

August 1st, 1794

# Letter from John Newton to John Campbell, August 1, 1794

John Newton

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## Recommended Citation

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The principal in hand & taken to little purpose. It was necessary to Mrs. Gindlin  
 a plain in the Bay, who was never so much as a Grammar School,  
 to cut off this great Gelictho Red. I think there is none of the Party being  
 enough to attempt to enlarge it.  
 I stand my <sup>right</sup> leg in January, which is nearly well. In my  
 last journey, I obtained my left knee. There is also amending. I have  
 been very lame, but I am now well to travel. I do not wish to know whether. In  
 other respects, Miss Collett & I, my husband are very well.  
 On Monday next, if I very I shall enter my 70<sup>th</sup> Year. At the time  
 of my dissolution cannot be very distant. Pray for me, that whenever it comes it  
 may find me waiting, with my family. That my decline in life, if I am not called  
 away suddenly, may be honorable & merciful with my preparation. That I may  
 be like the excellent's Saint, & die as he doth with a sinners, with me than plea or delay,  
 but that I am his child, dress & rings to save to his uttermost, those who put  
 their trust in him.

London One Aug 6  
 94  
 Mr J. Campbell  
 Great Market  
 Cheshamton Ed

As the length & the speed of this letter, please for me, if I should receive direct  
 from some person, I should not forget you, but I cannot wish to be burdened. I am most  
 glad to hear of you, & I am glad to hear of your success in all  
 your connections. I only add Miss Collett's respects, & that I am sincerely  
 your affectionate friend &

N<sup>o</sup>. 6. 1 August 94

Remember me to Dr. Stuart & Mr. Lawson when you see them. I  
 am indebted to them both, & mean to pay when I am down to Mr. Colquhoun  
 My friend & sincerely yours.



Dear Sir, I take a large sheet, but perhaps if I keep it, till I have filled it, I shall win your patience, both in waiting for my letter, & in reading it afterwards.

We, that is Miss Caslett & I, left home J. 17 June, & returned in peace & safety J. 24<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Givers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> found me at Cambridge. Since I came back I have paid Mr. Johnson of which he promised to advise you by last night's post. I expected to meet Mr. Scott, last night at our Society, but he did not come. I shall send his letter to day per penny post, which will inform him, that the money is ready. So much for business —

Mr. Scott is at Margate. I shall run over your letter by paragraphs — the first mentions your fear of being troubled one. I will not complement you, but hope you will not mention this again. Your letters are always welcome, pleasing & profitable.

I received a letter from a Mr. Grahame dated Edin- 23 June. If you know him please to thank him for me, as I have not time to write at present. He mentions two books of Mr. Riccalton. The sober Enquiry — And an Enquiry into the Spirit & tendency of Mr. Sandimans letters to Hervey. I know not which of these you have for me, but I should be glad of them both, if they can be procured.

If once we knew where Mr. Riccalton's 3 vol. can be had, I doubt not but a number of them will go off. Many of my friends here wish for a copy. I announced them at Cambridge, when I doubt not there will be several purchasers. And I trust the introduction of them into the University will have a good effect. [NB. Just now coming home, I found Mr. Riccalton's book with your note, upon the Table. I have not seen the person who brought it.] It seems a pity that such a Man should be harassed & in debt — but he may rise from his troubles. And it is a wonder to me that he should have been so little known. Pray give my thanks to Mr. Phipps for his kind present.

Give my love to Mr. Black. I hope his removal to Edinb'burgh will prove a blessing to many; & that in watering others he may be abundantly watered himself. I am glad you have good news from what you call the East Country. May the Gospel spread ~~the~~ East, West, North & South, till every part of this land, & all the lands & nations of the Earth is filled with light & love.

Give my love to Mr. Dickinson. I thank him for his letter, which must lie by a while. May the Lord bless him in his new relations, his new house, & in all his concerns. I saw Mr. Taron at Cambridge — but have not seen him yet at N. B. since my return. He was well, & spoke affectionately of you & his refs. to him.

I have seen many of Mr. Berridge's & Mr. Thornbui's letters, & perhaps those which you have. But I knew them both so well, that I need not trouble you to transcribe them. Mr. Berridge was a first rate man, both as a Minister & a Christian. But he could not easily restrain his natural turn for humour & brookery. This was certainly a blessing, especially when he brought it into the pulpit. But this he was sensible of the impropriety, in his latter years, & often acknowledged it, he was frequently drawn into a repetition. What made it worse, his taste was far from delicate. His allusions were generally appropriate, were from low & vulgar air, & disgusting even to his friends. But as well as, there are spots even in the sun. He was upon the whole a burning & a shining light. Mr. Whitfield & Denison could say comical things; but then it was in a manner quite his own, in which none of his Imitators could succeed. When he made his hearers smile, it was usually with a design to make them weep, & I have more than once seen these different effects produced in ~~succession~~ in almost the same minute.

My Narrative is indeed imperfect. But I think Letters to a Wife, will serve both as a Commentary, & a Supplement to it. Mr. Self seems to have obtained sufficiently upon the Attention of the Public already. I am not willing to introduce him again.

