

John Newton's Advice on Marriage to John Ryland Jr

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Introduction

John Newton (1725-1807) had a wide circle of friends with whom he corresponded regularly and to whom he offered counsel. Those receiving advice included the well-known hymn-writer William Cowper (1731-1800), the evangelical philanthropist, Hannah More (1745-1833), and the anti-slave campaigner, William Wilberforce (1759-1833), as well as a number of Dissenting ministers and friends.

Among the Dissenting ministers with whom he corresponded was the Baptist John Ryland Jr (1753-1825), who served as pastor of College Lane Church in Northampton and then, later, as the pastor of the Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol and as the Principal of the Baptist College in Bristol. Newton's correspondence with Ryland has been collected together and published by Grant Gordon in *Wise Counsel, John Newton's Letters to John Ryland, Jr.*¹ Using letters to Ryland from that collection, the diary of Ryland's second wife, Frances Barrett Ryland², as well as some of Newton's other letters, this article will explore Newton's advice to Ryland on marriage.³

The friendship of John Newton and John Ryland Jr.

John Newton was an Anglican priest with a warm Evangelical spirit that led to an openness to people of all Christian denominations and none. Described as “a singularly genial man”, a devoted and exemplary Christian minister, a theological moderate and a skilled spiritual director,⁴ he used both the pulpit and his pen to reach out to an extraordinary number of people. D. Bruce Hindmarsh has noted that Newton's links with Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists may be traced back to the days of his curacy at Olney (1764-80).⁵ In spite of the disapproval of some within his congregation he went to hear Benjamin Beddome (1717-1795)⁶ preach and, when he had settled at Olney, he worshipped and dined with the local Baptist minister, William Walker.⁷ In May 1776, he attended the Northamptonshire Baptist Association meetings which were held at Olney and heard a sermon by John Ryland Sr and Robert

Hall, as well as others. He provided accommodation for several people attending the meeting who were from away and invited others into his home for breakfast. He then wrote in his diary, 'We all seemed mutually pleased'.⁸ He attended the ordination service of John Sutcliff at Olney in 1776 and regularly corresponded with others. As Hindmarsh declares, Newton's 'links with Calvinistic Baptists were thus many and close'.⁹

One long-standing relationship was with John Ryland Sr who was a schoolmaster for boys, as well as minister at College Lane Church in Northampton. After meeting Ryland in 1765, Newton travelled often to Northampton to speak to the boys in Ryland's school. He also went to a school whose headmistress, Martha Trinder (1736-1790)¹⁰, was a member of the congregation at College Lane. Newton was apparently impressed by the work in the school and by 1776, he had enrolled his niece, Betsy Catlett (1769-1834), in Mrs Trinder's school for girls.¹¹

Newton became acquainted with the younger Ryland when he visited Northampton and when John Ryland Jr (1753-1825) was fifteen, he was first invited to visit Newton at Olney. This was the beginning of a long friendship as Newton became for Ryland a spiritual mentor and a friend.¹² Looking to him as a 'spiritual father' Ryland seems to have sought advice from Newton about everything, from preaching to pastoral work to more personal matters of finance and moving house. Hence, it is not surprising that when Ryland needed guidance on marriage, he turned to John Newton. Newton's counsel seems to have focused primarily on three issues: finance, domesticity and spiritual devotion.

