

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: John Newton Letters ~ Grace in the Blade****John Newton Letters ~ Grace in the Blade - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/8 6:21**

John Newton's Letters

**A; or Grace in the Blade**

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Mark 4:28

Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I sit down to give you my general views of a *progressive work of grace*, in the several stages of a believer's experience; which I shall mark by the different characters, A, B, C, answerable to the distinctions our Lord teaches us to observe from the growth of the corn, Mark 4:28. The Lord leads all his people effectually and savingly to the knowledge of the same essential truths, but in such a variety of methods, that it will be needful, in this disquisition, to set aside, as much as possible, such things as may be only personal and occasional in the experience of each, and to collect those only which in a greater or less degree are common to them all. I shall not therefore give you a copy of my own experience, or of that of any individual; but shall endeavor, as clearly as I can, to state *what the Scripture teaches us concerning the nature and essentials of a work of grace, so far as it will bear a general application to all those who are the subjects of gracious operations.*

By nature we are all dead in trespasses and sins; not only strangers to God, but in a state of enmity and opposition to his government and grace. In this respect, whatever difference there may be in the characters of men as members of society, they are all, whether wise or ignorant, whether sober or profane, equally incapable of receiving or approving Divine truths. 1Co. 2:14. On this ground our Lord declares, "No man can come unto me, unless the *Father* who has sent me draw him." Though the term *Father* most frequently expresses a known and important distinction in the adorable Trinity, I apprehend our Lord sometimes uses it to denote God, or the Divine Nature, in contradistinction from his humanity, as in John 14:9. And this I take to be the sense here: "No man can come unto me unless he is taught of God," and wrought upon by a Divine power. The immediate exertion of this power, according to the economy of salvation, is rather ascribed to the Holy Spirit than to the Father, John 16:8-11. But it is the power of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore severally attributed to the Father, Son, and Spirit: John 5:21, and John 6:44-63; 2Co. 3:18; 2Th. 3:5.

By A; or grace in the blade, I would understand a person who is under the drawings of God, which will infallibly lead him to the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation. The beginning of this work is instantaneous. It is effected by a certain kind of light communicated to the soul, to which it was before all utter stranger. The eyes of the understanding are opened and enlightened. The light at first afforded is weak and indistinct, like the morning dawn; but when it is once begun, it will certainly increase and spread to the perfect day. We commonly speak as if conviction of sin was the first work of God upon the soul, that he is in mercy about to draw unto himself. But I think this is inaccurate. Conviction is only a part, or rather an immediate effect, of that first work; and there are many convictions which do not at all spring from it, and therefore are only occasional and temporary, though for a season they may be very sharp, and put a person upon doing many things.

In order to a due conviction of sin, we must previously have some adequate conceptions of the God with whom we have to do. Sin may be feared as dangerous without this; but its nature and demerit can only be understood by being contrasted with the holiness, majesty, goodness, and truth, of the God against whom it is committed. No outward means, no mercies, judgments, or ordinances, can communicate such a discovery of God, or produce such a conviction of sin, without the concurrence of this Divine light and power to the soul. The natural conscience and passions may be indeed so far wrought upon by outward means, as to stir up some desires and endeavors; but if these are not founded in a spiritual apprehension of the perfection's of God, according to the revelation he has made of himself in his word, they will sooner or later come to nothing; and the person affected will either return by degrees to his former ways, 2Pe. 2:20, or he will sink into a self-righteous form of godliness, destitute of the power. Luke 18:11.

And therefore, as there are so many things in the dispensation of the Gospel suited to work upon the natural passions of men, the many woeful miscarriages and apostasies among professors are more to be lamented than wondered at. For though the seed may seem to spring up, and look green for a season, if there is not depth for it to take root, it will surely wither away. We may be unable to judge with certainty upon the first appearance of a religious profession, whether the

work be thus deep and spiritual or not; but "the Lord knows those who are his;" and wherever it is real, it is an infallible token of salvation.

Now, as God only thus reveals himself by the medium of Scripture truth, the light received this way leads the soul to the Scripture from whence it springs, and all the leading truths of the word of God soon begin to be perceived and assented to. The evil of sin is acknowledged; the evil of the heart is felt. There may be for a while some efforts to obtain the favor of God by prayer, repentance, and reformation; but, for the most part, it is not very long before these things are proved to be vain and ineffectual. The soul, like the woman mentioned Mark 5:26, wearied with vain expedients, finds itself worse and worse, and is gradually brought to see the necessity and sufficiency of the Gospel salvation.

