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## Thomas Scott's 'The Force of Truth': A diplomatic edition from the first and final editions with introduction and notes

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**Thomas Scott's *The Force of Truth*:  
A Diplomatic Edition from the First and Final Editions  
with Introduction and Notes**

by

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**Thesis**

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### **Abstract**

Among the many influential preachers and writers of the Evangelical Revival in the Church of England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was Thomas Scott (1747-1821). The most widely read of all his publications was his 1779 *Force of Truth* which went through 12 editions in his lifetime. This thesis presents a diplomatic edition of that work, based on the 1821 Edinburgh imprint and includes the major textual variants from the first 1779 London edition, with an introduction and annotations.

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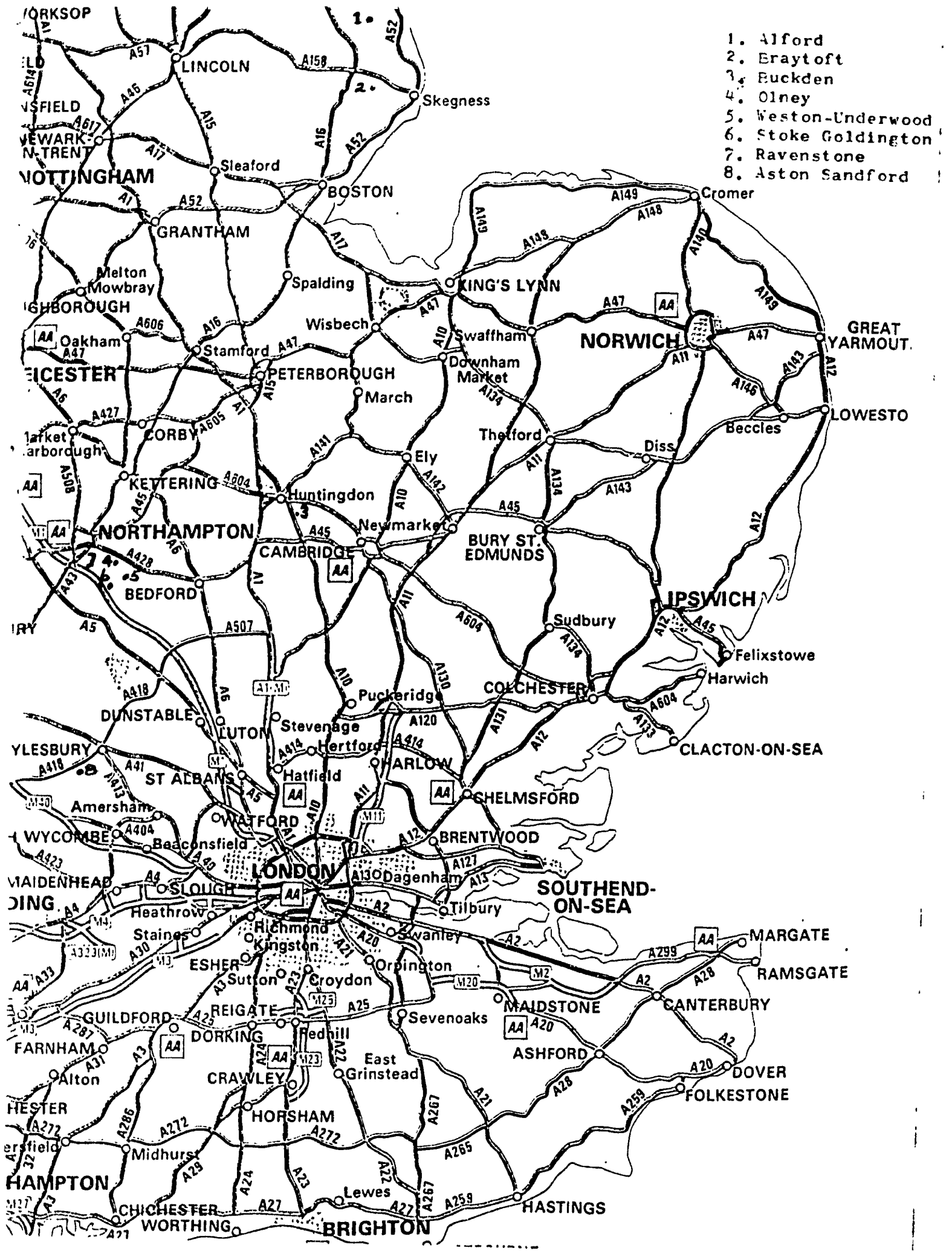
## Abbreviations

FT, *Force of Truth*.

LPTS, *Letters and Papers of Thomas Scott*.

LTS, *The Life of Thomas Scott*.

LCT, *Letters Concerning Toleration*.



1. Alford
2. Eraytoft
3. Buckden
4. Olney
5. Weston-Underwood
6. Stoke Goldington
7. Ravenstone
8. Aston Sandford



## Introduction

In the opening section of his *Apologia pro vita sua*, John Henry Newman identifies the writer who most influenced him as a young Christian:

[T]he writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul, [was] -Thomas Scott of Aston Sandford. I so admired and delighted in his writings, that, when I was an undergraduate, I thought of making a visit to his Parsonage, in order to see a man whom I so deeply revered...the news of his death in 1821 came upon me as a disappointment as well as a sorrow.<sup>a</sup>

The impression Scott made on Newman is certainly of interest for students of the great Cardinal's life and thought, but it is only one example of Scott's influence on many major figures. The significant nineteenth-century British Baptist minister, C.H.Spurgeon, for example, said of Scott's works: "Among entire commentators of modern date, a high place is usually awarded to Thomas Scott, and I shall not dispute his right to it. He is the expositor of evangelical Episcopalians...His work has always been popular, is very judicious, thoroughly sound and gracious."<sup>b</sup> Other important shapers of religious and social thought in the last century made similar statements. Among those who admired and were influenced by Scott were the missionary statesman William Carey, social reformer William Wilberforce, and financier Henry Thornton.<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1866), p.56.

<sup>b</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969), p.12.

<sup>c</sup> On Carey see Timothy George, *Faithful Witness* (Birmingham: New Hope, 1992). Note as well Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961) for a general context to this era.

Although Scott influenced a diverse spectrum of society within his own church and other communions, historians have paid little attention to him since his death. Before any full study of Scott can be done, however, a great deal of bibliographic work needs to be done on his writings and a detailed study of their texts must be undertaken. Scott was a prolific writer who was interested in “spreading the Gospel” as he understood it, and as a result radically revised new editions of his works when they were reprinted so as to meet what he saw as the new challenges of the day. His most significant book was *The Force of Truth*, first published in 1779; in Scott’s lifetime, it went through twelve editions.

What follows is an introduction to this work and to Scott’s life and a diplomatic edition of the last edition published in Scott’s lifetime (Edinburgh, 1821) with major textual variants to the first edition (London, 1779). My initial intention was to include all the variants of all editions, but that task proved far too great to complete within the confines of this thesis. In the first place, we still await a full bibliographic survey of known editions. It is almost certain that more exist than those listed in the printed catalogues of major libraries. My own survey is based on the listings in the *National Union Catalogue* and the *British Museum Catalogue*, but a search in several Scottish libraries and one in Wales proved that these listings are inadequate. Moreover, until further biographical work is done, we cannot tell which editions were printed under Scott’s direction and which were ‘pirated’ editions. Secondly, the texts themselves are often so extensively reworked that to have included all typographical and minor textual variants with which I am working with here would have more than

doubled the size of the apparatus; I have therefore chosen to include for the reader only the 'significant' changes.

## 1. The Evangelical Revival

Before looking at Thomas Scott in detail, it is necessary to see the context of the Evangelical renewal out of which he grew and which he helped to perpetuate. The great Evangelical leaders of the eighteenth century were not men of original thought as were the Protestant Reformers. Leaders in the time of Scott were concerned with the renewal and, as some saw it, restoration of the reformed faith, not with its formulation. The call from the Evangelical pulpits was for heart-felt religion.<sup>a</sup> The more cerebral aspects of Christianity had been addressed already by the leaders of the Reformation.

The Evangelical Awakening, which did so much to transform English society, actually began in New England in the late 1720's. One of the primary figures in this revival was Jonathan Edwards.<sup>b</sup> A committed evangelical minister, Edwards had entered Yale at the age of thirteen and graduated at seventeen. The majority of his writing while in the pastorate was on religious experience. His remarkable skills of analysis were employed in describing the experiential elements in the religious awakening under

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<sup>a</sup> The concerns were not limited to England. For a full discussion of the continental revival and its relationship to the English tradition see Peter C. Erb, *Pietists* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983). For a treatment of the Evangelical Revival in England see J. W. Bready, *England Before and After Wesley*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938).

<sup>b</sup> For a treatment of Edwards in his pastoral function see Patricia J. Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980). For Edwards as a philosopher see Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949).

his ministry in New England. Edwards, with all his remarkable intellectual ability, was consumed with writing on more subjective, pastoral issues. Only after he left the pastorate at Northampton did Edwards pursue writing on more objective theological issues such as his book, the *The Freedom of the Will*.<sup>c</sup>

During the winter of 1734-35, the church Edwards pastored in Northampton, MA, experienced a revival. Edwards wrote an account of this phenomenon and entitled it *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (1736). This book is possibly the first case study of conversions in the history of Christianity. By all accounts it is one of the most objective and detailed analysis ever produced on the subject.<sup>d</sup> Edwards was undoubtedly the greatest theologian of Christian experience of the day.

The "Narrative" was quickly recognized as a definitive manual on revival and went through many editions in the United States, England and Scotland. Isaac Watts, an English Dissenting minister and hymn writer, having heard of the revival and the book, obtained permission from Edwards to publish it in London in 1737. He and others prayed for such a revival in their churches. It is interesting to note that the revival began, not with Watts' congregational churches, but in the Anglican church with

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<sup>c</sup> Tracy, *Edwards*, 182 points out that it was only after his congregation fired him on June 22, 1750, that he "resumed the intellectual adventures of his youth and became a philosopher."

<sup>d</sup> Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 114 says, "This treatise stood as the *textus receptus* for the New Religious History promulgated by Whitefield and his allies...as more and more communities experienced revivals, they looked to that account as the benchmark and point of comparison for self understanding."

George Whitefield<sup>e</sup> and John Wesley<sup>f</sup> being among the earliest and most influential figures. As in the case of Scott, these men came to a clear intellectual understanding of the Evangelical faith prior to their conversion experience.<sup>g</sup>

George Whitefield entered Pembroke College, Oxford in 1732 with the view of fulfilling a boyhood dream of becoming a clergyman. There he met the Wesley brothers who had formed the "Holy Club." He joined the "Club" but did not find any more peace than the other members in the rigors of the "Club's" rules. He had an Evangelical conversion in 1735.

John Wesley had a remarkable spiritual pedigree. Among the many clergy expelled by the Act of Uniformity in 1662 were Dr. Samuel Annesley and John Wesley, his grandfathers, and Dr. Bartholomew Wesley a great-grandfather of Wesley. Samuel Wesley, John's father was an Anglican priest. Wesley did his undergraduate work at Christ Church, Oxford and was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford in 1726. It was not until May 24, 1738 that Wesley had his conversion experience and subsequently developed an Evangelical preaching career.

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<sup>e</sup> For details on Whitefield at this time see Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Vol. 1; London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970 Vol. 2; Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980), Vol.1, pp.61-77.

<sup>f</sup> For a general overview of Wesley's life and thought see Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London, Epworth Press, 1970), and Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960).

<sup>g</sup> Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 104, describes the sequence thus, "the fully fledged doctrinal conviction preceded the experience...the experience was the confirmation of a doctrine already accepted."

Neither Whitefield nor Wesley left the Anglican priesthood, but they did have unconventional ministries, for example in seeing the world as their parish rather than a local congregation, and being labelled “enthusiasts” or “methodists” by nonEvangelicals in the Anglican Church. They had an itinerant ministry throughout England, Scotland and Ireland. Whitefield went to Scotland on fifteen occasions. Wesley, with Arminianism and his views on the doctrine of election, had little success in Calvinistic Scotland, and so did not travel there frequently. Whitefield extended his efforts to the colonies and crossed the Atlantic seven times. It was Wesley who coined the phrase “The world is my parish,”<sup>b</sup> but it was Whitefield who really had the more global ministry. Perhaps the reason that Wesley is the much better known of the two is that he left a denomination behind him and Whitefield did not. While Whitefield was the most eloquent and dramatic preacher in the movement, John Wesley was the organizing genius. There is clear evidence that John Wesley excelled in organizing the converts and systematically establishing them in the Evangelical faith. This explains why there resulted, contrary to Wesley’s intentions, the denomination we now call Methodist. Whitefield did not leave any organization or institution behind to further his Calvinistic form of Christianity.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>b</sup> For Wesley’s coining of the phrase “the world is my parish” see Bready, p 63.

<sup>i</sup> Whitefield did seek to convert the Bethesda orphanage in Georgia into a southern college. This plan failed before it really began. See *DD*, pp.257-260.

The term "Methodist," initially used as a pejorative title, was applied to the members of the "Holy Club" which began in 1729 in the quarters of John Wesley at Lincoln College, Oxford. This term was used because of the rigorous and systematic way the members sought to live the Christian faith. They had daily meetings where they had prayer, confession of failures, and exhorted one another in the Christian life. They visited the prisons and sought to help the poor from their own resources. They lived in a frugal manner that characterized their entire lives.

Some of the more interesting and deliberate characteristics of the Evangelical Awakening were the Class Meetings, field preaching, and the development of itinerant preachers. All of these features troubled the young Scott before his conversion and, in fact, were viewed with disfavour by him throughout his whole life.

The Evangelical Class Meetings were divided by gender and were designed as gatherings for converts to come and confess their failures and receive encouragement to continue in their new faith. These gatherings were not particularly for instruction in Scripture nor were they preaching services. The experiential aspect of Christianity was the focus, not the doctrinal. They met on Saturday evening so as not to conflict with attendance at church on Sunday. Scott could accept such meetings as long as the clergy

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<sup>1</sup> "The term 'Methodism' had previously been employed in an ecclesiastical context in the sixteenth century with reference to Amyraldists or Semi-Aminians. Despite the theological similarity, there is no evidence of any direct derivation." *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), p.652.

were fully in charge. His conservative view of the traditional role of the parish church was also likely at the base of his opposition to field preaching and itinerancy.<sup>4</sup>

Another feature of the Awakening which was not particularly manifest in Scott's congregations was the emotional hysteria of listeners. Nor were any of the overt passions expressed by many others who were not persuaded by the Evangelical approach directed against him. The Established Church in England, through its bishops, reviled the preaching of Wesley, Whitefield and their colleagues. Mobs, occasionally led by clergy, sought to disrupt field preaching in various ways. The means of disruption were many and included, among other things, the throwing of ripe fruit, rot. eggs and stones, driving cattle through crowds, and pumping sewage on the

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<sup>4</sup> Views on the sincerity of roving evangelists vary even today. Whitefield in particular has provoked diverse opinions. Arnold Dallimore's work is largely sympathetic. Another modern historian, Stout, while regarding Dallimore's work as an "indispensable...reposito[ry] of biographical and anecdotal information"(p.289) comes to a very different opinion of Whitefield. Stout portrays Whitefield as an egocentric exploiter of the religious fervour of the time. On just one page of interpreting Whitefield's work Stout says of Whitefield, "he openly gloated [over his successes]...he noted with satisfaction how 'my name was first put into the public papers'...Whitefield was nevertheless pleased. He had made the news...he used the press...to...stage his preaching performances...Whitefield gloated."(p.45). Concerning Whitefield's practice of publishing his journals, Stout says, "Whitefield's *Journals* were...notable both for their shameless egocentricity and for the creation of a persona deliberately crafted for public dissemination and image."(p.223). It is disappointing to note that Stout does not mention that Whitefield's *Journal's* were only written and published during the first few years of his public ministry and after the age of 26 he ceased the practice. Regrettably the last 30 years of Whitefield's life do not have good documentation and therefore it is very difficult to know how maturity affected his alleged "egocentricity." Also, it needs to be recognized that the failure of some popular modern evangelists can prejudice our own thinking against all evangelists and a spirit of "McCarthyism" may take over our efforts at analysis.

Stout does an about face later in his work when he describes the friendship between Benjamin Franklin and Whitefield. "In Whitefield, Franklin saw someone who was different from other churchmen. Beneath Whitefield's bombast and showmanship, Franklin saw a truly virtuous character..."(p.230). Franklin had a critical mind, he had no special interest in evangelical religion, and would certainly be candid in his assessment of Whitefield. His evaluation of Whitefield, complete with first-hand observation, would therefore be better taken than Stout's. Another area where Stout pays tribute to Whitefield concerns the vast sums of money Whitefield collected for the orphanage in Georgia. It was Whitefield's custom after many sermons to ask for money for the Bethesda orphanage in Georgia. Whitefield did not use any of the funds he collected for himself, it all went to the orphanage. "All of the offerings were fully accounted for and disbursed in Georgia."(p.84).



preachers. Scott was spared much of this, although while Chaplain at Lock's Hospital in London he was initially censured for his theology.<sup>1</sup>

Many modern historians do not recognize that Calvinists such as Whitefield and Scott were aggressive evangelists. Dorothy Marshall, an eighteenth-century specialist seems to slur the Calvinistic evangelists when she says,

Wesley brought something quite different—a promise of individual salvation, an inclusive creed not, like the Calvinist, an exclusive one. The way of salvation was open to all not merely to the predestined...The most ignorant, the most wretched of creatures had the spark of faith within them by which they could be justified.<sup>2</sup>

Not only did Calvinistic evangelists like Whitefield urge all people (not just the predestined, as Marshall states) to repent and believe the message, even Charles Wesley, the Arminian, most certainly did not believe that unconverted people had a “spark of faith within them.” One of his most famous hymns, “And Can it be,” states,

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and error's night.  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray:  
I woke the dungeon flamed with light!  
My chains fell off, my soul was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

In a letter to an unnamed Countess who was seeking to help her sister become a Christian, Whitefield writes,

Honoured Madam, is it not a fountain opened? Opened for all that will come...? Entreat her Ladyship therefore...not to be faithless, but believing. Beg her to

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<sup>1</sup> *LTS*, pp. 234-236

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Marshall, *Eighteenth Century England* (London: Longmans, 1961), pp.244-45.

come, or rather be pleased to inform her Ladyship, that her Saviour entreats and commands her to come just as she is, and accept of salvation as a free gift...<sup>n</sup>

Such indiscriminate offering of the Gospel is very inclusive, not exclusive as Marshall insists. In fact, most of the evangelists of the revival, including Scott, were Calvinistic.<sup>o</sup>

When Whitefield and Wesley passed from the scene, the Evangelical work did not come to a halt. The Clapham Sect was beginning its own unique assault on the evils of society and used Parliament rather than the pulpit as its arena for effecting social change. John Thornton was one of the wealthiest merchants in Europe and dedicated his fortune to the cause of evangelical Christianity. When his sons Samuel, Henry, John Jr., and Robert, went into business, they too were very successful and made a significant impact on their society.<sup>p</sup> From the home of Henry Thornton would develop the Clapham Sect.<sup>q</sup> This group was comprised mainly of laymen who were powerful business men and politicians. Included in their number were such notables as William Cowper, W. Wilberforce and Lord Teignmouth.<sup>r</sup> These men and others worked diligently to create social reform groups and influence legislation for the reform of

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<sup>n</sup> Dallimore, Vol. 2, p.277.

<sup>o</sup> As John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 371, correctly observes, "The real force of Calvinism in England is seen in the Evangelical revival and its influence in Anglicanism. John Wesley, the greatest leader of the revival, was the only eminent personality in it who was not a Calvinist. Even Wesley's Arminianism retained...a great body of Calvinist doctrine, as is shown, for example, by his revision of the Westminster Shorter Catechism."

<sup>p</sup> For a detailed list of the evangelicals who belonged to at least 15 societies involved with the reform of society see Brown, pp.353-58.

<sup>q</sup> Bready, p.302.

<sup>r</sup> For a list of the evangelicals living in Clapham and who were aggressively involved in social reform see Brown p.389-90. Bready, p.304, says that "for all practical purposes, Hannah More also was a member of the 'Sect.'".

society.<sup>9</sup> During Scott's ministry in London, Wilberforce faithfully attended his preaching. Cowper was Scott's next-door neighbour in Olney.

Another area where the Great Awakening had a lasting impact on culture was in the development of many missionary societies in the late 1700's and early 1800's which took the message to the far reaches of the world. Some significant Christian institutions spawned by the Evangelical Awakening included the Baptist Missionary Society (1792), London Missionary Society (1795), Religious Tract Society (1799), The Society for Missions to Africa and the East (1800; Scott assisted in its formation and acted as its secretary), Sunday School Union (1803), British and Foreign Bible Society (1804), American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810), and London City Mission (1835). Christianity became the first worldwide religion as it made converts in Africa, India, China, Japan and Hawaii by 1860.

Cambridge became a significant Evangelical centre in the nineteenth century through the influence of Charles Simeon. In 1782 he was appointed vicar of Holy Trinity in Cambridge and stayed there until his death in 1836. He enjoyed great popularity as a preacher and established the Simeon Trust to purchase livings for Evangelical priests in the Anglican Church. Simeon was very helpful to Scott, who was always in financial troubles through unscrupulous publishers and his own mismanagement of his money. In fact, Scott was freed from this problem for the rest of his life after receiving Simeon's assistance.

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<sup>9</sup> For detail on how evangelicals helped shape English society at this time see, *ibid.*, pp.199-308.

## 2. Thomas Scott.<sup>a</sup>

### 2.1 Scott's Personality

Scott was born February 16, 1747 at Braytoft<sup>b</sup> to John and Mary (née Wayet) Scott. He was the tenth of thirteen children. His father was a grazier. In September 1762, Scott was apprenticed to "a surgeon and apothecary at Alford, about eight miles north of Braytoft."<sup>c</sup> Through misbehaviour during leisure time, Scott was dismissed after only two months and sent home in disgrace. There he went to work for his father, doing the "dirty parts" of the work and permanently impairing his health. At about sixteen years of age began to see he was a sinner. For the next nine years he had a tender conscience each time he prepared for the Lord's Supper, and then had a relapse until the next celebration. During these nine years from 1763 to 1772 he associated "with persons of the lowest station of life, and wholly destitute of religious principle."<sup>d</sup> Though Scott's family did not approve of his associations he continued this association, and at the same time continued to entertain the notion of becoming a clergyman. In April, 1772 he quit working for his father to seek ordination in the church. "At the ensuing Michaelmas ordination I was admitted a candidate without objection, and was

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<sup>a</sup> The following review of Scott's life is based on the memoir by his son, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn up by Himself, and Copious Extracts of His Letters*: by John Scott (London: L. B. Seeley, 1822).

<sup>b</sup> The modern spelling for this place is Bratoft.

<sup>c</sup> *LTS*, p.11.

<sup>d</sup> *LTS*, p.21.

examined at Buckden by Dr. Gordon.’<sup>e</sup> On September 20, he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Lincoln. and accepted the curacies of Stoke Goldington, and Weston Underwood, Bucks, boarding with a parishioner at Stoke Goldington. He was ordained priest on March 14, 1773 and in June entered Cambridge at “Clare-Hall, where my name stood for several years.”<sup>f</sup>

Scott’s reasons for wanting to enter the ministry were three-fold: “A desire of a less laborious and more comfortable way of procuring a livelihood,... more leisure to employ in reading,... [and] that I should some time distinguish and advance myself in the literary world.”<sup>g</sup> In these early days of being awakened to the Evangelical faith and before he embraced it, he was tormented with thoughts about judgment and hell much in the same way as was John Bunyan. He was so distressed about the futility of this life and uncertainty about life after death that he contemplated suicide. Only the belief that he would some day repent and be forgiven kept him from taking his own life.

[H]ad it not been for this hope, I would probably have given way to temptations, which frequently assaulted me, to put an end to my own life, in proud discontent with my lot in this world, and mad despair about another.<sup>h</sup>

Scott was apparently a self-taught person.

And for five or six and forty years he studied eight or ten hours a day, and frequently twelve or fourteen....From an early age, indeed, he was almost

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<sup>e</sup> *LTS*, p. 33.

<sup>f</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>g</sup> *Force of Truth*, p. 10 -- hereafter FT.

<sup>h</sup> *FT*, p.4.

entirely self-taught; the only education he received having been at a grammar-school, from the age of ten to fifteen.

Unfortunately, he did not keep a journal as many people in his day did. The task of getting a good understanding of his personal views on some issues and his struggles with his life and faith are far more difficult than if a record of his private thoughts had been preserved. Thus his son comments on the matter:

In one respect a deficiency may have been felt in these memoirs--my father never, I believe, at least never since a very early period, wrote any private papers, relative to what passed in his own mind. His judgment was not against it: but it was not his habit.<sup>1</sup>

However, even if Scott had kept a journal, it is unlikely it would have been preserved. Some time prior to his last illness, Scott destroyed "nearly all the letters in his possession."<sup>2</sup> Apparently he did not wish to leave any records behind him except what he had written for publication.

Because of the lack of such material it is difficult to get good insight into the more personal aspects of his life. He seems to have approached love in a rather cerebral manner. In writing to his sister prior to either being married he comments:

Let then sobriety be a sine qua non:...Never seek for those qualities which the most of your sex admire: they are indifferent in themselves,...You see how little stress I lay upon the qualifications of body or mind, which carry to the generality of each sex the most bewitching attractions...were I to marry a woman at a short warning, I would rather choose one of whom no one took any notice.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *LTS*, 603.

<sup>2</sup> *LTS*, p.258.

<sup>3</sup> John Scott, *Letters and Papers of Thomas Scott* (London: L.B. Seeley and Son, 1824), pp. 4-5 -- hereafter *LPTS*.

In a letter to his sister dated July 20, 1774, he says of his future wife,

Whom nature has blessed with a variety of her choicest gifts,-sense, prudence, sensibility: who has had many advantages of education, has read much, and is fit to appear with credit in any company:who has a heart fraught with the most virtuous and generous sentiments,...No woman in the world is better adapted for the management of a family.<sup>1</sup>

Scott certainly had a heavily pragmatic approach to selecting his wife, and he used her skills to good advantage in his preparation for preaching. He had a habit of reading his Sunday sermons to his wife for criticism, and, said Scott,

At her instance, I altered many things, especially in exchanging words, unintelligible to labourers and lace-makers, for simpler language. This induced a habit of familiar speaking in the pulpit, which has since been censured, probably with justice, as too colloquial.<sup>m</sup>

Scott was not autocratic as a husband although, by his own admission, he was impulsive and of a "violent temper." His manner did not stop his wife from being critical of him. She apparently possessed an uncanny accuracy in choosing the right issues to dispute with him, because as Scott admitted, "she always carried her point with me; to my unspeakable profit."<sup>n</sup>

This matter of Scott being persuaded by his wife, and his candidly admitting both her superior judgment and how he profited from her interventions with him, demonstrates his remarkable honesty. Newman rightly said of Scott's concern for

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<sup>1</sup> *LTS*, p.67.

<sup>m</sup> *LTS*, p.109.

<sup>n</sup> *LTS*, p.109.

honesty, "He followed truth wherever it led him."<sup>8</sup> In an age when women were keepers at home and it was a man's world, Scott gave full credit to his wife's superior abilities. It does need to be noted that Scott did not advocate an egalitarian position concerning the genders. His views on women's participation in public church life were very clear.

As to women praying in public in the presence of men, it is so antisciptural, so inconsistent with all the subordination in domestic life, and with all that modesty and delicacy which are the chief ornaments of the sex, that I should feel at liberty openly to protest against it.<sup>9</sup>

Obviously, then, Scott supported a theoretical notion concerning a patriarchal society. However, he did not consistently practice in his own home what he vigorously preached in public.<sup>4</sup>

There was a certain practical reality about Scott's views on sex, love and marriage. Concerning the relative merits of celibacy, Scott said, "As to young men in general, as human nature is, I am decidedly against everything that makes it their interest to live unmarried." Scott continued in this context to quote someone else whom he felt made a helpful comment, "Early marriage, [was] the best preservative of purity and good morals, in the present state of things."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Newman, p.57.

<sup>9</sup> *LTS*, p.497.

<sup>4</sup> The generation following Scott would see some sections of the evangelical movement become more accepting of women in public ministry. The great example of this is the Salvation Army. The founder's wife, Catherine Booth, preached her first sermon in 1860 after having published a book, *Female Ministry*, in defense of the American preacher Phoebe Palmer. See *Christian History*, Issue 26, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *LPTS*, p.157.



Scott was a tenderhearted man in various ways. When referring to family members in his sermons he would shed tears and cause his listeners to weep as well.<sup>6</sup> His oldest daughter died in May 1780 at age four and a half. In a letter dated January 11, 1804 Scott spoke about the memory of his deceased daughter: “The thoughts of my ever dear Anne came into my mind, with a force that I have not felt for some years.”<sup>7</sup> It is important to note not only that this happened, but that Scott could acknowledge such emotions.

His manner of raising his children involved applied psychology.

It was a rule with him that, from the time children became capable of making their wants known in any other way, they were to obtain nothing by crying for it, or by any other misconduct. The contrary practice, he said, was bribing them to behave ill.<sup>8</sup>

According to his son John, remedial discipline was only given for “what was wilful, rebellious, or immoral.”<sup>9</sup> It was not administered for petty acts resulting from immature behaviour. Once the offense was punished, the relationship was immediately peaceful again and Scott would show love and acceptance to the child. There never were lingering feelings on Scott’s part. Scott also was able to gradually release his control

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<sup>6</sup> *LTS*, p. 404.

<sup>7</sup> *LTS*, 403.

<sup>8</sup> *LTS*, p.623.

<sup>9</sup> *LTS*, p.622.

over his children as they grew up and were able to take increased responsibility for decision making according to one who lived for some time in the Scott's home."<sup>6</sup>

To suggest that there was a lack of the social graces in Scott's manner would be to put the matter in a very favourable light. Scott seemed inept in social settings of all sorts. It was not an occasional faux pas, but rather a pervasive and sustained deviation from the norm that plagued Scott in every social context.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Scott's Parishes.

On September 20, 1772, as already mentioned, Scott was ordained deacon<sup>8</sup> and accepted the curacies of Stoke Goldington and Weston Underwood, Buckinghamshire. Earlier in the year "the brother of the person with whom I boarded, an apothecary at Olney, often called; and finding me conversable, discussed with me a variety of subjects. Among the rest, he mentioned Mr. Newton, as a very singular character."<sup>9</sup> In November, moved from Stoke to Weston. Here he was invited to hear Rev. John Newton preach on a Thursday evening and the acquaintance began. In November of 1773 he moved from Stoke to Weston. It was here that Newton unwittingly shamed

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<sup>6</sup> See *LTS*, p.623.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding Scott's offensive manners note John Scott's comment: "His failings...lay on the side of roughness and severity of temper, pride of intellect, and confidence in his own powers. But from the time...he first obeyed...the gospel, he set himself to struggle against these...and he gradually increased in habitual mildness, humility, and tenderness for others." *LTS*, p.587.

<sup>8</sup> *FT*, p.9.

<sup>9</sup> *LTS*, p. 61.

Scott by visiting two of Scott's dying parishioners whom Scott had not visited as they had not requested he do so. On December 5, Scott married Jane Kell, and, for a time lived with his parents. One year later he moved back to Stoke.

Stoke had a population of about seven or eight hundred by Scott's estimate. Apparently it was a less religiously active community than Weston. Of those there who did have religion, Scott said, "[They] are almost all methodists and fanatics, of one sort or other; and for my part I regard them as the best portion of my parish, for any religion must be better than none."<sup>a</sup> Weston, he decided, had better prospects.

As would prove characteristic of Scott's assessment of most of his parishes, he did not see success while in the situation. Years later he would see results for his efforts in the district.

I would just inform you that the seed I was so long sowing there was not all thrown away; nay much seems now to be springing up, especially among the young people at Ravenstone.... Multitudes appear inclined to hear plain practical preaching, and there seems a great preparation of heart for receiving the gospel.<sup>b</sup>

In the summer of 1775 Scott moved to Ravenstone and assumed to curacy there. This situation, which lasted for two years, was the most pleasant of his life. "At this place I resided about two years, and it proved, as it were, a Bethel to me."<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> *LTS*, p.56.

<sup>b</sup> *LPTS*, p.103.

<sup>c</sup> *LTS*, p. 78.

Here his two eldest children were born.<sup>dd</sup> Major crises of conscience occurred early during his time here. In May, he failed in an effort to draw Newton into a public debate. Their famous correspondence began at the time and terminated the following December.<sup>ee</sup> At about the same time reading the Athanasian Creed one Sunday, he was convicted that his lack of belief in the doctrine of the Trinity was contrary to the Church's teaching. He recognized his hypocrisy and declared he could not subscribe to the creed.

Scott was able here to work through much of the Evangelical faith and see members of his congregation responding positively to the message he was beginning to preach. Different members of the church were coming and asking him the biblical question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Scott was not having the highly emotional reaction to his preaching that the evangelists experienced, but the same concern was evident in his hearers. He continued this responsibility until he went to Olney in 1781. However, in 1777 he moved to nearby Weston Underwood. By the end of this year, he had settled his opinions theologically and was a convinced Evangelical. In January, he had Hooker's works recommended to him and he commenced reading them. More significantly, however, in April, Scott initiated secret visits with Newton. At this time his "views were cleared up, and his sentiments established, successively, upon the doctrines of the atonement, human depravity, the Trinity, justification, the work of the Holy Spirit, and finally, on that of personal

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<sup>dd</sup> LTS, p. 76.

<sup>ee</sup> LTS p. 81-82.

election.”<sup>f</sup> It was at Weston Underwood that he wrote the history of his spiritual pilgrimage and entitled it *The Force of Truth*. There too he continued his interest in medicine:

About this time, I began, with great caution, to administer medical assistance to a few of my poor neighbours, and Mr. (now Dr.) Kerr, of Northampton, bestowed some pains in directing my proceedings:...I had before paid some attention to the study of medicine; and now, having so eminently skilful an advisor ready to give me counsel and aid, I made progress.<sup>g</sup>

During the year his mother and father died and his son John, who would some day edit his works, was born. By the close of the year he began to make use of Calvinistic doctrines “for the consolation of poor distressed and fearful believers,”<sup>h</sup> and to attend the preaching of John Newton, having come to Newton’s Evangelical Calvinistic views.

In 1781 Scott moved back to Olney into a parsonage that was next door to where the poet and hymn writer Cowper lived. Olney had about twenty five hundred residents and not many were in the habit of attending church. Here Scott’s ministry had a mixed reception. Some viewed him as “scolding”<sup>i</sup> the congregation. So Scott had the same reception as the other Evangelicals of the revival period. There was a sharp division and people were either highly loyal, or vigorously opposed.

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<sup>f</sup> Ibid, p. 116.

<sup>g</sup> *LTS* p. 115-116.

<sup>h</sup> *FT*, p. 72.

<sup>i</sup> *LTS*, p. 216.

In 1785 Scott was invited to come as chaplain to Lock's Hospital in London, which worked with people who had venereal disease. He continued there for seventeen years, completed the majority of his literary work, and had many disputes with the board of directors.

I was a warrior at the Lock; but I longed for peace. However I won every battle I fought. I chose my successor, in defiance of dukes and lords, and have left the charity in flourishing circumstances-the Hospital nearly 2300 pounds and the Asylum nearly 1000 pounds richer...than when I was chosen sole chaplain.<sup>j</sup>

Scott showed the typical Evangelical spirit of his day for creating social agencies when he established in 1787 the Lock Asylum to assist women discharged from the hospital.<sup>kk</sup> He observed that though about five hundred people were cured annually,<sup>ll</sup> many of the women went back to the streets and were reinfected. He wished to assist those who had an interest in rehabilitation.