In judging a warm heart to a clear head, you certainly judge by the rule of Scripture. The Lord looketh to the heart, not to the stature, the address, the intellect, the rank or wealth of a person. These are to the Man, no more than the trappings to <sup>an</sup> Horse, which is the same animal, whether laden with panniers, or drops in a fine caparison. So at the Theatre, people do not admire an Actor merely for the character he sustains, but for the manner in which he performs it. All flesh is grass, & all the goodliness thereof <sup>like</sup> the flowers of the field. The map of man-kind may be compared to grass, & those who are distinguished by Intellectual or Lettered accomplishments of any kind, to the Flowers, which look more gayly, & are perhaps a little taller than the grass. But when the Mower comes, they say the same thing, & both fall by the same stroke, & wither with equal speed. Indeed I believe, the most lively grass, & the most solid corn, are known amongst students poor & undistinguished people. Every outward advantage has a tendency to nourish the pride of the human heart, & requires a proportionable knowledge of deceitful self, & the evil of sin to counterbalance them. It is no less difficult to have great abilities, than great riches, without trusting in them. And Prelates who are remarkably sensible & ~~clever~~ clever, are frequently teased with whims & vagaries of thought, which do not trouble plain people. If I was qualified to search out the best Christian in the Kingdom, I should not expect to find him either in a Professors Chair, or in a Pulpit. I should give the palm to that person who had the lowest thoughts of himself, & the most admiring & cordial thoughts of the Saviour. And perhaps this person may be some bed-ridden, old Man or Woman, or a Pauper in a Parish workhouse. But our regard to the Lord, is not to be measured by our sensible feelings, by what we can say or write, but rather by the simplicity of our dependance, & the uniform tenor of our obedience to his Will. I hope the Author of Letters to a Wife was not an hy-po-crite, but if you knew him as well as I do (I know him but very imperfectly) you would be astonished that he could dare to write, <sup>what</sup> as he has sometimes written.

I believe the Miss Gilchrist's & their brother have not yet been in London. If they do come, I should be very glad to see them. I believe there are many good people at Farnham. But I thought them too hasty in their determination to build, & that the plan they proposed, as mentioned to me, was not likely to settle them comfortably. I did not approve, & therefore I did not encourage it. I have often seen Young & Warm Zeal lead to inconveniences. In these points we must judge for ourselves, as appearances struck us. But I trust I wish equally well to the Gospel, whether it be preached in a Church, a Chappel, a Kirk, a Meeting-house or a Barn; & whether the Preachers are of the English or Scotch Establishments, Seceders, Relief men or Methodists. Then we have an Army of Self-sent Preachers; some of them I hope are good Men, some I hope are useful - not a few I fear are neither very good, as to their character, nor at all competent for usefulness, but rather promote divisions & Errors. However the prevailing maxim, that whoever thinks himself qualified to preach, is thereby warranted to go forth, I cannot approve. And where I approve & wish well to the design, I will not promote builded schemes. If I did, as I am connected, I need have little else <sup>to do</sup>. The distresses of the numerous poor that come under my notice require much more than I can either spare, or procure, for their relief. I know nothing

nothing against the People of Farnham, or their Collectors. That they should be angry with me & others, for not heartily espousing their design, I do not wonder at. I said before, they are Young & Warm.

I am sorry for your friend Mr. Watt, & for many men, who would do better if they consulted the rule of God's word. Some well meaning people seduced by those of deeper views, I compare to Children playing with Gunpowder, who are sometimes blown up, before they are aware of danger. They are happy, who study to be quiet, to promote peace, & to persuade those whom they can influence, to such an interest in the Kingdom which cannot be shaken.

I have now taken some notice of every paragraph in your letter. Have little to add from my own stock. Our late excursion was very pleasant. We were chiefly at & round about Cambridge, at no time more than 62 miles from <sup>London</sup>. We saw many friends, & received much kindness. I preached while abroad in ten Churches, nine of them in different places, besides many house preachings. I found in most of these parishes active faithful Ministers, & attentive congregations. Mr. Limeau who has a parish in Cambridge, has been an instrument of much good in the University, the town, & the Neighbourhood. The Gospel certainly prospers in the Establishment. Young men of abilities & piety, are or claim every season, & there are 4 seasons in the year. And we now & then hear of Clergymen awarded, after they had been blind teachers of the blind for many years. In London we are highly favoured with many Ministers of the first rank for zeal & wisdom. Such there are likewise in several of our great towns, as such as Leicester, Birmingham, Leeds, Wallingford, York, Hull &c, Reading, & I hope there are several hundred settled in places of deep note, in different parts of the Kingdom, who are diligent & useful. Add to this the Itinerants in town & country, in Mr. Whitfield's, Wesleys, & Lady Huntingdon's departments, amongst whom, tho' they are not all alike, there are many faithful good preachers, & the Evangelical Dispensers - & I think we may hope, that real Religion is greatly upon the spread & revival amongst us. This I think is a token for good (I fear almost the only one) in this dark & threatening day. The bulk of the Nation is asleep in sin. Impiety, folly & dissipation abound every where. But the Lord has a praying people, who are mourning for the evils they cannot prevent, & the miseries which are the fruits of sin. These I hope would appear a large number, if they could be brought all together. But scattered as they are up & down, they are one in him: & for their sakes, I hope our Civil & Religious privileges, so little prized so much undervalued by the majority, will be still preserved to us.

I know not if I mentio'd Mr. Fuller's book. The tendency of the Calvinistic & Socinian doctrines compar'd as to Morals. But I suppose you must have seen it. I think it the most complete & unanswerable refutation of the Socinian Scheme, & the best book of controversies I ever saw. The great learned Doctors <sup>dodge</sup>