Newton's advice on finding a marriage partner

Ryland first wrote to Newton concerning marriage when he was twenty-two. While it does not appear that Ryland had a person, as Newton put it, 'fixedly in view', he seems to have had someone 'transiently in view'.¹³ However, seeing that Ryland had no money, Newton's advice was firm: 'since you have no settlement, if she has no money, I cannot but wish she may pass on till she is out of sight and out of mind'.¹⁴ Speaking of what he described as a 'grave business' Newton claims:

I take it for granted that my friend is free from the love of filthy lucre and that money will never be the turning point with you in the choice of a wife. Methinks I hear you think, 'If I wanted money, I would either dig or beg for

it; but to preach or marry for money, that be far from me.’ I commend you. However, though the love of money be a great evil, money itself, obtained in a fair and honourable way, is desirable, upon many accounts, though not for its own sake. Meat, clothes, fire, and books, cannot easily be had without it.¹⁵

Newton, it seems, placed a great emphasis on finance. However, realizing that Ryland might think he was putting too much stress on money, Newton went on to explain at some length that while ‘the love of money was the root of all evil’, pecuniary considerations were important. Bluntly, Newton urged Ryland to consider the future and the possibility of children to feed. He advised:

But while you are without income or settlement, if you have thoughts of marriage, I hope they will be regulated by due regard to consequences. They who set the least value upon money have in some respects the most need of it... You could perhaps endure hardships alone, yet it might pinch you to the very bone to see the person you love exposed to them. Besides, you might have a John, a Thomas, and a William, and half a dozen more to feed (for they all must eat).¹⁶

Newton ends this letter by urging Ryland to think carefully about financial considerations. Describing arrangements for a marriage that would be to Ryland’s advantage, Newton suggests that Ryland should look for a wife who would come from a family of some financial means. In this way he would not have to worry about finance because she would bring ‘a tolerable fortune to boot’. He wrote:

Many serious young women have a predilection in favour of a minister of the gospel; and I believe among such, one or more may be found as spiritual, as amiable, as suitable to make you a good wife, with a tolerable fortune to boot, as another who has not a penny. If you are not willing to trust your own judgment in the search, entreat the Lord to find her for you.¹⁷

Taken alone, these comments may seem to reflect a rather mercenary approach to marriage. Yet Newton would have been well aware of the financial difficulty, especially for many dissenting ministers. As with John Ryland Sr, many ministers started schools, kept a smallholding, or found some other source of income in order to try to make ends meet.¹⁸ While not all ministers were living in penury, Newton was aware that Ryland could easily find himself in great difficulty. Moreover, while

there were funds to help the widows and children of deceased ministers, those who had no financial security could leave their family in very dire straits.¹⁹ Newton was aware of the financial problems for John Ryland Sr. Moreover, Newton himself had known financial hardship. When he and Mary first married, they ‘had only their clothes and seventy pounds in debt to their names.’²⁰

The next time Ryland wrote to Newton about marriage, the focus does not seem to have been on finance, but on the suitability of the candidate in question. In January 1776, Ryland had approached a young woman’s father for permission to pursue the match and had been rejected.²¹ By December 1776, Newton wrote to him again, addressing him in the letter as ‘Poor dear Lad’ and stressing that he had burned Ryland’s letter to him ‘believing you would like to have it out of danger of falling into improper hands’.²² Ryland had obviously expressed great disappointment over the lack of success in finding a marriage partner. The circumstances are not clear from the correspondence, but whatever happened, Newton claimed that after reading his letter, he believed that Ryland should think of the incident more as ‘an escape than a disappointment’.²³ Always concerned to show Ryland how life experiences might shape him not only as a person, but also as a minister, Newton goes on to reflect on how such a disappointment might help him face disappointment in ministry. He wrote:

Your pride, it seems, has received a fall by meeting a repulse. I know Mr Self does not like to be mortified in these affairs; but if you are made successful in wooing souls for Christ, I hope that will console you for meeting a rebuff when only wooing for yourself. Besides I would have you pluck up your spirits.²⁴

Newton then offers some practical advice by quoting to Ryland two proverbs as assurance that he would ultimately find the right person:

‘There is as good fish in the sea as any that are brought out of it’ and ‘If one won’t another will, or wherefore serves the market?’ Perhaps all your difficulties have arisen from this, that you have not yet seen the right person: if so, you have reason to be thankful that the Lord would not let you take the wrong, though you unwittingly would have done it if you could. Where the right one lies hid I know not;... The Lord in his providence will disclose her, put her in your way, and give you to understand, ‘This is she’.²⁵