Although he was busy with the pastoral work and preaching, in January 1788 Scott began the commentary on the Bible which would make him known all through the Evangelical community. It was while Scott was in London that William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton faithfully attended his preaching ministry.

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<sup>j</sup> *LPTS*, p. 240.

<sup>kk</sup> *LPTS*, p. 203.

<sup>ll</sup> *LPTS*, p. 203.

On September 8, 1790 his first wife died after a two-week illness.<sup>mm</sup> Early in the following year he remarried after submitting the decision to remarry so soon to the clerical society with whom he met every two weeks.<sup>nn</sup> In March, 1792 he was appointed sole chaplain at Lock.

In the spring of 1803 he moved to Aston Sandford, a small farming parish and continued there until his death. More literary works were produced and he began gardening for recreation.<sup>oo</sup> His life there appears to have been enjoyable in every way. On August 20, 1804 a letter to a "friend in Scotland" states:

My situation is very retired: but I have a considerable number of attentive hearers; and I trust am useful in that respect: at least, I am more comfortably situated than ever before. And,...I am sure of good congregations to attend my occasional preaching.<sup>pp</sup>

Scott always took special interest in the lives of those with whom he worked. For the sake of his health, he made a number of voyages. While on board ship, he paid particular attention to the operation of the vessel.<sup>qq</sup> By this means he sought to build a relationship with the sailors which would afford him the opportunity to preach

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<sup>mm</sup> *LTS* p. 294.

<sup>nn</sup> *LTS*, p. 293.

<sup>oo</sup> *LPTS*, p. 249.

<sup>pp</sup> *LPTS*, p. 242-3.

<sup>qq</sup> *LTS*, p. 315.

his Evangelical faith to them. He worked with his parishioners in the same way, seeking to learn whatever he could about their daily lives and employment.

He thought it of much advantage to a clergyman to understand common affairs, particularly those connected with the employments of his people. 'When they saw that he understood things belonging to their profession, it would make them,' he said, 'give him credit for more competency to instruct them in what pertained to his own.'<sup>17</sup>

### 2.3 Scott as Preacher

References to Scott's unusual style of preaching are found throughout his memoirs and biographies. He frequently draws attention to a unique style of preaching that he sensed offended many people. Scott believed that sermons should be an hour long in order to give enough time for close application of the subject to the hearers.

Some people sensed that he "scolded" the listeners. One London minister for whom Scott preached said to him when he was about to go into the pulpit: "Do not scold my people, as I have heard you do the people at Olney."<sup>18</sup>

His sermons were extemporaneous from early in his ministry. He only prepared for the sermon an hour ahead of time. He would display various emotions when preaching. Unlike the evangelists of the Evangelical Awakening, Scott did not like field preaching and did not preach in the fields except on two occasions.

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<sup>17</sup> *LTS*, p. 601.

<sup>18</sup> *LTS*, p. 237.



## 2.4 Health Concerns

Scott seemed to be plagued by chronic medical symptoms throughout his life. When he was ten years old he was boarded out at a school in Scorton. There he received good food and lodging, but his health problems were evident even at that early age and he was frequently ill.<sup>u</sup> In his later teenage years, he said, "Aware of the uncertainty of life...through an unconfirmed state of health, I had many warnings and near prospects of death."<sup>uu</sup> John Scott described his father's health concerns as follows:

Though his constitution in itself was robust, his health was far from being good. An obstinate asthma with exhausting bilious attacks exposed him at times to acute sufferings for more than forty years of his life. Inflammatory fever succeeded these diseases during the last seven years, aggravated by a malady most inconvenient and alarming.<sup>v</sup>

Nonetheless, in a letter to his son John, dated Nov. 22, 1801, Scott stated that in the sixteen years he had been officiating each Sunday in London, his health concerns did not once cause him to miss a service.<sup>ww</sup>

His asthmatic condition seemed to be more severe during his earlier years. The asthma was particularly evident during the night:

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<sup>u</sup> *LTS*, p. 6.

<sup>uu</sup> *FT*, p. 3.

<sup>v</sup> *LTS*, p. 585.

<sup>ww</sup> *LTS*, p. 349.

more than half the night I [would] sit up in bed...unable to lie down from oppression of breath...longing for the morning...the remedies which I was obliged to employ were of the most unpleasant nature.<sup>x</sup>

## 2.5 Scott's Literary Work

Scott was a prolific writer and the sale of his works generated a substantial income. John Scott calculated the retail sales value of his father's commentary on the whole Bible during Thomas' lifetime at 199,900 pounds.<sup>y</sup> Because of Scott's mismanagement of his business affairs, and the unscrupulous ethics of some of his publishers, however, he realized little from his writings. His publications can be grouped and listed as follows. The list is based on information available through the British Museum Catalogue and *The Life of Thomas Scott*:

### 2.5.1 Books.

1. *The Force of Truth: an authentic narrative*. The first edition appeared in London in 1779. Other editions which are listed in published catalogues or have been found are the following: Second edition, pp. viii. 122. *Bellamy & Robarts; the Author*: London, 1789; Fourth edition, London, 1794; Sixth edition, London, 1801; Eighth edition, London, 1808; Tenth edition, Edinburgh, 1816; Tenth edition, London, 1817; New edition, Edinburgh, 1821; New edition, London, 1821; new edition, Dublin, 1821.

2. *A Discourse upon Repentance* London, 1785; Second edition, London, 1786; Fourth edition, London: *C.Watts*, 1791; Fifth edition, [Secret Passages from a Discourse upon Repentance. (An essay on the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, etc.)] London: *D.Jaques*, 1800; Sixth edition, London, 1803.

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<sup>x</sup> *LTS*, p. 168.

<sup>y</sup> *LTS*, p. 290.

3. *The Holy Bible with original notes*, 1788; 1792; 1809; 1810; 1812; 1814.
4. *Rights of God*, London, 1793.
5. *The Pilgrim's Progress...with original notes* 1801; 1811.
6. *Remarks on the refutation of Calvinism by G. Tomline...Bishop of Lincoln*, 2 vol. London, 1811; Second edition, London: *L.B. Seeley*, 1817.
7. *A selection of Psalms and hymns*, London: *The Author*, 1804; Second edition, London: *J. Seeley*, 1808.
8. *A treatise on growth in grace, with reference to St. Paul's prayer for the Philippians*, London, 1795; Third edition, pp.68, London, 1767; Fifth edition, pp.78, London, 1811.
9. *Two essays on the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; and the importance of Divine Truth; the duty of reading the Scriptures, etc..* London, 1797.
10. *A vindication of the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures...an answer to Mr. Paine's Age of Reason*, 1796; Second edition, pp.v.134, London, 1799.
11. *The warrant and nature of faith in Christ considered*, London, 1797; Second edition, carefully revised, Buckingham, 1801.
12. *An answer to the restoration of Israel*, 1814.
13. *The triumph of Jesus, as compared and contrasted with those of Mohammed*. Extracted from...T.Scott's "Answer to Rabbi J. Crooll's Restoration of Israel.", London, 1817.
14. *The articles of the Synod of Dort...translated...by T. Scott*, 1818.
15. *Essays on the most important subjects in religion*, London, 1794; Third edition, London, 1798; Fourth edition, London, 1800; Seventh edition, London, 1814.

### 2.5.2 Sermons

1. *A Thanksgiving Sermon* [on Ps. cvi.43,44], preached July 29, 1784, at the Parish Church of Olney, Bucks, Northampton, 1784.

2. *The doctrines of election and final perseverance stated from Scripture*, London, 1786.
3. *An estimate of the religious character and state of Great Britain*. Being the substance of a sermon [on Is.v.4] preached on...the day appointed for a general fast, etc. London, 1793.
4. *Four sermons, on I. Repentance unto life. II. The evil of sin. III. Christ's love to penitent sinners. IV. The promise of the Holy Spirit*. London, 1802.
5. *'Is there not a cause?'* preached for the London Missionary Society, 1804.
6. *The duty and advantage of remembering deceased ministers*: being the substance of a funeral sermon preached at...Wallingford, on Hebrews xiii.7,8: for the Rev. T. Plentycross, etc. Buckingham, 1808.
7. *The aspect and duty of the times*, A sermon [on Jer.xiv.7] preached...February 28, 1794, the day of the late general fast. London, 1794.
8. *A commentary on the ten commandments*. By a Clergyman [i.e. T.Scott]. pp.20, [c.1820.]
9. *The Jews a Blessing to the Nations*, and Christians bound to seek their conversion to the Saviour. A sermon [on Zech. viii.23], etc., London: *Black & Co.*, 1810; Third edition, London, 1810.
10. *Joy in Heaven*. A sermon [on Luke xv.10], etc., pp.56. London: *Hatchard*, 1812.
11. *The Lord protecting Great Britain for his own Name's sake*. A sermon [on Ezek.xx.22] preached...Nov.29, 1798, the day of the late general thanksgiving, London, [1798?]
12. *The love of Christ the source of genuine philanthropy*: a discourse...occasioned by the death of J. Thornton. 1791.
13. *Preparation for Death and Judgment*. A sermon [on Luke xii.40]...upon the...death of the Rev. Dr. Conyers, etc. London, 1786.
14. *The Real Christian's Growth in Grace*...A sermon [on Philip i.9-11], etc. London, 1787.

15. *A sermon preached...before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East...Also the report of the Committee, etc.* London, 1801.
16. *A sermon [on Ps. cxvi.2] preached at the close of a series of lectures, on the signs and duties of the times, continued for nearly three years in the metropolis by a Society of Clergymen.* London, 1802.
17. *A sermon preached...on the occasion of the death of the Rev. J. Newell...To which is added, a memoir of the deceased.* London, 1803.
18. *Sermons on select subjects,* London, 1796; Second edition, Buckingham, [1805?].
19. *The Spirit and Principles of a genuine Missionary.* A sermon [on Acts xx.24] occasioned by the death of...J.C.Barneth, etc. London, 1810.
20. *A sure guide to happiness.* On social love. See CORNARO (L.) *The Immortal Mentor,* etc. pt.3. 1810.
21. "Light shining out of darkness." 1814.
22. *A sermon on the death of the Right Hon. Lady Mary Fitzgerald,* 1815.
23. *The voice of God to Britain. A sermon [on Micah vi.9] on the...death of...the Princess Charlotte,* London, 1817.

2.5.3 Tracts: Unlike some of his Evangelical colleagues Scott does not appear to have been a prolific tract writer. Those which can be located are:

1. *The fatal consequences of female prostitution* (London, 1787)
2. *Hints for the consideration of patients in hospitals* (London, 1797)
3. *An impartial statement of the Scripture doctrine in respect of civil government, and the duties of subjects* (London, 1792; Second edition, 1794).

2.5.4 Letters: *The Life of Thomas Scott* has portions of a significant number of letters Scott wrote to different people on a range of topics. *The Works of Thomas Scott* is edited by John Scott and is devoted to reproducing much of Scott's correspondence.

### 3. *The Force of Truth*

Thomas Scott's *Force of Truth* is divided by the author into three sections. The first section is brief and deals with his life prior to when he commences his journey into Evangelical Christianity. It covers the years from his birth in 1747 to January 1774. The second section is the longest and relates the factors which contributed to his becoming an Evangelical. This time is from January 1774 to late summer-fall of 1777. Scott then uses the third part of the book to comment on his spiritual pilgrimage and make his observations on his experience.

Early in *The Force of Truth* Scott speaks with approval of Locke's *Letters Concerning Toleration*, an indication of the importance this figure in particular had for him. Although an Evangelical, Scott found himself approving of any of Locke's writings. The full dimensions of Locke's influence on him, indeed, deserves a study of its own. Scott certainly found himself attracted to the 'common sense' aspects of Locke's work. In addition, Locke's vocabulary is, at times, very biblical in its imagery. For example, Locke uses several biblical expressions on one page when he refers to "Christian warfare...Captain of our Salvation...Prince of Peace...Gospel of Peace..."<sup>4</sup> and these would have been noted by a person like Scott.

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<sup>4</sup>. *LCT*, p. 16.

The very title of Scott's autobiography seems to be borrowed from Locke. In his description of how one should come to the knowledge of truth, Locke says:

But if truth make not her way into the understanding by her own light, she will be but the weaker for any borrowed force violence can add to her.<sup>b</sup>

Scott evidently plays on the idea of truth carrying its own inherent force to the mind of the reader in his title. He insists that the defenders of the Evangelical faith did not persuade him of its truth, it was studying the doctrines themselves that persuaded him. "I changed my religious views, without any teaching from the persons to whose sentiments I have now acceded."<sup>c</sup>

Both Locke and Scott believed in the importance of the mind in arriving at truth. Scott spoke of his changes of doctrine as being very carefully thought out.

I sat down very coolly to search for the truth...I took no one opinion upon trust; I gave up none of my sentiments, until the arguments by which I had learned to defend them were satisfactorily answered; nor did I admit any new articles into my creed, till...every objection was obviated.<sup>d</sup>

Locke stated, "All the life and power of true religion consist in the inward and full persuasion of the mind."<sup>e</sup>

Locke was individualistic in his views as he argued for strict limits on the controls government could exercise over citizens. He argued vigorously for the notion

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<sup>b</sup>. *LCT*, p. 46.

<sup>c</sup>. *FT*, p. 93.

<sup>d</sup>. *FT*, p.92.

<sup>e</sup>. *LCT*, p. 18.

of the rights of the individual. Evangelicals in Scott's time were putting emphasis on the matter of 'personal' faith. The Reformation idea of the covenant community was losing ground to the revival focus on the individual needing to seek and have their own experience of salvation.

Scott exhibited a very sensitive conscience and sought to have what he believed put into practice in his life. An example of this is in the struggle he had with subscribing to the doctrine of the Trinity as described in *The Force of Truth*, pp. 21-23. Locke likewise put faith and inward sincerity as of primary importance in the sight of God. "Faith only and inward sincerity are the things that procure acceptance with God."<sup>1</sup>

The Evangelical movement of which Scott was a part believed that there was only one Gospel, only one correct message about how to have a right relationship with God. Locke seems to concur when he says, "For there...[is] but one truth, one way to heaven."<sup>2</sup>

On a personal level, Locke was trained in medicine, taking the M.B. degree in 1674 but did not graduate as a doctor. Scott had much less formal training in medicine, but read everything he could on the subject.

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<sup>1</sup>. *LCT*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>. *LCT*, p. 19.



In spite of these parallels, *The Force of Truth* remains very much Scott's own. In the First Part Scott tells the reader that he did not begin to take his religion seriously until he was sixteen years old. It was at this age, when he was going to the Communion Service, that he experienced particular guilt over one sin. What particular sin this is, Scott does not indicate. He prayed, made a grudging reformation and 'partook of the ordinance.' His good intentions at reformation soon disappeared and he again yielded to temptation. For nine years this cycle continued. Scott became increasingly convinced of the inherent perversity of human nature and began to despair of ever gaining heaven.

At this time he read a Socinian comment that stifled his conscience and allowed him to proceed with 'a heart full of pride and wickedness; my life polluted with many unrepented, unforsaken sins; without one cry for mercy, one prayer....'<sup>h</sup> In this state he was ordained deacon on Sept. 20, 1772. Now he was on his way to the three goals of being in the ministry, i.e., time to study, a secure income, and potential to develop as a writer. He did enough of his clerical duties to maintain a respectable reputation.

During this period he was particularly antagonistic to Evangelicals. Concerning Methodists, for example, he confessed he

held them in sovereign contempt; spoke of them with derision...and endeavoured to prove the doctrines which I supposed them to hold (for I had never read their books) to be dishonourable to God and destructive to morality.'

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<sup>h</sup> *FT*, p. 9.

<sup>i</sup> *FT*, p. 13.

His attraction to the Evangelical movement was initiated, he tells us in the early section of Part Two, by a pastoral problem in his church. In January 1774, two of Scott's parishioners, a husband and wife, lay dying. Because they had not called for Scott, he left them alone to die. John Newton visited the couple several times. This action on Newton's part caused Scott to be very ashamed and he immediately reformed his habits about visiting his parishioners. His efforts at self-reform were so pleasing to him that he smugly viewed himself as having achieved the highest point in the ministry.

In the spring of 1775, he indicates that he began to develop an antagonism to Calvinists. John Newton proved to be an accessible victim for his efforts. Newton was wiser than to be drawn into debate and instead chose to correspond with Scott.<sup>1</sup> This went on until the end of the year when Scott decided that he was not going to win this man for whom he had a grudging respect. The correspondence then ceased.

It was at this time that Scott realized that he did not accept the doctrine of the Trinity and his conscience, now sensitized, haunted him for his hypocrisy at subscribing to what he did not believe. He unconsciously began to operate on the Evangelical principle of the authority of the Bible and sought the teaching of Scripture to see if this doctrine of the Trinity could be found there.

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<sup>1</sup> For the letters of Newton to Scott see John Newton, *Works of John Newton* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Peter Brown. 1835), pp.169-88. Scott's letters apparently were destroyed by Scott shortly before his death.

Though he was concerned to be biblical in his thinking, for a time he consulted every author he could to retain his views which contradicted the Thirty-Nine Articles. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* proved a safe intellectual retreat for a time. Locke made favourable reference to Bishop Burnet's *Pastoral Care* and Scott read the book carefully. The book brought Scott back once more to the Scriptures and an increased sense of the importance of pastoral work.

Next Scott read Tillotson's *Sermons* and Jortin's *Works*. From these books he cribbed sermons for a time. He also began reflecting on the theme of John 3 concerning being "born again." This was a favourite theme of the Revival evangelists.

In the spring of 1776 Scott established a weekly lecture for expounding Scriptures. This brought him further into the study of the Bible but with little progress toward the Evangelical faith. In May 1776, Scott read Soame Jenyns' *View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion* and his respect for the Bible increased. He studied Clarke's *Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity* and this shifted him back from Socinianism to Arianism. Then, in December 1776, he read the once (to him) contemptible *Serious Call by Law*. This brought him to a more internal application of the pursuit of holiness.

Just a month later he began reading Hooker's *Discourse on Justification*, and he became convinced that he was altogether sinful and incapable of obeying God in

a satisfactory manner. Scott came to see that justification by faith was the Scriptural teaching. He now was convinced that the Church's teaching was what the Methodists taught. His preaching began to reflect the new truths he discovered and soon his congregation was in an uproar.

People were now coming to Scott asking what they needed to do to be saved. A revival of sorts had commenced in his own congregation. The problem for Scott was that he did not know how to counsel the people who came to him as his own views were not fully formed. Bishop Beveridge's sermons he now read with great appreciation came to the first of his Calvinistic tenets. Scott was persuaded that the atonement was specifically for the elect. Next he read Dr. Evan's, *The Christian Temper*, and became convinced of the corruption of human nature and the absolute necessity of being born again. Newton reappeared in April 1777 to gently nudge Scott farther along the way to Evangelical teaching.

Pride continued to plague Scott and he struggled with being called a Methodist because of his new found beliefs. He was cured of this pride by reading Venn's *Essay on the Prophecy of Zacharias*. In June 1777, having just read Lindsey's *Apology and Sequel* he lost confidence in Clarke's arguments and he again struggled over the doctrine of the Trinity. He lost the struggle and became convinced of the doctrine as taught in the Thirty-Nine Articles.

The next month, July, Scott read Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio* and his views on depravity and justification by faith became more focused. He realised that he was a Calvinist in all but election. However, a reading of Witsius' *Economy of the Covenants* tipped the scales and even showed him how to use the teaching to comfort those who were seeking personal salvation. Now Scott came to believe that these doctrines were the reformers' doctrines and the teaching of the church creeds.

Now that Scott's intellectual pilgrimage was complete, he came to experiential matters and John Newton's preaching was his stimulus in that area. While Scott does not indicate he had the powerful emotional excesses that the converts of Wesley and Whitefield experienced, he did describe his religious sensations as "an established peace...a sweet content...peace of conscience...and joy unspeakable."<sup>k</sup>

In Part Three Scott points out that he was a most unlikely candidate for this religious conversion for several reasons. First, he was highly dependent upon intellectual argument and was well satisfied with his scheme of religion, which was the opposite to the Evangelical faith. By temperament he was stubborn and would not concede any point in an argument until every support was removed. Thirdly, he was financially dependent upon those who would not wish him to become a Methodist. He was afraid of the ridicule that would come from believing Evangelical doctrines.

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<sup>k</sup> *FT*, p. 78.

Scott also points out that the change came very gradually. This is distinct from the quick conversions in the Evangelical Awakening, and it is distinct from Scott's impulsive temperament. The next observation Scott makes is that he made his change without being taught by those to whose views he came. It was after he came to Evangelical views that he read their books seriously.

Scott fourthly states that the Bible had a large role to play in his conversion. Then he refers to prayer as an effective agent in bringing him to these views. Next there is nothing to suggest in his spiritual journey that he was an "enthusiast." Lastly, he observes that those who discredit him will not be very willing to investigate his position seriously.

Scott concludes with an appeal to the readers to search for the truth themselves.

#### 4. The New Form of *The Force of Truth*

The 1821 edition of *The Force of Truth* has a number of variants from the original 1779 edition. A number of these are simply minor editorial revisions. In other cases Scott edited the latest edition to bring the language into the usage of the early nineteenth century, some forty years after his original edition.

A number of other cases are more interesting, however, almost all of them indicating that he evolved a more positive view of himself, although it does not appear that he left his firmly Calvinistic position on the total depravity of humanity. Thus, for example, Scott edits the 1821 edition fifty seven-times to tone down the vigour of his expressions especially concerning his personal sinfulness.<sup>a</sup> For example, he tones down the rather aggressive description “I was too much the slave of sin, too much devoted to other duties, and too much in love with this present world” to the comparatively bland “I was enslaved by sin, and too much engaged in other studies, and in love with this present world” (Endnote, 63). He enhances his descriptions of his evil tendencies only seventeen times in the 1821 edition.<sup>b</sup> He speaks in the 1821 edition of his “intolerable fears of damnation” for his sins, whereas earlier he only has “pressing fears of damnation” (Endnote, 34). On the positive side of describing himself, he edits

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<sup>a</sup> Note endnotes 4, 14, 17, 40, 42, 45, 52, 61, 63, 74, 84, 85, 94, 96, 101, 102, 103, 106, 149, 158, 177, 241, 261, 262, 281, 283, 284, 285, 288, 295, 296 (twice), 305, 325, 327, 334, 340, 341, 344, 350, 353, 357, 360, 363, 377, 391, 393, 401, 404, 418, 428, 443, 447, 455, 458, 544, 565 in the text below.

<sup>b</sup> See endnotes 6, 34, 36, 59, 95, 100, 129, 131, 300, 313, 317, 349, 376, 417, 575, 580, 584.

the 1821 edition nine times to put himself in a more favourable light and eight times he reduces the vigour of the positive expressions of himself.<sup>6</sup> In reflecting on the results of his preaching the message he had discovered, Scott originally described the hearers as having “an earnest concern, and anxiety about their souls. In the last edition of his lifetime he adds the words “they appeared truly penitent, and real believers,” (Endnote, 372). Scott’s memory of the respondents to his preaching at that time is clearly more favourable. On the other hand, Scott mutes his vigour when speaking of the results of his preaching as seen when he changes his description of the results from “a new, and entirely unexpected effect” to “a new and unexpected effect” (Endnote, 247).

With all the trials Scott had during his ministry, it is not surprising that he makes the following editorial adjustments concerning his view of the sacred office. Earlier Scott saw the ministry as “my ministerial trust” and later spoke of it as “the ministerial office” (Endnote, 533). The matter of the office being a “trust” is again deleted a few lines later when Scott changes the statement “declare the message which I had in trust” to “declare my message” (Endnote, 533). When Scott initially described his quest for wisdom through the Bible he stated “As a Christian, and still more as a Minister, I therefore”. As an older man he merely states “I therefore”.

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<sup>6</sup> See endnotes 274, 360 (twice), 372, 405, 488, 532, 540, 579. Note also how he tones down boastful comments--247, 299, 307, 362, 471, 512, 542, 578.



While some of the changes appear to cancel each other out, it is very evident that Scott is moving more towards the middle in his self-analysis and reducing the breadth of his statements.

In general, however, the thrust of the two editions remain the same, as he himself insists, reflecting an Evangelical position, typical to a Calvinist of his time, one which upheld a firm scholarly approach, a controlled use of the emotions in religious rhetoric and a strong social sense, all of which explain in some way the impact he had on people in his own time and on those, like Newman and Spurgeon, who came after him.

The text which follows is a diplomatic edition of the 1821 edition which appears to be the last edition Scott authorized, although until much further biographical work is done, it cannot be certain how much he directly oversaw its publication. All textual variants are to the 1779 edition. Square brackets indicate an editorial insertion; all footnotes are editorial insertions as well. The reader will note that Scott was not as concerned as his latter-day evangelical descendants are with absolute accuracy in quoting the scriptural text. In cases where he does not follow the Authorized Version precisely, I have noted the reference with a 'Cf.' Often Scott uses direct quotations from Scripture without acknowledging them with quotation marks; in these cases I have also indicated the source. Where Scott has used square brackets, I have entered double square brackets. For details on the individuals and books mentioned in the text the

reader is directed to the biographical section in the Appendices below. A glossary of rare or obsolete words has also been added as an appendix.

**Thomas Scott**  
**The Force of Truth**

**Edited from the Edinburgh, 1821 Edition**  
**with Textual Variants from the First London, 1779 Edition**

**THE  
FORCE OF TRUTH;  
  
AN  
AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.**

By The Rev. THOMAS SCOTT,  
Rector of Aston, Sandford, Bucks.

Ut si quis asselum  
In campo doceat parentem currere fraenis.

[As if one would teach an ass to run on the race track, directed by reins.]

Horace. [*Satires* 1:1, 92]

Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt. Who teacheth like him? Job xi. 12.; xxxvi.22.

TWELFTH EDITION.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for James Robertson, Wm. Whyte & Co. Fairbairn & Anderson, (successors to Mr Creech), Wm. Oliphant, and Waugh & Innes, Edinburgh; Chalmers and Collins and Wardlaw and Cuninghame, Glasgow; Beilby & Knotts, Birmingham; James Finlay, Newcastle-On-Tyne; James Nisbet; Burton, Smith, & Co., Geo. Offor, A. A. Paris, W. Whittemore, Francis Westley, and B. J. Holdsworth, London.

1821

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.<sup>1</sup>

**PREFACE  
TO THE  
FIFTH EDITION.**

Almost twenty years have now elapsed since the ensuing Narrative was first published. During this time the Author has had abundant opportunities of examining, over and over again, the principles which he then intended to inculcate. If, therefore, he had, on further reflection, materially altered his sentiments, he should have thought himself bound, by the strongest obligations, to retract what he had erroneously advanced. But he is thankful that, on the contrary, he feels it incumbent on him to declare most solemnly, as in the presence of God, that every thing which he has since experienced, observed, heard, and read, has concurred in establishing his most assured confidence, that the doctrines, recommended in this publication, are the grand and distinguishing peculiarities of genuine Christianity.

Very many *verbal* corrections, with a few retrenchments and additions, will be found in this edition. In improvements of this kind, the Author has bestowed considerable pains; but, he has been *scrupulously*, and almost *superstitiously*, careful to admit no alteration, which can in the least degree change the meaning of any passage.

He feels thankful, that the leading desire of his heart, in publishing a work, which seems to relate almost exclusively to himself and his own little concerns, has not been wholly disappointed: but, he would earnestly request the prayers of all, who favour the doctrines here inculcated, for a more abundant and extensive blessing on this, and all his other feeble endeavours, to 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' [Jude 1:3]

*Chapel-Street, Oct. 16, 1798.*

N.B. The First Edition was dated Feb. 26, 1779, when the author was curate of Ravenstone and Weston-Underwood, near Olney, Bucks.

Although the following Treatise has been published upwards of thirty years, as yet it is but little known to many of the friends of truth; there having been none but London editions to be met with, and of course the circulation confined. -- To gratify readers with a much neater edition of the book than any hitherto printed, without

increasing the price; and that the 'earnest request' of the author may be more generally complied with, and the 'doctrines' he inculcates more fully known, have been leading motives in publishing the present edition. -- For the accommodation of those who wish a superior copy, a few are thrown off on fine paper.<sup>1</sup>

## THE FORCE OF TRUTH

### PART 1.

*An Account of the State of the Author's Mind and Conscience in the early part of his Life; especially shewing, what his sentiments and conduct were, at the beginning of that change of which he proposes to give the history.<sup>2</sup>*

Though I was not educated in what is commonly considered as ignorance of God and religion; yet, till the sixteenth year of my age, I do not remember that I ever was under any serious conviction of being a sinner, in danger of wrath, or in need of mercy; nor did I ever, during this part<sup>3</sup> of my life, that I recollect, offer one *heartly* prayer to God in secret. 'Being alienated from God through the ignorance that was in me,' [Cf. Eph. 4:18] I lived without God in the world; [Cf. Eph.2:12], and as utterly neglected to pay him any voluntary service, as if I had been an *Atheist* in principle.

But, about my sixteenth year, I began to see that I was a sinner, I was indeed a leper<sup>4</sup> in every part, there being 'no health in me;' [Cf. Jer. 8:22], but out of many external indications of inward depravity, conscience discovered and reproached me with one especially;<sup>5</sup> and I was, for the first time, disquieted with apprehensions of the wrath of an offended [2] God. My attendance at the Lord's table was expected about the same time; and though I was very ignorant of the meaning and end of that sacred ordinance; yet this circumstance, uniting with accusations<sup>6</sup> of my conscience, brought an awe upon my spirits, and interrupted my before undisturbed course of sin.

Being, however, an utter stranger to the depravity and helplessness of fallen nature, I had no doubt that I could amend my life whenever I pleased. Previously therefore to communicating, I set about an unwilling reformation; and, procuring a form of prayer, I attempted<sup>7</sup> to pay my secret addresses to the Majesty of heaven. Having in this manner silenced my conscience, I partook of the ordinance: I held my resolutions also, and continued my devotions, such as they were, for a short time<sup>8</sup>; but they were<sup>9</sup> a weariness and a task to me; and, temptations soon returning, I relapsed; so that my prayer -- book was thrown aside, and no more thought of, till my conscience was again alarmed by the next warning given for the celebration of the

Lord's supper. Then the same ground was gone over again, and with the same issue. My 'goodness was like the morning dew that passeth away:' and loving sin and disrelishing religious duties as much as ever, I returned, as 'the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire.' [2 Peter 2:22]

With little variation, this was my course of life for nine years: but in that time<sup>10</sup> I had such experience of my own weakness, and the superior force of temptation, that I secretly concluded reformation in my case to be impracticable: 'Can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, or the leopard his [3] spots?' [Jer. 13:23] I was experimentally convinced that I was equally unable,<sup>11</sup> with the feeble barrier of resolutions and endeavours, to stem the torrent of my impetuous inclinations, when swelled by welcome, suitable, and powerful temptations: and being ignorant that God had reserved this to himself as his own work, and had engaged to do it for the poor sinner who, feeling his own insufficiency, is heartily desirous to have it done by him, I stifled my convictions as well as I could, and put off my repentance to *a more convenient season*. [Cf. Acts 24:25]

But, being of a reflecting turn, and much alone, my mind was almost constantly employed. Aware of the uncertainty of life, I was disquieted with continual apprehensions, that *this more convenient season* would never arrive; especially as, through<sup>12</sup> an unconfirmed state of health, I had many warnings and near prospects of death and eternity.<sup>a</sup> For a long time I entertained no doubt that impenitent sinners would be<sup>13</sup> miserable forever in hell: and at some seasons such amazing reflections upon this awful subject forced themselves into my mind, that I was overpowered by them<sup>14</sup>, and my fears became<sup>15</sup> intolerable. At such times my extemporary cries for mercy were so wrestling, and persevering, that I was scarcely able to give over; though at others I lived without prayer<sup>16</sup> of any sort! Yet, in my darkest hours, though my conscience was awakened to discover more and more sinfulness in my whole behaviour, there remained a hope<sup>17</sup> that I should one day repent and turn unto God. If this hope was from myself, it was a horrid presumption; but the event makes me willing to acknowledge a persuasion that it was from the Lord: [4] for, had it not been for this hope, I would probably have given way to temptations, which frequently assaulted me, to put an end to my own life, in proud discontent with my lot in this world, and mad despair about another.

A hymn of *Dr Watts*, (in his admirable little book for children) entitled, '*The all-seeing God*,' at this time fell in my way:<sup>b</sup> I was much affected with it, and having

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<sup>a</sup> Scott's near death experiences are referred to briefly in *LTS*, p. 9, as "very dangerous fevers" and a near fatal blow to the head.

<sup>b</sup> In *Watts Divine Songs* there are 35 songs for children. See *Works of Isaac Watts*, Vol. 4, (London, J. Barfield, Wardour-Street, 1810), pp. 389-404. Some of the titles to the hymns include, *Praise for Creation and Providence*, *Heaven and Hell*, *The Danger of Delay* and *Against Lying*. The hymn "The all-seeing God" includes verses such as:

Almighty God, thy piercing eye

committed it to memory, was frequently repeating it, and thus continually led to reflect on my guilt<sup>18</sup> and danger. -- Parents may, from this inconsiderable circumstance, be reminded, that it is of great importance to store their children's memories with useful matter<sup>19</sup>, instead of suffering them to be furnished with such corrupting trash as is commonly taught them. They know not what use God may make of these early rudiments of instruction in future life.

At this period, though I was the slave of sin, yet, my conscience not being pacified, and my principles not greatly corrupted, there seemed some hope concerning me; but at length Satan took a very effectual method of silencing my convictions<sup>20</sup>, that I might sleep securely in my sins; and justly was I given over to a strong delusion to believe a lie, [Cf. 2 Thess. 2:11] when I held the truth that I did know in unrighteousness [Cf. Rom. 1:18], I met with a *Socinian* comment on the Scriptures,<sup>c</sup> and greedily<sup>21</sup> drank the poison, because it quieted my fears and flattered my abominable pride. The whole system coincided exactly with my inclinations and the state of my mind. In reading this exposition<sup>22</sup>, sin seemed to lose its native ugliness, and to appear a very small and tolerable evil; man's imperfect obedience seemed to shine with an excellency almost divine; and God [5] appeared so entirely and necessarily merciful, that he could not make any of his creatures miserable without contradicting his natural propensity. These things influenced my mind so powerfully, that I was enabled to consider myself<sup>23</sup>, notwithstanding a few little blemishes, as upon the whole a very worthy being. At the same time, the mysteries of the gospel being explained away,<sup>24</sup> or brought down to the level of man's comprehension, by such<sup>25</sup> proud and corrupt, though specious, reasonings; by acceding to these sentiments, I was, in my own opinion, in point of understanding and discernment, exalted to a superiority above the generality<sup>26</sup> of mankind; and I pleased myself<sup>27</sup> in looking down with contempt upon such as were weak enough to believe the orthodox doctrines. Thus I generally soothed my conscience: and if at any time I was uneasy at the apprehension that I did not thoroughly *deserve* eternal happiness,<sup>28</sup> and was not entirely fit for heaven; the same book afforded me a soft pillow on which to lull myself to sleep: it *argued*<sup>29</sup>, and I then thought, *proved*, that there were no *eternal* torments; and it

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Strikes through the shades of night;  
And our most secret actions lie  
All open to thy sight.  
There's not a sin that we commit,  
Nor wicked word we say,  
But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,  
Against the judgment day.

<sup>c</sup> With reference to the Socinian comment, Scott says, "The comment mentioned in the Force of Truth was directly Socinian: it was published in weekly numbers in folio, about the year 1762 or 1763; and was said to be written by a society of gentlemen. It made altogether five moderate size volumes. There was a considerable degree of specious reasoning, and ingenuity in the management of their arguments, but it seems to me that it did not spread very wide; for I have not met with more than one copy of it since I entered into holy orders, and I find but few people who are acquainted with it." *LPTS*, p. 113f.



insinuated that there were *no* torments except for notorious sinners, and that such as should just fall short of heaven would sink into their original nothing. With this welcome scheme I silenced all my fears; and told my accusing conscience, that if I fell short of heaven I should be annihilated, and never be sensible of my loss.

