Heroes and Contemporaries

Olney Hymns

The best-loved politician and social reformer of nineteenth century England, Lord Shaftesbury’s deep compassion for the poor became legendary. He campaigned tirelessly to limit factory hours, to stop the use of boys as chimney sweeps and children in coal mines, and to develop universal education. As a result he changed the character of English society forever. Areas covered in this important new biography include his upbringing and education; his work as a politician and his campaign for mental health; factory and industrial reforms; campaigns for climbing boys and for better sanitation and housing; his contribution towards the founding of the Bible Society, CPAFS, London City Mission, Ragged School Union and CMS; his role as a defender of the Protestant faith and the campaign against ritualism; his personal theology.

The Preacher As Sermon: How Who You Are Shapes What They Hear

Amazing Grace

Most Christians know John Newton as a man who once captained a slave ship, was dramatically converted to Christ on the high seas, and later penned one of the greatest hymns of the faith, “Amazing Grace.” But he also had a huge impact on his times as an icon of the evangelical movement, as a great preacher and theologian, and as a seminal influence on abolitionist William Wilberforce. Newton’s friendship with Wilberforce is portrayed in the major motion picture Amazing Grace. Jonathan Aitken’s new biography John Newton explores all these facets of Newton’s life and character. It is the first biography to draw on Newton’s unpublished diaries and correspondence, providing fresh insight into the life of this complex and memorable Christian. The result is a fascinating, colorful, and historically significant portrait of John Newton, a self-described “great sinner” redeemed by a great Savior through amazing grace. “A new life of John Newton... is a fitting celebration of the bicentennial both of Newton’s death and of the abolition of the slave trade, Wilberforce’s triumph in which Newton played a key role. Master biographer Jonathan Aitken is in fine form, sympathetic, insightful, scholarly, and vivid, and his book, like its subject, must be rated spectacular.” J. I. Packer, Board of Governors’ Professor of Theology, Regent College “A riveting historical account of the life of this notorious eighteenth-century sinner who was dramatically saved by God’s grace. This book should be required reading for any person who loves history, loves the song, and is serious about following Christ.” The Honorable Jack Kemp, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; former U.S. Congressman “A rip-roaring adventure, a passionate romance, and an astonishing journey of faith all in one. I knew the story well, but this telling made a deep impression on me.” Os Guinness, author of The Preacher As Sermon: How Who You Are Shapes What They Hear "Jonathan Aitken’s fast-paced, well-researched, and detailed book shows why Newton was such an important figure. This is a book to read, ponder, and read again.” Mark Noll, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History, University of Notre Dame “A fresh, insightful, and inspiring account of this great figure. With that rare skill of a superb biographer, Aitken brings Newton to life for a new generation of admirers.” Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology, Oxford University “In careful and colorful detail, Aitken resurrects this nearly forgotten giant of the faith and establishes Newton in his rightful place as one who has altered the course of western history.” Robert Lupton, President, FCS Urban Ministries, Atlanta “Skilled biographer that he is, my friend Jonathan Aitken has brought to life one of eighteen-century England’s most influential Christians. The story of amazing grace both in the life of Newton and in the song that has become the Christian national anthem.” Chuck Colson, founder, Prison Fellowship “Only God could take a vile slave trader and turn him into a useful instrument in abolishing the slave trade and igniting a gospel revival, the flames of which are burning still. The story of Newton’s life inspires all who seek to follow the path of Jesus today.” Tim G. Hill, Executive Director, Christian Justice Today “John Newton not only wrote one of the greatest hymns of all time—he lived one of the greatest stories of salvation.” Rodney Stark, author of The Rise of Christianity “Even more amazing than Newton’s life with all its drama and color is the reminder that how completely revolutionary is God’s agenda to change the world his own way and through imperfect, broken people. Newton is just another entry to God’s long resume of his amazing grace in changed lives.” James MacDonald, Senior Pastor, Harvest Bible Chapel, Rolling Meadows, Illinois “An informed, authoritative biography of the man who played a critical role in helping William Wilberforce abolish the slave trade. His life story is absolutely spell-binding. I could not put the book down.” Armand M. Nicholi Jr., M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; author of The Question of God “Jonathan Aitken has written a book that, enriched by fresh research into unpublished papers, will enhance his reputation as one of today’s foremost biographers.” Rev. Dr. Michael Green