Newton's advice is quite practical and down to earth. He seems to believe that Ryland will be directed to the right person and he is insistent that Ryland should apply the disappointment he feels to his own personal spiritual growth: 'Wait, pray, and believe, and all shall be well'.²⁶

Newton urged Ryland 'to take notice of the very severe afflictions which many of the Lord's own people are groaning under, and your trials will appear comparatively light'.²⁷ Ryland must have struggled to come to terms with his rejection, though later, as he reflected on the event, he wrote: 'Providence shewed at length that she was not designed for me; and I found it my duty to submit to the divine Will, which I was enabled to do.'²⁸

The reasons for Ryland's rejection are not clear, though Newton's idea of the right kind of person for Ryland would probably have accorded with the accepted patterns of eighteenth-century domesticity. The household in the eighteenth century was a 'key institution'.²⁹ While historians argue that the gender separation between public and private spheres may not have been quite as simple as is sometimes supposed, for Evangelicals household roles were reinforced by Scripture. Like their Puritan forebears, they believed that family life had been ordained by God, and the home was the place where the structure and moral fibre of society was taught and monitored.³⁰ The 'godly order' within the home was evident first in the fact that every person had a proper place and role; men, women, children, servants, masters, indeed all who were part of society, were to behave in accordance with their status or rank. It was accepted that this 'ordering' had been decreed by God, and conformity to patterns of behaviour deemed appropriate to a particular station in life was a sign of spiritual maturity and growth in godliness. It seems likely that Newton, and indeed Ryland, were both thinking of a suitable marriage partner who conformed to the expected female roles of domesticity as well as being a suitable candidate for a minister's wife.

By 1777 it appears that Ryland had found a new potential candidate for marriage. However, there were complications in that she was under the care of guardians, and Ryland wrote to ask Newton's advice. Newton's reply was again, at first, practical. He reminded him of the legalities of marrying someone who was under guardianship and suggested that Ryland should speak to the guardians to gain their consent. Newton

probably would have known the young woman since she had been a pupil of Mrs Trinder's school in Northampton, where he had visited often and where his own niece had attended. In his letter to Ryland he spoke favourably: 'I think this prospect preferable to the former'.³¹ Ryland was keen to begin a courtship, but had run into difficulty because the young woman concerned had been involved with someone else. Newton offered this advice:

Your first step I should think (earnest prayer to the Lord for his blessing and direction excepted) should be to inform yourself whether her dislike to the young man formerly proposed continues, so that she is resolved against the connection....³²

Then Newton says that Ryland should approach the young woman and see how she felt about it, but that he should take care that it did not appear that he had 'courted her money rather than herself'.³³ By 15 February it seems that Ryland was making progress and Newton was writing again, claiming that he had put on his 'considering cap' before replying, but it had not taken long. He advised Ryland to speak to the guardians and then speak to the young lady concerned.³⁴ After two years of courtship, Ryland seems to have been discouraged again over the prospect of marriage. On 23 February 1779 Newton again began his letter 'Poor dear Lad.' He told Ryland that his troubles were something that would 'humble your spirit' and give a 'mellowness to your preaching'.³⁵

Finally, on 12 January 1780, John Ryland married Elizabeth Tyler of Banbury. She had been a student at Mrs Trinder's school and had been baptized by John Ryland Sr with others from the school on 10 April 1774.³⁶ In his diary Ryland claimed he had been seeking the Lord's guidance. Years later he wrote concerning the other two women he had considered for marriage, and claimed that he believed 'God provided still better for me in the end'.³⁷ Apparently Newton agreed. In January 1780 he wrote to them both:

I cordially rejoice that my two friends are at length happily brought together And I doubt not, before this you have been ashamed twenty times over of the unbelieving fears and complaints you have formerly indulged. Now you can say from your heart that the Lord's choice for you was better than your own would have been, and that, notwithstanding all your impatience, his time is likewise the best.³⁸

In this letter, he made mention of his own marriage to Mary Catlett some thirty years before.³⁹ He then urged Ryland to beware of falling into the temptation of idolatry.