He may be a believer thus far: That he believes the word of God, sees and feels things to be as they are there described, hates and avoids sin, because he knows it is displeasing to God, and contrary to his goodness: he receives the record which God has given of his Son; he has his heart affected and drawn to Jesus by views of his glory, and of his love to poor sinners; he ventures upon his name and promises as it's only encouragement to come to a Throne of Grace; he waits diligently in the use of all means appointed for the communion and growth of grace; he loves the Lord's people, accounts them the excellent of the earth, and delights in their conversation. He is longing, waiting, and praying, for a share in those blessings which he believes they enjoy, and can be satisfied with nothing less. He is convinced of the power of Jesus to save him; but, through remaining ignorance and legality, the remembrance of sins previously committed, and the sense of present corruption, he often questions his willingness; and, not knowing the abounding of grace, and the security of the promises, he fears lest the compassionate Savior should spurn him from his feet.

While he is thus young in the knowledge of the Gospel, burdened with sin, and perhaps beset with Satan's temptations, the Lord, "who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom," is pleased at times to favor him with comforts, that he may not be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. Perhaps his heart is enlarged in prayer, or under hearing, or some good promise is brought home to His mind, and applied with power and sweetness. He mistakes the nature and design of these comforts, which are not given him to rest in, but to encourage him to press forward. He thinks he is then right because he has them, and fondly hopes to have them always. Then his mountain stands strong. But before long he feels a change: his comforts are withdrawn; he finds no heart to pray; no attention in hearing; indwelling sin revives with fresh strength, and perhaps Satan returns with redoubled rage. Then he is at his wits' end; thinks his hopes were presumptuous, and his comforts delusions. He wants to feel something that may give him a warrant to trust in the free promises of Christ. His views of the Redeemer's gracefulness are very narrow: he sees not the harmony and glory of the Divine attributes in the salvation of a sinner: he sighs for mercy, but fears that justice is against him. However, by these changing dispensations, the Lord is training him up, and bringing him forward. He receives grace from Jesus, whereby he is enabled to fight against sin: his conscience is tender, his troubles are chiefly spiritual troubles; and he thinks, if he could but attain a sure and abiding sense of his acceptance in the Beloved, hardly any outward trial would be capable of giving him much disturbance.

Indeed, notwithstanding the weakness of his faith, and the prevalence of a legal spirit, which greatly hurts him, there are some things in his present experience which he may, perhaps, look back upon with regret hereafter, when his hope and knowledge will be more established. Particularly that sensibility and keenness of appetite with which he now attends the ordinances, desiring the sincere milk of the word with earnestness and eagerness, as a babe does the breast. He counts the hours from one opportunity to another; and the attention and desire with which he hears, may be read in his countenance. His zeal is likewise lively; and may be, for lack of more experience, too importunate and forward. He has a love for souls, and a concern for the glory of God; which, though it may at some times create him trouble, and at others be mixed with some undue motions of self, yet in its principle is highly desirable and commendable. John 18:10.

The grace of God influences both the understanding and the affections. Warm affections, without knowledge, can rise no higher than superstition; and that knowledge which does not influence the heart and affections will only make a hypocrite. The true believer is rewarded in both respects; yet we may observe, that though 'A' is not without knowledge, this state is more usually remarkable for the warmth and liveliness of the affections. On the other hand, as the work advances, though the affections are not left out, yet it seems to be carried on principally in the understanding. The old Christian has more solid, judicious, connected views of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the glories of his person and redeeming love: hence his hope is more established, his dependence more simple, and his peace and strength, more abiding and uniform, than in the case of a young convert; but the latter has, for the most part, the advantage in point of sensible fervency.