Jewels from John Newton | c2a2212b8668c1be4c7f1392a54b2d77
Jonathan Aitken

Uncover the true love story behind the famous hymn that stirs the hearts and ignites the faith of millions around the globe. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found. How remembered as the author of the world's most famous hymn, in the mid-eighteenth century as England and France stand on the brink of war, John Newton is a young sailor wandering aimlessly through life. His only duty is to report to his ship and avoid disgracing his father—until the night he hears Polly Catlett's enchanting voice, carolling. He's immediately smitten and determined to win her affection. An intense connection quickly forms between the two, but John's reckless spirit and disregard for the Christian life are concerns for the responsible, devout Polly. When an ill-fated stop at a tavern leaves John imprisoned and bound, Polly must choose to either stand by his side or walk out of his life forever. Will she forfeit her future for the man she loves?

Select Letters of John Newton

Probably best known as the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace," John Newton (1725-1807) is now largely forgotten among evangelical Christians. But it is worth recalling something of Newton's remarkable story. His parish ministry, practice of spiritual direction, and the integrity of his personal relationships make him a trustworthy guide for Christians today.

Psalms for People Under Pressure

"Looks at the life of John Newton, a slave trader turned preacher, hymn writer, and advocate for ending the African slave trade"--

John Newton (Foreword by Philip Yancey)

Broken Pieces and the God who Mends Them

When Jonathan Aitken stepped from Number 10 Downing Street on July 20th 1994, he was soon tipped as next Leader of the Conservative Party. John Major had just appointed him First Secretary to the Treasury and his future could not have been brighter. What went wrong? Within a year headlines appeared such as 'Aitken tried to arrange girls for Saudi friends' and 'New Light on who paid what at The Ritz in Paris.' Accused of pimping, arms dealing and corruption, both his career and reputation hung in the balance as he came out fighting with his now famous Sword of Truth speech. In 'Pride and Perjury' Aitken tells for the first time how he became the most vilified politician in Britain since John Profumo. He reveals his dealings with cabinet colleagues, his relationship with the Saudi Royal Family, and a full account of his stay at the Ritz Hotel in Paris. He also describes the intense and dramatic events behind his failed libel action and his subsequent trial for perjury and attempting to pervert the course of justice. Aitken's fall from grace was the greatest personal catastrophe for a public figure since the trials of Oscar Wilde – a living hell including bankruptcy, divorce and a prison sentence. With insight and with elegance Pride and Perjury is a moving and compelling account of a fallen politician's penitence and delves into the darker side of human nature. It is also an inspiring message of hope and redemption.

John Newton

a hundred selected prayers, each accompanied by a spiritual reflection with personal comments from Jonathan Aitken.

Things That Cannot Be Shaken

Richard Cecil's classic biography of Newton is considered to be his 'authorised' biography as he both knew Newton well and allowed him to see most of the manuscript before publication. Marylynn Rouse has used the intervening years, and the wealth of information since made public, well by adding many other details and contemporary happenings to Newton's life story. Some aspects of Newton's life are well-known: his involvement in the slave trade; his friendship with the poet William Cowper and the politician William Wilberforce; his gift as a hymn writer; his ministry, first in Olney, then in London. But Marylynn Rouse has gone further and provides fascinating pieces of information regarding those who influenced Newton as well as those who were influenced by him. Here we see not only Newton the public figure, but we also see Newton in private, as a loving husband and father, as a concerned pastor and letter-writer.