Beware of idolatry. You cannot love B[etsy] too much, if you love her in a proper subordination. Look at her while you are reading this, and it will help you to [see] an illustration of my meaning. You have not all her love. She will continue to love her relatives, and if she had a thousand friends, she has room enough in her heart for them all. But there is a peculiar regard due to you, which she cannot, will dare not, to transfer to another. Just so, the Lord leaves us scope enough for the exercise of affections towards creatures. But there is a sense in which we must love him wholly and only. To him our love must remain supreme and unrivalled.⁴⁰

The worry over idolatry was something that Newton had wrestled with in his own relationship with his wife, Mary. It seems that he worried that if he idolized her, God might take her from him.⁴¹ This worry over an idolatrous love for Mary continued even after her death, when he wrote to Hannah More:

You perhaps know, madam, from what you have read of mine, and possibly from what you have seen in me, that my attachment to my dearest was great, yea excessive, yea idolatrous. It was so when it began. I think no writer of romances ever imagined more than I realized. She was to me precisely (how can I write it?) in the place of God. By degrees He who has the only right place in my heart, and who alone can fill it, was pleased to make me sensible of his just claim, and my idol was brought some steps lower down. Yet still I fear there was somewhat of the golden calf in my love, from the moment that we joined our hands to the moment of separation.⁴²

While Newton's emphasis on idolatry may have been a reflection of his Calvinistic theology, the fear of separation by death was also born out of an awareness of the fragility of life. Life in the eighteenth century was harsh. Poor hygiene and lack of sanitation, as well as inadequate medical knowledge and treatment, meant that life was overshadowed by the constant threat of death. If a person did not die of influenza or a pulmonary infection, life might be ended by cholera, typhoid, typhus, dysentery or smallpox. While life expectancy varied according to social class, gender and region, it is estimated that the average life expectancy from birth in the mid-eighteenth century was between 35 and 40 years.⁴³

Women of child-bearing years were particularly vulnerable. Life in a pre-contraceptive era meant that women often had multiple pregnancies, and with every pregnancy there was a higher risk of death. Many women experienced numerous miscarriages before giving birth to a child who was stillborn, or died within a few days, or was maimed for life by the rough treatment received if delivery was difficult. Women who survived the trials of pregnancy were still at risk of dying in childbirth. There were few hygienic measures taken when giving birth to a child, and the risks of haemorrhaging or an obstructed delivery were great.⁴⁴ Newton was only too aware of how quickly death could strike. This may explain why, as he cautioned against idolatry, he reminded Ryland that all the pleasures of this life are transient and relationships are transient. What mattered most was relationship to God.

By all accounts, Betsy and John Ryland had a happy marriage. Newton wrote to him on 7 September 1780:

I am glad to find that you and your dear B[etsy] (to whom we join in love) can see and own the hand and goodness of the Lord, in bringing you together and now in blessing you together; that you are not disappointed in each other, and above all, that he has given you your desire, without sending leanness into your soul. Remember you are to be helpmeets, not hindrances.⁴⁵

By 13 March 1782 Newton was writing to Ryland, perhaps with an awareness that, as in his own marriage, there had been no children,

I hope that you and Mrs Ryland joy on like Zechariah and Elizabeth of old [who were] in all ordinances and commandments blameless; [and] that you are of one heart and mind—full of love, peace, gentleness, and usefulness to edification of all around you.⁴⁶

On 17 January 1785 Newton congratulated the Rylands on their fifth wedding anniversary and then reflected on the beginnings of his own marriage many years earlier:

Our setting out in wedded life was something like that of an adventurous mariner, who should put to sea without either pilot or compass. We knew and thought but little of the Lord, but he thought of us, his plan was exceedingly different from that we had formed for ourselves, but it gradually opened upon us, and hitherto he has helped us. What is before us we know not, but he knows it all, and I am enabled in some measure to cast the care upon him.