By experience I am well acquainted with Satan's intention, in employing so many of his servants to invent and propagate these pestilent errors<sup>30</sup>, whether in speculation or practice, that have in all ages [6] corrupted and enervated the pure and powerful doctrine of the gospel; for they lead to forgetfulness of God and security in sin, and are deadly poison to every soul that imbibes them, unless a miracle of grace prevent. Such, on the one hand, are all the superstitious doctrines of popery: purgatory, penances, absolutions, indulgences, merits of good works, and the acceptableness of will -- worship [Cf. Col. 2:23], and uncommanded observances; what are these but engines of the Devil to keep men quiet in their sins? Man, resolved to follow the dictates of his depraved inclination, and not to bound his pursuits and enjoyments by the limits<sup>31</sup> of God's holy law, catches at any thing to soften the horrible thought of eternal misery. This is the awakening reflection, God's sword in the conscience, which it is Satan's business by all his diabolical artifices, to endeavour to sheath, blunt, or turn aside; knowing, that while this alarming apprehension is present to the soul, he can never obtain possession of it in peace<sup>32</sup>. -- by such inventions, therefore, as these, he takes care to furnish the sinner with that which he seeks, and to enable him to walk according to the course of this wicked world, and the desires of depraved nature, without being disturbed by such dreadful thoughts. The same, on the other hand, is the tendency of all those speculations of reasoning men, which set God's attributes at variance with each other; which represent the Supreme Governor as so *weakly* merciful, that he regards neither the demands of his justice, the glory of his holiness, the veracity of his word, nor the peaceable order and subordination of the universe; which explain away all the mysteries of the gospel; and repre- [7] sent sin, that fruitful root of evil, that enemy of God, that favourite of Satan, as a very little thing, scarcely noticed by the Almighty, and which, contrary to the Scriptures, and universal experience and observation, would persuade us that man is not a depraved creature.

To these latter sentiments I acceded, and maintained them as long as I could; and I did it, most assuredly, because they soothed my conscience, freed me from the intolerable<sup>33</sup> fears of damnation, and enabled me to think favourably of myself. For *these reasons alone*<sup>34</sup>, I loved and chose this ground: I fixed myself upon it, and there fortified myself by all the arguments and reasonings I could meet with. These things I wished to believe: and I had my wish; for at length I did most confidently believe them. Being taken captive in this snare of Satan, I should here have perished with a lie in my right hand, had not that Lord, whom I dishonoured, snatched me as a brand from the burning! [Cf. Amos 4:11]

In this awful state<sup>35</sup> of mind I attempted to obtain permission<sup>36</sup> into *Holy Orders!* Wrapt up in the proud notion of the dignity of human nature, I had lost sight of the evil of sin, and thought little of my own sinfulness; I was filled with a selfimportant[sic] opinion of my own worth, and the depth of my understanding: and

I had adopted a system of religion accommodated to that foolish pride; having almost wholly discarded mysteries from my creed, and regarding with sovereign contempt those who believed them. As far as I understood such controversies, I was nearly a *Socinian* and *Pelagian*, [8] and wholly an *Arminian*:<sup>37</sup> yet, to my shame be it spoken, I sought to obtain admission into the ministry, in a church whose doctrines are diametrically opposed to all the three; without once concerning myself about those barriers which the wisdom of our forefathers has placed around her, purposely to prevent the intrusion of such dangerous heretics as I then was.

While I was preparing for this solemn office, I lived as before in known sin, and in utter neglect of prayer: my whole preparation consisting of [9] nothing else than an attention to those studies, which were more immediately requisite<sup>38</sup> for reputedly passing through the previous examination.

Thus, with a heart full of pride and wickedness<sup>39</sup>; my life polluted with many unrepented, unforsaken sins; without one cry for mercy, one prayer for direction or assistance, or a blessing upon what I was about to do; after having concealed my real sentiments under the mask of general expressions; after having subscribed articles directly contrary to what I believed; and after having blasphemously declared, in the presence of God and of the congregation, in the most solemn manner, sealing it with the Lord's Supper, that I judged myself to be 'inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take that office upon me;' (not knowing or believing that there was a Holy Ghost;) on *September* the 20th, 1772, I was ordained a *Deacon*.

For ever blessed be the God of all long-suffering and mercy, who had patience with such a rebel and blasphemer; such an irreverent trifler with his Majesty; and such a presumptuous intruder into his sacred ministry! I never think of this daring wickedness without being filled with amazement that I am out of hell; without admiring<sup>40</sup> that gracious God, who permitted such an atrocious sinner to live, yea, to serve him, and with acceptance, I trust, to call him father; and as his minister to speak in his name: -- 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy

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<sup>4</sup> Following footnote entered in fifth edition: Possibly some readers may not fully understand the import of these terms: and for their benefit I would observe, that the *Socinians* consider Christ as a mere man, and his death merely as an example of patience, and a confirmation of his doctrine, and not as a real atonement satisfactory to divine justice for man's sins. They deny the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, and do not admit that all Christians experience his renewing, sanctifying, and comforting influences; and they generally reject the doctrine of eternal punishments.--The *Pelagians* deny original sin, and explain away the scriptural history of the fall of man. They do not allow the total depravity of human nature, but account for the wickedness of the world from bad examples, habits, and education. They suppose men to possess an ability, both natural and moral, of becoming pious and holy, without a new creation or regeneration of the heart by the Holy Spirit: and they contend for the *freedom of the will*, not only as constituting us voluntary agents, accountable for our conduct, but as it consists in *exemption from the bondage of innate carnal propensities*; so that man has in himself sufficient resources for his recovery to holiness by his own exertions.--The *Arminians* deny the doctrines of gratuitous personal election to eternal life, and of the final perseverance of all true believers: and numbers of them hold the doctrine of justification by works *in part at least*; and verge in some degree to the Pelagian system, in respect of the first moving cause in the conversion of sinners. (5th Ed.)

name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases; [10] who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.' [Psa. 103:1-4] May I love<sup>41</sup>, and very humbly and devoutly serve, that God, who hath multiplied his mercies, in abundantly pardoning my complicated provocations!

I had considerable difficulties to surmount in obtaining admission into the ministry, arising from my peculiar circumstances; which likewise rendered my conduct the more inexcusable: and my views, as far as<sup>42</sup> I can ascertain them, were these three: -- A desire of a less laborious and more comfortable way of procuring a livelihood, than otherwise I had the prospect of: -- the expectation of more leisure to employ in reading, of which I was inordinately fond: -- and a proud conceit of my abilities, with a vain-glorious imagination that I should some time distinguish and advance myself in the literary world. These were my ruling motives in taking this bold step: motives as opposite to those which should influence men to enter this sacred office, as pride<sup>43</sup> is opposite to humility, ambition to contentment in a low estate, and a willingness to be the least of all, and the servant of all; as opposite as love of self, of the world, of filthy lucre, and slothful ease, is to the love of God, of souls, and of the laborious work of the ministry. To me, therefore, be the shame<sup>44</sup> of this heinous sin, and to God be all the glory of over-ruling it<sup>45</sup> for good, I trust, both to unworthy me, and to his dear people, 'the church which he hath purchased with his own blood.' [Acts 20:28]

My subsequent conduct was suitable to these motives. No sooner was I fixed in a curacy, than, [11] with close application, I sat down to the study of the learned languages,<sup>6</sup> and such other subjects as I considered most needful, in order to lay the foundation of my future advancement. And, Oh! that I were<sup>46</sup> now as diligent in serving God, as I was then in serving self and ambition! I spared no pains, I shunned, as much as I well could, all acquaintances and diversions, and retrenched from my usual hours of sleep, that I might keep more closely to this business. As a minister, I attended just enough to the public duties of my office<sup>47</sup> to support a decent character, which I deemed subservient to my main design; and, from the same principle, I aimed at morality in my outward deportment, and affected seriousness in my conversation. As to the rest, I still lived in the practice of what I knew to be sinful, and in the entire neglect of all sacred religion; if ever inclined to pray, conscious guilt stopped my mouth, and I seldom went farther than 'God be merciful unto me.' [Luke 18:13]

Perceiving, however, that my *Socinian* principles were very disreputable, and, being conscious from my own experience that they were unfavourable to morality, I concealed them in a great measure; both for my credit's sake, and from a sort of desire I entertained (subservient to my main design) of successfully inculcating the practice of the moral duties upon those to whom I preached. My studies indeed lay very little in divinity; but this little all opposed that part of my scheme, which respected the punishment of the wicked in the other world: and, therefore, (being now removed to

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\* The learned languages are Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

a distance from those books<sup>48</sup> [12] whence I had imbibed my sentiments, and from the reasonings contained in them, by which I had learned to defend them<sup>49</sup>.) I began gradually to be shaken in my former confidence, and once more to be under some apprehensions of eternal misery. Being also steadily employed, with the appearance of solemnity, in the public worship of God, whilst I neglected and provoked him in secret, my conscience clamorously reproached me with base hypocrisy: and I began to conclude, that if eternal torments were reserved for any sinners, I certainly should be one of the number. Thus I was again filled with anxious fears and terrifying alarms: especially as I was continually meditating upon what might be the awful consequences, should I be called hence by sudden death. Even my close application to study could not soothe my conscience nor quiet my fears; and, under the affected air of cheerfulness, I was truly miserable.

This was my state of mind when the change I am about to relate began to take place. How it commenced; in what manner, and by what steps, it proceeded; and how it was completed, will be the subject of the Second Part. -- I shall conclude this by observing, that, though staggered in my favourite sentiment before mentioned, and though my views of the person of Christ were verging towards *Arianism*, yet, in my other opinions, I was more confirmed than ever. What those opinions were, I have already briefly declared; and they will occur again, and be more fully explained, as I proceed to relate the manner in which I was constrained to renounce them, one after another, [13] and to accede to those that were directly contrary to them<sup>50</sup>. Let it suffice to say, that I was full<sup>51</sup> of proud self-sufficiency, very positive, and very obstinate; and, being situated in the neighbourhood of some of those whom the world calls *Methodists*,<sup>f</sup> I joined in the prevailing sentiment; held them in sovereign contempt; spoke of them with derision; declaimed against them from the pulpit, as persons full of bigotry, enthusiasm, and spiritual pride; laid heavy things to their charge; and endeavoured to prove the doctrines, which I supposed them to hold (for I had never read their books), to be dishonourable to God, and destructive to morality. And, though in some companies I chose to conceal part<sup>52</sup> of my sentiments, and in all affected to speak as a friend to universal toleration; yet, scarcely any person can be more proudly and violently prejudiced against both their persons and principles than I then was. [14]

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<sup>f</sup> Following footnote entered in fifth edition: *Methodist, as a stigma of reproach*, was first applied to Mr. Wesley, Mr. Whitefield, and their followers; to those who, professing an attachment to our established Church, and disclaiming the name of Dissenters, were not conformists in point of parochial order, but had separate seasons, places, and assemblies, for worship. The term has since been extended by many to all persons, whether clergy or laity, who preach or profess the doctrines of the Reformation, as expressed in the articles and liturgy of our Church. For this fault they must all submit to bear the reproachful name, especially the ministers; nor will the most regular and peaceable compliance with the injunctions of the Rubric exempt them from it, if they avow the authorized, but in a great measure exploded, doctrines to which they have subscribed. My acquaintance hitherto has been solely with Methodists of the latter description; and I have them alone in view when I use the term.

## PART II.

*A History of the Change which has taken place in the Author's Sentiments: with the manner in which<sup>53</sup>, and the means by which, it was at length effected.*

In *January*, 1774, two of my parishioners, a man and his wife, lay at<sup>54</sup> the point of death. I had heard of the circumstance, but<sup>55</sup>, according to my general custom, not being sent for, I took no notice of it; till one evening, the woman being now dead and the man dying, I heard that my neighbour Mr. N[ewton]<sup>56</sup> had been several times to visit them.<sup>b</sup> Immediately my conscience reproached me with being shamefully negligent<sup>57</sup>, in sitting at home within a few doors of dying persons, my general hearers, and never going to visit them. Directly it occurred to me, that, whatever contempt I might have for Mr. N's doctrines,<sup>i</sup> I must acknowledge his practice to be more consistent with the ministerial character than my own. He must have more zeal and love for souls than I had, or he would not have walked so far to visit, and supply my lack of care to, those who, as far as I was concerned, might have been left to perish in their sins.

This reflection affected me so much, that, without delay, and very earnestly, yea, with tears [Cf. Heb. 12:17], I besought the Lord<sup>58</sup> to forgive my past neglect: and I resolved thenceforth to be more attentive to this duty; which resolution, though at first formed [15] in ignorant dependence on my own strength, I have, by divine grace, been enabled hitherto to keep. -- I went immediately to visit the survivor; and the affecting sight of one person already dead, and another expiring, in the same chamber, served more deeply to impress<sup>59</sup> my serious convictions: so that from that time I have constantly visited the sick of my parishes, as far as I have had opportunity; and have endeavoured, to the best of my knowledge, to perform that essential part of a parish-minister's duty.

Some time after this, a friend<sup>j</sup> recommended to my perusal the conclusion of *Bishop Burnet's 'History of his own Time.'* especially that part which respects the clergy. It had the intended effect: I was considerably instructed and impressed by it; I was convinced that my entrance into the ministry had been the result of very wrong

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<sup>a</sup> In *LTS*, p. 61, John Scott says, "It can hardly be needful to say, that this was the Rev. John Newton, then curate of Olney, afterwards rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London. His name stands blank...in the ...'Force of Truth'."

<sup>b</sup> At this time Newton was minister at Olney and Scott at Ravenstone and Weston-Underwood. The distance between these places would be about 5 miles.

<sup>i</sup> John Newton was a Calvinist as understood in the Articles of Faith of the Anglican Church.

<sup>j</sup> "Bartholomew Higgins, Esq. senior, was the friend mentioned in the 'Force of Truth,' who induced me to read the conclusion of Bishop Burnet's *History of his Own Time.*" *LTS*, p. 64

motives, was preceded by a very unsuitable preparation, and accompanied with very improper conduct. Some uneasiness<sup>60</sup> was also excited in my mind concerning my neglect of the important duties<sup>61</sup> of that high calling: and, though I was enslaved by sin, and too much engaged in other studies, and in love with this present world<sup>62</sup> [Cf. 2 Tim. 4:10], to relinquish my flattering pursuit of reputation and preferment, and change the course of my life, studies, and employments; yet, by intervals, I experienced desires and purposes, at some future period, of devoting myself wholly to the work of the ministry, in the manner to which he exhorts the clergy.

All these things increased the clamorous remonstrances of my conscience; and at this time<sup>63</sup> I lived without any secret religion, because without [16] some reformation of my conduct, as a man and a minister, I did not dare to pray. My convictions would no longer be silenced or appeased<sup>64</sup>; and they became so intolerably troublesome, that I resolved to make one more effort towards amendment. In good earnest, and not totally without seeking the assistance of the Lord by prayer, I now attempted to break the chains, with which Satan had hitherto held my soul in bondage: and it pleased the Lord that I should obtain some considerable advantages. Part of my grosser defilements I was enabled to relinquish, and to enter upon a *form of devotion*<sup>65</sup>. *Formal* enough indeed it was in some respects<sup>66</sup>; for I neither knew that Mediator through whom, nor that Spirit by whom, prayers are offered with acceptance unto the Father<sup>67</sup>: yet, though utterly in the dark as to the true and living Way to the throne of grace, I am persuaded there were even then seasons, when I was enabled to rise above a mere form, and to offer petitions so far *spiritual* as to be accepted and answered.

I was now somewhat<sup>68</sup> reformed in my outward conduct; 'but the renewing in the spirit of my 'mind,'[cf. Rom. 12:2] if begun, was scarcely discernable. As my life was externally less wicked and ungodly, my heart grew more proud<sup>69</sup>; the idol *self* was the object of my adoration and obeisance; my worldly advancement was more eagerly sought than ever; some flattering prospects seemed to open, and I was resolved to improve my advantages to the uttermost. At the same time every thing tended to increase my good opinion of myself; I was treated with kindness and friendship by persons, from [17] whom I had no reason to expect it; my preaching was well received, my acquaintance seemed to be courted, and my foolish heart readily believed<sup>70</sup> that all this and much more was due to my superior worth: while conscience, which, by its mortifying [Cf. Col. 3:5], accusations, had been useful to preserve some sense of unworthiness in my mind, was now silenced, or<sup>71</sup> seemed to authorise that pride which it had checked before. And, having the advantage of conversing in general with persons, who either favoured my sentiments, or who, from good manners, or because they saw it would be in vain, did not contradict me; I concluded that my scheme of doctrine was the exact standard of truth, and that, by my superior abilities, I was capable of confuting or convincing all who were otherwise minded. In this view of the matter I felt an eager desire of entering into a religious controversy, especially with a *Calvinist*: for many resided in the neighbourhood, and I heard various reports concerning their tenets.

It was<sup>72</sup> at this time that my correspondence with Mr. N\_\_\_\_\_ commenced. At a visitation, *May, 1775*, we exchanged a few words on a controverted subject, in the room<sup>73</sup> among the clergy, which I believe drew many eyes upon us. At that time he prudently declined the discourse; but a day or two after he sent me a short note with a little book for my perusal. This was the very thing I wanted: and I gladly embraced the opportunity which, according to my wishes, seemed now to offer; God knoweth, with no inconsiderable expectations that my arguments would prove irresistibly convincing, and that I should have [18] the honour of rescuing a well meaning person from his enthusiastical delusions.

I had indeed by this time conceived a very favourable opinion of him, and a sort of respect for him; being acquainted with<sup>74</sup> the character he sustained even among some persons, who expressed<sup>75</sup> a disapprobation of his doctrines. They were forward to commend him as a benevolent, disinterested, inoffensive person, and a laborious minister.<sup>k</sup> But, on the other hand, as I looked upon his religious sentiments as rank fanaticism; and entertained a very contemptible opinion of his abilities, natural and acquired. Once I had had the curiosity to hear him preach; and, not understanding his sermon, I made a very great jest of it, where I could do it without giving offence. I had also read one of his publications;<sup>l</sup> but, for the same reason, I thought the greater part of it whimsical, paradoxical, and unintelligible.

Concealing, therefore, the true motives of my conduct under the offer of friendship, and a professed desire to know the truth, (which, amidst all my self-sufficiency and prejudice, I trust the Lord had even then given me;) with the greatest affectation of candour, and of a mind open to conviction, I wrote him a long letter; purposing to draw from him such an avowal and explanation of his sentiments, as might introduce a controversial discussion of our religious differences.

The event by no means answered my expectation. He returned a very friendly and long answer to my letter; in which he carefully avoided the mention of those doctrines which he knew would offend me. He declared he believed me to be [19] one who feared God, and was under the teaching of his Holy Spirit; that he gladly accepted my offer of friendship, and was no ways inclined to dictate to me; but that, leaving me to the guidance of the Lord, he would be glad, as occasion served from time to time,

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<sup>k</sup> Scott was favourably informed about Newton in the summer of 1773, when residing in Stoke. The informant was an apothecary at Olney who attended Newton's preaching and spoke highly of Newton's character to Scott, while indicating he was not sure what to make of Newton's preaching. *LTS*, p. 61.

<sup>l</sup> This publication is not identified in Scott's other writings.

to bear testimony to the truths of the gospel, and to communicate his sentiments to me on any subject, with all the confidence of friendship.<sup>m</sup>

In this manner our correspondence began; and it was continued in the interchange of nine or ten letters,<sup>n</sup> till *December* the same year. Throughout I held my purpose and he his. I made use of every endeavour to draw him into controversy; and filled my letters with definitions, enquiries, arguments, objections, and consequences; requiring explicit answers. He, on the other hand, shunned everything controversial as much as possible, and filled his letters with the most useful and least offensive instructions: except that now and then he dropped hints concerning the necessity, the true nature, and the efficacy of faith, and the manner in which it was to be sought and obtained; and concerning some other matters, suited<sup>o</sup>, as he judged, to help me forward in my enquiry after truth. But they much offended my prejudices, afforded me matter of disputation, and at that time were of little use to me.

This however, is certain, that, through the whole of the correspondence, I disputed, with all the arguments I could devise, against almost everything which he advanced; and was very much nettled at many things that he asserted. I read great part of his letters, and some books which he sent me,<sup>o</sup> [20] with much indifference and contempt. I construed his declining controversy into an acknowledgement of weakness, and triumphed in many companies as having confuted his arguments. And, finally, when I could not obtain my end, at my instance the correspondence was dropped.

His letters and my answers are now by me: and on a careful perusal of them, compared with all I can recollect concerning this matter, I gave this as a faithful account of the correspondence. His letters will,<sup>77</sup> I hope, shortly be made public, being such as promise greater advantage<sup>78</sup> to others, than, through my proud and contentious spirit, I experienced from them. Mine deserve only to be forgotten, except as they are useful to me to remind me what I was, and to mortify my pride: as they illustrate my friend's patience and candour in so long bearing with my ignorance and arrogance; and, not withstanding my unteachable quarrelsome temper, continuing his benevolent labours for my good: and especially as they remind me of the goodness of God, who, though he abominates and resists the proud, yet knows how to bring down the stout heart, not by the iron rod of his wrath, but by the golden sceptre<sup>79</sup> of his grace.

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<sup>m</sup> In Newton's letter to Scott dated June 23, 1775, he says: "It is the strain of evident sincerity which runs through your letters, that gives me a pleasing confidence the Lord is with you...Follow your heavenly leader, and in his own time and manner he will make your way plain...I set a great value upon your offer of friendship, which, I trust, will not be interrupted on either side, by the freedom with which we mutually express our differences of sentiments, when we are constrained to differ." *Works of John Newton*, p. 171.

<sup>n</sup> For copies of Newton's letters to Scott at this time see *ibid.*, pp. 169-188.

<sup>o</sup> These books include one by Halyburton which Newton does not name. Newton especially recommended Scott read the chapter on Faith and ignore the last chapter on regeneration and justification. *ibid.*, p. 173f.



Thus<sup>80</sup> our correspondence and acquaintance, for the present, were almost wholly broken off; for a long time we seldom met, and then only interchanging a few words on general topics of conversation. Yet, he all along persevered in telling me, to my no small offence, that I should accede one day to his religious principles; that he had stood on my ground, and that I should stand on his: and he constantly informed his friends, that, though, [21] slowly, I was surely, feeling my way to the knowledge of the truth. So clearly could he discern the dawns of grace in my soul, amidst all the darkness of depraved nature, and my obstinate rebellion to the will of God!<sup>81</sup>

This expectation<sup>82</sup> was principally grounded on my conduct in the following circumstances. Immediately after the commencement of our correspondence, in *May 1775*, whilst my thoughts were much engrossed by some hopes of preferment; one Sunday, during the time of divine service, when the psalm was named, I opened the prayer-book to turn to it: but (*accidentally shall I say, or providentially?*) I opened upon the articles of religion; and the eighth,<sup>p</sup> respecting the authority and warrant of the *Athanasian* creed,<sup>q</sup> immediately engaged my attention. My disbelief of the doctrine of a Trinity of *co-equal persons in the unity of the Godhead*, and my pretensions to candour, had both combined to excite my hatred to this creed; for which reasons I have been accustomed to speak of it with contempt, and to neglect reading it officially. No sooner therefore did I read the words, 'That it was to be thoroughly received and believed; for that it might be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture,' than my mind was greatly impressed and affected. The matter of subscription immediately occurred to my thoughts; and from that moment I conceived such scruples about it, that, till my view of the whole system of gospel doctrine was entirely changed, they remained insuperable.

It is wisely said by the son of *Sirach*, 'My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul [22] for temptation.' [Ecclesiasticus 2:1] I had twice before subscribed these articles with the same religious sentiments which I now entertained. But, conscience being asleep, and the service of the Lord no part of my concern, I considered subscription as a matter of course, a necessary form, and very little troubled myself about it. But now, though I was greatly influenced by pride, ambition<sup>83</sup>, and the love of the world; yet, my heart<sup>84</sup> was sincerely towards the Lord, and I dared not to venture on a known sin, deliberately, for the sake of temporal interest. -- *Subscription to articles which I did not believe, paid as a price for church-preferment, I began to look upon<sup>85</sup> as an impious lie, a heinous guilt, that could never truly be repented of without throwing back the wages of iniquity.* The more I pondered it, the more strenuously my conscience protested against it. At length, after a violent conflict

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<sup>p</sup> Article eight of "The Articles of Religion" as printed in *The Book of Common Prayer* reads: "The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture."

<sup>q</sup> Scott would have come upon the Athanasian Creed in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

between interest and conscience, I made known to my patron my scruples<sup>86</sup> and my determination not to subscribe; thus my views of preferment were deliberately given up, and with an increasing family, I was left, as far as mere human prudence could discern, with little other prospect than that of poverty and distress. My objections to the article were, as I now see, groundless: much self-sufficiency<sup>87</sup>, undue warmth of temper, and obstinacy, were betrayed in the management of this affair, for which I ought to be humbled<sup>88</sup>: but my adherence to the dictates of my conscience, and holding fast my integrity in such trying circumstances, I never did, and I trust never shall, repent.

No sooner was my determination known, than I was severely censured<sup>89</sup> by many of my friends. [23] They all, I am sensible, did it from kindness, and they used arguments of various kinds, none of which were suited to produce conviction. But, though I was confirmed<sup>90</sup> in my resolution by the reasonings used to induce me to alter it, they at length were made instrumental in bringing me to this important determination; *not so to believe what any man said, as to take it upon his authority; but to search the word of God with this single intention, to discover whether the articles of the church of England in general, and this creed in particular, were, or were not, agreeable to the Scriptures.*<sup>91</sup> I had studied them in some measure before, for the sake of becoming acquainted with the original languages, and in order thence to bring detached texts to support my own system; and I had a tolerable acquaintance with the historical and preceptive parts of them: but I had not searched this precious repository of divine knowledge, with the *express design of discovering the truth in controverted matters of doctrine.* I had very rarely been troubled with suspicions that I was or might be mistaken; and I now rather thought<sup>92</sup> of becoming better qualified, upon scriptural grounds, to defend my determination, than of being led to any change of sentiments.

However, I set about the enquiry; and the first passage, as I remember, which made me suspect that I might be wrong; was James i. 5. 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.' On considering these words with some attention, I became conscious, that, though I had thought my- [24] self wise<sup>93</sup>, yet assuredly I had obtained none of my wisdom in this manner; for I had never offered one prayer to that effect during the whole course of my life<sup>94</sup>. I also perceived that this text contained a suitable direction, and an encouraging promise<sup>95</sup>, in my present enquiry; and from this time, in my poor manner, I began to ask God to give me this promised wisdom.

Shortly after, I meditated on, and preached from, John vii. 16,17. 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me; if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' I was surprised<sup>96</sup> that I had not before attended to such remarkable words. I discovered that they contained a direction and a promise, calculated to serve as a clue, in extricating<sup>97</sup> the sincere enquirer after truth, from that labyrinth of controversy in which, at his first setting out<sup>98</sup>, he is likely to be bewildered. And, though my mind was too much leavened with the pride of reasoning, to reap that benefit from this precious text, which it is capable

of affording to the soul that is humbly willing to be taught of God; yet, being conscious that I was disposed to risk every thing in doing what I thought his will, I was encouraged with the assurance, that, if I were under a mistake, I should some time discover it.

I was further led to suspect that I might possibly be wrong, because I had not hitherto sought the truth in the proper manner, by attending to Proverbs iii. 5,6: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and [25] he shall direct thy paths.' I could not but know that I had not hitherto<sup>99</sup> *trusted in the Lord with all my heart, nor acknowledged him in all my ways, nor depended on his directions in all my paths;* but that, in my<sup>100</sup> religious speculations, *I had leaned<sup>101</sup> wholly to mine own understanding.*

But, though these and some other passages made, for the present, a great impression upon me, and influenced me to make it a part of my daily prayers, that I might be directed to a right understanding of the word of God; yet, my pride and addictedness to controversy<sup>102</sup> had, as some desperate disease, infected my whole soul, and was not to be cured all at once. -- I was very far indeed from being a little child [Cf. Mark 10:15], sitting humbly and simply at the Lord's feet, to learn from him the very first rudiments of divine knowledge. I had yet no abiding suspicion, that all I had heretofore accounted wisdom was foolishness, and must be unlearned and counted loss, before I could attain to the excellency of the true knowledge of Jesus Christ; for, though I began to allow it probable, that in some few matters I might have been in an error, yet I was still confident that in the main my scheme of doctrine was true. When<sup>103</sup> I was pressed with objections and arguments against any of my sentiments, and when doubts began to arise in my mind, to put off the uneasiness occasioned by them, my constant practice was, to recollect, as far as I could, all the reasonings and interpretations of Scripture on the other side of the question: and when this failed of affording satisfaction, I had recourse to controversial writings. This drew me aside from the pure word of God, rendered me more remiss and formal in prayer, and furnished me with defensive armour against my convictions, with fuel for my passions, and food for my pride and self-sufficiency.

At this time *Locke's 'Reasonableness of Christianity,'* with his '*Vindications*' of it, became my favourite pieces of divinity. I studied this, and many other of *Mr. Locke's* works, with great attention, and a sort of bigotted fondness; taking him almost implicitly for my master, adopting his conclusions<sup>104</sup>, borrowing many of his arguments, and imbibing a dislike to such persons as would not agree<sup>105</sup> with me in my partiality for him. This was of great disservice to me; as, instead<sup>106</sup> of getting forward in my enquiry after truth, I thence collected more ingenious and specious arguments, with which to defend my mistakes.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Following footnote entered in fifth edition: After having spoken so freely of Mr. Locke's divinity, which I once so highly esteemed, it seems but just to acknowledge the vast obligation which the whole religious world is under to that great man for his '*Letters concerning Toleration,*' and his answers to those

But one book which I read at this time, because mentioned with approbation by *Mr. Locke*, was of singular use to me: this was *Bishop Burnet's 'Pastoral Care.'* I found little in it that offended my prejudices, and many things which came home to my conscience respecting my ministerial obligations. I shall lay before the reader a few short extracts, which were most affecting to my [27] own mind. Having mentioned the question proposed to those who are about to be ordained Deacons, 'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministry, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?' he adds, (page 111.) 'Certainly the answer that is made to this ought to be well considered; for, if any one says, 'I trust so,' that yet knows nothing of any such motion, and can give no account of it, he lies to the Holy Ghost, and makes his first approach to the altar with a lie in his mouth, and that not to men, but to God.' And again, (page 112.) 'Shall not he [[God]] reckon with those who dare to run without his mission, pretending *that they trust they have it*, when perhaps they understand not the importance of it; nay, and perhaps some laugh at it, as an enthusiastical question, who yet will go through with the office! They come to Christ for the loaves; they hope to live by the altar and the gospel, how little soever they serve at the one, or preach the other; therefore they will say any thing that is necessary for qualifying them to this, whether true or false.'

Again, (page 122.) having interwoven a great part of the excellent office of the ordination of priests into his argument, concerning the importance and weight of the work of the ministry; he adds, 'Upon the whole matter, either this is all a piece of gross and impudent pageantry, dressed up in grave and lofty expressions, to strike upon the weaker part of mankind, and to furnish the rest with matter to their profane and impious [28] scorn; or it must be confessed that priests come under the most formal and express engagements to constant and diligent labour, that can be possibly contrived or set forth in words.' He concludes this subject, of the ordination-offices, by exhorting all candidates for orders, to read them frequently and attentively, during the time of their preparation; that they may be aware before-hand of the obligations they are about so solemnly to enter into; and to peruse them at least four times in a year, ever after their ordination, to keep in their minds a continual remembrance of their important engagements. How necessary this counsel is, every minister, or candidate for the ministry, must determine for himself: for my part, I had never once read through the office when I was ordained, and was in great measure a stranger to the obligations I was about to enter into, till the very period; nor did I ever afterwards attend to it till this advice put me upon it. The shameful negligence and extreme absurdity of my conduct in this respect are too glaring, not to be perceived, with self-application, by everyone who has been guilty of a similar omission. I would therefore only just

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who wrote against them. The grounds of religious liberty, and the reasons why every one should be left to his own choice, to worship God according to his conscience, were, perhaps, *never generally* understood since the foundation of the world; till, by these publications, Mr. Locke unanswerably made them manifest.

mention, that hearty earnest prayer to God, for his guidance, help, and blessing, may be suitably recommended, as a proper attendant on such a perusal of our obligations.

Again, (page 147.) he thus speaks of a wicked clergyman: 'His whole life has been a course of hypocrisy in the strictest sense of the word, which is the acting of a part, and the counterfeiting another person. His sins have in them all possible aggravations: they are against know- [29] ledge, and against vows, and contrary to his character: they carry in them a deliberate contempt of all the truths and obligations of religion; and if he perishes, he doth not perish alone, but carries a shoal down with him, either of those who have perished in ignorance through his neglect, or of those who have been hardened in their sins through his ill example! -- Again, (page 183) having copiously discoursed on the studies befitting ministers, especially the study of the Scriptures, he adds, 'But to give all these their full effect, a priest that is much in his study, ought to employ a great part of his time in secret and fervent prayer for the direction and blessing of God in his labours, for the constant assistance of his Holy Spirit<sup>107</sup>, and for a lively sense of divine matters; that so he may feel the impressions of them grow deep and strong upon his thoughts: this, and this only will make him go on with his work without wearying, and be always rejoicing in it.'

But the chief benefit which accrued to me from the perusal was<sup>108</sup> this: -- I was excited by it to an attentive<sup>109</sup> consideration of those passages of Scripture<sup>110</sup>, that state the obligations<sup>111</sup> and duties of a minister, which hitherto I had not observed, or to which I had very *loosely* attended<sup>112</sup>. In particular, (it is yet fresh in my memory,) I was greatly affected<sup>113</sup> with considering the charge of precious souls committed to me, and the awful account one day to be rendered of them, in meditating<sup>114</sup> on Ezekiel xxxiii. 7-9. 'So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman<sup>115</sup> unto the house of *Israel*: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, [30] and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man! thou shalt surely die: if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it: if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.' For I was fully convinced, with *Bishop Burnet*, that every minister is as much concerned in this solemn warning as the prophet himself. Acts, xx. 17-35<sup>116</sup>, was another portion of Scripture which, by means of this book, was brought home to my conscience<sup>117</sup>; especially verse 26, 27, 28, which serve as an illustration of the preceding Scripture<sup>118</sup>: 'Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel<sup>119</sup> of God. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.'

In short<sup>120</sup> I was put upon the attentive and repeated perusal of the *Epistles to Timothy* and *Titus*, as containing the sum of a minister's duty in all ages. I searched out and carefully considered every text I could find in the whole Scripture which referred to this argument. I was greatly impressed by 1 Cor. ix 16, 'For necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.' Nor was I less struck with

Coloss. iv. 17, 'Say to *Archippus*, take heed [31] to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.' This was brought to<sup>121</sup> my conscience with power, as if the apostle had in person spoken the words *to me*. But especially I was both instructed and encouraged by meditating upon 1 Peter v. 2-4. 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock: and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'

I hope the reader will excuse my prolixity in speaking on this subject, because in itself it is very important: and though I obtained no new views of gospel truth from *The Pastoral Care*<sup>122</sup>, yet I received such a deep conviction of the difficulty and importance of that work, in which I had thoughtlessly engaged, and of the imminent danger to which my soul would be exposed, should I neglect to devote myself wholly to it; as laid the foundation of all my subsequent conduct and change of sentiments.<sup>123</sup> I was, indeed, guilty of very criminal procrastination, after I had been thus convinced; and, being engaged more than I ought in other matters, I for some time postponed and neglected complying<sup>124</sup> with the dictates of my conscience. But I never lost sight of the instruction I had received, nor ever enjoyed any comfortable reflection<sup>125</sup>, till, having broken off all other engagements, I had given myself up to<sup>126</sup> those studies and duties which pertain to the work of the ministry. And I have cause<sup>127</sup> to bless God, that this book ever came in my way. [32]

Still, however, my self-confidence was very little abated, and I had made no progress in acquiring the knowledge of the truth<sup>128</sup>. I next read *Tillotson's* sermons and *Jortin's* works: and, my time being otherwise engaged, I for a while gave<sup>129</sup> into the indolent custom of transcribing their discourses, with some alterations<sup>130</sup>, to preach to my people. This precluded free meditation on the word of God, and led me to<sup>131</sup> take up my opinions on trust. My preaching was in general that smooth palatable mixture of law and gospel, which corrupts both, by representing the gospel as a *mitigated law*, and as accepting *sincere* instead of *perfect obedience*. -- This system, by flattering pride<sup>132</sup> and prejudice, and soothing the conscience, pleases the careless<sup>133</sup> sinner and self-righteous formalist, but does real good to none; and is in fact a specious and unsuspected kind of Antinomianism.