Porridge and Passion

When Jonathan Aitken was in prison, he experienced a religious conversion. When he emerged into the light of day, he headed for Oxford where he read for and obtained a degree in theology. The Psalms have assumed a quite exceptional importance in his life. The Psalms are at the very heart of the Christian life and its liturgy – in them is found the whole range of human emotion, of triumph and despair. In this new book, Aitken expounds his own view of the Psalms, the fruit of much prayer, study and reflection. He has busy, stressed modern men and women and the forefront of his mind as he writes. Aitken was a successful businessman and financier before he ever entered government as Chief Secretary to the Treasury. He is fully aware of the enormous pressures on people in countless walks of life – as speed of communication increases and more and more people are obliged to live with targets hanging over them like the sword of Damocles. Aitken writes 'out of the depths': he has experienced as profoundly as any of us the heights of adulation and the depths of disgrace and shame and he understands the meaning of repentance. This is an account of the Psalms tried and tested in raw human emotion. This book is designed to be kept in the top drawer of a businessman's desk, the satchel of a student, or the briefcase of a top flight lady executive.

Newton and Polly

In this sequel to his first volume of autobiography Pride and Perjury, Aitken starts his story as he is taken down from the courtroom and incarcerated at Her Majesty's Pleasure. How this Old Etonian former Cabinet Minister on Mrs Thatcher's Treasury. He is fully aware of the enormous pressures on people in countless walks of life – as speed of communication increases and more and more people are obliged to live with targets hanging over them like the sword of Damocles. Aitken writes 'out of the depths': he has experienced as profoundly as any of us the heights of adulation and the depths of disgrace and shame and he understands the meaning of repentance. This is an account of the Psalms tried and tested in raw human emotion. This book is designed to be kept in the top drawer of a businessman's desk, the satchel of a student, or the briefcase of a top flight lady executive. ' Tablet
John Newton

Margaret Thatcher

Behind our most beloved hymn is a fascinating story spanning continents, cultures, and centuries. Inspired by the way "Amazing Grace" continues to change and grow in popularity, acclaimed music writer Steve Turner embarks on a journey to trace the life of the hymn, from Olney, England, where it was written by former slave trader John Newton, to tiny Plantation Island off the coast of Africa, where Newton was held captive for almost a year, to the Kentucky-Tennessee border and other parts of the South, where the hymn first began to spread. Newton had been rescued from Africa by a merchant ship when, during an eleven-hour storm on the Atlantic, he converted to Christianity. Years later, as a minister, he wrote the hymn for use among his congregation. Through the nineteenth century, "Amazing Grace" appeared in more and more hymn books, and in the twentieth century it rose to a gospel and folk standard before exploding into pop music. It has been recorded by artists as varied as Elvis Presley, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Tiny Tim, Al Green, Johnny Cash, Rod Stewart, Chet Baker, and Destiny's Child. Amazing Grace closely examines this modern history of the hymn through personal interviews with recording artists. From John Newton's incredible life story to the hymn's role in American spirituality and culture, Amazing Grace is an illuminating, thorough, and unprecedented musical history.

Foke's Book of Martyrs

Who is Rampaging Roy Slaven? An Australian icon, a raconteur, an athlete of unsurpassable - and some may say improbable - sporting feats. Whether it was riding Rooting King to another Melbourne Cup victory, commenting on the Olympics or hobnobbing with the country's upper crust, Rampaging Roy Slaven has lived an extraordinary life. But even some of the greatest men come from humble beginnings. Before he shot to fame as Australia's most talented sportsman, he was just another kid in Lithgow, trying to avoid Brother Connell's strap and garner the attention of Susan Morgan from the local Catholic girls school. Blessed follows one year in the life of the boy who would become Rampaging Roy Slaven, a boy who, even at the age of fifteen, knew he was destined for greatness but had to get through high school first.

Poems

A Prisoner and Yet

For the 200th anniversary of his death, The Life of John Newton, previously published as, But Now I See, is newly reset. Recount the moving story of God's redeeming and restoring grace to one who wrote his own epitaph: "Once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long laboured to destroy."

