blessing on them. Last week I was enabled to preach both Wednesday & Thursday (the thanksgiving day) Yesterday I preached twice, & distributed the bread at the Lords table to more than 300 Communicants, & to day I have walked more than a mile in the streets. So that you may set me down as Well And I hope you will praise the Lord for on my behalf, & continue to pray for me.

I was much surpris'd & grieved to see in the cover of the last Magazine you sent me, an advertisement importing that my books were printing in Edinburgh by subscription. I think your Booksellers have taken an unwarrantable & unjust liberty. It cannot now be prevented, but if they do not insert a Note in every Volume of apology that they did it without the consent or even the knowledge of the Author, I shall think it right to justify myself in the London papers, which will be read in your City. I might perhaps have got money, had I published them by subscription myself; but especially where an Author is known to be in real distress & poverty, I think subscription is a degrading & unworthy method of pushing abroad Religious books. When I first commenced Author, I committed myself & my books to the Providence of the Lord, & I know <sup>not</sup> that I ever took a step, to put off a single Copy - nor was it needful

The Lord gave them acceptance & a spread beyond my hopes & expectations. They have been published in English, here, in Scotland, Ireland & America. Translated & circulated in Holland & Germany, & I believe an known & read in most places where the Lord has any people that call upon Him in Spirit & in Truth. So that my wish that my name which descent above most, to be buried in the dust, that it might be forgotten that such a work had existed, is known from India, Stabiltice & New-Holland in the South & East, to Labrador & Greenland in the North & West. I therefore never could think of publishing by subscription, in my life time; tho' in my Will, I have consented that my Executors, if they think proper, may publish a complete Edition in Octavo, by subscription & after my decease. Whom your Booksellers have done so lightly, without saying with your leave, or by your leave, I durst not have done myself in point of Conscience, if I had been sure of gaining a Thousand pounds. And I must not be under the suspicion, of so mean an evasion, as to connive at doing that in Edinburgh, which I was ashamed of doing in London; for all regards ~~to~~ my friends here will know my sentiments upon the subject. I beg you to tell the Booksellers, that they have hurt my feelings very much; & that I expect & insist that they do me the only justice which is now in their power. I should not have cared if they had published Twenty Editions without my knowledge, provided they had not done it by subscription. I mentioned it to Mr. Ogilvie when he was in Town, but I wish they may likewise be informed of it by you, whom I consider as my Representative.

Give my love to Miss C. Welwood, & tell her that Mr. & Mrs. Aitch whom she sent, breakfasted with me once, & I hope it was a pleasant meeting to us all. The Misses who brought your letter called when I was at Church; they did not come again, so that I have not seen them. One married Missary named Jones was with me two hours, & I liked him much. They seem to be chiefly very young folks; but if their hearts & views be right before the Lord, He will teach them to profit apace, & enlarge their minds & of penance, as occasions require. There is none teacheth like Him - & where He bestows a humble & dependant Spirit, every other good will follow. I suppose by this time they are all safe on board the Duff at Portsmouth. May the Lord of the Sea & the dry land, who steered the Ark of Noah to its appointed place, bless them while on their passage, & dwell in their hearts & houses, wherever his Providence may fix them!

I loved James Lawson. I believe he was a truly upright honest Man, tho' in some things a little eccentric. I know he has long been a sufferer, & therefore I am not sorry <sup>that</sup> the days of his mourning are ended. I have lost a true friend, but my loss is his gain, & I trust we shall soon meet in a <sup>better world</sup>.

You send good news of Duncan Macdonald, may the Lord strengthen & bless him! When great awakenings take place among people who are grossly ignorant of the Scriptures, there are frequently some extraordinary appearances. It was so among our first Methodists, under Mr. Wesley, Whitfield, Bennet &c. It was so in the great revival in America, which began under Mr. Edwards, so likewise at Hyloby the Lord permits it, perhaps for 2 reasons. These stir, engage the attention of the people

Neighbourhood, & prompt many to hear, who otherwise would not. 2 There are those who want something to cavil at, & these things furnish them with the occasions they wish for. According to the prophecy Isa. 8. 14, 15. The Light comes; but they who love Darkness, think themselves justified in opposing the Light, on account of these incidental blemishes, which therefore they are glad to expatiate upon. Mr. R & L Erskine were good men, but they were Bigots in the extreme. And because they had left your Church, they took it for granted that the Lord had forsaken it likewise. & therefore hastily took it for granted, that the work could not be ~~his~~ His. I have heard that they fasted & prayed to intreat the Lord to put a stop to it. Well may we say, Lord what is Man!

I thank you for your orders of Ed. Bleachider. I expected his letters, tho' only written to his Wife, would afford some variety. I hope you will at least ~~afford~~ <sup>find</sup> enough for a Publication. The Memory of such a Man in such a situation, should be preserved, & his Example held up for the instruction of our Modern Warriors.

Mr. Grimshaw has been with the Printer Swabs to day, but I have only one sheet from the Press. At this rate, we may wait till March for his appearance. But I hope we shall go on faster what with Printers, & what with Booksellers, poor Authors have need of a good stock of patience. However, all our concerns are in a higher hand, & I hope Mr. Grimshaw will be seen, whether sooner or later, just at the right time.

The close of your letter pleases me. I shall rejoice to see you once more before I go hence. Forcass, & contrive to stay as long as you possibly can, & be sure to reserve one whole day for me. On a Tuesday or a Saturday I am usually at home from Morning till Night. Hoping to have you soon, I shall conclude with my prayers & best wishes for your welfare. The Lord bless thee, & keep thee & cause his face to shine upon thee! I only add Miss Catlett's respects, & subscribe myself, with love to all friends,  
Your very affectionate John Newton

N. 6. 4. Dec. 98. - 9. P. M.

My love to Janet Ramsay