A tree is most valuable when laden with ripe fruit, but it has a peculiar beauty when in blossom. It is spring-time with 'A'. He is in bloom, and, by the grace and blessing of the heavenly Farmer, will bear fruit in old age. His faith is weak, but his heart is warm. He will seldom venture to think himself a believer; but he sees, and feels, and does those things which no

one could, unless the Lord was with him. The very desire and bent of his soul is to God, and to the word of his grace. His knowledge is but small, but it is growing every day. If he is not a *father* or a *young man* in grace, he is a dear *child*. The Lord has visited his heart, delivered him from the love of sin, and fixed his desires supremely upon Jesus Christ. The spirit of bondage is gradually departing from him, and the hour of liberty, which he longs for, is approaching, when, by a further discovery of the glorious Gospel, it shall be given him to know his acceptance, and to rest upon the Lord's finished salvation. We shall then take notice of him by the name of 'B', in a second letter, if you are not unwilling that I should prosecute the subject.

**John Newton Letters ~ Grace in the Ear - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/8 6:24**

John Newton's Letters

**B; or, Grace in the Ear**

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Mark 4:28

Dear Sir,

The manner of the Lord's work in the hearts of his people is not easily traced; though the fact is certain, and the evidence demonstrable from Scripture. In attempting to explain it, we can only speak in general, and are at a loss to form such a description as shall take in the immense variety of cases which occur in the experience of believers. I have already attempted such a general delineation of a young convert, under the character of 'A', and am now to speak of him by the name of 'B'.

This state I suppose to commence, when the soul, after an interchange of hopes and fears, according to the different frames it passes through, is brought to rest in Jesus, by a spiritual apprehension of his complete suitableness and sufficiency, as the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of all who trust in him, and is enabled by an appropriating faith to say, "He is mine, and I am in him." There are various degrees of this persuasion; it is of a growing nature, and is capable of increase so long as we remain in this world. I call it *assurance*, when it arises from a simple view of the grace and glory of the Savior, independent of our sensible frames and feelings, so as to enable us to answer all objections, from unbelief and Satan, with the Apostle's words, "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died; yes rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Rom. 8:34. This, in my judgment, does not belong to the essence of faith, so that 'B' should be deemed more truly a believer than 'A', but to the establishment of faith. And now that faith is stronger, it has more to grapple with.

I think the characteristic of the state of 'A' is desire, and of 'B' is conflict. Not that B's desires have subsided, or that 'A' was as a stranger to conflict; but as there was a sensible eagerness and keenness in A's desires, which, perhaps, is seldom known to be equally strong afterwards, so there are usually trials and exercises in B's experience; something different in their kind and sharper in their measure than what 'A' was exposed to, or indeed had strength to endure. 'A', like Israel, has been delivered from Egypt by great power and a stretched-out arm, has been pursued and terrified by many enemies, has given himself up for lost again and again. He has at last seen his enemies destroyed, and has sang the song of Moses and the Lamb upon the banks of the Red Sea. Then he commences 'B'. Perhaps, like Israel, he thinks his difficulties are at an end, and expects to go on rejoicing until he enters the promised land. But, alas! his difficulties are in a manner but beginning; he has a wilderness before him, of which he is not aware. The Lord is now about to suit his dispensations to humble and to prove him, and to show him what is in his heart, that he may do him good at the latter end, and that all the glory may redound to his own free grace.

Since the Lord hates and abhors sin, and teaches his people whom he loves to hate it likewise, it might seem desirable (and all things are equally easy to him), that at the same time they are delivered from the guilt and reigning power of sin, they should likewise be perfectly freed from the defilement of indwelling sin, and be made fully conformable to him at once. His wisdom has, however, appointed otherwise. But, from the above premises, of God's hatred of sin, and his love to his people, I think we may certainly conclude, that he would not allow sin to remain in them, if he did not purpose to overcome it, for the fuller manifestation of the glory of his grace and wisdom, and for the making his salvation more precious to their souls.

It is, however, his command, and therefore their duty: yes, further, from the new nature he has given them, it is their desire to watch and strive against sin; and to propose the mortification of the whole body of sin, and the advancement of sanctification in their hearts, as their great and constant aim, to which they are to have a habitual persevering regard. Upon this plan 'B' sets out. The knowledge of our acceptance with God, and of our everlasting security in Christ, has in itself the same tendency upon earth as it will have in heaven, and would, in proportion to the degree of evidence and clearness, produce the same effects, of continual love, joy, peace, gratitude, and praise, if there was nothing to counteract it. But 'B' is not all spirit. A depraved nature still cleaves to him; and he has the seeds of every natural corruption yet remaining in his heart. He lives likewise in a world that is full of snares, and occasions, suited to draw forth those corruptions; and he is surrounded by invisible spiritual enemies, the extent of whose power and subtlety he is yet to learn by painful experience. 'B' knows, in general, the nature of his Christian warfare, and sees his right to live upon Jesus for righteousness and strength. He is willing to endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and believes, that, though he may be sorely thrust at that he may fall, the Lord will be his stay. He knows, that his heart is "deceitful and desperately wicked;" but he does not, he cannot, know at first, the full meaning of that expression.