May he be your guide and guard likewise. I trust he will. He has given you a heart to care for his concerns, and he will care for yours.⁴⁷

His words were another attempt to offer spiritual guidance to Ryland and a reminder of the need to trust in God's providence. Words that proved timely. For after seven years of marriage Elizabeth gave birth to their first child, John Tyler Ryland, on 9 December 1786. However she soon developed a 'consumptive disorder' and was gravely ill.⁴⁸ Hearing the news, Newton wrote to Ryland of the difficulties of losing someone we love, but urged him nevertheless to simply submit to God's will and to say 'Thy will be done'.⁴⁹

Ryland's wife Elizabeth (Betsy) died on 23 January 1787. A few days later, when Newton received confirmation of the death, he wrote to Ryland. While again he urged him to trust in God, he also called him to put his ministry first.

Your wound must be painful for a time, but the Lord will not leave you; he will condescend to visit you; he will, if I may so speak, dress your wound, till it be effectually healed. In the meanwhile, beware of grief; it is insinuating, deceitful, [and] hurtful. Attend to your health and your calling. Ride, walk, talk, change air and objects now and then. Time, prayer, and especially praise, will relieve you. You are a soldier, you are a leader in the Lord's army, and private concern must give way to the public cause. The enemy presses at the gates, and must be repelled. The Lord's flock must be fed and guarded from the wolves. Time is short and eternity approaching. You must drop a tear, but I hope you will be enabled to weep as if you wept not. These are truths, though as I hinted before, I ought to offer them with just a sense of my own inability to apply them to myself, were your case my own.⁵⁰

Newton's rather firm emphasis on ministerial duty in the face of grief could be interpreted as lacking pastoral sensitivity. Yet, again, it would seem that this was an expression of belief in the providence of God. Elizabeth's death it seems was to be accepted as God's will. Newton's pastoral concern for his friend, however, may be noted in his comment that while he stated what should be believed and practised, he would have had difficulty applying it to himself if he had been in Ryland's place. Indeed, when his own wife died in 1790, he wrote 'that the world seemed to die with her' and for several years composed hymns marking the anniversary of her death.⁵¹

Ryland was grief-stricken over the death of Elizabeth, and financially insecure,⁵² so he did not immediately rush into a second marriage. However, in 1788, fifteen months after the death of his beloved Betsy, Newton wrote to Ryland suggesting that it was time he married again:

Seriously, everybody knows you loved your Betsy while she lived, and were a true mourner for her after she was gone. But the moment she went, you were freed from the law of your wife. You are still a young man; there are circumstances about you that make you uneasy, and to pair yourself to another gracious suitable partner, seems the easiest and most effectual way of deliverance from your thralldom.⁵³

Ryland eventually made plans to marry Frances Barrett, a woman who had known Elizabeth at Mrs Trinder's school and had remained friends with her. However, even as plans for the wedding were being made, Ryland wrote to Newton and expressed his doubts over the rightness of the match. In his reply Newton confirmed that, at Ryland's request, he had burned the letters Ryland had written to him about the matter. Nevertheless, Newton advised Ryland that if he did not have the same passion he had felt for his first wife, he should not worry, stating that those feelings were perhaps idolatrous and certainly 'overrated'.