About this time I foolishly engaged in a course of diversion and visiting, more than I had done since my ordination:<sup>134</sup> This unfitted me for secret prayer and close meditation, and rendered the Scriptures, and other religious studies, insipid and irksome to me, a never-failing consequence of every vain<sup>135</sup> compliance with the world. For a season<sup>136</sup>, therefore, my ardour was damped, my anxiety banished, and my enquiries retarded. I was not, however, permitted entirely to drop my religious pursuits: generally I made it a rule to read something in the Scriptures every day, and to perform a task of daily devotion; but in both I was very formal and lifeless<sup>137</sup>.

Yet, not long after, I was engaged in earnest meditation<sup>138</sup> on our Lord's discourse with *Nicodemus*. [33] (John 111.) I felt an anxious desire to understand this

interesting portion of Scripture; especially to know what it was to be 'born again,' or 'born of the Spirit'<sup>139</sup>, which in five verses our Saviour has<sup>140</sup> three times declared absolutely necessary to salvation. I was convinced it was absurd<sup>141</sup> to suppose, that such strong<sup>142</sup> expressions implied no more than baptism with water. *Tillotson's* controversial sermons on this subject afforded me no satisfaction<sup>143</sup>. Some great and total change I supposed to be intended, not only in the behaviour, but also in the heart. But, not having clearly experienced that change, I could not understand in what it consisted<sup>144</sup>. However, having offered some poor prayers for Divine teaching<sup>145</sup>, I undertook to preach upon it; but I talked very darkly<sup>146</sup>, employed a considerable part of my time in declaiming against visionaries and enthusiasts, and reaped very little benefit from it. Yet, I was so well satisfied with my performance, that, in the course of my correspondence with Mr N., I sent him these sermons for his perusal: and he<sup>147</sup>, in return, sent me some of his own upon the same subject. But though sincerely desirous to understand our Lord's meaning in this important point, I was too proud to be taught by *him*: I cast my eye therefore carelessly over some of them, and returned the manuscript, without closely attending to any thing contained in it.<sup>148</sup>

Nothing material occurred after this, till the next spring, 1776; when I was induced by what I had learned from *Bishop Burnet*, to establish<sup>149</sup> a lecture once a week in one of my parishes, for expounding the Scriptures. This brought many passages, which I had not before<sup>150</sup> observed, under at- [34] tentative consideration: and afforded my<sup>151</sup> reflecting mind abundance of employment, in attempting to reconcile them with each other, and with my scheme of doctrine.

Little progress, however, had been made, when in *May* 1776, I heard a dignified clergyman, in a visitation sermon, recommend *Mr Soame Jennings's 'View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.'* In consequence<sup>152</sup> of this recommendation, I perused it, and not without profit<sup>153</sup>. The truth and importance of the Gospel-revelation appeared, with convincing evidence, to my understanding, and came with efficacy<sup>154</sup> to my heart by reading this book. I received from it more distinct heart-affecting views of the design of God in this revelation of himself, than I had before; and I was put upon much serious reflection<sup>155</sup>, and earnest prayer to be led to<sup>156</sup>, or established in, the truth, concerning the nature and reality of the atonement by the death of Christ; for hitherto I had been in this respect, a *Socinian*<sup>157</sup>, or very little better.

But, to counterbalance this advantage, *Dr Clarke's 'Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity,'* and the controversy which ensued upon its publication, became a favourite part of my study. The *Arian* scheme is<sup>158</sup> so inconsistent with reason, that, when

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\* Soame Jennings' *View* first appeared in 1776. It proved highly popular and reached a tenth edition by 1798 and was translated into several other languages. It produced significant controversy and was regarded as evidence that the author had come to an orthodox theological position.

† *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* was first published in 1712. As this work tended toward Arianism, he was charged with being Arian.

reflecting<sup>159</sup> men, in order to avoid<sup>160</sup> those *mysterious*, and, as they imagine, *unreasonable* conclusions, which, according to the true meaning of words, the Scriptures contain, have become *Arians*<sup>161</sup>, it is wonderful they do not<sup>162</sup>, for the same cause, embrace the *Socinian* system. This is the natural progress of unhumbled reason; from *Arianism* to *Socinianism*; from *Socinianism* to *Deism*; and thence<sup>163</sup> to *Atheism*. [35] Many and awful have been the examples of reasoning and learned men, who, under the name of *Philosophers*, arrogating to themselves the prerogative of superior discernment, have manifested the propriety with which they claimed this pre-eminence<sup>164</sup>, by treading this down-hill road, almost, if not quite to the very bottom.

But when a man has fallen so low as *Socinianism*, not merely for want of information, or by blindly and implicitly adopting the sentiments of other men, but by leaning to his own understanding, and preferring the conclusions of his own reason to the infallible dictates of the Holy Ghost; it is not common for him to return gradually, by<sup>165</sup> the retrograde path, first to *Arianism*, and then to the received<sup>166</sup> doctrine of the Trinity. Yet, this was my case<sup>167</sup> -- *Dr Clarke* appeared to me so undeniably<sup>168</sup> to establish his argument by express scriptural<sup>169</sup> evidences, and so plausibly to defend<sup>170</sup> his system on both sides, and to back his cause<sup>171</sup> with so many seeming authorities; that I found<sup>172</sup> myself unable any longer to maintain my *Socinian* principles, and<sup>173</sup> was constrained to relinquish them as untenable; at the same time I was not aware of the flaw of his reasoning, and the unavoidable consequence<sup>174</sup> of his middle doctrine; namely, 'that the Son and Holy Spirit<sup>175</sup>, however exalted, or dignified with names and titles, must either be *mere creatures*, or that otherwise there must be three Gods.' Not perceiving this, and my newly acquired reverence for Scripture, and my old self-confidence and fondness for reasoning, being, by this conciliating scheme<sup>176</sup>, both humoured; I cordially<sup>177</sup> acceded to his sentiments, and [36] for a long time could not endure any other doctrine.

Nothing further of any consequence occurred, till about *December 1776*, when carelessly taking up *Mr Law's 'Serious Call,'*" a book I had hitherto treated with contempt, I had no sooner opened it, than I was struck with the originality of the work; and the spirit and force of argument with which it is written. I mean merely<sup>178</sup> as to his management of the subjects he treats of; for there are many things in it that I am very far from approving; and it certainly contains as little *gospel* as any religious work I am acquainted with. But<sup>179</sup>, though a very uncomfortable book to a<sup>180</sup> person who is brought under a serious concern for his soul, and deep convictions of sin; it is<sup>181</sup> very useful to prepare the way, to shew the need we have of a Saviour, and to enforce the practice of that holy diligence in the use of means, which the important interests of eternity reasonably demand. This was its use to me. By the perusal of it, I was convinced<sup>182</sup> that I was guilty of great remissness and negligence; that the duties of secret devotion called for far more of my time and attention than had hitherto been

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" The work, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, first appeared in 1729 and its tenth edition was published in 1772. Many evangelicals were influenced by William Law (1686-1761), including George Whitefield, Charles and John Wesley, and Henry Venn.



allotted to them; and that, if I hoped to save my own soul<sup>183</sup>, and the souls of those that heard me, I must in this respect greatly alter my conduct, and increase<sup>184</sup> my diligence in seeking and serving the Lord. From that time I began to study in what manner my devotions might be rendered more fervent and pertinent; I transcribed, and committed to memory<sup>185</sup>, scriptural petitions; I employed some time in reading manuals of devotion; made attempts to [37] compose prayers myself, and became more *frequent* and *earnest*, and, I trust, more *spiritual*, than heretofore, in my secret addresses to the Majesty of heaven.

About this time, after many delays, I complied with the admonitions of my conscience, and disengaged myself from all other<sup>186</sup> employments, with a solemn resolution to leave<sup>187</sup> all my temporal concerns in the hands of the Lord, and entirely to devote myself<sup>188</sup> to the work of the ministry. Being thus become master of all my time, I dropped every other study, and turned the whole current of my reflections and enquiries into<sup>189</sup> another channel; and for several years I scarcely opened<sup>190</sup> a book which treated of any thing besides religion.

The first step I took, after this disengagement, was, to keep *common-place books*; one I had for noting down remarkable passages out of other authors; and another for collecting into one view every text I could meet with in Scripture, respecting the most important and controverted doctrines of the gospel. Though I held this but a short<sup>191</sup> time, (for when my engagements multiplied I dropt it,) yet I found it very useful in bringing me acquainted with many passages of the word of God, to which I had not hitherto much attended; and it prepared the way for writing<sup>192</sup> my sermons, on doctrinal subjects, with the scriptural<sup>193</sup> testimonies concerning the point in hand, in one view before me.

In *January 1777*, I met with a very high commendation of *Mr Hooker's* writings,\* in which the honourable appellation of *Judicious* was bestowed<sup>194</sup> [38] upon him. This excited my curiosity to read his works; which accordingly I did with great profit<sup>195</sup>. In his '*Discourse on Justification*,' (Edit. 1682, page 469,) I met with the following remarkable passage, which, as well for its excellency, as for the effect it had upon<sup>196</sup> my religious views, I shall, though rather<sup>197</sup> long, transcribe: -- 'If our hands did never offer violence to our brethren, a bloody thought did prove us murderers before him [[God.]] If we had never opened our mouth to utter any scandalous, offensive, or hurtful word, the cry of our secret cogitations is heard in the ears of God. If we did not commit the sins, which daily and hourly, in deed, word, or thoughts, we do commit; yet, in the good things which we do, how many defects are there intermingled! God, in that which is done, respecteth the mind and intention of the doer. Cut off then all those things wherein we have regarded our own glory, those things which men do to please men, and to satisfy our own liking; those things which we do by any respect<sup>198</sup>, not sincerely, and purely for the love of God: and a small score will serve

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\* *The Works of Richard Hooker*, [Edited] by J. Gauden, London, 1682. The 'Works' of Hooker had gone through at least nine editions by 1724.

for the number of our righteous deeds. Let the holiest and best thing we do<sup>199</sup> be considered: -- we are never better affected unto God than when we pray; -- yet, when we pray, how are our affections many times distracted! how little reverence do we shew unto the grand Majesty of God<sup>200</sup> unto whom we speak! how little remorse of our own miseries! how little taste of the sweet influence of his tender mercies do we feel! Are we not as unwilling many times to [39] begin, and as glad to make an end, as if in saying, 'Call upon me,' he had set us a very burdensome task? It may seem somewhat extreme which I will speak, therefore let every one judge of it, even as his own heart shall tell him, and no otherwise. I will but only make a demand: if God should yield unto us, not, as unto *Abraham*, if fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, yea, or if ten, good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes the city should not be destroyed; [Cf. Genesis 18:23-33] but, and if he should make us an offer thus large: Search all the generations of men, since the fall of our father *Adam*; find one man that hath done one action, which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and, for that one only man's action, neither men nor angels shall feel the torments which are prepared for both: Do you think, that this ransom, to deliver men and angels, could be found to be among the sons of men? The best things, which we do, have somewhat in them to be pardoned; how then can we do anything meritorious, or worthy to be rewarded? Indeed, God doth liberally promise whatsoever appertaineth to a blessed life, to as many as sincerely keep his law, though they be not exactly able to keep it<sup>201</sup>. Wherefore we acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well, but the meritorious dignity of doing well we utterly renounce. We see how far we are from the perfect righteousness of the law; the little fruit which we have in holiness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound: we put no confidence at all in it; we challenge nothing in the world for it; [40] we dare not call God to reckoning, as if we had him in our debt-books. Our continual suit to him is, and must be, to bear with our infirmities, and pardon our offences.'

I had no sooner read this passage, than I acquired such an insight into the strictness and spirituality of the divine law, and the perfection which a just and holy God, according to that law, cannot but require in all the services of his reasonable creatures; that I clearly perceived my very best duties, on which my main dependence had hitherto been placed, to be merely specious sins; and my whole life appeared to be one<sup>202</sup> continued series of transgression. I now understood the apostle's meaning<sup>203</sup>, when he affirms, that, 'By the works of the law can<sup>204</sup> no flesh be justified before God.' [Gal. 2:16]<sup>205</sup> All my difficulties in this matter vanished; all my distinctions<sup>206</sup> and reasonings about the meaning of the words *law* and *justification*, with all my borrowed criticisms upon them, failed me at once. I could no longer be thus amused; for I was convinced, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that all men were so notoriously transgressors of every law of God, that no man could possibly be justified<sup>207</sup> in his sight by his obedience to any of the divine commandments. I was sensible, that if God should call me into judgment before him, according to the strictness of his perfect law, for the best duty I ever performed, and for nothing else, I must be condemned as a transgressor; for when weighed<sup>208</sup> in these exact balances, it would be found wanting. Thus I was effectually convinced, that, if ever I were saved, it must be in some way of unmerited mercy and grace, though I did not clearly under- [41] stand<sup>209</sup> in what

way till long after. Immediately, therefore, I took for my text Gal. iii.22. 'But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of<sup>210</sup> Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.' And I preached from it according to *Hooker's* doctrine; expressing, as strongly as I could, the defilements of our best actions, and our need of mercy in every thing we do, in order the more evidently to shew that 'salvation is of grace, through faith; -- not of works, lest any man should boast.' [Eph. 2:8-9]<sup>211</sup>

I had not, however, as yet attained to a knowledge of the fulness of that fountain, whence all these polluted streams flow forth so plentifully into our lives and conversation. -- Neither was I then able to receive the following nervous passage concerning justification: (*Hooker*, page 495:) 'The righteousness<sup>212</sup> wherein we must be found, if we will be justified, is not our own; therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us, if we be faithful; for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet, even the man which is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin; him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin remitted through repentance, him God upholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it; taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto by pardoning it; and accepteth him in Jesus Christ as perfectly righteous as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law. Shall I say, *more per-* [42] *fectly* righteous, than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say; but the apostle saith, '*God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*' [2 Cor. 5:21] 'Such we are<sup>213</sup> in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury, whatsoever, it is our comfort, and our wisdom; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered; that God hath made himself the Son of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God.'

Equally determinate and expressive are these words<sup>214</sup>: (page 500.) 'As for such as hold, with the Church of *Rome*, that we cannot be saved by Christ alone without works, they do, not only by a circle of consequence, but directly, deny the foundation of faith; they hold it not, no not so much as by a thread.' If the *judicious Hooker's* judgment may in this important concern be depended upon (and I suppose it will not easily be proved erroneous,) I fear the foundation of faith is held by only a small part of that Church<sup>215</sup>, which has honoured her champion with this distinction.<sup>216</sup>

Page 508 and 509, he thus defends his doctrine against the objections of the *Papists*, (for at that time none but the *Papists* openly objected<sup>217</sup> to it.) 'It is a childish cavil wherewith, in the matter of justification, our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaiming that we tread all Christian virtues under our feet, and require nothing of Christians but faith; because we teach that faith alone justifieth. Whereas, by this [43] speech, we never meant to exclude either hope, or charity, from being always joined, as inseparable mates with faith, in the man that is justified; or works from being added as necessary duties, required at the hands of every justified man; but

to show that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ unto justification; and Christ the only garment, which, being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfections of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God; before whom, otherwise, the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable; yea, to shut us from the kingdom of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute can enter.'

Had I at this time met with such passages in the writings of the *Dissenters*, or in any of those modern publications, which, under the brand of *methodistical*, are condemned without reading, or perused with invincible prejudice, I should not have thought them worth regard, but should have rejected them as wild enthusiasm. But I knew that *Hooker* was deemed as perfectly orthodox, and a standard-writer, by the prelates of the church of his own days. I learned from his dispute with *Mr Travers*,<sup>w</sup> that he was put upon his defense, for making concessions in this matter<sup>218</sup> to the Church of *Rome*, which the zealous *Protestants* did not think warrantable; and that he was judged by the more rigid too lax in his doctrine, by none too rigid<sup>219</sup>. I had never heard it insinuated<sup>220</sup> that he was tinctured with enthusiasm; and the solidity of his judgment, and the acuteness of his reasoning faculties, need no voucher to the attentive reader. His opinion, therefore, carried [44] great weight with it; made me suspect the truth<sup>221</sup> of my former sentiments; and put me upon serious enquiries and deep meditation on this subject, accompanied with earnest prayers for the teaching and direction of the Lord in this important point. The result was,<sup>222</sup> that after many objections and doubts, and much examination of the word of God, in a few months I began to accede to *Mr Hooker's*<sup>223</sup> sentiments. And at the present my opinion in this respect, as far as I know, coincides with these passages of this eminent author, and is supported and vindicated by the same arguments:<sup>224</sup> he, therefore, who would prove our doctrine of *justification by faith alone*<sup>225</sup> to be an error, will do well to answer in the first place these quotations from *Mr Hooker*.

Indeed, as far as I can understand him, there is scarcely<sup>226</sup> any doctrine which, with no inconsiderable offence, I now preach, that is not as evidently contained in his writings as in my sermons. Witness particularly his '*Sermon*<sup>227</sup> *of the certainty and perpetuity of faith in the elect*;' in which the doctrine of the final perseverance of true believers is expressly taught<sup>228</sup> and scripturally maintained: and he closes it with this noble triumph of full assurance, as resulting from that comfortable doctrine<sup>229</sup> in the hearts of confirmed and experienced Christians; 'I know<sup>230</sup> in whom I have believed;' [2 Tim. 1:12] 'I am not ignorant whose precious blood has been shed for me; I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power: unto him I commit myself. His own finger hath engraven this sentence in the tables of my heart. *'Satan hath*

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<sup>w</sup> Hooker replied to Travers in, *The Answer of R.H. to a Supplication preferred by W. Travers to the Lordes of the Privie Counsell*, published in 1612.

<sup>a</sup> This sermon was published as, "A Learned and Comfortable Sermon [on Habak.i.4] of the certaintie and perpetuitie of faith in the Elect; especially of the Prophet Habakkuk's faith", in 1612.

*desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed [45] that thy faith fail not.* [Luke 22:31-32]<sup>231</sup> Therefore, the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep as a jewel unto the end, and by labour, through the gracious meditation of his prayer, I shall keep it.' (Page 532.) With<sup>232</sup> such words in my mouth, and such assurance in my heart, I wish to live, and hope to die.

The insertion of these quotations from this old author will, I hope, need no apology.<sup>233</sup> Many have not his works, and these extracts are worthy of their perusal; others, from these specimens,<sup>234</sup> may be prevailed with to read, what perhaps hath hitherto been<sup>235</sup> an unnoticed book in their studies. Especially I recommend to those, who admire him as the champion of the external order and discipline of the church, and who willingly allow him the honour<sup>236</sup> of being distinguished by the epithet *Judicious*, that they would attentively read, and impartially consider, his doctrine.<sup>237</sup> This would put an effectual stop to those declamations that, either ignorantly or maliciously, are made against the very doctrines as novel inventions, which have just now been explained and defended in *Mr Hooker's* own words. For my part, though I acknowledge that he advances many things I should be unwilling to subscribe, yet I heartily bless God that at this time I read him: the first material alteration, that took place in my views of the gospel, being in consequence of it.

One more quotation I shall make, and so take my leave of him. Addressing himself (in his Second '*Sermon on part of St. Jude's Epistle,*') to the pastors who are appointed to feed the chosen in Israel, he says [[Page 552,]]<sup>238</sup> 'If there be any feeling of Christ, any drop of heavenly dew, or any spark<sup>239</sup> of God's good Spirit within you, stir it up; be careful to build and edify, first yourselves and then your flocks, in this most holy faith. I say, *first yourselves*; for he, which will set the hearts of other men on fire with the love of Christ, must himself burn with love. It is want of faith in ourselves, my brethren, which makes us retchless [careless] in building others. We forsake the Lord's inheritance and feed it not. What is the reason of this? Our own desires are settled where they should not be. We, ourselves, are like those women which have a longing to eat coals, and lime, and filth: we are fed, some with honour, some with ease, some with wealth: the gospel waxeth loathsome and unpleasant in our taste; how should we then have a care to feed others with that which we cannot fancy ourselves? If faith wax cold and slender in the heart of the prophet, it will soon perish from the ears of the people.' -- It is not needful to add any reflections upon this passage, every one will readily make them for himself: we are however reminded of *Solomon's* words, (Eccl. i.9, 10.) 'There is no new thing under the sun; is there any thing whereof it may be said, see, this is new? It hath been already of old time which was before us.' (Eccl. iii.15.) 'That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been.'

To my shame be it spoken, though I had twice subscribed the *Articles*, which allow the book of *Homilies*<sup>y</sup> to be sound and wholesome doctrine, I had never yet seen them, and understood not [47] what that doctrine was.<sup>240</sup> But, being at length engaged in a serious enquiry after truth, and *Hooker's* works<sup>241</sup> having given me a more favourable opinion of these old authors, I was inclined to examine them, and I read part of the book<sup>242</sup> with some degree of attention.<sup>z</sup> And though many things seemed hard sayings, that I could not receive, yet others<sup>243</sup> were made very useful to me, especially concerning justification. In short, I perceived that the very doctrine, which I had hitherto despised as methodistical, was indisputably the standard-doctrine of the established church, when the homilies were composed:<sup>244</sup> and consequently that it is so still; for they have lost none of their authority, (however fallen into disrepute,) with those who subscribe the thirty-nine articles.<sup>245</sup> This weakened my prejudice, though it did not prove the doctrine true.

About this time a new and unexpected effect was produced by my preaching.<sup>246</sup> -- I had hitherto been satisfied to see people regularly frequent the church, listen attentively to what was discoursed, and lead moral decent lives. The way in which I had been led was so smooth, and the progress I had made so gradual; I had lately experienced so little *distressing* concern for my own soul, and had so little acquaintance with persons conversant in these matters; that, while I declared<sup>247</sup> the strictness, spirituality, and sanction of the law of God<sup>248</sup> in an alarming manner, it never occurred to me, that my hearers might not proceed<sup>249</sup> in the same easy gradual way. But, I had scarcely begun this new method of preaching, when application was made to me by persons in great distress [48] about their souls; for, their consciences being awakened to a sense<sup>250</sup> of their lost condition by nature and practice, they were anxious in enquiring<sup>251</sup> what they must do to be saved. I knew not well what to say to them, my views being greatly clouded, and my sentiments concerning justification very much perplexed.<sup>252</sup> but, being willing to give them the best counsel I could, I exhorted them in a general way to believe<sup>253</sup> in the Lord Jesus Christ, though I was incapable of instructing them either concerning the true nature of faith, or in what manner they were to seek it.<sup>254</sup> However, I better understood my own meaning, when I advised them to the study<sup>255</sup> of Scriptures, accompanied with prayer to God to be enabled rightly to understand them;<sup>256</sup> and when I inculcated amendment of life. In this manner the Lord slowly brought them forwards: and though, for want of a better instructor, they were a considerable time before they arrived<sup>257</sup> at establishment in the faith; yet some of them, having their minds less leavened with prejudice and the pride of reasoning, were more apt scholars in the school of Christ than I was, and got<sup>258</sup> the start of me in the

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<sup>y</sup> *The Book of Homilies* is a collection of authorized sermons issued in two books by the Church of England in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I.

<sup>z</sup> The author here apparently refers to the first *Book of Homilies* and the homily entitled, "Of the Salvation of all Mankind." Included in that sermon is the following: "We be justified by faith only, freely, and without works, is spoken for to take away clearly, all merit of our works, as being unable to deserve our justification at God's hands." (p. 22)

knowledge both of doctrine and duty; and in their turns became, without intending it, in some respects monitors to me, and I derived important advantage from them.<sup>259</sup>

This singular circumstance, of being an instrument in bringing others earnestly and successfully to enquire after salvation, while I so little understood the true Gospel of Jesus Christ,<sup>260</sup> very much increased my perplexity.<sup>261</sup> I became doubly earnest to know the truth, lest I should mislead those, [49] who confided their precious souls to me as their spiritual instructor.<sup>262</sup> This added to<sup>263</sup> my diligence in reading and meditating on the word of God: and made me more fervent<sup>264</sup> in prayer to be guided to the knowledge of the truth. And, under<sup>265</sup> every difficulty, I constantly had recourse unto the Lord, to preserve me from ignorance and error, and to enable me to distinguish between the doctrines of his word, and the inventions and traditions of men.

About this time,<sup>266</sup> I established a weekly lecture for expounding the Scriptures in my other parish, by which I obtained further<sup>267</sup> acquaintance with the various parts of the word of God. It was my general practice,<sup>268</sup> in penning these Lectures, to search out all the texts referred to in the margin of the Bible, with such as I could recollect upon the subject,<sup>269</sup> and to make use of them in explaining each other.<sup>270</sup> This method enabled me to store my memory with the language of Scripture; and made way for a greater exactness<sup>271</sup> in discussing doctrinal subjects, than I had hitherto been acquainted with.

In the course of the winter, 1777, I was engaged in deep meditation upon Luke xi.9-13. concerning the Holy Spirit being given in answer to prayer. And at length, having made a collection of all the Scriptures I could meet with, which related to that important doctrine,<sup>272</sup> diligently comparing them together, and meditating upon them, and earnestly beseeching the Lord to fulfil the promise<sup>273</sup> to my soul, I wrote two sermons upon the subject: one from Luke xi.13 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts [50] unto your children, how much more shall your<sup>274</sup> heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' The other from James i.16,17. 'Do not err, my beloved brethren; every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' By this my views of a Christian's privileges and duties in this respect were much enlarged, and my requests were made known<sup>275</sup> unto the Lord in a more full, exact, and believing manner, than before. Though I still remained very ignorant in many<sup>276</sup> important matters respecting the person, offices, and work, of the Holy Spirit;<sup>277</sup> yet I had discovered more<sup>278</sup> of what was promised concerning him, and therefore knew better what to ask.

My obligations to *Bishop Beveridge* must here be acknowledged.<sup>279</sup> -- When I first began to peruse his sermons,<sup>280</sup> I conceived a mean<sup>280</sup> opinion of him; and it was sometime before I could prevail with myself to examine any further into his writings: but being now more<sup>281</sup> advanced in my enquiry after truth, those singularities which at

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<sup>280</sup> Bishop Beveridge's sermons were first published as *The Works of...Dr. William Beveridge* in 2 volumes in 1720. A second edition was published in 1729.

first offended me became tolerable,<sup>282</sup> and I began to relish the simplicity, spirituality, love of Christ, and affection for souls, which eminently shine forth in many parts of his works. Indeed I received<sup>283</sup> considerable instruction from him; but especially his sermon on the real satisfaction made by the death of Christ for the sins of believers, was the blessed means of clearing up my views, and confirming my faith,<sup>284</sup> respecting that fundamental doctrine of Christianity. On *Good Friday*, 1777, I preached a sermon upon that subject, from Isaiah liii.6. 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have [51] turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid (hath caused to meet<sup>285</sup>) on him the iniquities of us all.' I endeavoured to prove,<sup>286</sup> (what has ever since been the sole foundation of all my hopes,) that Christ indeed bare the sins of all who should ever truly believe, in all their guilt, condemnation, and deserved punishment,<sup>287</sup> in his own body on the tree. I explicitly avowed my belief, that Christ, as our Surety and Bondsman, stood in our law-place, to answer all our obligations, and to satisfy Divine justice and the demands of the law for our<sup>288</sup> offences: and I publicly renounce as erroneous, and grievous perversions of Scripture, all my former explanations and interpretations of these subjects.<sup>289</sup>

This was the first doctrine, in which I was clearly and fully brought to acknowledge the truth; though I had with no little earnestness for two years been enquiring about it: to so astonishing a degree was my blinded understanding filled with prejudice against the doctrines of the word of God!<sup>290</sup> Hitherto they had been foolishness to me; but now, under the Divine teaching, I began, though *very dimly*, to discern the wisdom of God in them.<sup>291</sup>

I say *dimly*, for I was still under many and great mistakes, and very ignorant in many important points. -- I knew sin to be the transgression of the divine law; but I did not perceive its odious deformity, as deliberate rebellion against God's sovereign authority, and an express<sup>292</sup> contradiction to his holy nature; as charging God foolishly, with the want of<sup>293</sup> either wisdom or goodness, in laying such restraints upon the inclinations of his creatures; and as tending to overturn all subordination in the universe, and to introduce anarchy, confusion, and misery into the whole creation. I had discovered that my best *actions* were defiled;<sup>294</sup> but I understood not that this was the effect of a depraved nature, and a polluted heart. The doctrine of original sin, as the fruitful root of these multiplied evils, was as yet no part of my creed. Inconsistently,<sup>295</sup> I was an *Arian*, or a *Clarkist*,<sup>bb</sup> in my sentiments concerning the person of Christ, and the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Some faint conception I had formed of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit<sup>296</sup> in the soul; the beginnings of it I little understood; and I continued to entertain an implacable enmity to the doctrine of election, and the truths more intimately connected with it.<sup>297</sup> But my faith was now fixed<sup>298</sup> upon a crucified Saviour, (though I dishonoured his person, and denied his Deity,) and I had a sincere desire of being devoted to the Lord. He therefore in mercy accepted his own work in

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<sup>bb</sup> A Clarkist is a follower of Samuel Clarke, who published in 1712, a work entitled, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*. This work is generally regarded as tending towards Arianism and caused great controversy, see p.60 above.



my heart, and pardoned all that was mine; and at length extricated me from that labyrinth of perplexities and inconsistencies<sup>299</sup> in which I was entangled.

About this time, in the course of my lectures, our Lord's discourse with *Nicodemus* came again under my consideration. Notwithstanding much meditation, and many prayers, I could not satisfy my mind about it.<sup>300</sup> I was convinced some internal change must be implied in the expressions, 'born again'<sup>301</sup> and 'born of the Spirit:' and, according to what I had experienced, I endeavoured to explain it: but I was still very confused in my [53] views of that important subject, and had many doubts whether I were right or wrong in what I advanced.<sup>302</sup>

Hitherto, excepting *Leland 'on the Deistical Writers,'*<sup>303</sup> I had not read any book written by a *Dissenter*, with the least degree of candour and attention; but at this crisis I met with the first volume of *Dr Evans' sermons*, entitled, '*The Christian Temper.*'<sup>304</sup> I was induced to read it by the recommendation of a friend; but (such was my proud foolish heart!) I opened it with great prejudice,<sup>305</sup> because I understood that the author was a *Dissenter*. However, this book came with a blessing: for by perusing it, I at length perceived that fallen man,<sup>306</sup> both body and soul, is indeed carnal and sold under sin; that by nature, in every man living, the reasonable and immortal part is destitute of *spirituality*, immersed in matter, and by a dishonourable and miserable prostitution, given up 'to make provision<sup>307</sup> for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;'[Rom. 13:14] and, that man must be renewed in the spirit of his mind, new created unto good works, born of the Spirit of God, made partaker of a new and divine nature, before he can possibly be made meet for, or admitted into, the Kingdom of God. In a very little time all my difficulties about this matter vanished, and the truth became so exceedingly plain and evident, that, until I had made the experiment, I could scarcely be persuaded, but that every person, who heard it rightly explained, must assent to it. -- This doctrine I have ever since, invariably preached,<sup>308</sup> with good effect, I trust, 'in opening the eyes of sinners, and turning them from dark- [54] ness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' ([Cf.] Acts xxvi.28.)

When I had made this little progress in seeking the truth, my acquaintance<sup>309</sup> with Mr \_\_\_\_\_ was resumed. From the conclusion of our correspondence in *December, 1775*, till *April, 1777*, it had been almost wholly dropped. To speak plainly, I did not care for his company; I did not mean to make any use of him as an instructor; and I was unwilling the world should think us in any way connected. But, under discouraging circumstances, I had occasion to call upon him: and his discourse<sup>308</sup> so comforted and edified me, that my heart, being by his means relieved from its burden, became susceptible of affection for him.<sup>309</sup> From that time I was inwardly pleased to have him

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<sup>303</sup> John Leland first wrote *A view of the principal Deistical writers that have appeared in England in the last and present century...* in 1754-56. The fourth edition was published in 1764.

<sup>304</sup> Scott here refers to *Practical discourses concerning the Christian Temper*, Fourth edition. 2 vol. London, 1737.

for my friend; though not, as now, rejoiced to *call* him so. I had, however, even at that time, no thoughts<sup>310</sup> of learning doctrinal truth from him, and was ashamed to be detected in his company: but I sometimes stole away to spend an hour with him.<sup>311</sup> About the same period, I once heard him preach; and still it was foolishness to me, his sermon being principally upon the believer's experience, in some particulars with which I was unacquainted: so that, though I loved<sup>312</sup> and valued him, I considered him as a person<sup>313</sup> misled by enthusiastical notions; and strenuously insisted that we should never think alike, till we met in heaven.

All along in the progress of this enquiry, I grew more and more concerned about my character. I saw myself continually verging nearer and nearer to that scheme of doctrine, which the world [55] calls *Methodism*; nor could I help it without doing violence to my convictions.<sup>314</sup> I had indeed set out with the *avowed*, and I trust *sincere*, resolution of seeking the truth as impartially as possible; and of embracing it wherever I might find it, without respect to interest, reputation, or any worldly consideration whatever. I had taken patiently, and sustained comfortably, the loss of my opening prospect of preferment: I trust mainly from the supports of grace, and the consciousness of having acted with integrity; yet I am not sure but my deceitful heart might also derive some support from a vain imagination that my character would be no loser.<sup>315</sup> Ambitious thirst after the praise of men was much more my peculiar corruption than covetousness; and I had been in no ordinary degree proud of my natural understanding. -- I had been accustomed to hear the people called *Methodists* mentioned with contempt, as ignorant and deluded, as fools, and sometimes as madmen; and that with no small degree of complacency and self-preference; I too had despised them as weak enthusiasts.<sup>316</sup> But I now began to be apprehensive, that the tables were about to be turned upon me. If I professed and taught<sup>317</sup> these doctrines, I must no longer be considered as a man of sober understanding; but as one of those persons, whose heads, being naturally weak, had been turned by religious studies; and who, having fallen under the power of enthusiasm, had become no better than fools or madr

This was the sharpest trial I passed through: for I had not yet learned,<sup>319</sup> that, 'when we are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are [56] we.' [1 Peter 4:14] Nor did I remember, with due consideration of the reasons assignable for so extraordinary a circumstance, that the apostles<sup>320</sup> were 'fools for Christ's sake; [1 Cor. 4:10] were deemed 'beside themselves; [2 Cor. 5:13] and went 'through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true; [2 Cor. 6:8] that they were 'every where spoken against,' [Acts 28:22] as 'the men that turned the world upside down; [Acts 17:6] were treated as 'vain babblers,' [1 Tim. 6:20] and 'accounted as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.' [1 Cor. 4:13] I did not consider that Jesus himself, the 'Brightness of the Father's glory,' [Heb. 1:3] 'the Word and Wisdom of God,' [John 1:1ff., 1 Cor. 1:30] who 'went about doing good,' [Acts 10:38] and 'spake as never man spake,' [John 7:46] was not only rejected, but despised as not worth hearing, as 'one that had a devil,' [John 10:20] as in league with the devil, as 'a blasphemer,' [Matt. 26:65] 'a Samaritan' [John 8:48] 'a madman,' [John 10:20] yea, 'a devil.' I read, indeed, but my understanding was not yet opened to understand such plain Scriptures as these, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the

world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore* the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you: The servant is not greater than his<sup>321</sup> Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.' (John xv.19,20.) 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. If they have called the master of the house *Beelzebub*, how much more shall they call them of the household?' (Matt.x.24,25.) 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you [57] *falsely* for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.' (Matt.v.11,12.) Not being aware of these consequences when my resolution was first formed, I was as one who had begun to build without counting the cost; and was greatly disturbed when I saw the favourite idol of my proud heart, my character, in such imminent danger.