Out of the Depths

In When Character Was King, Noonan brings her own reflections on Reagan to bear as well as new stories--from Presidents George W. Bush and his father, George H. W. Bush, his Secret Service men and their House colleagues, his wife, his daughter Patti Davis, and his close friends--to reveal the true nature of a man even his opponents now view as a maker of big history. Marked by incisive wit and elegant prose, When Character Was King will both enlighten and move readers. It may well be the last word on Ronald Reagan, not only as a leader but as a man.

A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity

John Newton (1725-1807) was a trophy of God's grace. His transformation from a blasphemous slave trader to a much loved minister of the gospel is a testimony to the powerful, life-changing grace of God in Jesus Christ. His hymns, letters, and other writings have been a source of strength and comfort to Christian believers for centuries. Jewels From John Newton (1725-1807) was a trophy of God's grace. His transformation from a blasphemous slave trader to a much loved minister of the gospel is a testimony to the powerful, life-changing grace of God in Jesus Christ. His hymns, letters, and other writings have been a source of strength and comfort to Christian believers for centuries. Jewels From John Newton's incredible life story to the hymn's role in American spirituality and culture, Amazing Grace is an illuminating, thorough, and unprecedented musical history.

Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade

Amazing Grace tells the story of the remarkable life of the British abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759-1833). This accessible biography chronicles Wilberforce's extraordinary role as a human rights activist, cultural reformer, and member of Parliament. At the center of this heroic life was a passionate twenty-year fight to abolish the British slave trade, a battle Wilberforce won in 1807, as well as efforts to abolish slavery itself in the British colonies, a victory achieved just three days before his death in 1833. Metaxas discovers in this unsung hero a man of whom it can truly be said: he changed the world. Before Wilberforce, few thought slavery was wrong. After Wilberforce, most societies in the world came to see it as a great moral wrong. To mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade, HarperSanFrancisco and Bristol Bay Productions have joined together to commemorate the life of William Wilberforce with the feature-length film Amazing Grace and this companion biography, which provides a fuller account of the amazing life of this great man than can be captured on film. This account of Wilberforce's life will help many become acquainted with an exceptional man who was a hero to Abraham Lincoln and an inspiration to the anti-slavery movement in America.

Blessed

Heroes and Contemporaries is a book of profiles written with the author's personal insights, anecdotes and judgments on fascinating public figures he encountered in life's journey. Jonathan Aitken was for many years at the heart of British journalism and politics. The early chapters here offer illuminating portraits of historical characters Aitken knew as a young man including Sir Winston Churchill, Randolph Churchill and Lord Beaverbrook, the author's great uncle, who founded the Aitken dynasty of newspaper owners and politicians. In his own career, which took him through 23 years in the House of Commons to the Cabinet, Aitken became close to some of the most intriguing figures in British politics including Harold Wilson; Margaret Thatcher and her family; and Michael Portillo - all profiled in these pages. Jonathan Aitken also enjoyed a colourful personal and business life which ranged wider than politics. This is reflected in the chapters on Sir James Goldsmith, John Aspinall and Sir Frank Williams. During his prison sentence Aitken was visited by several of his subjects including Lord Longford and Nicky Gumbel. The resulting mixture of these profiles makes a book attractively written biographical studies full of fresh perceptions and revealing stories.
Amazing Grace

Most Christians know John Newton as a man who once captivated a slave ship, was dramatically converted to Christ on the high seas, and later penned one of the greatest hymns of the faith, "Amazing Grace." But he also had a huge impact on his time as an icon of the evangelical movement, as a great preacher and theologian, and as a seminal influence on abolitionist William Wilberforce. Newton's friendship with Wilberforce is portrayed in the major motion picture Amazing Grace. Jonathan Aitken's new biography John Newton explores all these facets of Newton's life and character. It is the first biography to draw on Newton's unpublished diaries and correspondence, providing fresh insight into the life of this complex and memorable Christian. The result is a fascinating, colorful, and historically significant portrait of John Newton, a self-described "great sinner" redeemed by a great Savior through amazing grace.