As matters seem to have gone too far for receding with honour and propriety, and as you mean to marry in the Lord, I think you should trust him to give you such feelings as may suffice to make your relation comfortable. Where there is grace and good sense, and a mutual desire of walking according to the rule of his word, it may, I think, be humbly expected that his blessing on the interchange of kind offices, which are continually recurring in so near a connection, may conciliate, preserve, and increase friendship and esteem, which if not accompanied by all the transports of passion, may very well answer every valuable purpose of life. And, indeed, those feelings which you and I have had towards the objects of our heart's love are perhaps overrated. If they have been sources of pleasure, they have likewise been the sources of our sharpest and most painful trials. And I believe that they are generally so much defiled by an idolatrous attachment, that we have little reason to boast of them....And perhaps this might be one of the reasons why the Lord, in his wisdom and mercy, saw it most for your good to take your Betsy home, that you might not be hindered in your first and greatest desire of cleaving to Him, and him alone, with full purpose of heart....⁵⁴

Humorously, Newton assured Ryland that

Your last letter to me is going into the fire, as you ordered; though, poor thing! I see nothing in it to deserve such a sentence.⁵⁵

The suggestion that Elizabeth might have died in order to ensure Ryland's proper devotion to God seems rather harsh. However, such a claim was in keeping with Newton's own concerns over idolatrous love and again reflected the Calvinistic understanding that everything that happens is within the sovereign purposes of God. While Ryland obviously did not have the same feeling for Frances that he had known for Elizabeth, he seems to have accepted Newton's view that true piety and devotion to God were the most important qualities for a wife. Later he wrote:

If ever I sought the glory of God in any action of my life, I am sure it was in this. I regarded sincere piety in the choice of a companion, more than any other consideration whatever. It was my chief concern to be united with one whose heart was united to Christ, and who would help me to devote myself wholly to him.⁵⁶

On Thursday 18 June 1789, Frances Barrett married John Ryland Jr. She was twenty-eight and had never previously been married, while he was thirty-six years of age with a young son. There is no hint in Frances's diary that she was aware of Ryland's misgivings over their impending marriage. On the Sunday after they married she wrote:

Last Thursday day ever to be remembered. I entered the marriage state and became united, to one of the kindest, and best of men! I feel the importance of my situation, because I am sure of all others, it will require great delicacy, and propriety of conduct...O that I may be assisted in the discharge of every duty, possess a lowliness of spirit becoming my station, and excited to a greater gratitude of the divine goodness⁵⁷

The friendship between John Ryland and John Newton continued until Newton's death at the age of eighty-two. While the relationship changed over the years, it is evident that Ryland looked to the older Newton as a trusted spiritual guide. Newton's practical guidance on finance and domesticity in marriage was shaped by the eighteenth-century social and cultural ideal of the Christian household, as well as his Evangelical religious views. However, Newton's views on marriage were formed

also by his own happy union with his wife, Mary: the one for whom his love, he feared, was ‘excessive, yea idolatrous’. Throughout his correspondence with Ryland, Newton always stressed that love for God must come before anything, even before his love for his wife. When Mary died on 15 December 1790, they had been married for forty years. In a letter to Ryland on 26 March 1791 he expressed thanks to God that while he had loved her, he had also been able to let her go.

I thank you for your condolences and prayers, especially the latter. I am a debtor to the prayers of my friends. The Lord has heard them on my behalf. I have been, and am wonderfully supported. My attachment to my dear was very strong, indeed idolatrous; yet I have been far from sinking under the stroke. Neither her sickness nor her death prevented me from preaching a single sermon. I was enabled to preach her funeral, almost with the same composure as if it had been that of another person....I thought I could bear the removal of any but one. And now the Lord has reconciled me (in a manner beyond my hopes) to give up that one also; though she was dear to my heart, as the light to my eyes. He has indeed done a marvelous thing.⁵⁸

Newton lived for seventeen more years, preaching and offering counsel to his friends until he died on 21 December 1807. Ryland died on 25 May 1825, always grateful for the spiritual guidance and practical advice of his friend.