It must be supposed that this apprehension would<sup>322</sup> make me cautious what doctrines<sup>323</sup> I admitted into my creed; and, unwilling<sup>324</sup> to be convinced that those things were true and important, the profession of which was sure to bring infamy on my character; and that, even after the fullest conviction, I should thus be rendered<sup>325</sup> very careful in what manner I preached them. In general, however, though the conflict was sharp,<sup>326</sup> I was enabled to be faithful. The words 'Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel,' [1 Cor. 9:16] were commonly upon my mind when I penned my sermon, and when I entered the pulpit:<sup>327</sup> and though, when a bold declaration of what I believed to be the truth, with an offensive application of it to the consciences of my hearers, drew opposition and calumny upon me, I have secretly resolved to be more circumspect the next time; yet, when that time came, my heart and conscience being both engaged, I dared not to conceal one tittle of what appeared to me to be true, and to promise usefulness. But while,<sup>328</sup> with perturbation of mind, and with many disquieting apprehensions, I declared the message with which I supposed [58] myself to be entrusted; to screen myself from the charge of *Methodism*, and to soften the offence,<sup>329</sup> I was frequently throwing out slighting expressions, and bringing the charge of enthusiasm against those who preached such doctrines as I was not yet convinced of. On the other hand, my concern about my character quickened me very much in prayer, and increased my diligence in searching the Scriptures, that I might be sure I was not, at this expence, preaching 'cunningly devised fables,' [Cf. 2 Peter 1:16] instead of feeding the souls committed to my care with the unadulterated milk of evangelical truth.<sup>330</sup>

In this state of mind, which is more easily understood by experience than description, I met with *Mr Venn's Essay on the Prophecy of Zacharias*, (Luke 1.67-79.)<sup>331</sup> I was no stranger to the character he bore in the eyes of the world, and did not begin to read this book with great alacrity or expectation: however, the interesting subjects<sup>331</sup> treated of engaged my attention, and I read it with great seriousness, and some degree of impartiality.<sup>332</sup> I disapproved indeed of many things; but the truth and

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\* Henry Venn's work, *Mistakes in religion exposed: in an essay on the prophecy of Zacharias*, was published in 1774.

importance of others brought conviction both to my understanding and conscience:<sup>333</sup> especially, I found a word in season, respecting my foolish<sup>334</sup> and wicked shame and attention to character, in enquiring after divine truth, and in the performance of the important duties of a gospel-minister. These solemn words in particular came home to my heart: 'If the spirit of the world, pride, carelessness respecting the soul, and neglect of Christ, be not hateful to God and destructive to men, the gospel (with reverence I speak it) is an imposition. [59] Do you abhor that thought as blasphemy? Abhor as much a fawning upon Christ from year to year in your closet, calling him there your Lord and God, and then coming out to consult the world, how far they will allow you to obey his plain commands, without saying you are a *Methodist*. Cease rather to profess any allegiance to Christ, than treat him, under professions of duty, with such contempt. I would,' saith he to the church of *Laodicea*, 'thou wert cold or hot;' but, 'because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' (Page 85.) [Rev. 3:15-16]

I should as easily be convinced that there was no Holy Ghost, as that he was not present with my soul when I read this passage, and the whole of what *Mr Venn* has written upon the subject. It came to my heart with such evidence, conviction, and demonstration,<sup>335</sup> that it lifted me up above the world, and produced<sup>336</sup> that victory which faith alone can give, and that liberty which uniformly attends the presence of the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>337</sup> I became at once ashamed of my base ingratitude and foolish fears, and was filled<sup>338</sup> with such consolation and rejoicing, even in the prospect of sacrificing my character, and running the risk of infamy and contempt, as made me entirely satisfied on that head: and, some few seasons of unbelief excepted, I have never since been much troubled about being called<sup>339</sup> an *Enthusiast*, or a *Methodist*.

But, while I was thus delivered from the dread of unmerited reproaches, I continued as much as ever afraid of *real enthusiasm*; nay, I became continually more and more averse to every thing which [60] can justly bear that name:<sup>340</sup> so that the nearer I verged to what I had ignorantly supposed to be enthusiastical, the more apprehensive I was, lest my earnestness<sup>341</sup> in such interesting enquiries, and the warmth of my natural spirits, thus occasionally increased, should put me off my guard, and betray me into delusions and mistakes. From this danger I could however obtain no security, but by keeping close to the study of the word of God; and by being earnest and particular in praying to be preserved from error,<sup>342</sup> and to be enabled to distinguish between the pure revelations of the Holy Spirit contained in Scripture, and the inventions of men, the imaginations of my own heart, or the delusions of the spirit of lies.<sup>343</sup>

The doctrine of a Trinity of coequal persons in the Unity of the Godhead had been hitherto no part of my creed. I had long<sup>344</sup> been accustomed to despise this great mystery of godliness. I had first quarrelled<sup>345</sup> with the articles of the established church about this doctrine; I had been very decided and open in my declarations against it; and my unhumiliated reason still retained many objections to it.<sup>346</sup> But about *June*, 1777, I began to be troubled with doubts about my own sentiments,<sup>347</sup> and to suspect the truth

of *Dr Clarke's* hypothesis. I had just read *Mr Lindsey's Apology*<sup>f</sup> and *Sequel*. -- Before I saw these tracts, I had even ridiculed those who thought of confuting him on the *orthodox scheme*, and was not without thoughts of maintaining *Dr Clarke's* system against him. But, when I understood that he claimed *Dr Clarke* as a *Socinian*, I was extremely surprised, and, in consequence, was led again to a [61] more serious and anxious consideration of the subject.<sup>348</sup> Yet, the more I studied, the more I was dissatisfied. Many things now first occurred to me as strong objections against my own sentiments; and being thus perplexed, and unable to form a scheme for myself,<sup>349</sup> I easily perceived that I was not qualified to dispute with another person. My pride and my convictions struggled hard for the victory.<sup>350</sup> I was very unwilling to become a *Trinitarian in the strict sense of the word*, though, in *my own sense*, I had for some time pretended to be one; and yet the more I considered it, the more I was dissatisfied with all other systems. My esteem for Mr N. was also now very much increased; and though I had hitherto concealed this part of my sentiments from him, yet I knew his to be very different. I was not indeed willing to be taught by him in other matters; yet, in this respect, finding his opinion the same which in all former ages of the Church hath been accounted orthodox, while that which I held had always been branded as heretical, my fears of a mistake were thus exceedingly increased.<sup>351</sup> In this perplexity I applied to the Lord, and frequently besought him to lead me to a settled conclusion what was the truth of this important subject.<sup>352</sup> After much meditation, together with a careful examination of all the Scriptures which I then understood to relate to it, accompanied with earnest prayer for divine teaching,<sup>353</sup> I was at length constrained to renounce, as utterly indefensible, all my former sentiments, and to accede to that doctrine which I had so long despised. I saw, and I could no longer help<sup>354</sup> seeing, that the offices and [62] works, attributed in Scriptures to the Son and the Holy Spirit, are such as none but the infinite God could perform; that is a contradiction to believe the *real*, and consequently *infinite*, satisfaction to divine justice made by the death of Christ, without believing him to be 'very God of very God:' nor could the Holy Ghost give spiritual life, and dwell in the hearts of all believers at the same<sup>355</sup> time, to adapt his work of convincing, enlightening, teaching, strengthening, sanctifying, and comforting, to the several cases of every individual, were he not omniscient, omnipresent, infinite God. Being likewise certain, from reason as well as from Scripture, that there is not, and cannot be, more Gods than one; I was driven from my reasonings, and constrained to submit my understanding to divine revelation;<sup>356</sup> and, allowing that the incomprehensible God alone can fully know the unsearchable mysteries of his own divine nature, and the manner of his own existence, to adopt the doctrine of a 'Trinity in Unity,' among other reasons of still greater moment, in order<sup>357</sup> to preserve consistency in my own scheme. It was, however, a considerable time before I was disentangled from my embarrassments on this subject.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>f</sup> Theophilus Lindsey's *The Apology of Theophilus Lindsey, on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire*, was published in 1774 and had three editions that year. A fourth edition was published in 1775. "A Sequel to the Apology on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire", was published in 1776.

Hitherto my prejudices against *Mr Hervey*, as a writer upon doctrinal subjects, had been very strong. I thought him a very pious man, and I had read with pleasure some parts of his *Meditations*; yet, looking on him as an enthusiast,<sup>359</sup> I had no curiosity to read any other of his writings. But about *July*, 1777, I providentially met with his *Theron and Aspasio*,<sup>360</sup> and, opening the book, [63] I was much pleased with the first passage on which I cast my eye. This engaged me to read the whole with uncommon attention; nor did I, in twice perusing it, meet with any thing contrary to my own sentiments, without immediately beseeching the Lord to guide me to the truth. I trust the Lord heard and answered these prayers; for, though I could not but dissent from him (as I still do) in some few things; yet, I was both instructed and convinced by his arguments and illustrations in every thing<sup>361</sup> relative to our fallen, guilty, lost, and helplessly miserable state by nature; and the way and manner in which the believer is accounted, and accepted as righteous, in the presence of a just, holy, and heart-searching, a faithful and unchangeable God: especially his animated description and application of the stagchase, cleared up this important matter to my mind, more than any thing I had hitherto met with upon the subject.<sup>362</sup>

I had now acceded to most of the doctrines which at present I believe<sup>363</sup> and preach, except the doctrine of personal election, and those tenets which immediately depend on it,<sup>364</sup> and are connected with it. These were still foolishness to me: and so late as *August* 1777, I told my friend Mr N., that I was sure I would never be of his sentiments on that head.<sup>365</sup> To this he answered, that if I never mentioned this subject, he never should, as we were now agreed in all he judged absolutely needful; but, that he had not the least doubt of my very shortly becoming a *Calvinist*, as I should presently discover my system of doctrine to be otherwise incomplete, and inconsistent with

[64]itself. Indeed, I had by this time so repeatedly discovered myself to be mistaken where I had been very confident, that I began to suspect myself in every thing, in which I entertained sentiments different from those with whom I conversed. This, however, did not influence me to take their opinions upon trust; but it disposed me more particularly and attentively<sup>366</sup> to consider them; and, in every perplexity, to have recourse to the Lord, to be preserved from error, and guided to the truth.

About the same time also, I began to have more frequent applications made to me by persons under deep concern for their souls.<sup>367</sup> My heart was much interested<sup>368</sup> in this new employment; as I was greatly concerned<sup>368</sup> to see their pressing anxieties, and to hear their doubts, difficulties, and objections against themselves; and, being

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<sup>359</sup> James Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio* was first published in 1755 and the fifth edition was published in 1767.

<sup>360</sup> Further comment by Scott on this situation is as follows: "The first sermon I preached afterwards [after his coming to 'true repentance'] was from Gal.iii.22, *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe*. This very discourse was the means of bringing some of my people to feel their danger, and to come to me saying, *What must I do to be saved?* when I hardly knew how to answer the question." *LTS*, p. 77.

sincerely desirous to give them good instruction, and to lead them on to establishment and comfort,<sup>369</sup> I felt my deficiency, and seemed to have no ground to go on, nor any counsel to give them, but what, instead of relieving them, led them into greater perplexity. In this case, I earnestly besought the Lord to teach me what word in season to speak unto them.

While I was thus circumstanced, I read *Witsius's Economy of the Covenants*,<sup>a</sup> and observed what use he made of the doctrine of election for this very purpose. This convinced me that the doctrine, *if true*, would afford that ground of encouragement<sup>370</sup> which the people wanted. They had been awakened from ignorant formality, open ungodliness and vice, or entire carelessness about [65] religion, to an earnest and anxious enquiry after salvation; they appeared truly penitent, and real believers, and heartily desirous of cleaving unto<sup>371</sup> the Lord; and they wanted some security that they should not, through the deceitfulness of their hearts, their weakness, the entanglements of the world, and the temptations of Satan, fall back again into their former course of sin. This, if genuine, was the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit;<sup>372</sup> and if wrought in consequence of the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God respecting them, it would follow, from the entire and undeserved freeness of this first gift bestowed on them, when neither desiring nor seeking it, but while in a stage of enmity and rebellion against God, and neglect of his service;<sup>373</sup> and from his unchangeableness in his purpose, and faithfulness to his promises, that he would assuredly carry on and complete the good work of his grace, and keep them by his power,<sup>374</sup> as in a castle, through faith unto salvation.

Having now discovered one use of this doctrine which before I objected to as useless and pernicious, I was led to consider<sup>375</sup> how the other objections, which I had been accustomed to urge against it, might be answered. It is true, I now began to consider it as a mystery,<sup>376</sup> not to be comprehended, nor yet too curiously to be searched into by man's natural reason; but humbly received by faith just as far as it is plainly revealed in God's unerring word. I was therefore constrained to leave many objections unanswered, or to resolve them into the incomprehensible nature of God, whose judgments and counsels<sup>377</sup> are, as the great [66] deep, unfathomable; and into the sovereignty of God, who doeth what he will with his own, and gives no account of any of his matters, let who will presume to find fault; and into his declarations, that his thoughts and ways are as far above our thoughts and ways, as the heavens are above the earth. Here I left the matter, conscious, at length, that such knowledge was too high for me [Psa. 139:6]; and that, if God had said it, it was not my place to cavil against it. I acknowledge this way of proceeding<sup>378</sup> is not very satisfactory to man's proud curiosity, who would be as God, and know all that God knows; and who even dares to dispute with him! and there are times when I can hardly acquiesce in such a solution.<sup>379</sup> But, surely, it is highly becoming the dependent state and limited understanding of the creature, to submit the decision of all high points implicitly to the

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<sup>a</sup> Herman Wit's *The Oeconomy of the Covenants between God and Man* was first published in 1763, with a second edition in 1771-1772.

award of the infinitely wise Creator. Indeed,<sup>3,40</sup> the Christian religion expressly requires it of us; for our Lord declares, that 'Except we receive the kingdom of God (not as disputing philosophers, but) as a little child, we shall in no wise enter therein.' [Luke 18:17] 'The day is coming when we shall<sup>381</sup> be able to answer all objections. Here 'we walk by faith,' [2 Cor. 5:7] 'and see in part, through a glass, darkly;' hereafter, 'we shall see face to face, and know even as 'e are known.' [Cf. 1 Cor. 13:12]<sup>u</sup> [67]

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<sup>u</sup> Following footnote entered in fifth edition: The doctrine of *personal election to eternal life*, when properly stated, lies open to no objection, which may not likewise, with equal plausibility, be urged against the conduct of God, in placing one nation in a more favourable condition than another, especially as to religious advantages; without the previous good or bad behaviour of either of them, or any *discernable* [67] *reason for the preference*. In both cases we may say *Unmerited favour* to one person, or people, is no *injustice to others*; and the infinitely wise God hath many reasons for his determinations, which we cannot discern, and which he designs not to make known to us.

If sinners *deserve* the punishment inflicted on them, it cannot be *unjust* in the great Governor of the world to *pre-determine* their condemnation to it. The contrariety to justice and goodness, if there be any, must certainly be found in the Lord's *actual dealings with his creatures*, and not in *his predetermination thus to deal with them*. It could not be inconsistent with any of the divine attributes, for the Lord from all eternity to decree to act consistently with all of them. The clamours excited against *predestination*, if carefully scrutinized, are generally found to be against the *thing decreed*, and not against the circumstance of its *having been decreed from eternity*. The sovereignty of God, when duly considered, appears to be nothing more than infinite perfection determining and accomplishing every thing in the very best manner possible; and infallibly performing the counsels of everlasting knowledge and wisdom, justice, truth, and love; notwithstanding all the plans and designs of innumerable voluntary rational agents, which might seem incompatible with them: nay, performing those counsels even by means of these voluntary agents, in perfect consistency with their free agency and accountableness; but in a manner which we are utterly incapable of comprehending.

We should scarcely object to this infinitely wise and holy sovereignty of God, however absolute, did we not, from consciousness of guilt and carnal enmity of heart, suspect that it might probably be found at variance with our happiness; and, I apprehend, should any man be fully persuaded that God had decreed his eternal happiness, however groundless that persuasion might be, he would find his aversion to the doctrine of election exceedingly abated by it. I have often observed that some persons, who declaim most vehemently against the Calvinistical doctrine of divine decrees, seem perfectly reconciled to predestination, when persuaded that God hath *eternally decreed the salvation of all men!* On the other hand, no consciously impenitent sinner is cordially reconciled to the general declarations of Scripture, concerning the everlasting misery of all impenitent sinners, whatever he may think about personal election.

In fact, the grand difficulty in the whole of the divine conduct equally embarrasses every system of Christianity; and every scheme of Deism, except that men deny that God is the Creator and Governor of the world. For wickedness and misery actually exist and abound; the fact is undeniable: the Almighty God could have prevented this; and we should have thought that infinite love would have preserved the creation from all evils of every description. Yet, infinite Wisdom saw good to permit them to enter, and amazingly to prevail! Till this difficulty be completely solved, let none object to truths, plainly revealed in Scripture, on account of similar difficulties. But let us remember, that our narrow capacities, and scanty information, do not qualify us to judge concerning what it becomes the infinite God to determine and to do; and let us adopt the language of the apostle on this subject; 'Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For *of him, and through him, and to him*, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen! (Rom. xi. 33-36.)

As for the objections made to these doctrines, as inconsistent with free agency, accountableness, commands, invitations, calls to repentance, faith and holiness, and diligence in the use of means; they *universally and altogether* arise from *misrepresentation* and *misapprehension* of the subject. (See the Author's *Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance*, &c. 5th Ed.) [Thomas Scott's sermon, "The



Leaving therefore all difficulties of a metaphysical nature to be cleared up in that world of light and knowledge, I began to consider the abuses of [68] this doctrine, which I had always looked upon as a very formidable objection<sup>382</sup> against it. But I soon discovered, that though ungodly men,<sup>383</sup> who make profession of religion, will turn the grace of God [69] into licentiousness; yet, we might so explain<sup>384</sup> and guard these doctrines, that none could thus abuse them, without being conscious of it, and so detecting their own hypocrisy. It still indeed appeared probable to me, that the preaching of them might at first occasion some trouble of mind to a few well-disposed persons; but I considered, that by cautious declaration, and contrasting them with the general promises of the gospel to all who believe, this might in great measure be prevented; at the worst, a little personal conversation with such persons, would seldom, if ever, fail to satisfy them, and enable them in general to derive encouragement from them:<sup>385</sup> while the unsettling of the minds of such persons, as are carelessly living in an unconverted state, is the great end of all our preaching to them; and therefore we need not fear any bad effect of this doctrine in that respect. The great question therefore was, Are these doctrines in the Bible, or not? Hitherto I had wilfully passed over and neglected, or endeavoured to put some other construction upon all those parts of Scripture which directly speak of them: but now I began to consider, meditate, and pray over them; and I soon found that I could not support my former interpretations. They *would* teach predestination, election, and final perseverance, in spite of all my twisting and expounding. It also occurred to me, that these doctrines, though now<sup>386</sup> in disgrace, were universally believed and maintained by our venerable reformers; that they were admitted, at the beginning of the Reformation, into the creeds, catechisms, or articles, of every one of the *Protestant* churches; that our articles and homilies [70] expressly maintained them: and consequently, that a vast number of wise and sober-minded men, who in their days were burning and shining lights had, upon mature deliberation, agreed, not only that they were true, but that they ought to be admitted as useful, or even as necessary articles of faith, by everyone who deemed himself called to take upon him the office of a Christian minister.

In the course of this enquiry, I perceived that my system was incomplete without them. I believed that men, by nature born in sin, the children of wrath, and by wicked works the enemies of God, being in themselves ungodly and without strength; were saved of *free mercy and grace*, without having done any thing, more or less, to deserve it, through the Redeemer's righteousness and atonement, received by faith, the gift and operation of God; as born again, born of God, or new created unto good works,<sup>387</sup> and to the divine image, by the power of the Holy Ghost. It now, therefore, occurred to me to enquire, from *what source* these precious blessings, thus freely flowing, through the channel of redemption, to poor worthless sinners, could originally spring? and thus my mind<sup>388</sup> was carried back from the consideration of the *effects*, to that of the *cause*; and from the promises made to fallen man, to the counsels and

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Doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance stated from Scripture...A sermon [on John vi. 37-40]...' was first published in 1786.]

purposes of God which induced him to give those promises. I was engaged in frequent meditations<sup>389</sup> on the divine omniscience, unchangeableness, and eternity; and the end which the all-sufficient God had in view in all his works, even the manifestation of the glory of his own perfections: and I perceived, that redemption itself,<sup>390</sup> as planned by God, to whom [71] were 'known all his works from the beginning of the world,' must be the result of his eternal purpose of displaying the glory of his mercy and grace, in harmonious consistency with his most awful justice and holiness;<sup>391</sup> and thus manifesting the inexhaustible resources of his manifold wisdom, in glorifying at once all these attributes, which, considered as *perfect*, seem to be created understanding irreconcilable to each other. I considered that,<sup>392</sup> until the fall of man, and his redemption had manifested the attribute of mercy to sinners, it had, as far as we can learn, been unexercised and undisplayed, and consequently unknown to any but God himself, from all eternity; nor could he have the glory of it, but must have been considered as so perfect in justice and holiness, as to be incapable of mercy, had he not chosen some objects on whom to exercise it, and devised some method of displaying it,<sup>393</sup> in consistency with his other perfections. Thus I perceived redemption<sup>394</sup> to be the effect of a settled design, formed in God's eternal counsels, of manifesting himself to his reasonable creatures, complete and full-orbed in all conceivable perfections. But, as all have transgressed the divine law, and as none are disposed of themselves to embrace his humbling and holy Salvation, or even to enquire after it; so I was convinced<sup>395</sup> that the merciful and gracious nature of God, the Fountain of goodness, alone moved him to choose any of them<sup>396</sup> as objects of his favourable regard; that his unconstrained will and pleasure are the only assignable causes of his choosing one rather than another; and that in fact the whole<sup>397</sup> work was his own; his wisdom having devised the means; his [72] love and all-sufficiency having, in the person, offices, and work of Christ, made all things ready; his providence directing absolutely to whom the word of invitation shall be sent; and his Holy Spirit alone inclining and enabling the soul to embrace it by faith. -- Hence I concluded that God, who knoweth the end from the beginning, and is a Sovereign,<sup>398</sup> and, when none have deserved any thing, may do as he will with his own, actually 'chose us (even every individual believer),<sup>399</sup> in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we *should* be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.'(Eph.i.4-6.)

In short, though my objections were many, my anxiety great, and my resistance long; yet, by the evidence which, both from the word of God and from my own meditation, crowded upon my mind, I was at length constrained to submit;<sup>400</sup> and, God knoweth, with fear and trembling, to allow these formerly despised doctrines a place in my creed. -- Accordingly, about *Christmas 1777*, I began cautiously to establish the truth of them, and to make use of them for the consolation of poor distressed and fearful believers. This was the only use I then knew of them, though I now see their influence on every part of evangelical<sup>401</sup> truth.

However, I would observe that, though I assuredly<sup>402</sup> believe these doctrines as far as here expressed; (for I am not willing to trace them any higher by reasonings

or consequences, into the unrevealed [73] things of God;) and, though I exceedingly need them in my view of religion, both for my own consolation and security against the consequences of a deceitful heart, an ensnaring world,<sup>403</sup> and a subtle tempter, as also for the due exercise of my pastoral office, yet, I would not be understood to place the acknowledgement of them upon a level with the belief of the doctrines before spoken of. I can readily conceive<sup>404</sup> the character of a humble, pious, spiritual Christian, who is either an utter stranger to the doctrines in question, or who, through misapprehension or fear of consequences,<sup>405</sup> cannot receive them. But, I own I find a difficulty in conceiving of a humble, pious, spiritual Christian, who is a stranger to his own utterly lost condition, to the deceitfulness and depravity of his heart, to the *natural* alienation of his affections from God, and to the defilements of his best duties; who trusts, either in whole or in part, *allowedly*, to any thing for pardon and justification, except the blood and righteousness of a crucified Saviour, God manifested in the flesh; or who expects to be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, in any other way than by being born again, created anew, converted, and sanctified, by the divine power of the Holy Ghost.

Some time in *November, 1777*, I was, by a then unknown friend, furnished with a considerable number of books, written in general by the old divines, both of the church of *England* and of the *Dissenters*. And, to my no small surprise, I found that those doctrines, which are now deemed noble inventions, and are called *Methodistical*, are in these books every where discoursed of as known and al- [74] lowed truths: and that the system which, despising to be taught by men, and unacquainted with such authors, I had for near three years together been *hammering* out for myself, with no small labour and anxiety, was to be found ready made to my hands in every book I opened.

I do not wonder that the members of the church of *England* are generally prejudiced against the writings of *Dissenters*; for I have been so myself to an excessive degree. We imbibe this prejudice with the first rudiments of instruction, and are taught by our whole education to consider it as meritorious, though no doubt it is a prejudice, of which every sincere enquirer after truth ought to be afraid, and every pretended enquirer ashamed; for how can we determine on which side truth lies, if we will not examine both sides? Indeed, it is well known to all those who are acquainted with the church-histories of those times, that, till the reign of *James I.* there were no controversies between the Established Church and the *Puritans*,<sup>406</sup> concerning doctrine; both parties being, in all matters of importance, of the same sentiments: they contended only about discipline and ceremonies; till the introduction of *Arminianism* gave occasion to the *Calvinists* being denominated *Doctrinal Puritans*. To this period all our church-writers were *Calvinistical* in doctrine; and even after that time many might be mentioned, who were allowed friends to the Church of *England*, that opposed those innovations, and agreed in doctrine with every thing above stated.<sup>406</sup> Let it suffice, out

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<sup>406</sup> For a development of the differences between the Established Church and Puritans, see J.F.H. New, *Anglican and Puritan* (Stanford:Stanford University Press, 1964).

of many, to recommend the works of *Bishop Hall*,<sup>407</sup> especially his *Contemplations on the Life of Jesus*, a book not easily [75] to be prized too highly; and *Dr. Reynold's* works. To these no true friend<sup>407</sup> of the Church of *England* can reasonably object; and, in general, I believe and teach nothing but what they plainly taught before me.<sup>408</sup>

The *outlines* of my scheme of doctrine were now completed:<sup>409</sup> but I had been so taken up with doctrinal enquiries, that I was still, in great measure, a stranger to my own heart,<sup>410</sup> and had little experience of the power of the truths I had embraced.<sup>411</sup> The pride of reasoning, and the conceit of superior discernment, had all along accompanied me; and, though somewhat broken, had yet considerable influence. Hitherto, therefore, I had not thought of hearing any person preach; because I did not think any one, in the circle of my acquaintance, capable of giving me such information as I wanted.<sup>412</sup> But, being at length convinced that Mr. N.<sup>413</sup> had been right, and that I had been mistaken, in the several particulars in which we had differed, it occurred<sup>414</sup> to me, that, having preached these doctrines so long, he must understand many things concerning them to which I was a stranger. Now, therefore, though not without much remaining prejudice, and not less in the character of a judge than of a scholar, I condescended to be his hearer, and occasionally to attend his preaching, and that of some other ministers; -- and I soon perceived the benefit; for from time to time the secrets of my heart were discovered to me, far beyond what I had hitherto noticed; and I seldom returned from hearing a sermon, without having conceived a meaner opinion [76] of myself;<sup>415</sup> without having attained to a further acquaintance with my deficiencies, weaknesses, corruptions, and wants; or without being supplied with fresh matter for prayer, and directed to greater watchfulness. I likewise learned the use of experience in preaching, and was convinced that the readiest way to reach the hearts and consciences of others, was to speak from my own. In short, I gradually saw more and more my need of instruction, and was at length brought<sup>416</sup> to consider myself as a very novice in religious matters. Thus I began experimentally to perceive our Lord's meaning, when he says, 'Except ye receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter therein.' [Luke 18:17] For, though my proud heart is continually rebelling, and would fain build up again the former *Babel* of self-conceit; yet, I trust, I have from this time, in my settled judgment, aimed and prayed to be enabled to consider myself as a little child, who ought simply to sit at the Master's feet, to hear his words with profound submission, and wait his teaching with earnest desire and patient attention. From this time I have<sup>417</sup> been enabled to consider those persons, in whom knowledge has been ripened by years, experience, [sic] and observation, as fathers and instructors; to take pleasure in their company, to value their counsels, and with pleasure<sup>418</sup> to attend their ministry.

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<sup>407</sup> Bishop Joseph Hall's works occupy eighteen pages in the *British Museum Catalogue*. This work is listed as *Contemplations upon the remarkable passages in the life of the Holy Jesus* and was published in 1679. DNB refers to *Contemplations upon the Principall Passages of the Holy Storie* issued in eight volumes between 1612 and 1626, and again in the edition of his works in 1634.

Thus, I trust, the old building, which I had purposed to repair was pulled down to the ground, and the foundation of the new building of God laid aright; 'Old things passed away, behold all things 'were become new.' [2 Cor. 5:17] -- 'What things were gain to [77] me, those I have counted loss for Christ.' [Phil. 3:7] My boasted reason I have discovered to be a blind guide, until humbled, enlightened, and sanctified, by the Spirit of God: my former wisdom foolishness;<sup>419</sup> and that when I thought I knew much, I knew nothing as I ought to know. Since this period, every thing I have experienced,<sup>420</sup> heard, or read; and every thing I observe around me, confirms and establishes me in the assured belief of those truths which I have received; nor do I in general any more doubt whether they be from God, than I doubt whether the sun shines, when I see its light, and am warmed with its refreshing beams. I see the powerful effects of them continually among those to whom I preach; I experience the power of them daily in my own soul; and while, by meditating on, and 'glorying in the cross of Christ, I find the world crucified unto me, and I unto the world,' -- by preaching Christ Jesus and him crucified, I see notoriously immoral persons 'taught, by the saving grace of God, to deny ungodliness<sup>421</sup> and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,' [Titus 2:12] being examples to such as before they were a scandal to.

And now, by this change, the consequences of which I so much dreaded, what have I lost, even in respect of this present world? -- Indeed, I have lost some degree of favour, and I escape not pity, censure, scorn, and opposition: but the Lord is introducing me to a new and far more desirable acquaintance; even to that of those whom the Holy Spirit<sup>422</sup> hath denominated *the excellent of the earth*; nay, the Lord the Spirit condescends to be my Comforter. In general, I enjoy an established [78] peace of conscience, through the blood of sprinkling, and continual application to the heavenly advocate; with a sweet content, and 'that peace of God which passeth all understanding,' [Phil. 4:7] in casting all my cares upon him who careth for me: [1 Pet. 5:7] and I am not left utterly without experience of that 'joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.' [1 Pet. 1:8] These the world could not give me, were I in favour with it; of these it cannot deprive me by its frowns. My desire henceforth, God knoweth, is to live to his glory, and by my whole conduct and conversation 'to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour,' [Titus 2:10] and 'to shew forth his praises who hath called me out of darkness into his marvellous light;' [Cf. 1 Pet. 2:9] to be in some way or other useful to his believing people; and to invite poor sinners, who 'are walking in a vain shadow and disquieting themselves in vain,' to 'taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and how blessed they are who put their trust in him,' [Psalm 34:8] --

'Now would I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found;  
Would point to his redeeming blood,

And cry, Behold the way to God.'<sup>mm</sup>

Thus hath the Lord led me, a poor blind sinner, in a way that I knew not; - 'he hath made darkness light before me, crooked things straight,' [Isa. 42:16] and hard things easy, and hath brought me to a place of which I little thought when I set out; and, having done these things for me, I believe, yea, I am undoubtedly sure he will never leave me nor forsake me. [Heb. 13:5] To him be the glory of his undeserved [79] and long-resisted grace: to me be the shame, not only of all my other sins, but also of my proud and perverse opposition to his purposes of love towards me. But all this was permitted, that my high spirit and stout heart being at length humbled and subdued, 'I might remember, and being confounded, and never open my mouth any more, because of my shame, now that the Lord is pacified to me for all that I have done.'

And now, as in the presence of the heart-searching Judge, I have given, without one wilful misrepresentation, addition, or material omission, a history of the great things God hath done [Cf. Deut. 10:21], for my soul; or, if that suit not the reader's view of it, a history of that change which hath recently taken place in my religious sentiments and conduct, to the surprise of some, and perhaps the displeasure of others, among my former friends. The doctrines I have embraced<sup>423</sup> are indeed charged with being destructive of moral practice, and tending to licentiousness; but, though I know that my best righteousness are as filthy rags; yet, I trust I may return thanks to God, that by his grace he hath so upheld me, since this change took place, that I have not been permitted to disgrace the cause in which I have embarked by any immoral conduct: 'My rejoicing,' in this respect, 'is this, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have my conversation in the world.' [2 Cor. 1:12] I can confidently avow,<sup>424</sup> that the belief of these doctrines hath a quite contrary effect upon me.<sup>425</sup> I most earnestly desire, aim, endeavour, and pray to be enabled to love God, and keep his commandments 'without partiality [80] and without hypocrisy;' [James 3:17] and so to demean myself, 'as, by well doing, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' [1 Pet. 2:15] That I fall so very far short in everything, is not the effect of my new doctrines, but of my old depraved nature and deceitful heart. -- 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!' [Psalm 51:10]

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### PART III.

#### *Observations on the preceding Narrative.*

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<sup>mm</sup> This is the last verse of a hymn composed by John Cennick (1718-1754?). For the entire hymn see *Our Own Hymnbook*, #408.

My design<sup>426</sup> in writing this account of myself, and my religious enquiries and change of sentiments, was this: I considered myself as a singular<sup>427</sup> instance of a very unlikely person, in an uncommon manner, being led on from one thing to another, to embrace a system of doctrine which he once heartily despised. As I assuredly believe that this change hath been effected<sup>428</sup> under the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit;<sup>429</sup> so I hoped, that a circumstantial relation of it might be an encouragement and comfort to those who know and love the Lord, and from them levy a tribute of gratitude and praise to our gracious God;<sup>430</sup> and that it also might be instrumental, by the convincing Spirit,<sup>431</sup> to awaken others to a serious review of their religious sentiments; to put them upon the same earnest enquiry after the truth as it is in Jesus; [Cf. Eph. 4:21] [81] and to influence them to the diligent use of the same blessed means, in which the Lord directed me to be found. I would<sup>432</sup> therefore now offer a few observations on the preceding narrative; and may<sup>433</sup> the Lord guide both the writer and every reader<sup>434</sup> of these pages, to the saving knowledge of the truth, and into the ways of peace and righteousness.<sup>435</sup>

I. It must<sup>436</sup> be evident to every *unprejudiced* reader of this narrative, that at the time this change commenced, I was, humanly speaking, a most unlikely person to embrace the system of doctrine above stated.<sup>437</sup> -- This will appear from the following considerations:

1. My religious opinions had been for many years directly contrary to it. Being always of a reflecting turn of mind, I entertained exceedingly high notions of the powers of human reason; and I had, upon<sup>438</sup> *reasoning principles*, embraced a system of religion, which both soothed my conscience, and flattered my self-conceit. After some trivial alterations, I seemed to myself, upon mature deliberation, to have come to a settled determination, and had bestowed considerable pains in making myself acquainted with those arguments and interpretations of Scripture, by which that system is usually defended: and I had ranked together many of those plausible objections and high charges, which are commonly brought by reasoning men against<sup>439</sup> the doctrines and characters<sup>440</sup> of the *Calvinists*. But, I was<sup>441</sup> in great measure a stranger to what the *Calvinists* could say for themselves; Because I thought the matter too plain to bear an argument, and therefore did not think their answer worth reading. In short, very few have been<sup>442</sup> [82] recovered from that abyss of error, (for so I must call it), into which I had been permitted to sink.<sup>443</sup> Full of confidence in my cause, and in the arguments with which I was prepared to support it, I was eager to engage in controversy with the *Calvinists*, and entertained the most sanguine hopes of victory.<sup>444</sup> In this confidence I frequently harangued against them from the pulpit, and spared not to charge upon them consequences both absurd and shocking. Yet, after much,<sup>445</sup> very much, anxious diligent inquiry, I have embraced, as the sacred truths of God's unerring word, every doctrine of this despised system!