Yet it is for the Lord's glory, and will in the end make his grace and love still more precious, that 'B' should find new and mortifying proofs of all evil nature as he goes on, such as he could not once have believed had they been foretold to him, as in the case of Peter, Mark 14:29. And, in effect, the abominations of the heart do not appear in their full strength and aggravation, but in the case of one who, like 'B', has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and rejoiced in his salvation.

The exceeding sinfulness of sin is manifested, not so much by its breaking through the restraint of threatening and commands, as by its being capable of acting against light and against love. Thus it was with Hezekiah. He had been a faithful and zealous servant of the Lord for many years; but I suppose he knew more of God, and of himself, in the time of his sickness, than he had ever done before. The Lord, who had signally defended him from Sennacherib, was pleased likewise to raise him from the borders of the grave by a miracle, and prolonged the time of his life in answer to prayer. It is plain, from the song which he penned upon his recovery, that he was greatly affected with the mercies he had received; yet still there was something in his heart which he knew not, and which it was for the Lord's glory he should be made sensible of, and therefore he was pleased to leave him to himself. It is the only instance in which he is said to have been left to himself, and the only instance in which his conduct is condemned.

I apprehend, that, in the state of 'B', that is, for a season after we have known the Lord, we have usually the most sensible and distressing experience of our evil natures. I do not say, that it is necessary that we should be left to fall into gross outward sin, in order to know what is in our hearts; though I believe many have thus fallen, whose hearts, under a former sense of redeeming love, have been as truly set against sin, as the hearts of others who have been preserved from such outward falls. The Lord makes some of his children examples and warnings to others, as he pleases. Those who are spared, and whose worst deviations are only known to the Lord and themselves, have great reason to be thankful. I am sure I have: the merciful Lord has not allowed me to make any considerable blot in my profession during the time I have been numbered among his people. But I have nothing to boast of herein. It has not been owing to my wisdom, watchfulness, or spirituality, though in the main he has not allowed me to live in the neglect of his appointed means. But I hope to go softly all my days under the remembrance of many things, for which I have as great cause to be abased before him, as if I had been left to sin grievously in the sight of men. Yet, with respect to my acceptance in the Beloved, I know not if I have had a doubt of a quarter of an hour's continuance for many years past. But, oh! the multiplied instances of stupidity, in gratitude, impatience, and rebellion, to which my conscience has been witness! And as every heart knows its own bitterness, I have generally heard the like complaints from others of the Lord's people with whom I have conversed, even from those who have appeared to be eminently gracious and spiritual.

'B' does not meet with these things perhaps at first, nor every day. The Lord appoints occasions and turns in life, which try our spirits. There are particular seasons when temptations are suited to our frames, tempers, and situations; and there are times when he is pleased to withdraw, and to permit Satan's approach, that we may feel how vile we are in ourselves. We are prone to spiritual pride, to self-dependence, to vain confidence, to creature attachments, and a train of evils. The Lord often discovers to us one sinful disposition by exposing us to another. He sometimes shows us what he can do for us and in us; and at other times how little we can do, and how unable we are to stand without him.

By a variety of these exercises, through the over-ruling and edifying influences of the Holy Spirit, 'B' is trained up in a growing knowledge of himself and of the Lord. He learns to be more distrustful of his own heart, and to suspect a snare in every step he takes. The dark and disconsolate hours which he has brought upon himself in times past, make him doubly prize the light of God's countenance, and teach him to dread whatever might grieve the Spirit of God, and cause him to withdraw again. The repeated and multiplied pardons which he has received, increase his admiration of, and the sense of his obligations to, the rich sovereign abounding mercy of the covenant. Much has been forgiven him, therefore he love

s much, and therefore he knows how to forgive and pity others. He does not call evil good, or good evil; but his own experiences teach him tenderness and forbearance. He exercises a spirit of meekness towards those who are overtaken in a fault; and his attempts to restore such, are according to the pattern of the Lord's dealings with himself.