Notes

- ¹ Grant Gordon, ed., *Wise Counsel, John Newton's Letters to John Ryland, Jr.* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009). Gordon has drawn these letters from a collection of Newton's letters to Ryland located in the Bristol Baptist College archive and from Newton's *Cardiphonia: Or, The Utterances of the Heart, [1780]* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1911).
- ² The original diary is in the archives at Bristol Baptist College, Bristol. The diary has been transcribed in full by Timothy Whelan, ed. *Nonconformist Women Writers, 1720-1840*, Vol. 8 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), pp. 307-97.
- ³ His ‘Thoughts on Marriage’, published in 1761 in *The Christian's Magazine* under the pseudonym ‘Minor’, and later in 1803 in *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, were originally advice he had offered to his friend Joseph Woolmer (1716-1782).
- ⁴ D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 4-5.

- ⁵ Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, p. 142.
- ⁶ Benjamin Beddome served as pastor of the church at Bourton-on-the-Water in Gloucestershire for fifty-five years from 1740 to 1795. He wrote over eight hundred hymns, many of which were written to provide the congregation with a summary of his sermon to be sung at the end of a service. J.R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 198–204. See also K.E. Smith, ‘Benjamin Beddome’, in *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730–1860*, ed. Donald M. Lewis, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 1, 74. See also W.B. Lowther, ‘Beddome, Benjamin (1717–1795)’, rev. by Karen E. Smith, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1921>> [accessed 13 Nov 2016].
- ⁷ Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, p. 142. See also, Geoffrey F. Nuttall, ‘Baptists and Independents in Olney to the time of John Newton’, *Baptist Quarterly*, 30.1 (January, 1983), pp. 26-37.
- ⁸ Diary (1773-1805), 1 June, 1776, as cited in Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, p. 142.
- ⁹ Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, p. 143.
- ¹⁰ ‘Some Account of Mrs Martha Trinder, of Northampton’, in John Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register for 1790, 1791, 1792 and part of 1793* (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1793), pp.135-142.
- ¹¹ Betsy was the daughter of Mary Newton’s brother, George Catlett. See, Hindmarsh, *John Newton*. p.143.
- ¹² Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, p. 144 ff.
- ¹³ Grant Gordon *Wise Counsel*, letter fourteen, 3 February, 1775, p. 73. Also the fourth of the ‘Nine Letters to the Rev. Mr R---’ in *Cardiphonia*, p. 322.
- ¹⁴ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter fourteen, 3 February, 1775, p. 73.
- ¹⁵ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter fourteen, 3 February, 1775, p. 73.
- ¹⁶ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter fourteen, 3 February, 1775, p. 74.
- ¹⁷ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter fourteen, 3 February, 1775, pp. 74 -5.
- ¹⁸ Kenneth Brown’s study of ministers in the nineteenth century showed that there was a discrepancy in the amount the ministers were paid by churches. See, Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.156ff.
- ¹⁹ For a discussion of the financial hardship of the families of deceased Baptist ministers see, Karen E. Smith, ‘What about the Widows? An Appeal to Nineteenth Century Baptist Women’ in *Baptists and the World: Renewing the Vision*, ed. John H.Y. Briggs, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2010), pp. 70-82.
- ²⁰ Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, p. 62.
- ²¹ According to Grant, a note was made in Ryland’s diary on 26 January, 1776. See *Wise Counsel*, p.89.