Shaftesbury

Land of Fortune

"The authors make vivid the two-way street of our communion with God and God's being with us. Their book is full of things that we today need urgently to take to heart." J. I. Packer, Board of Governors' Professor of Theology, Regent College It's a quickly changing world out there. A world enamored with anything new. But all that "progress" comes with a price: we now live in a relativistic culture that appears to be missing an anchor. All authority is questioned. Truth has been thrown out with traditional views. And nothing seems sure. Especially not matters of faith. Not even for Christians. So how do we find our spiritual moorings? In environments that seek to undermine faith at every turn, how do we solidify our thinking so that our faith will not waver? By holding fast to the "things that cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12:27), say authors Scott Oliphint and Rod Mays. For every challenge you're likely to face in the dorm, the classroom, even the workplace . . . Is Christianity true? Can faith really help in my struggle against sin? What does God have to do with my relationships? How can I know what's real? Things That Cannot Be Shaken equips you to respond biblically, with certainty and confidence. It will also challenge you to set aside those sins that cling so closely and let what cannot be shaken become the defining characteristic of your walk with Christ.

How to Stay Christian in Seminary

Seminary is exhilarating . . . and dangerous. Seminary can be thrilling, with the potential to inspire and equip church leaders for a lifetime of faithful ministry. But it's not without its risks. For many who have ignored the perils, seminary has been crippling. But with an extra dose of intentionality, and God's help, this season of preparation can invigorate your affections for Jesus. How to Stay Christian in Seminary takes a refreshingly honest look at the seminarian's often-neglected devotional life, offering real-world advice for students eager to survive seminary with a flourishing faith.

Letters by The Rev. John Newton of Olney and St. Mary Woolnoth

John Newton

These are the stories of twenty women undaunted by obstacles of language, culture, distance, disease, and isolation, who mobilized from all parts of the world to share the news of Christ. They translated, nursed, taught, and evangelized, laying foundations for the modern Chinese Christian church.

Newton on the Christian Life

Reprint of the original, first published in 1869.

The Christian Hymn Book

Amazing Grace in the Life of William Wilberforce (Foreword by Jonathan Aitken)

The Life of John Newton

A Prisoner and Yet reveals a belief in Christ that carried an innocent woman through some of the worst agonies man can devise. Here is one of the most tragic, yet most inspiring and faith-giving true stories of Corrie ten Boom during her time spent in a Nazi concentration camp.

The Life and Spirituality of John Newton

"John Piper’s succinct and superbly perceptive study of William Wilberforce deserves to become an acclaimed bestseller. It not only tells the story of a great man’s life—it also tells us how to understand the ultimate source of his greatness and happiness. Moreover, that understanding goes far deeper than the abolitionist achievements for which Wilberforce is honored, astounding though they were. William Wilberforce’s secret, as revealed in this book, was that he made the journey from self-centeredness, achievement-centeredness, and political-centeredness to God-centeredness. And he made it with Christlike joy." —Jonathan Aitken

Against great obstacles William Wilberforce, an evangelical Christian and a member of Parliament, fought for the abolition of the African slave trade and against slavery itself until they were both illegal in the British Empire. Many are aware of Wilberforce's role in bringing an end to slavery in Great Britain, but few have taken the time to examine the beliefs and motivations that spurred him on for decades. In this concise volume, John Piper tells the story of how Wilberforce was transformed from an unbelieving, young politician into a radically God-centered Christian, and how his deep spirituality helped to change the moral outlook of a nation. As world leaders debate over how to deal with a host of social justice and humanitarian crises, a closer look at Wilberforce’s life and faith serves as an encouragement and example to all believers.