In a word, B's character, in my judgment, is complete; and he becomes a 'C', when the habitual frame of his heart answers to that passage in the Prophet Eze. 16:63; "That you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more (to boast, complain, or censure), because of your shame, when I am pacified towards you for all that you have done, says the Lord God."

**John Newton Letters ~ The full corn in the ear - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/8 6:33**

John Newton's Letters

**C; or, The full corn in the ear**

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear". Mark 4:28

Dear Sir,

By way of distinction, I assigned to 'A' the characteristic of desire, to 'B' that of conflict. I can think of no single word more descriptive of the state of 'C' than contemplation. His eminence, in comparison of 'A', does not consist in the sensible warmth and fervency of his affections: in this respect many of the most exemplary believers have looked back with a kind of regret upon the time of their espousals, when, though their judgments were but imperfectly formed, and their views of Gospel truths were very indistinct, they felt a fervor of spirit, the remembrance of which is both humbling and refreshing; and yet they cannot recall the same sensations. Nor is he properly distinguished from 'B' by a consciousness of his acceptance in the Beloved, and an ability of calling God his Father; for this I have supposed 'B' has attained to.

Though, as there is a growth in every grace, 'C', having had his views of the Gospel, and of the Lord's faithfulness and mercy, confirmed by a longer experience, his assurance is of course more stable and more simple, than when he first saw himself safe from all condemnation. Neither has 'C', properly speaking, any more strength or stock of grace inherent in himself than 'B', or even than 'A'. He is in the same state of absolute dependence, as incapable of performing spiritual acts, or of resisting temptations by his own power, as he was at the first day of his setting out. Yet in a sense he is much stronger, because he has a more feeling and constant sense of his own weakness. The Lord has been long teaching him this lesson by a train of various dispensations; and through grace he can say, that he has not suffered so many things in vain. *His heart has deceived him so often, that he is now in a good measure weaned from trusting to it; and therefore he does not meet with so many disappointments.* And having found again and again the vanity of all other helps, he is now taught to go to the Lord at once for "grace to help in every time of need." Thus he is strong, not in himself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But C's happiness and superiority to 'B' lies chiefly in this, that, by the Lord's blessing on the use of means—such as prayer, reading and hearing of the word, and by a sanctified improvement of what he has seen of the Lord, and of his own heart, in the course of his experience—he *has attained clearer, deeper, and more comprehensive views of the mystery of redeeming love*; of the glorious excellency of the Lord Jesus, in his person, offices, grace, and faithfulness; of the harmony and glory of all the Divine perfection's manifested in and by him to the church; of the stability, beauty, fullness, and certainty of the Holy Scriptures; and of the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of the love of God in Christ. Thus, though his sensible feelings may not be so warm as when he was in the state of 'A', his judgment is more solid, his mind more fixed, his thoughts more habitually exercised upon the things within the veil. His great business is to behold the glory of God in Christ; and by beholding, he is changed into the same image, and brings forth in an eminent and uniform manner the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. His contemplation's are not barren speculations, but have a real influence, and enable him to exemplify the Christian character to more advantage, and with more consistence, than can in the present state of things be expected either from 'A' or 'B'. The following particulars may illustrate my meaning.

**I. Humility.** A measure of this grace is to be expected in every true Christian: but it can only appear in proportion to the knowledge they have of Christ and of their own hearts. It is a part of C's daily employment to look back upon the way by which the Lord has led him; and while he reviews the Ebenezers he has set up all along the road, he sees, in almost an equal number, the monuments of his own perverse returns, and how he has in a thousand instances rendered to the Lord, evil for good. Comparing these things together, he can without affectation adopt the Apostle's language, and style him

self "less than the least of all saints, and of sinners the chief." 'A' and 'B' know that they ought to be humbled; but 'C' is truly so, and feels the force of that text which I mentioned in my last; Eze. 16:63. Again, as he knows most of himself, so he has seen most of the Lord. The apprehension of infinite Majesty combined with infinite Love, makes him shrink into the dust. From the exercise of this grace he, derives two others, which are exceedingly ornamental, and principal branches of the mind which was in Christ.