- ²² *Wise Counsel*, letter nineteen, 20 December 1776, p. 99. Grant notes that the letter is also printed as letter eight of ‘Nine letters to Rev R...’ in *Cardiphonia*. However the salutation is ‘dear Sir’.
- ²³ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter nineteen, 20 December 1776, p. 99.
- ²⁴ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter nineteen, 20 December 1776, p. 99.
- ²⁵ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter nineteen, 20 December 1776, p. 100.
- ²⁶ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter nineteen, 20 December 1776, p. 100.
- ²⁷ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter nineteen, 20 December, 1776, p. 101.
- ²⁸ John Ryland, *Autograph Reminiscences*, unpublished manuscript in Bristol Baptist College, Bristol, p. 53 as cited in Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, p. 102.
- ²⁹ Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1982), p. 160.
- ³⁰ See Karen E. Smith, ‘Baptists at Home’ Chapter 5 in *Challenge and Change: English Baptists’ Life in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Stephen Copson and Peter J Morden, (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2017), pp. 100-122.
- ³¹ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty, 7 February, 1777, p.103.
- ³² G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty, 7 February, 1777, p.104.
- ³³ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty, 7 February, 1777, p. 104.
- ³⁴ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty-one, 15 February 1777, p. 107-8.
- ³⁵ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty-five, 23 February 1779, p. 123-4.
- ³⁶ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, p. 136.
- ³⁷ John Ryland, *Reminiscences*, p. 54 as cited in G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, p. 136.
- ³⁸ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty-eight, January 1780, p. 137.
- ³⁹ They had married on 12 February 1750.
- ⁴⁰ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty-eight, January 1780, p. 138-9.
- ⁴¹ Hindmarsh claims that this fear was mentioned in writings by other Evangelical ministers. He noted that Henry Venn wrote to his wife in 1759 claiming that they must love one another as though they were unmarried so that ‘by this means we shall more likely to continue together, and not provoke the stroke of separation by an idolatrous love to one another’. John Venn, *Life and a Selection from the letters of the Late Rev. Henry Venn*, ed. Henry Venn, 2nd edn., 1841, p. 73 as cited in Hindmarsh, p. 62.
- ⁴² ‘Letter to Mrs Hannah More’ in *Letters of John Newton*, with biographical sketches and notes by Josiah Bull, [1869] (reprinted Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2007), p. 352.
- ⁴³ E. A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1546-1871: A Reconstruction*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press),

- p. 236 as cited in Susannah R. Ottoway, *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 21.
- ⁴⁴ Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660–1770* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 15. Similar stories are told of births in France. See John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment* (Oxford University Press, 1981), 8–9.
- ⁴⁵ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter twenty-nine, 7 September 1780, p. 143.
- ⁴⁶ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter thirty-one, 13 March 1782, p. 156.
- ⁴⁷ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter thirty-three, 17 January 1785, p. 164-5.
- ⁴⁸ John Ryland, *Pastoral Memorials*, as cited in G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, p. 179.
- ⁴⁹ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter thirty-seven, 23 January 1787, p. 186. This letter was also published in the *Baptist Magazine* 13 (1821), pp. 152-3.
- ⁵⁰ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter thirty-eight, 2 February 1787, p. 189-90.
- ⁵¹ J. Newton, *Letters to a Wife, by the author of Cardiphonia*, (London: J. Johnson, 1793), Vol II [1755-1785], pp. 244 and 253ff.
- ⁵² His financial difficulties were related to an agreement with his father when he moved to London.
- ⁵³ Grant Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter forty-two, 30 April, 1788, p. 205.
- ⁵⁴ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter forty-four, 20 January 1789, p. 214. This letter was also published in the *Baptist Magazine* (1860), pp. 496-8.
- ⁵⁵ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter forty-four, 20 January 1789, p. 214.
- ⁵⁶ J E Ryland, *Pastoral Memorials: Selected from the Manuscripts of the late Revd John Ryland D.D. of Bristol: With a Memoir of the Author*, 2 vols (London: BJ Holdsworth, 1826-8) vol. 2, pp. 42-3 as cited in *Nonconformist Women Writers, 1720–1840*, 8 vols, ed. Timothy Whelan (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), viii, p. 308.
- ⁵⁷ ‘Diary of Frances Barrett Ryland’ (21 June 1789) in *Nonconformist Women Writers, 1720–1840*, VIII, p. 315.
- ⁵⁸ G. Gordon, *Wise Counsel*, letter fifty, 26 March 1791, pp. 241-50.