2. My natural spirit and temper were very unfavourable to such a change. Few persons have ever been more self-sufficient<sup>446</sup> and positive in their opinions than I was. Fond to excess of entering into argument, I never failed on these occasions to betray this peculiarity of my character. I seldom acknowledged or suspected myself mistaken;

and scarcely ever dropped an argument, till either<sup>447</sup> my reasonings or obstinacy had silenced my opponent. A certain person once said of me, that I was like a stone rolling down a hill, which could neither be stopped or turned: this witness was true; but those things which are impossible with man, are easy with God. I am evidently both stopped and turned: man, I am persuaded, could not have done it; but this hath God wrought, and I am not more a wonder to others than to myself. Indeed, I carried the same obstinate positive temper into my religious enquiries; for I never gave up one tittle of my sentiments till I could defend it no longer; nor ever submitted to conviction till I could no [83] longer resist. The strong man, armed with my natural pride and obstinacy, with my vain imaginations and reasonings, and high thoughts, had built himself many strong-holds, and kept his castle in my heart; and, when<sup>448</sup> One stronger than he [Cf. Jer. 20:7], came against him, he stood a long siege; till, being by superior force driven from one to another, and all his armour in which he trusted being at length taken from him, he was constrained to recede. So that the<sup>449</sup> Lord having made me willing in the day of his power, I was forced to confess, 'O Lord thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed.' [Jer. 20:7]

3. My situation in life rendered such a change improbable. I had an increasing family, no private fortune, a narrow precarious income, and no expectations, except from such friends as my conduct might procure or continue to me. I had unexpectedly contracted an acquaintance<sup>450</sup> with some of those, whose favour goes a great way towards a man's advancement in life; nor was I insensible to the advantages to be hoped for, from cultivating,<sup>451</sup> by a compliant behaviour, their kind and friendly regard to me. At the same time, I was no stranger to the opinion which the world entertain of those who preach these disreputable doctrines? and could not but conclude, that embracing them<sup>452</sup> would probably deprive me of these prospects of preferment. But, as the result of diligent enquiry, I was assuredly convinced that it was my indispensable duty to profess and preach them,<sup>453</sup> and that by so doing alone, I could insure to myself the favour of a better Friend than any here below: and thus, while fully aware<sup>454</sup> all along how unfavourable, [84] *according to human probability*, it would prove to my worldly interests, I at length deliberately embraced them.

4. My regard to character was no trifling security against such a change of sentiment. I was ambitiously and excessively fond of that honour which cometh from man; and considered the desire of praise as allowable, nay, laudable. By this motive was I urged on to a very diligent prosecution of my studies, even beyond what natural inclination led me to; and my whole conduct was influenced by, my whole conversation was tinged with, this vain-glorious aim. On the other hand, with approbation and self-complacency, I had been accustomed to hear the most contemptuous and opprobrious epithets liberally bestowed on those persons<sup>455</sup> to whom I have now joined myself: and all along, as I verged nearer and nearer to *Methodism*, I was painfully sensible that I was drawing upon myself the same mortifying distinctions. -- I have been a vain-glorious candidate for human applause;<sup>456</sup> but I renounce such pretensions, and willingly submit to be considered by the world, under the mortifying character of a half-witted,<sup>457</sup> crack-brained enthusiast. These epithets, I am sensible, are now bestowed upon me behind my back, nay, very often to my face: I bless God, however,

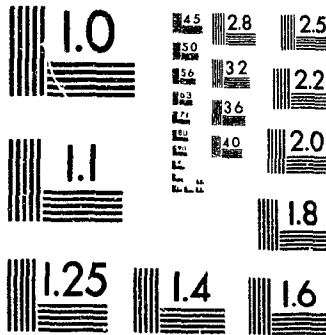


this doth not move me; but I can heartily thank him, that I am counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake. But, when I saw the trial approaching, it appeared very formidable; and I can truly affirm, that nothing but the fullest conviction that the cause in which I was embarking was the cause of God, nothing, [85] but not daring to act contrary to the plain dictates of my conscience, could have influenced me to make this sacrifice of my character, and bring upon myself so much scorn and contempt.

5. To reason with our despisers upon their own principles: if I<sup>458</sup> am now fallen into enthusiasm, mistake, and strong delusion; I certainly was, when I first set out on this enquiry, a very unlikely person so to do. My leading resolve was to search for the truth diligently, and to embrace it wherever I found it, and whatever it might cost. No sooner had I begun the enquiry, than I was called upon to give proof of the sincerity of this resolution;<sup>459</sup> and, from a principle of conscience, though a mistaken one, I renounced my prospect of an immediate preferment; and it would be uncandid to question my *sincerity* after it had been thus evidenced.<sup>460</sup> Since that time I have also deliberately sacrificed my character, and hazarded the loss of all my former friends. Giving these proofs of integrity,<sup>461</sup> I set off in dependence on those plain promises which I have mentioned; I have sought this desired knowledge of the truth chiefly in reading the holy Scriptures, and by prayer for the promised teaching of the Holy Ghost, in the manner which hath been related; and I am now led to conclusions diametrically opposite to what I expected! -- Now, lay all these things together, and attentively consider them; and then let your own consciences determine how far it is probable that a person, in this manner seeking for the truth, to be given over to a strong delusion to believe a pernicious lie [Cf. 2 Thess. 2:11] -- 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that [86] is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then,<sup>462</sup> being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' [Luke 11:11-13] Can any man suppose, that after such repeated and continued pleading, of the express promises of the Lord to this effect, in earnest prayer, according to his appointment, I should be delivered<sup>463</sup> up to the teaching of the father of lies? Can any one make this conclusion without an evident insinuation that God hath broken his promises?<sup>464</sup> In short, you may make a jest of the narrative;<sup>465</sup> you may throw by the book without giving any attention to an argument of this kind; you may say, what you never can prove, that it is all a contrived story; or you may argue,<sup>466</sup> that these promises, though contained in the Bible, are not to be depended on *by us*, which is to give up the Scriptures to be scoffed at by *Infidels* and *Atheists*, and to render them useless to the humble anxious enquirer after truth<sup>467</sup> and salvation; but by no other means, I am assured, can you account for this single circumstance, without allowing, that the substance of those doctrines, which I have now embraced, is indeed contained in the word of God; that they comprise the truth as it is in Jesus, [Eph. 4:21] and are not corrupted with any such delusion as can hazard the salvation of my soul, or the souls of those who by my ministry receive them. On this supposition all difficulties vanish. The Lord had given me a sincere desire to know the saving doctrine<sup>468</sup> of [87] the gospel; and, though I was exceedingly ignorant, obstinate, and prejudiced, yet, this desire having, according to his direction,<sup>469</sup> led me to the word of God, and influenced

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me to seek his teaching by prayer, he was faithful to his own promises, and it was an example of his own words, 'Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.' [Matt. 7:8] My evident sincerity in seeking the truth was sufficient<sup>470</sup> to convince any person, conversant and experienced in the things of God, that, as my friend foretold, thither would all my enquiries lead me; in that would they all finally centre. And, could I be assured, beloved reader, whoever thou art, that thou wast as sincerely desirous to know the truth as I then was, and as heartily resolved to embrace it wherever thou mightest find it, and whatever it should cost thee; had I also assurance, that, in a believing dependence on these promises, thou wast diligently, and from day to day, in the study of the word of God and prayer, seeking the accomplishment of them:<sup>471</sup> I would as confidently foretel, that, as to those things which I now regard as essential to salvation, and, if thou hast the souls of others committed to thee, as to what is needful for thy usefulness in the ministry, thou wouldest be brought in time to these same conclusions, whatever thy present religious sentiments may be. May the Lord give thee true sincerity, and incline thine heart to try the experiment!

I am aware that many will object to what I have argued on this head,<sup>472</sup> as being too confident and as what is urged by men of contrary religious sentiments, each in behalf of his own system; [88] and, as I would not leave any material and plausible objection in force against what I have advanced,<sup>473</sup> I hope the reader will excuse my obviating this beforehand. I would therefore entreat those, who object to the confidence with which this argument is brought forward, *impartially*<sup>474</sup> and *carefully to consider the limitations with which on every hand it is guarded*: and then to enquire, whether in any other way, than that which hath been mentioned, they can account for the fact.<sup>475</sup> That is, supposing this narrative true, (for which the appeal is to the heart-searching God;) and supposing the promises mentioned to be proposed to us, that we may embrace them, depend on them, and plead them in prayer, considering the glory of the divine veracity as concerned in their accomplishment to every believer; let them try whether they can possibly evade one of these conclusions;<sup>476</sup> -- either God hath failed of his promise; -- or he hath in the main, and as far as is expressed, led the author by his Holy Spirit to the knowledge and belief of the truth. -- As to the confidence of men of opposite sentiments, I observe, that many, who speak in high terms concerning sincerity and candour, will without hesitation condemn, as enthusiastical, such reliance on the promises,<sup>477</sup> and this way of searching for truth: and it is plain<sup>478</sup> they do not seek truth in that manner which they condemn in others. Many others, perhaps, slightly mention these matters, but they will not endure to be closely questioned: for, being conscious that they have not sought the truth in this manner, they evade such discourse as personal.<sup>479</sup> Again, the writings of many professed<sup>480</sup> enquirers after truth evidently show that they expect to find it, not by 'trusting the Lord with all their heart,' [Prov. 3:5] or seeking it from the Scriptures, and by earnest prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit;<sup>481</sup> but by 'leaning to their own understanding;' [Cf. Prov. 3:5] resting the argument on philosophical reasonings, and the authority of this or that renowned name; and supporting their conclusions by bold and perplexing criticisms and interpretations of Scripture. Hence so many daring appeals from revelation to reason and philosophy! hence such and so many objections brought against doctrines plainly

revealed in God's word, if language hath any determinate meaning! and so many consequences charged upon these doctrines, with a design to invalidate their divine authority; as if the appearance of unreasonableness, imposed by every disingenuous art, were sufficient<sup>482</sup> to prove the plainest revelation of God's Holy Spirit a falsehood! Hence such liberty in interpretation and criticism on the word of God, as the learned would never endure in interpreting or criticizing *Virgil* or *Horace*! These things prove that such persons<sup>483</sup> are strangers to that earnest, hearty, sincere desire to *know the truth*, which brings the enquirer to an humble willingness to be taught of God, and, in submission of understanding, to seek wisdom from his word and Spirit.<sup>484</sup> It is indeed most evident, that many who profess to be influenced by *this sincere desire*<sup>485</sup> to *know the truth*, are not troubled with suspicions that they are, or can be, wrong. They have made up their minds before they begin the enquiry: and you will not find them willing to make the least concession, but, in the management of the controversy, resolved to vindicate and con -- [90] tend for every tittle; and, where<sup>486</sup> arguments fail, to make use of the other arts of controversy, with which skill in the management of their weapons, and anger against their opponents, can supply them. Where a cause is thus maintained, you may easily know that there is none of that earnest desire of learning the truth, that anxious fear of mistaking it, that self-diffidence, and those doubts concerning the sentiments held at present, which constitute the godly sincerity<sup>487</sup> that leads the enquirer to the word and the Spirit of God for direction and teaching. These things taken together, will, on Scriptural grounds, cut off many confident pretenders to sincerity from their claims, as entirely<sup>488</sup> as they exclude Annas and Caiaphas, and the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, from being sincere enquirers into the truth of the Old Testament; when, in support of their authority<sup>489</sup> and reputation, and influenced by pride and anger, they, under colour of their law, put to death him 'of whom Moses and the prophets did write, even Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.' [Cf. John 1:45] -- And as to men of another spirit, who appear sincere, humble, and willing to be taught of God, [Cf. John 6:45] in their enquiry after truth; but do not<sup>490</sup> entirely agree with what has been laid down, I would<sup>491</sup> only wish them to observe the distinction between<sup>492</sup> some and others of these doctrines. Such persons do not, I dare say, materially differ from that which has been mentioned *as necessary to salvation*: as, therefore, I allow them to have been in the main taught of God, so I only require the same allowance. -- Let it be supposed that the same God, who, according to his promise, hath both led, as far as is need -- [91] ful, to salvation, in the same way, has, in other things, left us to differ, for the mutual exercise of candour and forbearance, till that time when we shall know even as we are known. [1 Cor. 13:12]

II. I would observe, that this change in my sentiments took place very gradually.<sup>493</sup>

When any person suddenly changes his religious opinions<sup>494</sup> for others very different from them, it is no inconsiderable evidence of a changeable and fickle disposition. It gives cause to suspect that he was not well established in his former sentiments;<sup>495</sup> and that he has taken them upon trust, and was a stranger to the arguments by which they might be defended, and to the objections which might be urged against them. If worldly interest, reputation, or conveniency, seem to favour the

change, there is room for a presumption that these had an undue influence upon him: if not, it may be insinuated that he was deluded with specious appearances; that he did not allow himself time to weight the arguments on each side; and, that he had only changed one set of notions for another, without having duly considered either of them.<sup>496</sup> -- Such objections may reasonably be made, and the consequences of precipitate changes too often justify them. But though I was always, and still am, of a headlong impetuous spirit in other things; and when once I have purposed, can have no rest from incessant agitation of mind, till I have accomplished my design; yet in this particular I acted in direct opposition<sup>497</sup> to my natural temper. Indeed at first I did, in some instances, too much betray my impetuosity: but, at that time, I acted not in the character of an enquirer, but in full confidence that I [92] was pleading the cause of truth, and had no more thought of becoming what the world calls a *Methodist*, than of turning *Mahometan*. But, after that first hurry was over, though commonly<sup>498</sup> in earnest, and sometimes in considerable perturbation of mind, I was outwardly calm and satisfied; being generally enabled to believe<sup>499</sup> that, if I were in any thing at present mistaken, I should some time be guided to the truth. -- My determination to set about this enquiry proceeded not so much from anxious fears about my own soul, as from a deep sense impressed upon my heart, of the importance of my ministry, the worth of souls committed to my charge, and the awful account to be given of them; and as I all along bestowed some pains in instructing my people in what I believed to be the truth,<sup>500</sup> I was preserved from any discomposing fears, or undue disquietude of mind. I sat down very coolly to search for the truth, I proceeded very gradually, and with *extreme caution*; I took no one opinion upon trust; I gave up none of my sentiments, until the arguments by which I had learned to defend them were satisfactorily<sup>501</sup> answered; nor did I admit any new articles into my creed, till either every objection was obviated, or I was pressed on the other hand with such as were still more unanswerable. Much, very much, prayer and meditation preceded every change of sentiment; and I was nearly three years from the beginning of my enquiry before I came to a determination what was truth. So long, deliberately, and, step by step, I examined the premises, before I finally proceeded to draw my conclusion. I perceive much cause to be ashamed of my un- [93] teachable temper; for with such opportunities as were afforded me, if I had improved them, I might have attained<sup>502</sup> to the knowledge and belief of the same truths in a much less time. But the Lord, I trust, led me in this way, and left me thus far to my own natural pride of heart; that it might more evidently appear, that I received not my doctrines from man, but that indeed, in the first instance, I learned them from the word and Spirit of God.

III. I would observe that I changed my religious views, without any teaching from the persons to whose sentiments<sup>503</sup> I have now acceded. For a considerable time after the commencement of my enquiries,<sup>504</sup> I would not so much as read what they had to urge in their own behalf. I entered indeed into a correspondence with Mr.N.: my intention, however, was not to learn from him, but to dispute with him; and when he waved controversy, I dropt the correspondence, and utterly neglected his letters.<sup>505</sup> From that time I avoided his company, and all the while I declined hearing him preach.<sup>506</sup> I would not be understood to insinuate that Mr. N. has not been useful to me: he has been, and continues to be, eminently so; and I continually see great cause to bless God

for giving me such a friend, to be so near at hand on all occasions. But this I assuredly believe, that I had never seen him, at least from the time that his example had put me upon considering my conduct, I should have arrived at the same views of evangelical<sup>507</sup> truth which I now have. His usefulness to me has all along been in those matters in which we were in some measure agreed, not in those in which we differed; for, as to these, my proud heart scorned to have him for a teacher. [94]

At the same time, though I had the offer of several books, written<sup>508</sup> by *Dissenters* and *Methodists*, I declined it; and did not, for nearly two years, peruse any of them with sufficient attention to recollect any thing of consequence which they contained.<sup>509</sup> I say not this, as slighting these books; for justice requires me to acknowledge, that many, which then I ignorantly despised, contain as solid, judicious, and excellent divinity, as hath been penned since the days of the apostles. But I did not get *my system* from them; for that was nearly complete before I was prevailed upon to read them. My studies, besides the Bible, were chiefly confined to authors of allowed reputation in the church of *England*, several of which I have mentioned. When they differed from each other, (as certainly *Tillotson* and *Hooker*, *Jortin* and *Beveridge*, *Bull*<sup>m</sup> and *Hall*, do differ very much indeed), I endeavoured to judge for myself, comparing all of them with the word of God, and with the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church of *England*: and from such authors thus compared, as far as the writings of uninspired men have been instrumental to this change, I have received the greatest part of my present opinions.<sup>510</sup>

But, let it be observed, that the further these streams are traced upward towards the fountain of the blessed Reformation, the purer they flow, according to my present judgment: and it may easily and undeniably be proved,<sup>511</sup> that there is nothing material preached by many regular clergymen of the establishment, under the scandal<sup>512</sup> of *Methodistical*, which was not expressly taught<sup>513</sup> by those [95] excellent persons, who, having laid the foundation of our church, gave their bodies to be burned in confirmation of their doctrine.<sup>514</sup> It is greatly to be wished, that their lives and discourses, living and dying, and their remaining writings, were more generally known among us; and did not remain locked<sup>515</sup> up from the world, in large folios, in the learned languages, and in books out of print, or exceedingly scarce. In consequence of this the members of our national church are in general utterly ignorant of its standard-doctrines, and ignorantly<sup>516</sup> brand those as *Methodists* and *Enthusiasts*, who preach zealously the very doctrines of the first<sup>517</sup> Reformers.

IV. I would observe the great influence which the study of the Scriptures had in producing this change.<sup>518</sup>

We are all too apt, without careful examination, to take things for granted, especially in respect of religion. We often collect our scheme of divinity from other

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<sup>m</sup> The "Bull" Scott refers to is likely Bishop George Bull (1634-1710), who wrote in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity and created significant controversy over his writings.

authors, or from our own reasonings and imaginations; and only seek for a few<sup>519</sup> detached texts which appear to countenance our preconceived opinions; neglecting, or very slightly considering, such parts of the word of God as seem incapable of being made use of to our purpose. We are likewise too prone, in availing ourselves of the labours of critics and expositors, to resign up ourselves implicitly to their guidance, and to imagine that we have proof enough of our doctrines, if we can produce the sanction of some great name that has espoused and maintained them, without carefully examining whether they be right or wrong: but this [96] is to pay that deference to the human interpretation, which is only due to the divine book commented on. We ministers especially, though at ordination we solemnly promise to turn all our studies, as much as may be, into this channel, are very apt to suffer our time and thoughts to be engrossed with such studies and employments as are foreign to our profession,<sup>520</sup> and interfere with it, and which leave at most but a secondary attention for the study of the word of God. And who can deny, that many do not bestow so much pains in meditating<sup>521</sup> upon the Bible, and in comparing spiritual things with spiritual; [Cf. 1 Cor. 2:13] or one part of Scripture with another, and every part with what they<sup>522</sup> experience in their own hearts, and what they hear and see in the world around them, - - as they do about matters of far less consequence? So that probably, should they at any time sit down to a diligent examination of the whole word of God, they would find it a very different book than they expected. Thus at least it has been with me, and possibly it may be so with many others.<sup>523</sup>

The word of God informs us<sup>524</sup> that wisdom, the saving, practical, and experimental knowledge of divine things, is not to be acquired without earnest and diligent seeking: 'My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thine heart<sup>525</sup> for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of [97] God.' (Prov. ii.1-6.)<sup>∞</sup> If then our wisdom has been acquired, without any of that eagerness and painful diligence, with which<sup>526</sup> the covetous man desires and seeks for his riches; it is a shrewd conjecture, that it is not of the genuine sort. -- Once I had in my own esteem a sort of wisdom, which seemed to offer itself to me spontaneously, and to be found with little seeking. But, now I am persuaded it was a mere counterfeit, a fair-seeming pernicious foolishness.

That, which I now esteem to be true wisdom, if I could but attain to it, is not to be acquired<sup>527</sup> in so easy a manner. When I first began to desire and seek this wisdom, I set out with the assurance, that it was to be found in the Holy Scriptures, and no where else; they alone being able to make us wise unto salvation. [Cf. 2 Tim. 3:15] I therefore<sup>528</sup> considered myself engaged to make them my study: and, as the whole was<sup>529</sup> 'given by inspiration from God' [Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16] and was all declared to be profitable, according<sup>530</sup> to the various ends which the Holy Spirit designed in it,

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<sup>∞</sup> This reference should be Proverbs 2:1-5.

I made the whole my study. Thus I learned<sup>531</sup> to look upon the Bible as my book of instructions, given me along with the ministerial office<sup>532</sup> by my Lord and Master; that from thence I might deduce<sup>533</sup> all my doctrines, instructions, and admonitions, warnings, examples, encouragements, rules of duty, and motives to duty; and I also considered<sup>534</sup> it to be the believer's charter of privileges, containing exceedingly great and precious promises [Cf. 2 Pet. 1:4], and the whole of that which God saw fit to reveal concerning those unspeakable and inconceivable good things, which he hath of his infinite mercy prepared for them that love him. [Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9]. In order, therefore, faith- [98] fully to declare my message from the Lord Almighty to the souls of men, I found it indispensably needful to be well acquainted<sup>535</sup> with every part, and to take the word of God myself, as well as propose it to others, as 'the lantern of my feet, and the light of my paths.' [Cf. Psa. 119:105] not only attending to the *letter*, but also to the *true meaning*, the mind of the Spirit of God in it. This I found to be a work that required much time, great diligence, mature consideration, and an unbiassed unprejudiced mind.

With this view of the matter partially obtained, and continually more and more unfolding itself, I studied the word of God;<sup>536</sup> and have now for nearly four years thus employed a very considerable part of my time, neither rejecting, nor yet greatly depending on, the assistance of interpreters. I sincerely desired<sup>537</sup> to know the truth, and for that end I read the Scriptures, 'not as the word of man, but as the word of God.' [1 Thess. 2:13] And, though there<sup>538</sup> have been seasons of remissness, when other employments and studies too much interfered with this main business; and though at first I was very far from an unbiassed mind, being blindly and obstinately prejudiced against those doctrines, which I now believe to be the true gospel of Jesus Christ; - - yet, in that space I have read the Bible many times<sup>539</sup> over, in every part, with the strictest attention of which I have been capable. There are very few passages which relate to doctrine, that I have not repeatedly and diligently examined, comparing one with another, with<sup>540</sup> all the care and consideration I could; and I seldom ever ceased meditating on any portion of Scripture, until I had attained [99] to some satisfying conclusion concerning its true meaning, and its agreement with other Scriptures. I may truly say I have filled *reams of paper* with religious discussions, with sermons, expositions and letters; in all which I ransacked the Bible, to bring<sup>541</sup> as much scriptural evidence for my direction as possible. For these last two years, I have scarcely opened a book except upon religious subjects, and from morning till night, nearly every day, all this while, my thoughts incessantly have been employed in meditation upon the great truths of the gospel. Every difficulty and objection,<sup>542</sup> (and difficulties and objections, both from my own meditations, and in the course of my reading, continually crowded upon my mind,) sent me to the word of God, and increased my care and attention in examining and weighing every text of Scripture, respecting the point in question, before I exchanged my old opinion for a new one.

Thus I may truly say, I have sought in the word of God, (that field in which alone this precious treasure lies hid,) 'for wisdom,' *for the saving knowledge of divine things*, 'as for silver, and searched for her as for hid treasures.' [Prov. 2:4] And, though I am sensible that my knowledge is still comparatively superficial, the knowledge of



a child, of a novice<sup>543</sup> in the school of Christ; yet I trust, that, as far as relates to the leading truths of the gospel, according to the promise, I am brought to 'understand the fear of the Lord, and have found the knowledge of God.' [Prov. 2:5]

Permit me now, beloved reader, to put thee in remembrance, that until thou hast, with some good measure of this diligence, studied the whole word [100] of God, thou runnest very great hazards in passing judgment upon men and doctrines. Be cautious what thou doest; let these men quite alone, until thou hast imitated the conduct of the noble *Bereans*, and thoroughly, and with unbiassed mind, examined and meditated upon the whole word of God, to see whether the things they believe and teach be so or not: lest otherwise it should come to pass, (as probably it will,) that, in opposing and condemning them, thou shouldest be found to fight against God [Cf. Acts 5:39] -- Oh! that the Lord would hear and grant my request, and by his Holy Spirit powerfully incline the hearts of all who read these sheets, according to their leisure, station in life, obligations, and opportunities, thus attentively to read their Bibles; not as the word of men, but as the word of God himself, speaking from heaven unto them, and concerning the everlasting interests of their precious and immortal souls! Be the adviser what he will, despised, and deserving to be despised,<sup>544</sup> the advice is undoubtedly good; advice he will have no occasion to repent having thus given,<sup>545</sup> at the solemn hour of death, and the awful day of judgment; advice which, at those approaching seasons, none will repent<sup>546</sup> having followed; though it should divert them<sup>547</sup> from more amusing, and at this day more reputable, studies; or engross that time which they have been accustomed to devote to more pleasurable and fashionable employments; but which, neglected, will be an additional sting in every conscience through all the countless ages of eternity.

And, Oh! that they, to whom the chief Shepherd hath committed the care of precious souls, [101] and at whose hands he will assuredly require every one that perishes through their default, would take in good part this expression of the very affectionate desire of my soul, both in behalf of them and of their flocks, in dropping these hints concerning their peculiar obligations, to devote much of their time to the attentive unbiassed study of the word of God, that infinitely best, but often least studied, of all books! What avails it, that the ministers of the everlasting gospel should be learned classical scholars, profound philosophers, metaphysicians, and mathematicians, expert logicians, or adorned with the knowledge of the politer sciences; if they are unacquainted, or but superficially acquainted, with the Sacred Scriptures? These other branches of literature may amuse and entertain them, may procure them preferment, reputation, respect, and favour; but the knowledge of the Bible alone can enable them in such a manner, to 'take head to themselves, and to their doctrine,' [Cf. Acts 20:28] as shall issue in the everlasting salvation of their own souls, and the souls committed to their care.--Far be it from me to presume to lay down my opinions as the standard of doctrine, or a rule for the faith and preaching of my brethren in the sacred ministry! But, the more obscure I am, the less objection can there reasonably be against my hinting to them; that if anyone should find this subject manifest itself to his conscience, and make him sensible, that verily he hath 'been faulty in attending to other employments, and studying other books more than the word of God; then,

possibly, he may be mistaken in his sentiments concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and, being mistaken himself, may be [102] misleading others, to the endangering of their immortal souls: for he cannot be certain, but that, should he employ some years in this single study, (which its importance well deserves,) he may find the Bible a very different book than he expected.

V. I would observe the influence which *prayer* appears to have had in effecting this change.<sup>548</sup>

I am aware that the world, though called *Christian*, is come to such a pass, that the very mention of this subject in many companies is accounted ill manners, or even received with ridicule; and that being known to maintain a constant communion with God, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, is alone sufficient<sup>549</sup> to denominate any person a *methodist*. It is however most certain,<sup>550</sup> that the word of God is full of precepts, instructions, exhortations, invitations, promises, and examples to this effect. He never read his Bible who knows not this; nor can any man under any pretence whatever, make a jest of this great duty and privilege of a believer, without pouring contempt upon the Holy Scriptures; and insulting the brightest characters there proposed to us as examples, not excepting the Lord Jesus himself. Let men, therefore, under the profession of *Christianity*, be as irreligious and profane as they please, I shall not be ashamed to speak upon so unfashionable a topic: for if the word of God be true, he never knew any thing as he ought to know, never believed, never repented, never performed one duty aright in his life, who hath not sought all his wisdom, knowledge, faith, repentance, and sufficiency for obedience from God, by fervent, instant, persevering prayer. Time was, even since I had [103] souls committed to my care, that I lived in the neglect of this duty, and so 'without God in the world;' [Eph. 2:12] but since, through his forbearance and mercy, I have been in earnest about the salvation of my own soul, and the souls of other men, my conduct in this respect has been very different.<sup>551</sup>

'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' [Luke 11:13] and 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' [Rom. 8:9] As he is the Spirit of truth, it is his office to lead us into all truth [Cf. John 16:13], and to teach us all things: for he searches<sup>552</sup> and reveals the deep things of God. [Cf. 1 Cor. 2:10] It is expressly promised to the true church,<sup>553</sup> that 'all her children shall be taught of the Lord,' (Isaiah, liv.13.) Referring to this, Christ hath declared that 'none can come unto him, except he be drawn of the Father,' and 'taught of God,' (John vi.44,45.) And St Paul declares, 'that 'The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' (1Cor.ii.14.) The *natural man* [[*pseuchikos*]] is explained in Jude, by *not having the Spirit*; which is evidently the apostle's meaning in this passage; for in the preceding verse he declares that he preached the gospel, 'not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. [1 Cor. 2:13]' -- On these grounds, I concluded that man's natural understanding could not, spiritually or profitably, receive the knowledge of revealed

mysteries, unless it were enlightened by the Holy Spi- [104] rit; I learned also, that our eyes may be blinded by Satan,<sup>554</sup> the god and prince of this world; [Cf. 2 Cor. 4:4] that our understandings may be closed, and a veil be upon our hearts. when we read the word of God; [Cf. 2 Cor. 3:15] in which case, the letter of the Scriptures, without the spirit, only killeth. [Cf. 2 Cor. 3:6] Hence the need of the 'understanding being opened to<sup>555</sup> understand the Scriptures;' [Lu. 24:45] for want of which the plainest discourses of our Lord to his disciples, concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, were hidden from them, and they understood them not. -- The veil also must be taken from the heart:<sup>556</sup> [Cf. 1 Cor. 3:14] for want of which the *Jews*, in reading the *Old Testament*, cannot understand the plainest declarations of *Moses* and the Prophets, concerning their promised Saviour.

The Scriptures also every where declare that true wisdom is the gift of God, and must be asked of him,<sup>557</sup> by every one who would be wise unto salvation; that 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him;' [Psalm 25:14] and that those 'who receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved, are given over to a strong delusion to believe a lie; that they might all be damned, who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.' ([Cf.] 2 Thess. ii. 10-12.)

On these grounds, and depending upon the promises and invitations so plentifully interspersed throughout the Scriptures,<sup>558</sup> when I began to enquire after the truth, I was led also in some measure to cry unto the Lord for his guidance and teaching; and, as my mind grew more engaged,<sup>559</sup> and my difficulties, in extricating myself from the labyrinths of controversy, increased, I became [105] more and more earnest, constant, and particular, in making my requests known to God. My constant prayer to the Lord was, to be delivered from pride and prejudice, blindness of heart, contempt of the truth, obstinacy, enthusiasm, ignorance, and error; and that the Lord would give me wisdom and knowledge, guide me to the truth as it is in Jesus, open my understanding, take away the veil from my heart, and make known unto me the way of salvation which is revealed to sinners in his holy word. Thus waiting upon the Lord according to his own appointment, depending on him, and pleading his promises from day to day, I was led from one thing to another, until my view of religious truth was totally changed. This I most firmly believe to have been by the promised teaching of the Spirit of truth, powerfully enlightening my mind, opening the Scriptures, and, by dispelling the clouds of error and prejudice, enabling me to receive the truth in faith and love. I am conscious that I have no intention, in speaking thus publicly on such a subject, but to advance the glory of God in the salvation of souls.<sup>560</sup> But, as in his presence, I must declare<sup>561</sup> that I have prayed over many of the most interesting passages of Scripture, chapter by chapter, and often verse by verse, with the most anxious dread<sup>562</sup> of rejecting or mistaking the truth, or embracing a falsehood; and with the most earnest desire of knowing what that doctrine was which Jesus and his Apostles taught. -- In the sight of God, I am sensible, I have abundant cause to be humbled, and ashamed of my frequent remissness, and the continual defilement of my prayers; but, [106] as surely as I believe his promises to be faithful, as surely as I believe him to be a God that heareth prayer; so surely do I believe, that 'flesh and

blood hath not revealed' to me the doctrines I now preach, but God himself by his Holy Spirit.

Reader, whoever thou art, if thy conscience testifies<sup>563</sup> that thou hast hitherto lived in the neglect of this important duty, or the formal, lifeless, unmeaning performance of it with thy lips, while thy heart hath been disengaged, and thy thoughts allowedly wandering to the ends of the earth: if thou hast not been accustomed by fervent prayer to seek wisdom from God by his teaching Spirit; if thou knowest not what it is to exercise faith upon the promises pointed out to thee, nor to plead them in prayer to a promise-keeping God; if all thy knowledge of divine things hath been acquired by leaning to thy own understanding; if, in reading the Scriptures, thou hast looked more to learned critics, commentators, and expositors, than to the illuminating Spirit of God: then be as sure as the word of God is true, and as we are concerned in it, that 'the light which is in thee is darkness,'<sup>564</sup> [Luke 11:35] and that thou 'knowest nothing yet as thou oughtest to know.' [1 Cor. 8:2] -- May the Lord effectually incline thine heart to take a contrary course, and to seek wisdom where alone it can be found, even from<sup>565</sup> the Lord, 'the Father of Lights, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift,' [Cf. James 1:17] who hath invited and commanded thee to ask, that it may be given thee!