The one is submission to the will of God. The views he has of his own vileness, unworthiness, and ignorance, and of the Divine sovereignty, wisdom, and love—teach him to be content in every state, and to bear his appointed lot of suffering with resignation, according to the language of David in a time of affliction, "I was silent, and opened not my mouth, because you did it."

The other is, tenderness of spirit towards his fellow-Christians. He cannot but judge of their conduct according to the rule of the word. But his own heart, and the knowledge he has acquired of the snares of the world, and the subtlety of Satan, teach him to make all due allowances, and qualify him for admonishing and restoring, in the spirit of meekness, those who have been overtaken in a fault. Here 'A' is usually blameable; the warmth of his zeal, not being duly corrected by a sense of his own imperfections, betrays him often into a censorious spirit. But 'C' can bear with 'A' likewise, because he has been so himself, and he will not expect green fruit to be ripe.

**II. Spirituality.** A spiritual taste, and a disposition to account all things as worthless and vanity—in comparison of the knowledge and love of God in Christ—are essential to a true Christian. The world can never be his prevailing choice; 1 J o. 2:13. Yet we are renewed but in part, and are prone to an undue attachment to worldly things. Our spirits cleave to the dust, in defiance to the dictates of our better judgments; and I believe the Lord seldom gives his people a considerable victory over this evil principle, until he has let them feel how deeply it is rooted in their hearts. We may often see people entangled and clogged in this respect, of whose sincerity in the main we cannot justly doubt; especially upon some sudden and unexpected turn in life, which brings them into a situation they have not been accustomed to.

A considerable part of our trials are mercifully appointed to wean us from this worldly propensity; and it is gradually weakened by the Lord's showing us at one time the vanity of the creature, and at another his own excellence and all-sufficiency.

Even 'C' is not perfect in this respect; but he is more sensible of the evil of such attachments, more humbled for them, more watchful against them, and more delivered from them. He still feels a fetter, but he longs to be free. His allowed desires are brought to a point; and he sees nothing worth a serious thought, but communion with God and progress in holiness.

Whatever outward changes 'C' may meet with, he will in general be the same man still. He has learned, with the Apostle, not only to suffer need, but (which is perhaps the harder lesson) how to *abound*. A palace would be a prison to him, without the Lord's presence; and with the Lord's presence, a prison would be a palace. From hence arises a peaceful reliance upon the Lord: he has nothing which he cannot commit into his hands, which he is not habitually aiming to resign to his disposal. Therefore he is not afraid of evil tidings; but when the hearts of others shake like the leaves of a tree, he is fixed, trusting in the Lord, who he believes can and will make good every loss, sweeten every bitter, and appoint all things to work together for his advantage. He sees that the time is short, lives upon the foretastes of glory, and therefore accounts not his life, or any inferior concernment, dear, so that he may finish his course with joy.

**III. A union of heart to the glory and will of God,** is another noble distinction of C's spirit. The glory of God, and the good of his people, are inseparably connected. But of these great ends the first is unspeakably the highest and the most important, and into which everything else will be finally resolved. Now, in proportion as we advance nearer to him, our judgment, aim, and end will be conformable to his, and his glory will have the highest place in our hearts. At first it is not so, or but very imperfectly. Our concern is chiefly about ourselves; nor can it be otherwise. The convinced soul inquires, 'What shall I do to be saved?' The young convert is intent upon sensible comforts; and in the seasons when he sees his interest secure, the prospect of the troubles he may meet with in life makes him often wish for an early death, that he may be at rest, and avoid the heat and burden of the day.

But 'C' has attained to more enlarged views: he has a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which would be importunate if he considered only himself; but his chief desire is, that God may be glorified in him, whether by his life or by his death. He is not his own; nor does he desire to be His own; but, so that the power of Jesus may be manifested in him, he will take pleasure in infirmities, in distresses, in temptations; and, though he longs for heaven, would be content to live as long as Methuselah upon earth, if, by anything he could do or suffer, the will and glory of God might be promoted. And though

he loves and adores the Lord for what he has done and suffered for him, delivered him from, and appointed him to; yet he loves and adores him likewise with a more simple and direct love, in which *self* is in a manner forgotten, from the consideration of God's glorious excellence and perfections, as he is in himself. That God in Christ is glorious over all, and blessed forever, is the very joy of his soul; and his heart can frame no higher wish, than that the sovereign, wise, holy will of God may be accomplished in him, and all his creatures. Upon this grand principle his prayers, schemes, and actions, are formed. Thus 'C' is already made like the angels; and, so far as is consistent with the inseparable remnants of a fallen nature, the will of God is regarded by him upon earth as it is by the inhabitants of heaven.