When Character Was King

As Britain’s first woman Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher brought about the biggest social and political revolution in the nation’s post-war history. She achieved this largely by the driving force of her personality—a subject of endless
speculation among both her friends and her foes. Jonathan Aitken has an insider’s view of Margaret Thatcher’s story. He is well qualified to explore her strong and sometimes difficult personality during half a century of political drama. From first meeting her when she was a junior shadow minister in the mid 1960s, during her time as leader of the Opposition when he was a close family friend, and as a Member of Parliament throughout her years in power, Aitken had a ring side seat at many private and public spectacles in the Margaret Thatcher saga. From his unique vantage point, Aitken brings new light to many crucial episodes of Thatcherism. They include her ousting of Ted Heath, her battles with her Cabinet, the Falklands War, the Miners’ Strike, her relationships with world leaders such as Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and the build up to the Shakespearian coup inside the Conservative Party which brought about her downfall. Drawing on his own diaries, and a wealth of extensive research including some ninety interviews which range from international statesmen like Mikhail Gorbachev, Henry Kissinger and Lord Carrington to many of her No.10 private secretaries and personal friends, Jonathan Aitken’s Margaret Thatcher – Power and Personality breaks new ground as a fresh and fascinating portrait of the most influential political leader of post-war Britain.

Prayers for People Under Pressure

This Christian classic tells the stories of brave men and women who were martyred for their faith in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries.

John Newton

The nature and effects of that unhappy and disgraceful branch of commerce, which has long been maintained on the Coast of Africa, with the sole, and professed design of purchasing our fellow-creatures, in order to supply our West-India islands and the American colonies, when they were ours, with Slaves; is now generally understood. So much light has been thrown upon the subject, by many able pens; and so many respectable persons have already engaged to use their utmost influence, for the suppression of a traffic, which contradicts the feelings of humanity: that it is hoped, this stain of our National character will soon be wiped out. If I attempt, after what has been done, to throw my mite into the public stock of information, it is less from an apprehension that my interference is necessary, than from a conviction that silence, at such a time, and on such an occasion, would, in me, be criminal. If my testimony should not be necessary, or serviceable, yet, perhaps, I am bound, in conscience, to take shame to myself by a public confession, which, however sincere, comes too late to prevent, or repair, the misery and mischief to which I have, formerly, been accessory. I hope it will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was, once, an active instrument, in a business at which my heart now shudders. My headstrong passions and follies plunged me, in early life, into a succession of difficulties and hardships, which, at length, reduced me to seek a refuge among the Natives of Africa. There, for about the space of eighteen months, I was in effect, though without the name, a Captive and a Slave myself; and was depressed to the lowest degree of human wretchedness. Possibly, I should not have been so completely miserable, had I lived among the Natives only, but it was my lot to reside with white men; for at that time, several persons of my own colour and language were settled upon that part of the Windward coast, which lies between Sierra-Leon and Cape Mount; for the purpose of purchasing and collecting Slaves, to sell to the vessels that arrived from Europe.

The Works of John Newton: Tracts . Sermons

(Updated and revised by Dennis R. Hillman) The original and unvarnished account of one of Christianity’s most dramatic conversions—the autobiography of John Newton, the author of “Amazing Grace.” This is the ultimate, full-length hymn story, as spectacular and compelling today as when it was first written.

Letters by the Rev. John Newton

John Newton hated being a sailor. The ship’s officers treated him terribly. John wondered how God could have let this happen to him. Every day he got angrier and angrier. He fought with everyone and stole whenever he got the chance. By the time he was seventeen, he had about the worst reputation in the whole navy! John prayed that God would get him off the horrible warship. But in His Amazing Grace, God had other plans for a young man shunned as “the worst of the worst,” changed into a man of God who helped turn the heart of England against the slave trade. This biography by prolific writer Kary Marshall Strom, is a middle grade biography about John Newton, the man who wrote the hymn, “Amazing Grace.”

Pride and Perjury

John Newton is best known as the slave trader turned hymn writer who penned the most popular English hymn in history: “Amazing Grace.” However, many Christians are less familiar with the decades he spent in relative obscurity, laboring as a “spiritual doctor” while pastoring small parishes in England. In the latest addition to Crossway’s growing Theologians on the Christian Life series, Tony Reinke introduces modern readers to Newton’s pastoral wisdom by leading them through the many sermons, hymns, and—most importantly—letters that he wrote over the course of his life. Considered by many to be one of the greatest letter writers of all time, Newton has valuable insights to offer modern Christians, especially when it comes to fusing together sound doctrine, lived experience, and godly practice. Part of the Theologians on the Christian Life series.