VI. I would observe, that there is nothing in this Narrative, which can reasonably be condemned as *enthusiasm*. [107]

It is allowed that *enthusiasm*, properly so called, is a frequent attendant<sup>566</sup> on religious zeal; that in some of its operations it is a grievous evil, and in all attended<sup>567</sup> with many inconveniencies; and that it ought very carefully to be guarded against by every religious professor and zealous preacher. -- It would also be in vain to pretend that the late revivals of religion, which have been indiscriminately stigmatized with the name of *Methodism*, have been, in opinion and practice, entirely free from this enthusiasm. For, what revivals of religion ever were free from scandals? Where the Lord sows his good seed, there the enemy will be sure to scatter his tares. -- It must be confessed, that some of the most eminent instruments in this work,<sup>568</sup> whose names, when prejudice shall vanish, will be handed down with honour, as burning and shining lights, to the latest periods of the church; have, by the greatness of their zeal, through human frailty, been betrayed into sentiments, expressions, and deportment, in some instances, justly to be censured as enthusiastical; of which their enemies have not failed sufficiently to avail themselves. -- But, whatever indiscretions and mistakes particular persons, who have preached these doctrines, may have fallen into; this doth not, in the judgment of candid and impartial persons, in the least affect the general cause, or prove the doctrines erroneous. We would not contend for the credit of individuals, or the interests of a party, but for the doctrines of God's word, and of the established church of *England*. These will continue true and important, though many of those, who have zealously and successfully preach- [108] ed them, may have<sup>569</sup> justly incurred the charge of enthusiasm: and I would confidently insist on it, that a man may be led to the belief of the doctrines, in the way of sober rational enquiry, and zealously preach them without being an enthusiast.<sup>570</sup>

It would be very well, if some of those, who so readily accuse whole bodies of apparently religious persons, of *enthusiasm*, would favour us with their determinate definition of an *enthusiast*. -- In its original meaning, the word has a very favourable sense, and implies, that, by a *divine* influence upon the soul, a man is filled with an ardour and warmth of zeal in the cause in which he is engaged.<sup>571</sup> Now, 'it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing:' [Gal. 4:18] and, if our ardour of soul be from the Spirit of God, according to the revealed will of God, and for the glory of God, it is the noblest, most desirable, most heavenly, and most beneficial, exertion of the human mind. -- In every thing but religion, an ardour, described by the term *enthusiasm*, is allowed and commended: a *poetical*, a *military*, a *patriotic enthusiasm*, even when they carry men beyond the strict bounds of cold reasoning and exact prudence, fail not to meet with admirers. Our zeal may be fervent in every thing without censure, unless we be zealous for the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. But, there is an *enthusiasm* of this sort, which forms the highest elevation, and the noblest effort of the human mind.<sup>572</sup> Such an enthusiasm animated the Apostle<sup>573</sup> Paul in all his self-denying labours and sufferings, and filled his writings (under the guidance of the Holy Ghost,) with the [109] most ardent zeal for the honour of his dear Saviour, and affection for the souls of men. Such an enthusiasm he expresses, when he says, (2 Cor.v.13,14.) 'Whether we be beside ourselves it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us.' Of this enthusiasm I wish I were far more *guilty*. -- But, on the other hand, there is danger of a counterfeit, pernicious enthusiasm; and about that we are at present enquiring. Now, I apprehend, that, in order to constitute this culpable enthusiasm, some one or more of the following things must appear. Either, *the ardour of soul excited proceeds from a heated imagination, or from a delusion of Satan, instead of being produced by a divine influence; or, the cause in which this ardour is employed is the cause of error and wickedness;*<sup>574</sup> *instead of the cause of God and truth; or, it exerts itself in unjustifiable measures and practices.* For if our ardour be warranted by the word of God, if it do not tend<sup>575</sup> to the dishonour of God, and if it be confined in its exercise to the rules and precepts of the word of God; -- how intense soever it may be, I can see no cause to censure it; unless men can be too zealous for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.

But, whatever be the distinguishing criterion of enthusiasm, I suppose it will be difficult to fix a charge of it upon any thing<sup>576</sup> for which I plead in this narrative. I never was taught any thing by impulses, impressions, visions, dreams, or revelations; except so far as the work of the Spirit, in enlightening the understanding for the reception of the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures, [110] is sometimes stiled[sic] revelation. Other revelation I never expected.<sup>577</sup> Not but that the Lord is sovereign, and may do what he will with his own; and, if he pleases, may, and I suppose sometimes does, go out of the ordinary course, for the conversion of a sinner, or the guidance of a perplexed, or the comfort of a distressed, soul; but I never took one step in dependence on any such extraordinary interpositions, nor ever encouraged any person to do so. And surely it will not be called *enthusiasm*, by any but avowed infidels, to believe God's word to be the standard of truth, and his promises to be faithful; and in

this belief to seek for the knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, in the manner above related. In this way I have been taught no new truths; but, as I believe, have been shown the meaning, use, tendency, consistency, harmony, wisdom, and glory of those truths which are contained in the sacred volume; but which before, through pride and ignorance, I perverted, neglected, reviled, or counted foolishness. -- Nor do I make any pretences to infallibility: God hath not, I trust, left me so unstable, as to float about in the uncertain stream of opinion, and to be 'tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' [Eph. 4:14] -- As to the grand doctrines of the gospel, which I have marked<sup>578</sup> out as *necessary to salvation*, they are neither so uncertain nor so difficult as men would persuade us; their uncertainty and difficulty arise wholly from our pride, prejudice, love of sin, and inattentive ignorance of our own hearts. There is really much difficulty in bringing a vain man to cease from leaning to his own understanding: and in prevailing with him to trust in the Lord with all his heart, [Prov. 3:5] and to be willing, in the humble posture of a little child, to be taught of God. Nothing but a deep conviction of guilt, a fear of wrath, and a sense of our lost condition by nature and practice, can bring our minds into this submissive frame: but, this being effected, the difficulty is over, and the way of salvation is so plain, that the 'way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.' [Isa. 35:8] As to the other doctrines, which I myself believe, though they seem plain enough to me, I desire not to proselyte others to them, but am willing to leave them, as matters in which fallible men may differ without danger. And, as to my sufficiency for the faithful discharge of my ministry, to God's glory and the salvation of souls, he will not, I trust, deceive my expectations, which are grounded on his promises. For the rest, I mistake daily, and find myself in continual danger of mixing my own imaginations with his divine truth, and of following my own spirit instead of his. Whatever I preach truly or do wisely, to God be the glory; for I am not sufficient of myself to think a good thought: whatever I speak falsely, or do foolishly, to me be the shame; for it is the natural fruit of my own deceitful heart. If this be enthusiasm, it is an enthusiasm warranted, not only by the word of God, as I have endeavoured to prove, but by the whole liturgy of our Church. We all, at ordination, profess to be 'moved by the Holy Ghost,' [2 Pet. 1:21] to take the ministerial office upon us; and assuredly we cannot be moved by the Holy Ghost, if we [112] neither have the Holy Ghost, nor may expect his help and guidance. We agree to pray that the Lord would 'lead into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived;' that he would 'illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of his holy word;' that he would 'cleanse our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit;' that, 'he would grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit;' with much more to this effect: and I am persuaded, that such a confidence as I have expressed cannot be censured as enthusiasm, without including our Church-establishment and continual public worship in the same charge.

VII. Lastly, I would observe that our opposers and despisers will seldom<sup>579</sup> give us the hearing. -- With all their pretensions to candour, reasoning, and free enquiry, they accuse and condemn us, without so much as knowing, with any tolerable degree of accuracy, what our sentiments are; although furnished with such plentiful

means of information in those numerous publications which are now extant upon these subjects.

Having imbibed strong prejudices against us, they frame so contemptible an opinion of our understandings and writings, that they will not bestow so much pains, or afford us so much regard, as to peruse our books, and to call an author a *Methodist* is with many people a sufficient reason why they should not read his works. -- Hence it comes to pass, that for want of information, our doctrines are grievously misrepresented; and in general the attacks made upon us, though calculated to make<sup>580</sup> our persons odious and despised, do [113] not in the least affect the argument in debate. -- Our adversaries in general know little of our opinions, except what they have picked up by *hearsay*,<sup>581</sup> in which neither the connection, consistency, tendency, nor application, of those opinions is preserved: no wonder, therefore, that we are vilified, and reproached with things to which we are utter strangers, or which we abominate and protest against every Lord's day,<sup>582</sup> and against which we neglect not to fill our writings with reasonings, warnings, and cautions.

For my own part, I freely acknowledge that my strongest objections against this scheme of doctrine arose wholly from *misapprehension and mistake*. Not having read their books, my notions of the doctrines of the *Methodists* were received from vulgar report, and from their enemies; while my creative imagination put its own construction on them, and drew terrible consequences from them:<sup>583</sup> so that, when I preached against them, I was as one fighting with my own shadow; and in speaking evil of those things that I knew not, I only betrayed my own ignorance and pride. -- No better founded are the lamentable outcries, which at this day are made against our<sup>584</sup> principles, as if they tended to banish reason, argument, sober-mindedness, and morality out of the world; and in their stead to substitute a set of whimsical vagaries, which are without foundation in reason or Scripture, and have no influence, or rather a pernicious influence, on our conduct and conversation. When such a declamation is ended, (for one would not interrupt it) ask the declaimer what a *Methodist* is? he can scarcely give you an answer: -- enquire about [114] the doctrines of the *Methodists*, -- he does not understand them; -- or their writings, -- he has never read them!

Reader, if thou desirest to know what our opinions are, and what foundation there is for these heavy charges, read our books: but read them with attention, and aim at impartiality; compare them with the word of God, and with the liturgy, articles, and homilies of the church of *England*; and, if thou hast leisure and opportunity, with the works of our first reformers. Nor do we desire thee to renounce thy *reason*, but only to make this *reasonable* concession, -- that where thy reason is ready to determine one way, but God hath expressly determined another way, that thou wouldest allow him to understand his own mysteries better than thou dost; and that therefore thou oughtest, by faith exercised upon the veracity of God, to receive *implicitly and without reasoning*, those doctrines which God hath expressly revealed, and which thy reason feels to be far above out of its reach, and therefore doubtless out of its province. Whenever, on such enquiry, thou discoverest us to be mistaken, there dissent from us, yea, blame us, as far as meekness and candour will permit; but do not condemn us in

the gross; do not assert our scheme of doctrine to be enthusiastical and groundless, though some of our writers should be found to have advanced questionable opinions. -  
 - This were the way to drive all truth and certainty out of the world; for what book can be mentioned, the Bible excepted, in which there is nothing advanced, either erroneous or questionable?

And be assured, that to read<sup>585</sup> only one side [115] of the question, and then clamorously to adopt every childish cavil, every vague report, every scandalous falsehood; and industriously to propagate them, as if these afforded a sufficient confutation of all the arguments, authorities, and scriptural testimonies, with which we support our sentiments; -- is no evidence of a candid liberal mind, or of a sincere desire to know the truth. And let it be observed,<sup>586</sup> that though some professors have been proved enthusiasts, and others detected to be hypocrites, this doth not prove that we are all enthusiasts and hypocrites. Such rash judgments are most hurtful to those who pass them.<sup>587</sup>

For myself, I here publicly profess, that I will, to the end of my days, acknowledge it as the greatest obligation that any person can confer on me, if, in the spirit of meekness, he will point out to me any error, or enthusiastical delusion, into which I have fallen, and by sufficient arguments convince me of it. I trust, that my earnest desire to discover 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' [cf. Eph. 4:21] has not abated in its influence; and that I still retain the same disinterested resolution to embrace it and adhere to it, with which I set out. Still I am solicitously fearful of being betrayed, by a warmth of spirit, and by the deceitfulness of my heart, into erroneous opinions. But clamour and reproach, objections and arguments, brought against sentiments I detest, or consequences I cannot see to be fairly deductible from our doctrines; or such reasonings as set one divine attribute at variance with another, make one part of the Bible contradict another, or exalt the human understanding upon the tribunal, and arraign and condemn revealed [116] mysteries at her presumptuous bar; will have no weight at all with me, or with any who ever knew the grace of God in truth.

And now, beloved reader, let me conclude, with having it upon thy conscience to search for the truth of the gospel in the study of God's word, accompanied by prayer, as thou would search for hid treasure. [Cf. Matt. 13:44] I give thee this counsel, expecting to meet thee at the day of judgment, that our meeting may be with joy, and not with grief; may the Lord incline thee to follow it with that solemn season full in view! -- Time how short! eternity how long! life how precarious and vanishing! death how certain! the pursuits and employments of this present life how vain, unsatisfying, trifling, and vexatious! God's favour and eternal life how unspeakably precious! His wrath the never quenched fire, the never -- dying worm, how dreadful! -- Oh! trifle not away the span of life, in heaping up riches, which shortly must be left for ever, and which profit not in the day of wrath; in such pleasures and amusements as will issue in eternal torments; or in seeking that glory which shall be swallowed up in everlasting infamy. Agree with me but in this, -- that it is good to redeem precious time, to labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life, [Cf. John 6:27] and to attend principally to the one thing needful; -- take but thy measure *of truth*, as well as *duty*,



from the word of God; be willing to be taught of God; meditate on his word day and night; [Cf. Ps. 1:2] let it be 'the light of thy feet, and the lantern of thy paths;' [Psa. 119:105] and in studying it, 'lean not to thy own understanding,' [Prov. 3:5] trust not implicitly to expositors and commentators, but ask wisdom and teaching of God. Be not a *Felix*, saying to thy serious apprehensions about thy soul, -- 'Go thy way at this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee;' [Acts 24:25] lest death and judgment come before that season: -- and be not an *Agrippa*, almost persuaded to be a *Christian*,<sup>588</sup> [Cf. Acts 26:28] but seek to be altogether such as the primitive *Christians* were. I say, agree but with me in these reasonable requests, and we shall at length agree<sup>589</sup> in all things; -- in many, in this world; -- in all, when we hear the Son of God address us in these rejoicing words, -- 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' [Matt. 25:34] -- May the Lord vouchsafe unto the writer, and to every reader, of this narrative, 'that wisdom which is from above;' [James 3:17] that teaching of his Holy Spirit, which guides into the ways of peace; that faith, which justifies and works by love;<sup>590</sup> that peace of God which passeth understanding; [Cf. Phil. 4:7] and that measure of sanctifying and strengthening grace, which may enable each of us to be 'stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding<sup>591</sup> in the work of the Lord, as knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' [1 Cor. 15:58]

THE END

MICHAEL ANDERSON, PRINTER.

## Textual Variants from 1779 Edition

1. Title Page in 1779 editon reads:

THE  
FORCE OF TRUTH  
AN  
AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

Ut si quis Asellum  
In campo doceat parentem currere frenis.  
Horace.

Vain Man would be wife, though Man be born a  
Wild-asses Colt. Job xi.12.

Who teacheth like him? Job xxxvi.22.

By THOMAS SCOTT,  
CURATE OF WESTON UNDERWOOD, AND  
RAVENSTONE, BUCKS.

LONDON :

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and J. Johnson, No. 72, in St. Paul's Church Yard.  
M DCC LXXIX.

[Price Two Shillings Unbound.]

1. For the Preface to the first edition see Appendix 1.
2. *An Account...history.] Giving an Account of the State of the AUTHOR'S Mind, and Conscience, previous unto, and at the Commencement of that Change, whereof he purposes to give the HISTORY.*
3. this part] this long part
4. sinner, I was indeed a leper] sinner.-A leper
5. one especially:and] one; and
6. uniting with accusations] joined to the accusations
7. prayer, I attempted] prayer, with this help, I attempted
8. a short time] a little space
9. but they were] But it was

10. time] space
11. was equally unable] was as little able
12. through] by reason of
13. would be] must be
14. that...them] that my soul was overpowered with them,
15. became] were
16. I lived without prayer] I lived utterly without prayer
17. hope that] hope in my mind that
18. and...guilt] and was thereby continually reminded of my guilt
19. children's memories...matter] children's minds with such useful matter
20. convictions] conscience
21. unrighteousness.I met with...and greedily] unrighteousness.-A Socinian Comment on the Scriptures came in my way, and I greedily
22. mind. In...this exposition] mind, approved itself to me.-In reading such Expositions
23. I was...myself] I was induced to conclude
24. worthy being...explained away,] worthy creature. Then further, the mysteries of the Gospel being, in the management of this argument, explained away,
25. such] their
26. generality] general run
27. I pleased myself] amused myself
28. *deserve* eternal happiness, nor was entirely] deserve, nor was entirely
29. it *argued*,] It declared, and argued,
30. servants...errors,] servants in inventing such pestilent errors,
31. by the limits] within the limits
32. can never...peace.] can never maintain his possession of it in peace.
33. intolerable] pressing
34. For *these reasons alone*, I] For these reasons I

35. this awful state] this state
36. permission] admission
37. This footnote is not in the 1779 edition.
38. requisite] required
39. Thus,...wickedness;] And thus, after some difficulty, I continued; with a heart full of pride, and all manner of wickedness,
40. admiring] adoring
41. May I love, and] May I love much, and
42. provocations!...as far as] provocations! My views in entering into the ministry, so far as
43. influence...as pride] influence therein, as pride
44. To me,...shame] Mine therefore be the shame
45. it] all
46. And, Oh! that I were] And would I were
47. office] station
48. books] authors
49. sentiments....defend them,] sentiments, and from whose reasonings I had learned to defend them
50. to them.] thereto
51. was full] was brim full
52. conceal part] conceal some part
53. *A History...in which] Containing an HISTORY of this Change, the Manner in which,*
54. lay at] lay at the same time at
55. heard...but] heard of it, but
56. Mr. N[ewton]] Mr.[Newton] and hereafter
57. conscience...negligent,] conscience smote me, and reproached me with being shamefully negligent,
58. so much,...besought the Lord] so much, that earnestly, yea with tears, I without delay besought the Lord
59. served more...impress] still deeper impressed

60. Some uneasiness] a considerable uneasiness
61. concerning my...the important duties] concerning my negligence in performing the important duties
62. though I was...present world] though I was too much the slave of sin, too much devoted to other duties, and too much in love with this present world
63. at this time] now therefore
64. pray. My...appeased;] pray. But conscience would no longer be silenced, or appeased,
65. and it pleased...*of devotion.*] It pleased the Lord, that I at this time should obtain some advantages, wash away in part some of my grosser defilements, and enter upon somewhat of a form of devotion.
66. in some respects;] in general!
67. unto the Father:] unto God;
68. I was now somewhat] Thus I was somewhat
69. As my life...proud;] As my life was in my own sight, less wicked, my heart grew more proud;
70. readily believed] verily believed,
71. or] and
72. Calvinist...It was] Calvinist. It was
73. few words...in the room] few words in an argumentative way in the room
74. being acquainted with] because I was well acquainted with
75. who expressed] who scrupled not to express
76. other matters, suited,] other matters, connected therewith, suited,
77. correspondence...His letters will] correspondence, tho' different from what has been represented--His letters will
78. advantage] usefulness
79. the stout heart...golden sceptre] the stout heart, and high looks, not only by the iron rod of his wrath, but also by the golden sceptre
80. Thus] In this manner
81. will of God!] will of God concerning me.
82. This expectation] This his assured expectation
83. But now...ambition,] But now, tho' still full of self, of ambition,

84. the world; yet, my heart] the world; yet my conscience was not utterly stupified, and my heart
85. I began to look upon] I looked upon
86. I made known to my patron my scruples] I make known my scruples
87. My objections...much self-sufficiency,) My scruple was, as I now see, a mistaken one; much self-sufficiency
88. for which...humbled] for which I feel cause to be humbled,
89. severely censured] much blamed
90. kindness...was confirmed] kindness to me, but with arguments of a very different tendency, one from the other--And though upon the whole I was confirmed
91. agreeable to the Scriptures.] agreeable thereto.
92. and I now rather thought] and even now thought
93. myself wise] myself very wise
94. effect...my life.) effect in my life.
95. I also....promise,) nor could I avoid reflecting, that this text contained a very suitable direction, and a very encouraging promise
96. I was surprised] It occasioned no little surprise to me,
97. contained a ...in extricating] contained a direction, and a promise annexed thereto so clear and full, that they are calculated to answer the purpose of a clue, in extricating
98. controversy...setting out,) wherein, especially at his first setting out,
99. paths."...hitherto] paths."--Evidently I had not hitherto
100. in my] in all my
101. speculations, I had leaned] speculations, in the pride of unhumbl'd reason, had leaned
102. addictedness to controversy] addictedness to argument, and controversy
103. true. When] true--In this state of mind, when
104. adopting his conclusions,) adopting almost all his conclusions
105. his arguments,...not agree] his arguments, and being scarcely able to endure any one, who would not agree
106. as, instead] as for the most part instead

107. Holy Spirit! holy spirit
108. perusal was] perusal of the book was
109. I was...attentive] Thereby I was excited to an attentive
110. those passages of Scripture] those Scriptures
111. that state the obligations] which speak of the obligations
112. or to...attended] or very loosely attended to
113. I was greatly affected] how much I was affected
114. of them, in meditating] of them; as this subject occurred to me in meditating
115. thee a watchman] thee as a watchman
116. Acts xx.17-35.] The 20th chap. of the Acts from the 17 v. unto the end,
117. book,...conscience] book was brought under consideration, and home to my conscience;
118. the preceding Scripture] the foregoing Scripture
119. the whole counsel] all the counsel
120. short...I] short, at this instance I
121. brought to] brought home to
122. though I obtained...*Pastoral Care*, yet] though I got no new views of gospel truth from this book, yet
123. that work, it;...sentiments] that work, which I had unthinkingly engaged in, and of the imminent danger my soul was exposed to, if I neglected wholly to devote myself thereto; that in this very conviction thus received, was laid the foundation of all my subsequent conduct, and of that change of sentiment, which was consequent thereto.
124. I for some time postponed...complying] I postponed, and neglected for a time, complying
125. nor ever...reflection] nor ever had any comfortable reflection,
126. myself up to] myself wholly to
127. And I have cause] And on this account, therefore, I have cause
128. and I had...truth] and my advance in the knowledge of the truth very small
129. I for a while gave] I gave
130. some alterations] some little alterations

131. led me to] led me for a time to
132. corrupts both...flattering pride] corrupts both; which flattering the pride,
133. the careless] every careless
134. good to none;...ordination] good to none. About the same time I was ensnared, by foolishly giving into a course of diversion, and visiting, more than ever since my ordination;
135. every vain] this vain
136. season] time
137. every day, and...lifeless] every day, and had somewhat of a course of daily devotion; but I was very formal and lifeless in both the one, and the other.
138. Yet...meditation] Yet, about this time, I was engaged in earnest, and close meditation
139. or 'born...Spirit,'] or from above, and born of the spirit;
140. our Lord has] our Saviour hath
141. I was...absurd] Even then it appeared to me absurd
142. strong] high
143. no satisfaction] little satisfaction
144. But, not having...consisted.] but having not yet clearly experienced that change myself, I could not satisfy myself wherein it consisted-
145. for Divine teaching,] for the divine illumination therein,
146. but I ...darkly] but talked very darkly about it,
147. and he,] who
148. important point...contained in it.] important matter, I was too proud, and too much a deceiver to be taught by him; I cast my eye therefore carelessly over some of them, and then returned the manuscript, without attending to any one thing therein contained.
149. when I...to establish] when, what I had learned from Bishop Burnet, incited me to establish
150. before] hitherto
151. and afforded my] and found my
152. clergyman,...In consequence] clergyman from the pulpit, in a visitation sermon, recommend to the perusal of the clergy Mr. Soame Jennings's "Treatise on the internal "evidences of Christianity"-In consequence



153. not without profit] not unprofitably-
154. came with efficacy] came with power, and efficacy
155. I received...serious reflection,] some more distinct, and heart-affecting views of the end, and design of God in this revelation of himself, from thence I received; and especially I was led to much serious reflection,
156. and earnest...led to,] and not a few hearty prayers to be led to,
157. for hitherto...a Socinian,] for hitherto, in regard to this leading truth, I was a Socinian,
158. is] seems
159. reflecting] reasoning
160. avoid] escape
161. have become *Arians*,] have been induced to forsake this unerring guide, so far as to become Arians;
162. do not,] should not,
163. thence] then
164. have manifested...this preeminence,] have manifested with what propriety they advanced their claim to such preeminence.
165. Holy Ghost...gradually, by] Holy Ghost; it seemeth very extraordinary, that such a person should ever return gradually by
166. the received] the commonly received
167. my case] my singular case
168. me so undeniably] me so fully, and undeniably
169. scriptural] Scripture
170. to defend] defended
171. both...cause] both hands, and backed his cause
172. authorities;...I found] authorities, that on the one side I found
173. and] but
174. as untenable;...unavoidable consequence] as untenable; and on the other, I could not see into the weakness of his scheme, nor was aware of the flaw in his reasoning, and the natural unavoidable consequence
175. Holy Spirit] Holy Ghost

176. for Scripture,...conciliating scheme] for Scripture, and my old fondness for reasoning, and confidence in my own understanding, being by this conciliating scheme

177. I cordially] I most cordially

178. I mean merely] This I speak merely

179. and it...acquainted with. But,] and to be sure it contained as little gospel, as any book of religion I am acquainted with. However,

180. book to a] book in itself for a

181. who is...it is] who is duly brought under a serious concern for his soul; yet tis

182. I was convinced] I was clearly convinced

183. to them;...my own soul] to them; that as a christian, and a minister, if ever I hoped to please God, and save my own soul

184. and increase] and much increase

185. and committed to memory] and laid up in my memory

186. from all other] from all my other

187. to leave] of leaving

188. and entirely to devote myself] and of entirely devoting myself

189. my reflections...into] my reflections, enquiries, and reading into

190. channel; and...opened] channel, and thenceforth scarce opened

191. short] little

192. writing] penning

193. scriptural] Scripture

194. *Mr. Hooker's*...bestowed] Mr. Hooker's works, and the honourable distinction of the *judicious Hooker* bestowed

195. read his...profit.] read his book; which accordingly I did to my great advantage--

196. effect it had upon] effect thereof upon

197. rather] somewhat

198. do by any respect,] do for any by respect

199. best thing we do] best things, which we do

200. Majesty of God] Majesty of heaven
201. keep it.] do it--
202. appeared to be one] appeared no other than one
203. transgression. I...meaning] of transgressions-Plainly did I now see into the Apostle's meaning
204. can] could
205. '...by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.'
206. all my difficulties...all my distinctions] All the difficulties I had hitherto found in this matter vanished at once; all my distinctions
207. God, that...justified] God, that they none of them could be justified
208. I was sensible...when weighed] I was sensible in my own case, that if God should pass by all my sins, and only call me into judgment before him, according to the strictness of his perfect law, for the best duty I ever performed, I must be condemned as a transgressor--when weighed
209. I did not clearly understand] I understood not clearly
210. by faith of] that is by faith in
211. 'For by grace are ye saved through faith;---not of works lest any man should boast.' Eph. 2:8-9.
212. conversation.---Neither was I...The righteousness] conversations. The following passage concerning justification in page 495, was too strongly worded for me at that time to be able to receive it--'But the righteousness
213. we are] are we
214. expressive are these words:] expressive is what he says,
215. is held...that Church,] is held by a lesser part of that church,
216. with this distinction.] with this distinction than one would wish.
217. *Papists* openly objected] *Papists* objected
218. this matter] this very matter
219. more rigid...too rigid.] more rigid sort as rather too lax in his doctrine, by none as too rigid:
220. heard it insinuated] heard that it had been insinuated,
221. suspect the truth] suspect the solidity, and truth
222. earnest prayers...result was,] earnest prayers unto the Lord for his direction, guidance, and teaching  
-The result whereof was,

223. *Mr. Hooker's*] Mr. Hooker's
224. I know,...same arguments:] I know, exactly the same which is expressed in these passages of this eminent author, and supported and vindicated with the same arguments:
225. *justification by faith alone*] justification by faith alone
226. Indeed,...scarcely] And indeed, so far as I can understand him, there is scarce
227. Sermon] Discourse
228. in which...expressly taught] in which the now offensive doctrine of the final perseverance of true believers, as far as seems to me worth contending for, is expressly taught,
229. and he closes...comfortable doctrine] Which discourse he closes with a noble triumph of full assurance, as growing out of that comfortable doctrine
230. Christians; 'I know] christians; page 532 he concludes with these precious words--'I know
231. 'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:' Luke 22:31.
232. it.' (Page 532.) With] it."--With
233. old author...no apology.] old author, I should hope would not need an apology;
234. specimens,] samples,
235. been] lain
236. the church,...the honour] the church, and as such willingly concur in allowing him the honour
237. consider, his doctrine.] consider the doctrine he teaches--
238. of him...[[Page 552,]]] of him, page 552, addressing himself unto the pastors who are appointed to feed the chosen in Israel, he says--
239. or any spark] any spark
240. seen them,...was.] seen them, and was almost entirely a stranger to the doctrines therein contained.
241. But,...works] But now, being engaged in a serious enquiry after gospel truth, and Hooker's works
242. old authors,...part of the book] old authors, than I had formerly conceived, I was inclined to examine them--Accordingly I read a great part of the book
243. many things...yet others] many things therein contained seemed hard sayings, and I could not yet receive them; yet many others

244. In short,...composed:] Beyond dispute I perceived, that the doctrine, which hitherto I had despised as novel, and methodistical, was the standard doctrine of the established church when that book was composed;

245. consequently...articles.] consequently that it was so still; for that book has lost none of its authority, though much of its esteem, with those who subscribe the thirty-nine articles

246. a new...preaching.] a new, and entirely unexpected effect began to follow my preaching--

247. I had...I declared] I had so little experienced any seasons of pressing concern for my soul, and had so little acquaintance with those persons, who were conversant with these matters, that though I declared

248. the law of God] the law

249. it never...proceed] yet it never occurred to me, but that they, who profited, would proceed

250. sense] feeling

251. anxious in enquiring] anxious and earnest in enquiring

252. my views...perplexed] my views being still very clouded, and my sentiments very perplexed

253. exhorted them...to believe] exhorted them to believe

254. I was...seek it.] I was neither capable of instructing them concerning the true nature of justifying faith, nor in what manner they were to seek for it.

255. advised them to the study] advised the study

256. God to be...understand them;] God, to be led to the right understanding of them;

257. considerable time...arrived] considerable time before they obtained comfort, or arrived

258. I was, and got] I was, and being taught of God, got

259. in some...from them.] in some things my meetings, to my no small advantage.

260. circumstance,...Jesus Christ,] circumstance of my being made the instrument for the beginning of a work of grace in others, whilst I myself was far off from an acquaintance with the true gospel of Jesus Christ,

261. Jesus Christ, perplexity.] Jesus Christ, dishonoured his person, and understood not his offices, very much increased my perplexity---

262. who confided...spiritual instructor.] who now confided their precious souls to me, as unto their spiritual instructor---

263. added to] increased

264. fervent] earnest

265. And, under] And especially under
266. About this time,] At this time also
267. by which I obtained further] which occasioned my further
268. God. It was my general practice,] God: my general practice
269. Lectures,...subject,] Lectures, being to search out all the Scriptures referred to in the margin, and all others I could recollect upon the same subject,
270. of them...other.] of them all in explaining one another.
271. This method...greater exactness] This, and a similar method before mentioned, which I made use of in writing my sermons, enabled me to fill both them and my memory, with the texts of Scripture, and made way for a far greater exactness
272. which related to that important doctrine,] which respected that very important doctrine;
273. and earnestly...the promise] and besought the Lord to accomplish the promise
274. your] my
275. my requests were made known] my requests in this behalf were made known
276. Though I...in many] Though much in the dark in many
277. Spirit;] Ghost,
278. discovered more] discovered somewhat more
279. must here be acknowledged.] come next in my way to be acknowledged--
280. a mean] a very mean
281. more] further
282. first offended me became tolerable,] first too much offended me, became more tolerable
283. Indeed I received] In many points I received
284. my faith,] my unsettled faith
285. meet] light
286. I endeavoured to prove,] Wherein I declared, and endeavoured to prove
287. believe,...punishment,] believe, in the whole of their guilt, condemnation, curse, and deserved punishment,
288. for our] for all our

289. interpretations of these subjects.] interpretations thereof.
290. for two years...of God!] for near two years been inquiring about it;-so astonishingly was my blinded understanding, in the pride of reason, filled with prejudice against the doctrines of the word of God.
291. God in them.] God therein.
292. great mistakes...and an express] great mistakes, and in much darkness and ignorance concerning the most important matters. I knew sin to be a transgression of God's law; but I did not yet see its odious deformity, in being deliberate rebellion against God's sovereign authority; in being an express
293. with the want of] as either wanting
294. and to introduce...defiled;] and to introduce lawless anarchy, confusion, and misery into the whole creation of God.-My own best actions I perceived to be defiled;
295. original sin...Inconsistently,] original sin, as the well spring and fruitful root of these multiplied evils, had not yet gained admission into my prejudiced mind. Inconsistently enough,
296. work of the Holy Spirit] work to be wrought by the Holy Spirit
297. election,...with it.] election, and those connected therewith--
298. But...fixed] But my faith now laid hold of, and was fixed
299. labyrinth of perplexities and inconsistencies] labyrinth of difficulties
300. I could not...it.] I could not come to a satisfactory understanding of it--
301. expressions, 'born again'] expressions, being born from above,
302. to explain it...advanced] to explain it, but was much in the dark, and had many doubts, whether I was right or wrong.
303. great prejudice,] no small degree of prejudice,
304. However,...fallen man,] However, this despised book came to me, as I believe, with a blessing; for by perusing it, my understanding was at length enlightened, to perceive that fallen man,
305. make provision] make not provision
306. invariably preached,] invariably and undoubtingly preached,
307. When I...acquaintance] And now about this time my acquaintance
308. But, under...his discourse] But on a particular occasion I called upon him at this time; and being under discouraging circumstances, his discourse
309. became...for him.] became then first susceptible of affection to him--
310. I had,...thoughts] still, however, I had no thoughts

311. but I...with him.] thought I now and then stole away to spend an hour or two with him--
312. believer's experience,...I loved] believer's experience; and therefore, though I now loved
313. considered him as a person] considered him still as a mistaken person
314. help it,...convictions.] help it, without shutting my eyes to that, which I was undoubtedly convinced was the truth.
315. not sure...loser.] not sure, but there might therewith creep in some consolation to my deceitful heart, from a vain imagination that my character would be no loser thereby--
316. contempt,...enthusiasts.] contempt as very silly, as fools, and sometimes as madmen; with no small degree of complacency, and self preference, I had myself hitherto despised them, under the notion of ignorant, weak enthusiasts.
317. taught] preached
318. no better than fools or madmen.] no better than fools.
319. through:...learned,] through, though I kept it to myself, I had not yet learned,
320. I remember,...the apostles] I remember that the apostles
321. his] the
322. supposed that this apprehension would] supposed this would
323. me cautious what doctrines] me very cautious what new doctrines
324. unwilling] very unwilling
325. my character;...rendered] my character; and, even when convinced, so that I could withstand no longer, that thereby I should be rendered
326. the conflict was sharp,] the conflict with my corrupt fears was sharp,
327. my mind...pulpit:] my conscience when I penned my sermons, and when I mounted the pulpit;
328. usefulness. But while,] usefulness.--One evil effect this fear of men produced; whilst
329. soften the offence,] soften the offence this might give,
330. evangelical truth.] gospel truth.
331. and did not begin...subjects] and did not come to the reading of his book with great willingness or expectation; however, the importance of the subjects
332. attention,...impartiality.] attention, and some degree of impartiality in reading it--



333. I disapproved...conscience:] Many things indeed I disapproved, and quarrelled with; but others evidenced their truth and importance to my understanding and conscience;

334. foolish] weak

335. my heart...demonstration,] my heart with such power, conviction, and demonstration of the spirit,

336. produced] gave me

337. that liberty which...the Lord.] that liberty, which is where the spirit of the Lord is and no where else.--

338. was filled] was at the same time filled

339. some few...called] some few cold unbelieving seasons excepted, I have since that time been very little troubled about being accounted

340. But, while...name:] But still I remained, and yet do remain, as much, nay, far more afraid of enthusiasm itself, than ever.---Apprehensions about my reputation I was then delivered from;

341. lest my earnestness] lest the earnestness of my soul

342. error,] enthusiasm

343. the Holy Spirit...lies.] the holy spirit, and the inventions of men, or the delusions of the spirit of lies.

344. long] for years

345. I had first quarrelled] I had quarrelled

346. I had...to it.] I had been very positive and open in my declarations against it; and my unhumbléd reason still retained its objections to it.