The power of Divine grace in 'C' may be exemplified in a great variety of situations. 'C' may be rich or poor, learned or illiterate, of a lively natural spirit, or of a more slow and phlegmatic constitution. He may have a comparatively smooth, or a remarkably thorny path in life; he may be a minister or layman. These circumstantial will give some tincture and difference in appearance to the work; but the work itself is the same; and we must, as far as possible, make proper allowances for each, in order to form a right judgment of the life of faith.

The outward expression of grace may be heightened and set off to advantage by many things which are merely natural, such as evenness of temper, good sense, a knowledge of the world, and the like; and it may be darkened by things which are not properly sinful, but unavoidable, such as lowness of spirit, weak abilities, and pressure of temptations, which may have effects that those who have not had experience in the same things cannot properly account for. A double quantity of real grace, if I may so speak, that has a double quantity of hindrances to conflict with, will not be easily observed, unless these hindrances are likewise known and attended to; and a smaller measure of grace may appear great, when its exercise meets with no remarkable obstruction. For these reasons, we can never be competent judges of each other, because we cannot be competently acquainted with the whole complex case.

But our great and merciful High Priest knows the whole: he considers our frame, "remembers that we are but dust;" makes gracious allowances; pities, bears, accepts, and approves, with unerring judgment. The sun, in his daily course, beholds nothing so excellent and honorable upon earth as 'C', though perhaps he may be confined to a cottage, and is little known or noticed by men. But he is the object and residence of Divine love, the charge of angels, and ripening for everlasting glory. Happy 'C'! his toils, sufferings, and exercises, will be soon at an end; soon his desires will be accomplished; and He who has loved him, and redeemed him with his own blood, will receive him to himself, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter you into the joy of your Lord."

If this representation is agreeable to the Scriptures, how greatly are they mistaken, and how much to be pitied, who, while they make profession of the Gospel—seem to have no idea of *the effects it is designed to produce upon the hearts of believers*, but either allow themselves in a worldly spirit and conversation, or indulge their unsanctified tempers, by a fierce contention for names, notions, and parties. May the Lord give to you and to me daily to grow in the experience of that wisdom which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

([http://www.gracegems.org/Newton/John\\_Newton1.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/Newton/John_Newton1.htm)) John Newton's Letters

### John Newton Letters ~ The full corn in the ear - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/11 9:43

Recognize this might be a bit long for some tastes. This whole recent 'discovery' of John Newton has been tremendous, who first brought it forth and I am sure over the years there must have been some excerpts here and there and how I might have missed him in the grand scheme of things ...

I just want to show my appreciation and thankfulness for this tremendous soul. What grasp and understanding, someone who obviously wrote out of experience, who knew his own heart and was such a student of it in all of its manifestations. A great conviction and want of emulation (think 2Th 3:9).

His progressive exegesis here, seems very dead on.

Quote:  
-----The other is, tenderness of spirit towards his fellow-Christians. He cannot but judge of their conduct according to the rule of the word. But his own heart, and the knowledge he has acquired of the snares of the world, and the subtlety of Satan, teach him to make all due allowances, and qualify him for admonishing and restoring, in the spirit of meekness, those who have been overtaken in a fault. Here 'A' is usually blameable; the warmth of his zeal, not being duly corrected by a sense of his own imperfections, betrays him often into a censorious spirit. But 'C' can bear with 'A' likewise, because he has been so himself, and he will not expect green fruit to be ripe.  
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Quote:

-----If this representation is agreeable to the Scriptures, how greatly are they mistaken, and how much to be pitied, who, while they make a profession of the Gospel—seem to have no idea of *the effects it is designed to produce upon the hearts of believers*, but either allow themselves in a worldly spirit and conversation, or indulge their unsanctified tempers, by a fierce contention for names, notions, and parties. May the Lord give to you and to me daily to grow in the experience of that wisdom which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."  
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