347. about my own sentiments] about it,

348. I was...subject.] I was surprised, and engaged in much anxious consideration of the subject.

349. my own sentiments;...for myself,] my sentiments upon that head; I was thereby thrown into great perplexities, and not being able to make out a scheme for myself,

350. convictions...victory:] convictions seemed to struggle hard for the mastery,

351. my fears...increased.] my fears of a mistake in this fundamental point were exceedingly increased thereby.--

352. I applied...subject.] I was led to apply to the Lord, and I besought him to determine me, and to lead me to a settled conclusion what was the truth.--

353. to relate...teaching,] to relate thereto, accompanied with hearty prayer to God for his direction, and teaching therein,

354. help] avoid
355. the same] one and the same
356. I was driven...revelation;] I was constrained to relinquish my reasonings, to humble my pride, and to submit my natural understanding to divine revelation;
357. Unity',...in order] Unity, in order
358. embarrassments on this subject.] embarrassing difficulties in this matter.
359. I thought...enthusiast,] I had long believed him to be a very pious man, and had read with pleasure many parts of his meditations; but having always been taught to consider him as an enthusiast,
360. his *Theron* and *Aspasio*;) his Dialogues and Letters between Theron and Aspasio,
361. I was...in everything] I was very much enlightened thereby in every thing
362. matter to my...subject.] matter to my before-darkened apprehension, more than every thing I had hitherto read upon the subject.
363. I had...believe] And now I was come to somewhat of a distinct view of most of these doctrines, which I now believe,
364. and those tenets which immediately depend on it,] and those which depend thereon, and are connected therewith,---
365. on that head.] in these respects;
366. but it...attentively] but only disposed me more impartially and attentively
367. interested] engaged
368. I was greatly concerned] I was much troubled
369. establishment and comfort,] establishment in the faith and comfort,
370. encouragement] comfort
371. wanted. They had...cleaving unto] wanted; as it would prove, that the effect produced upon them, in their being awakened out of their former careless state to an earnest concern for, and anxiety about their souls, and to an hearty desire of cleaving unto
372. This, if...Spirit;] it would, I say, prove this to be the work of the Holy Ghost
373. seeking it,...his service:] seeking it, but being in a state of enmity and rebellion against, and neglect of God;
374. and complete...power,] and compleat the work of grace, which he had thus begun, and keep the believing soul,

375. I was led to consider] I began to consider
376. It is...mystery,] Tis true, that I now considered this whole matter as an unfathomable mystery
377. judgments and counsels] judgments, and still more his counsels,
378. of proceeding] of answering objections
379. such a solution.] such a solution of the difficulty myself;
380. Indeed,] And it is likewise what
381. The day..shall] That day is coming, in which, I trust, we shall
382. upon as a very formidable objection] upon as forming a very powerful objection
383. though ungodly men,] though there is no preventing ungodly men,
384. yet, we might so explain] yet that there were ways so to explain
385. to satisfy...from them:] to satisfy their minds, and even bring them in general to derive comfort and encouragement from them,
386. final perseverance,...though now] final Perseverance and Assurance, in spite of all my twisting and expounding. It then occurred to me, that however now
387. operation of God;...works,] operation of God; and accompanied with a new birth of the Spirit, a new creation unto good works,
388. and thus my mind] In this enquiry, my mind
389. I was...meditations] and being engaged in meditating
390. and I perceived, that redemption itself,] at length I perceived, that this great work of redemption
391. and holiness;] and the most glorious holiness;
392. manifold wisdom...I considered that,] manifold wisdom, in thus reconciling, and at one time, and in one work, unitedly glorifying these his attributes, which, considered as *perfect*, seem, to created understanding, entirely contradictory to each other. Especially was I convinced of this, when I discovered, that
393. devised some method of displaying it,] devised some way wherein to exercise it,
394. Thus I perceived redemption] The work of redemption I therefore now perceived
395. But, as all...convinced] this passage is not in the 1779 edition.
396. any of them] any transgressors of his law

397. another;...whole] another: that the objections are as strong against this being understood of nations, or collective bodies, as of individuals: that the whole
398. Hence,...Sovereign,] therefore, if God doth know the end from the beginning, and if he be sovereign,
399. his own,...believer,] his own, then God absolutely both might and did chuse every individual believer
400. long; yet,...submit;] long; yet at length I was overcome by the evidence, which, both from the word of God, and from my own meditation, crowded my mind; and all my arguments on the contrary side being one way or other silenced, or answered, I was constrained to submit,
401. evangelical] gospel
402. However,...assuredly] However, I would just by the way observe, that though I do indeed myself assuredly
403. consequences of...world,] consequences of my weak and evil nature, a deceitful heart, a deceitful world,
404. can readily conceive] can conceive
405. stranger to...consequences,] stranger to these Calvinistical doctrines, or through misapprehension, or the fear of abuse,
406. every thing above stated.] every thing I have been mentioning.
407. To these no true friend] These, and many more, which might be mentioned, no true friend
408. plainly taught before me.] plainly and clearly taught before me, as I could easily prove, but that I have been too tedious already.
409. The *outlines*...completed:] And now I had got the outlines of my scheme of doctrine marked out, but though I was not sensible of it, I was yet a very child in knowledge--
410. enquiries,...heart,] enquiries, that, except in a very few things, I was a stranger to the workings of my own heart,
411. experience...embraced.] experience in my own soul, of the power of those truths I had attained unto.
412. acquaintance,...wanted.] acquaintance was capable of informing me in anything deserving attention, which I was ignorant of.
413. But,...Mr.N.] But now at length perceiving, that in the whole matter Mr. \_\_\_
414. I had been...it occurred] I had been the mistaken person, it occurred
415. opinion of myself;] opinion of myself than I went with;
416. was at length brought] was brought
417. From this time I have] from this time my prejudice hath indeed been overcome; and I have

418. and with pleasure] and love
419. wisdom foolishness;] wisdom I now know to have been foolishness,
420. I have experienced,] I have experienced in my own heart.
421. immoral persons...ungodliness] immoral persons influenced to deny ungodliness
422. Spirit] Ghost
423. I have embraced] I have now received,
424. I can confidently avow,] And sincerely I may avow,
425. effect upon me.] effect upon me than that imputed to them;
426. My design] My only design
427. as a singular] to be a very singular
428. effected] brought about
429. Spirit;] Ghost;
430. gracious God;] gracious wonderworking God;
431. by the convincing Spirit,] in the hands of the convincing spirit,
432. found. I would] found in--In order to help forward this desired effect, I would
433. observations...and may] observations upon what hath been related, to the attentive and impartial consideration of the reader: and may
434. and every reader} and reader
435. of these pages,...righteousness.] of these sheets to the saving knowledge of himself, and of the ways of truth, and peace!
436. It must] I think it must
437. speaking,...stated.] speaking, as unlikely a person, as any in the world to embrace this system of doctrine--
438. reason;...upon] reason, and a very favourable opinion of my own understanding: and I had upon
439. which are...against] which are by reasoning men brought against
440. characters] persons
441. But, I was] But on the other hand, I was

442. In short, very few have been] in short I was fallen so very low, that very few reasoning men have ever been
443. error,...sink.] error, which I had been permitted to sink into--
444. sanguine hopes of victory.] expectations of success,
445. Yet, after much,] And yet at length after much,
446. My natural...self-sufficient] By reason of my natural spirit, and temper, I was a most unlikely person thus to change--Few persons were ever by nature more self-sufficient
447. scarcely ever...either] scarce ever did I drop any argument I had undertaken to support, until either
448. heart; and, when] heart; and thus garrisoned, when
449. constrained to recede. So that the] Constrained to yield. And thus the
450. contracted an acquaintance] contracted somewhat of an acquaintance
451. nor was I...cultivating,] nor was I unacquainted with the advantages to be hoped for, from continuing to cultivate
452. that embracing them] that embracing this system of religion
453. But, as...them,] Had I not therefore, as the result of my diligent enquiries, been assuredly convinced, that these doctrines were true, that it was my indispensable duty to embrace, and preach them,
454. here below:...aware] here below; I should have been destitute even of common sense, to have had anything to do with them--And yet being aware
455. liberally bestowed on those persons] liberally added to the names of those persons,
456. for human applause;] for praise
457. a half-witted,] a silly, half-witted,
458. if I] upon supposition that I
459. sincerity of this resolution;] sincerity wherewith I had formed this resolution;
460. I renounced...evidenced.] I renounced my only prospect of preferment; it were unreasonable to question my sincerity, when thus evidenced.
461. Giving these proofs of integrity,] Thus giving proof of my integrity in this undertaking,
462. serpent?...then,] serpent? If ye then,
463. I should be delivered] I should be likely to be delivered

464. conclusion without...promises?] conclusion without insinuating that God hath broken his promises, which is shocking to think of?
465. of the narrative;] of these things,
466. argue,] say,
467. after truth] after gospel truth
468. the saving doctrine] the true saving doctrine
469. according to his direction,] by his providential direction,
470. My evident...sufficient] My sincerity in seeking the truth, evidenced by the sacrifice I made to my conscience was sufficient
471. the accomplishment of them:] the accomplishment thereof unto thy soul;
472. argued on this head,] urged under this head,
473. as I would...advanced,] as I would neither wish by vain controversy to be detained from more profitable employments, nor yet to leave any material and plausible objection in force against what I have asserted;
474. I would...*impartially*] In answer therefore to those, who may deem me too confident in this argument, I would only entreat them impartially
475. they can account for the fact.] he can account for this circumstance.
476. believer;...conclusions;] believer, and then see if you possibly can evade one of these conclusions.
477. the truth....promises,] the truth.--to the 2d argument, taken from experience, I answer, 1. That is not true---Many pretenders to sincerity and candour will, without hesitation, charge such a reliance on, and confidence in these promises,
478. truth: and it is plain] truth, with being enthusiastical; and therefore it is plain
479. discourse as personal.] discourse, as too pinching.
480. professed] pretended
481. their heart,'...Spirit;] their heart, asking wisdom of him, or seeking in the word of God and prayer, to be taught of him;
482. divine authority;...were sufficient] divine authority as if by all manner of artifice their being made to have the shew of unreasonableness, was sufficient
483. that such persons] that the authors of such books
484. his word and Spirit.] the word and spirit of God.

485. It is...*desire*] And 3.It is evident, that many pretenders to this sincere desire
486. title; and, where] title, wading through thick and thin, (as it is said) to make good their cause; and where
487. mistaking it ..*sincerity*] mistaking it, or of that distrust of self, and those doubts concerning our present knowledge and belief, which constitute that sincerity,
488. entirely] absolutely
489. their authority] their own authority
490. truth; but do not] truth; who yet in this way of seeking it, do not
491. laid down, I would] laid down as my view of the truth; I would
492. distinction between] distinction established between
493. we are known...*gradually*.] we are known.  
 Now lay these things impartially together, consider my former sentiments on religious subjects; my self-sufficiency and positiveness in my opinions; my worldly interest and character both to appearance at stake; my sincerity in my religious enquiries thus evidenced; and then supposing my present sentiments to be enthusiasm and pernicious delusion, and will it not be evident to your own consciences, that I was a most unlikely person to fall into them?  
 II. In the second place then I would observe from this narrative, that this change in my sentiments was very gradual.
494. opinions] profession
495. was not...*sentiments*.] was not in any suitable manner established in his former opinions,
496. weigh the arguments...*them*.] weigh the arguments pro and con; that he had only changed one profession, one set of notions for another, without having duly considered either side.
497. in direct opposition] contrary
498. commonly] generally
499. I was...*believe*] I was, as to the outward expression thereof, calm and satisfied; being generally enabled on reflection to believe,
500. instructing...*truth*.] instructing them to the best of my knowledge, in what I believed to be the truth;
501. satisfactorily] convincingly
502. afforded me...*attained*] afforded me, if I would have improved them, with the same full conviction, I might have been led
503. III...*sentiments*] III. then 3dly, let me observe further upon this matter, that as I changed my religious views deliberately, so, as hinted above, I did it without any teaching from those whose sentiments
504. time...*enquiries*.] time after I began to enquire after the truth,



505. neglected his letters.] neglected his letters, as not considering them worth a refusal.
506. company,...preach.] company and would not all along so much as hear him preach.
507. evangelical] gospel
508. offer of several books, written] offer of what books I chose, written
509. peruse any...contained.] peruse any of them with such a measure of attention, as to recollect any thing of consequence in them.
510. present opinions.] present scheme of doctrine.
511. the purer...proved.] the purer, according to my present view, they flow: and I have no doubt, but I could, were I to go about it, with proper helps, prove undeniably,
512. preached...scandal] preached by me, under the scandal
513. not expressly taught] not been preached
514. of their doctrine.] of the truths they taught.
515. It is greatly...locked] It is much to be wished, that their lives, their discourses, living and dying, and their remaining writings, were more generally known amongst us, and did not remain as they now do, locked
516. standard-doctrines, and ignorantly] standard doctrines of that church; and not knowing how far we are commonly departed from them, ignorantly
517. of the first] of our first
518. observe...change.] observe what influence the study of the Scriptures had into this change.
519. to take...few] to take many things for granted, to collect our scheme of divinity from other authors, and only to fetch a few
520. foreign to our profession,] foreign thereto,
521. God...meditating] God. Hence it comes to pass, that frequently we bestow not so much pains in meditating
522. the third person plural in the 1821 edition replaces the first person plural in the 1779 edition for the rest of this paragraph.
523. with many others.] with others.
524. informs us] gives us to understand
525. thine heart] thy voice

526. If then...which] Now if our wisdom has been acquired without our having experienced any of that eager desire, and without having employed any of that painful diligence in seeking it, with which
527. is not to be acquired] is not I perceive to be acquired
528. salvation. I therefore] salvation. As a Christian, and still more as a Minister, I therefore
529. the whole was] the whole word of God was
530. inspiration...according] inspiration from God, and was all declared to be profitable for some purpose or other, according
531. designed in...learned] designed therein; so ought I to make the whole my study without picking and choosing. Thus by degrees I learned
532. the ministerial office] my ministerial trust
533. I might deduce] I was to draw
534. and I also considered] that moreover it was to be considered
535. declare my message...acquainted] declare the message which I had in trust to deliver to the souls of men from the Lord Almighty, I found it indispensably needful for me to be well acquainted
536. more and more...God;] more and more clearly unfolding itself to my mind, I set about the study of the word of God,
537. my time...I sincerely desire] my time therein, neither rejecting, nor much depending upon helps. Sincerely I all the time desired
538. And, though there] And though during this time there
539. many times] several times
540. with another, with] with another, and laying one thing against another, with
541. Bible, to bring] Bible to the utmost I could, to bring
542. Every difficulty and objection,] Every difficulty which I met with, every objection that occurred to me,
543. am sensible...novice] am sensible, that compared with many with whom I have personal acquaintance, and still more whole works I read, my knowledge of the Scriptures is superficial, the knowledge of a child, of a mere novice
544. despised,] despised for a Methodist,
545. thus given,] thus given you,
546. none will repent] none of you will repent

547. The third person plural is given as the second person plural for the rest of this paragraph in the 1779 edition.

548. V...change.] V. Then, 5thly, I would also observe from the foregoing narrative, the influence which prayer appears to have had into this change,

549. being known...sufficient] being known to live a life of prayer and communion with God, is alone sufficient

550. It is however most certain,] However, it is scarcely needful to say,

551. but since,...different.] but since through the forbearance and mercy of my gracious God, I have been in earnest about the salvation on my own soul and theirs, I have not been left to do so. However, it is not my intent to speak any further on this subject than relates to the matter in hand.

552. 'If ye...searches] The word of God promises the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; he is the Spirit of truth, leads into all truth, teaches all things, and searches

553. It is...church,] Now the leading promise to the church is this,

554. also,...Satan,] also, that there is such a thing as our eyes being blinded by Satan,

555. opened to] opened, in order to

556. The veil...heart:] and of the veil being taken from our heart;

557. The Scriptures...him,] I was taught also that true wisdom was the gift of God, and to be asked of him,

558. throughout the Scriptures;] through the whole word of God;

559. I was...engaged,] I began also to cry unto the Lord for his guidance therein: as my mind became more and more engaged,

560. enabling me to receive...souls.] enabling me to receive the spiritual truth therein contained.

But though I am not ashamed of declaring my desire of living a life of prayer, and communion with God; yet I have no intention in speaking thus publicly on such a subject, but advancing his glory, and forwarding the salvation of souls--

561. I must declare] I declare

562. dread] apprehensions

563. testifies] testifies against thee

564. Spirit of God...darkness,'] Spirit of God, sought in humble prayer to open thy understanding, to take the veil from thine heart, and to give thee that wisdom, which is from above; then be sure, if the word of God be true, and we are any ways concerned in it, thou must be in the wrong, the light that is in thee must be darkness,

565. found, even from] found from

566. It is allowed...attendant] That there is such a thing as Enthusiasm; that it is a frequent attendant
567. evil,...attended] evil, I speak of the faulty Enthusiasm in all, attended
568. confessed, that...work,] confessed, that even some of the most eminent instruments in this good work,
569. them, may have] them, have
570. enthusiasm:...enthusiast.] Enthusiasm. All that I would intimate is no more than this; that a man may be led to the belief of those doctrines which are branded as Methodistical in a way of sober, rational enquiry; and zealously preach them without being an Enthusiast.
571. and implies,...engaged.] and implies no more than being by a *divine* influence upon the soul, filled with an ardour and warmth of zeal in the cause we are engaged in;
572. the human mind.] the human soul;
573. the Apostle] the great Apostle
574. *employed...wickedness,*] employed, must be the cause of self and error,
575. For if...*do not tend*] Now if our ardour of mind be not such as is not warranted by the word of God, if it be not such as tends
576. a charge...thing] a charge of it upon me, for any thing
577. Other...expected.] Other revelation I never expected or experienced, nor ever taught others to expect.-
578. have marked] have endeavoured to mark
579. Lastly,...will seldom] Lastly, I would observe the great disadvantage under which we labour is, that our opposers and despisers will seldom
580. though calculated to make] though they make
581. -Our adversaries...*hearsay,*] What most of our adversaries know of our opinions, are only scattered fragments picked up by hearsay,
582. every Lord's day,] from sabbath to sabbath,
583. drew terrible consequences from them:] drew the consequences from them;
584. against our] against us, and our
585. And be...read] And be afforded, it is no argument of a sincere desire to know the truth, to read
586. sentiments,--...observed,] sentiments. Observe,
587. judgments...them.] judgments hurt not us, but those that pass them.

588. almost persuaded...*Christian*;} an almost Christian;

589. shall at length agree] shall sometime agree

590. faith,...love;} faith which justifies,

591. strengthening grace,...abounding] strengthening grace, which shall enable us to hold on, and to hold out unto the end, always abounding

## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX A

### THE

### PREFACE

[to the First Edition (London, 1779)]

If a Book do not apologize for its own publication, it is in vain for the Author to think of doing it in his Preface; yet it seemed requisite to assign my reasons for troubling the Public.

In this Narrative, little more is contained than an history of the workings of my heart, that forge of iniquity; and of my conscience, that friendly monitor, whom we generally hate, because, as far as informed, it boldly tells us the truth, whom we endeavour to pacify, to lay asleep, and to render insensible, as if seared with a hot iron; which, through the deceitfulness of our hearts, of sin, and of the world, by the assistance of Satan, we generally in time accomplish; and to whose remonstrances, until this is effected, we commonly deafen ourselves, by living in a continual noise and bustle. The conflict in my soul between these two are here related, and some account given of the artifices, which Satan, in confederacy with my heart, made use of to keep my conscience quiet, and silence its remonstrances; as also of the means which the Lord employed to defeat this conspiracy, to give conscience its due ascendancy, and to incline my before unwilling heart to become obedient to its friendly admonitions; with the effect thereof upon my religious views and conduct.

As to the effect of this publication, respecting my character and worldly interest,--myself, and all that is dear to me, I would leave in his hands who causeth all to work together for good to them that love him, whom he hath called according to his purpose. And he hath so evidenced his care over me, and goodness to me, in all the concerns of my past life, that it were shameful indeed did I not most willingly cast all my care upon him for the future. But, Reader, the effect of this publication respecting thee I have much at heart, and have had, still have, and shall continue to have it much in my prayers. If thou art a believing servant of God, I hope thou wilt see cause to bless God in me, and wilt be established and comforted thereby, according to the fervent desire of my soul, for all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; if thou art one, whose experience answers in many things to what is here related of me, as face answers to face in the water; may the Lord, the Spirit, who convinceth of sin, alarm thy drowsy conscience, and bring thee under a serious concern for thy precious soul, and its eternal interests; may he incline thine heart diligently to use the means here spoken of, as far as conscience evidences it to be thy duty; and may he bless the means for enlightening thy mind with the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and

guiding thy wandering feet into the ways of peace. This be assured is my hearty prayer for thee; and with this prayer I commend this Work unto the Lord, that if it be his blessed will, he may employ it as an instrument for advancing his glory, and the salvation of souls.

THOMAS SCOTT.

Weston Underwood,  
Feb. 26, 1779.



## APPENDIX B

**Glossary**

Unless otherwise noted, the following definitions are from *The Oxford English Dictionary*

**Ague** - A malarial fever, marked by successive fits or paroxysms, consisting of a cold, hot, and sweating stage.

**Antinomianism** - One who maintains that the moral law is not binding upon Christians, under the 'law of grace'.

**Articles of Religion** - These number 39, and can be found in the Book of Common Prayer of the Anglican Church.

**Atonement** - Reconciliation or restoration of friendly relations between God and man.

**Bereans** - "[the Bereans] were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to *see* whether these things were so." Acts 17:11, the King James Version.

**Cavil** - A captious, quibbling, or frivolous objection.

**Conformists** - One who conforms to the usages of the Church of England as required by the successive Acts of Uniformity, especially that of 1661.

**Controverted** - Made an object of controversial discussion.

**Curacy** - The office or position of a curate. [A curate is] One entrusted with the cure of souls; a spiritual pastor. A clergyman who has the spiritual charge of a parish (or parochial district); the parson of a parish.

**Dissenters** - One who separates himself[sic] from the communion of the Established Church of England or (in Scotland) of Scotland. Occasionally distinguished from *Nonconformist*, and restricted to those who not only dissent from the national church as it is actually constituted, but disagree with the principle of national or state churches.

**Divinity** - The science of divine things; the science that deals with the nature and attributes of God, His relations with mankind, etc., theology.

**Enervated** - To destroy the force of (arguments, testimony, etc.); to destroy the grounds of (a doctrine, an opinion); to render ineffectual (a law, an authority, an opponent's efforts, etc.).

**Enthusiasm** - Ill-regulated or misdirected religious emotion, extravagance of religious speculation.

**Established Church** - Used with reference to the national church or its religion. [In this case the Anglican Church.

**Experimentally** - By experience; as the result of experience.

**Extemporary** - Arising at the moment, occasional, casual; sudden, unexpected...Made for, or suggested by the occasion; hastily built, framed, prepared, or provided; makeshift.

**Forward** - Ready, prompt, eager (in an action or a cause); *to* (do something).

**Hearers** - One who receives oral instruction, or attends lectures or sermons; a disciple. One admitted to hear the Scriptures read and receive instructions, but not to the common worship of the church; applied to catechumens and penitents of the second order.

**Injunctions of the Rubric** - A direction for the conduct of divine service inserted in liturgical books, and properly written or printed in red.

**Michaelmas** - The feast of St. Michael, 29 Sept., one of the four quarter-days of the English business year.

**Mortifying** - Causing humiliation of feeling, vexation, or depression.

**Nervous** - Of writings, arguments, etc.; Vigorous, powerful, forcible; free from weakness and diffuseness.

**Nettled** - Irritated, vexed, provoked, annoyed.

**Obeisance** - The action or fact of obeying. Authority, rule, command, sway.

**Ordinance** - A practice or usage authoritatively enjoined or prescribed; especially a religious or ceremonial observance, as the sacraments...Applied esp. to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

**Parochial order** - Of, belonging, or pertaining to a parish, or parishes in general.

**Partiality** - Excessive or special preference for, or prepossession in favour of, a particular person or thing; hence, Favourable disposition, predilection, fondness, or affection for some one or something.

**Patron** - One who holds the right of presentation to an ecclesiastical benefice.

**Politer** - Of the arts, or any intellectual pursuits, esp. literature: Polished, refined, elegant; correct, scholarly, exhibiting a refined taste.

**Preferment** - An appointment or post which gives social or pecuniary advancement; chiefly, an ecclesiastical appointment.

**Propensities** - Disposition or inclination to some action, course of action, habit, etc.; bent of mind or nature.

**Prostitution** - Devotion to an unworthy or base use; degradation, debasement, corruption.

**Retchless** - obs. variant of RECKLESS.

**Retrenchments** - The act of excising, deleting, or omitting.

**Seasons** - A particular time or period during which something happens, or which is defined by some characteristic feature or circumstance.

**Secret** - In private, not openly or in public.

**Sentiments** - What one feels with regard to something; mental attitude (of approval or disapproval, etc.); an opinion or view as to what is right or agreeable.

**Sovereign** - Of things, qualities, etc. Supreme, paramount; principal, greatest, or most notable.

**Subscribed** - To give one's assent or adhesion to; to countenance, support, favour, sanction, concur in.

**Subscription** - A declaration of one's assent *to* articles of religion, or some formal declaration of principles, etc. by signing one's name; in the Church of England, assent to the Thirty-nine Articles.

**Superstitiously** - Overscrupulous; punctilious; extremely careful or particular.

**Titlle** - A small stroke or point in writing or printing.

**Universal toleration** - For a definition of toleration in its religious aspects see *RTE*, pp. 69-70.

**Upbraideth** - To bring forward, adduce, or allege (a matter), as a ground for censure or reproach.

**Will-worship** - (Col.ii.23)...Worship according to one's own will or fancy, or imposed by human will, without divine authority.

**Wrestling - To go through, to perform or execute, to carry out, with struggle or effort.**

## APPENDIX C

**Biographical Sketches**

Beveridge, William (1637-1708). Beveridge was the Bishop of St. Asaph. He was particularly versed in the original languages. He graduated from St. John's College, Cambridge B.A. 1656 and M.A. 1660. He was ordained priest Jan. 1660. His posthumously published *Private Thoughts* (1709), demonstrates a very sensitive and serious approach to the pastoral function.

Bull, George (1634-1710). Bishop of St. David's. His most significant work was *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae* (1685). The *Defensio* was written to clear him of charges of being a Socinian. He maintained the necessity of good works caused his adversaries to insinuate that he was a Socinian. In his work *Judicium* (1694), he held that it was necessary to believe in the true and proper divinity of Christ. His most popular work was *The Corruptions of the Church of Rome* (1705).

Burnet, Gilbert (1643-1715). When ten years old he entered the Marischal College of Aberdeen and graduated M.A. four years later. He was a tolerant person who read widely. His tolerant views toward other denominations caused some intolerant people to be angry with him. *History of his own Time*, his most significant work was not published until after his death.

Clarke, Samuel (1675-1729). Anglican clergyman whose theological writings were

designed to demonstrate the rational nature of Christianity. His *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* tended towards Arianism. At Queen Caroline's request he had a well publicized debate with Leibnitz. The correspondence between them was published in 1717. Clarke's doctrine gave offence to both deists and orthodox thinkers each of whom claimed he was the other in disguise.

Edwards, Jonathan (1703-1758). A precocious child, he entered Yale in 1716. Upon graduation in 1719 he had a short pastorate in New York, studied theology for three years at Yale to earn the M.A., and then was a tutor at Yale until he joined his maternal grandfather, Samuel Stoddard, in pastoring the Congregational Church in Northampton, Mass. in the summer of 1726. Beginning in late 1734 his ministry produced a series of revivals in his own church. The revival did not last long as he was voted out of his church in 1750. In his pastoral years he wrote a penetrating analysis of some of the conversion experiences of his parishioners. In the years following his ejection until his death he was involved with writing theological and philosophical books. He was appointed president of Princeton weeks before he died.

Evans, John, D.D.(1680?-1730). First a congregational minister, he turned Presbyterian. The universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen both conferred on him the honorary degree of D.D. He was best known for a series of sermons entitled *Practical Discourses concerning the Christian Temper* (4th ed. 1737). These thirty-eight sermons dealt with how to live the Christian life.

Fuller, Andrew (1754-1815) A brilliant, self-taught Baptist theologian who had a great influence on the missionary statesman William Carey. He wrote a significant work, *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation* (1785). In this work he sought to revive evangelical Calvinism and caused a split in the Baptist movement when some denounced him and formed the Strict and Particular Baptist denomination.

Hall, Joseph (1574-1656). Successively bishop of Exeter and Norwich. He favoured Calvinism, was a loyal churchman and wrote voluminously on a wide range of theological subjects. He was appointed by James I as his representative to the Synod of Dort (1618-19). His position concerning relationships with Rome were that the church of England should condemn the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church without denying her catholicity.

Hervey, James (1714-1758). At seventeen years of age he entered Lincoln College, Oxford and within two or three years came under the influence of the Oxford methodists. He received holy orders near the end of 1736 or the beginning of 1737. In 1740 he became curate of Bideford, North Devon, and while there planned and likely began writing the first of his *Meditations* entitled "Meditations among the Tombs". The *Meditations* were filled with truisms, ornately expressed, and were admired by educated persons. The *Meditations* had reached a twenty-fifth edition by 1791.

In 1755 he published what would become a very famous work entitled, *Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio* in three volumes. Aspasio seeks to persuade

Theron of the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Because of his Calvinistic teaching he became the object of opposition from John Wesley, who wrote some 'Remarks' on *Theron and Aspasio*. Hervey was not a controversialist by anyone's estimate.

Hooker, Richard (1554?-1600). English theologian and apologist. Hooker took holy orders about 1581. He preached that year a sermon in St.Paul's Cross in London and stayed in the home of John Churchman whose wife persuaded Hooker to marry their daughter Joan. Joan Churchman was alleged to lack looks, money or personality. On March 17, 1584-5 he was appointed master of the Temple and that appointment marked the beginning of a controversy with Walter Travers who was passed over for the Temple appointment. While Travers charged Hooker with heresy, the men always treated each other with respect during the ensuing controversy.

Hooker's most famous writing was his *Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593-97) which sought to provide a philosophical framework for the Elizabethan settlement of English ecclesiastical government.

Jenyns, Soame (1704-1787). A miscellaneous writer, who was not regarded as a first-rank theologian. In 1776 the first edition of his *View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion* appeared and the tenth edition was published in 1798. The book produced more controversy than it probably merited as different writers condemned or defended Jenyns. Although Hannah More (1745-1833) was converted to Christianity by a study of the *View*, she did criticize Jenyns.



Jortin, John (1698-1770). He graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge with his B.A. in 1719 and with his M.A. in 1722. He took holy orders in 1724. A church historian, his reputation was established with the appearance of his biography of Erasmus. The first volume of his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* appeared in 1751 and it was to become his most lasting contribution.

Law, William (1688-1761). He graduated from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, B.A. 1708 and M.A. in 1712. He was ordained and elected fellow of his college in 1711. In 1726 the first of his practical treatises on 'Christian Perfection' appeared. In 1727 he became tutor to Edward Gibbon, father of the historian. His very famous work *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, was first published in 1728 and went through at least 10 editions by 1772. He was highly esteemed by the Wesleys and Whitefield, and other evangelicals, including some who attacked his mysticism, such as James Hervey and John Newton. Because he did not have Locke's faith in human reason, he opposed rationalism.

Leland, John (1691-1766). He was educated for the nonconformist ministry, became joint-pastor of a congregation in New Row, Dublin and afterwards pastor of a congregation in Eustance Row, Dublin. His writings that brought him to public attention were against the deists. *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers that have appeared in England during the last and present century, &c.* (1754-6) was his most important work.

Lindsey, Theophilus (1723-1808). A Unitarian, graduated B.A. from St. John's College, Oxford, and in 1747 was elected a fellow of his college. He took holy orders, and was presented to a Chapel in Spital Square on the recommendation of Lady Ann Hastings. On Sept. 29, 1760 he married Hannah Elsworth, the step-daughter of his friend Archdeacon Francis Blackburne and soon afterwards adopted Blackburne's latitudinarian views on subscription. In the controversy that followed on the publication of Blackburne's 'Confessional', he joined in the petition signed by two hundred persons in 1772 for giving practical effect to Blackburne's views on subscription. On the rejection of the petition he resigned his living, and on Nov. 28 1773, he preached his farewell sermon.

He issued *The Apology of Theophilus Lindsey on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire* in 1774. In it he listed his reasons for leaving the Church of England, and gave a history of the doctrine of the Trinity and Unitarianism. It produced both hostile and friendly criticism, to which he replied in the preface to his next work, *A Sequel to the Apology* (1776), which was the most elaborate, and in many respects the most valuable, of his contributions to dogmatic theology.

Locke, John (1632-1704). Studied at Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated M.A. 1658. Locke appears to have had some intentions of becoming a clergyman but he doubted his fitness for the position. Locke studied medicine and took the M.B. degree in 1674. For Locke, the state was supreme. The judicial system was to be occupied only with the preservation of peace. With the exceptions of atheism, which struck at all morality, and catholicism, which was in principle intolerant, Locke felt all religions

should be free to practice their worship. Locke believed in supernatural revelation. In his work, *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), he argues that reason is to determine what is revelation. His writings did much to encourage the rationalization of Christianity.

Newton, John (1725-1807). Newton had a dissolute early life as both a slave trader and a slave. He gained his freedom and went to live in Liverpool in 1755 where he became a convert of George Whitefield's ministry. In December 1758 he sought holy orders and was gently refused. Newton persisted and on April 29, 1764 he was ordained deacon and on June 17 priest. His first charge was Olney, Buckinghamshire. In October 1767 the famous poet, William Cowper, settled in Olney, very close to Newton. In 1779 *Olney Hymns*, a very popular hymnal of the evangelical movement, was issued. The book contained sixty-eight pieces by Cowper, and two hundred and eighty by Newton.

Newton's final years at Olney were discouraging as the congregation was split in various ways. In January 1780, he moved to St. Mary Woolnoth. When Newton came to London, William Romaine (1714-95) was the only other evangelical there. Here he had a happy ministry with a crowded church until his death.

Simeon, Charles (1759-1836). Appointed vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge in 1782, he remained there until his death. He was very influential at Cambridge and in the evangelical community generally. Such people as Patrick Bronte and Henry Martyn were greatly influenced by Simeon. He helped to found the Church Missionary Society

and the London Jews Society. He established the Simeon Trust which purchased livings for evangelicals.

Travers, Walter (1548?-1635). Travers graduated B.A. 1565, and M.A. 1569, from Christ's College, Cambridge. Travers went to Geneva, formed a lifelong friendship with Beza and strengthened his desire for reform within the church of England. He there wrote the famous *De Ecclesiasticae Disciplinae...Explicatio* (1574). He declined to subscribe, and was unable to obtain a license to preach. Early in 1578 he went to Antwerp and was ordained there. Within two years he was back in England and in 1581 was appointed afternoon lecturer at the Temple. The famed Richard Hooker gave morning lectures in the Temple and in the afternoon Travers took Hooker's morning lecture apart. They packed the building. The controversy was carried on in a very restrained manner with each showing respect for the other. Travers remained a nonconformist until his death.

Venn, Henry (1725-1797). Graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge, B.A. in honours, 1745-6, and M.A. 1749. He was ordained priest in June 1749. In 1750 he became curate to Adam Langley, who held the livings of St. Matthew, Friday Street, and West Horsley, Surrey. During this time he became an evangelical. In 1754 he accepted the curacy of Clapham, where he began a lifelong friendship with John Thornton and others of his family. For the last twenty-six years of his life he ministered in the small living of Yelling, Huntingdonshire, about twelve miles from Cambridge.

Having established a reputation as a preacher and writer in the evangelical

tradition, he now, extended his ministry by his large correspondence and his strong personal influence on many young men who used to visit him from Cambridge. These included Charles Simeon, William Farish, and Joseph Jowett.

Watts, Isaac (1674-1748). Hymnwriter. Nonconformist minister, Mark Lane Church, London, from 1702 until his death. The father of modern congregational hymn writers, he composed over 600 pieces. His *Divine Songs* (1715) was the first children's hymnal. He did not write new tunes, but composed words to the tunes of the Psalter. He was granted an honorary D.D. from the University of Glasgow in 1828.

Wilberforce, William (1759-1833). Best known as the champion of the slaves, he worked for years in the British parliament to see slavery abolished. He wrote a best selling book, *Practical View* (1797), which went through fifteen editions in England by 1824, and twenty five in North America. He was a member of the Clapham Sect. He was a faithful attender on Thomas Scott's preaching.

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