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THOMAS SCOTT THE COMMENTATOR (1747-1821)

A Study
of
His Theological Thought

by
Aaron Edward Gast, B. A., B. D.

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Edinburgh, Scotland
May, 1955
To

my wife

whose patient help

has made this work possible
PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the life and work of Thomas Scott, the Commentator, with special reference to his theological thought. The title of the thesis indicates that our interest is primarily theological, not biographical. We shall, however, include biographical material in order to provide a concrete context in which we may view Scott's theological writings.

In chapter one we shall mark the prevailing religious tendencies that existed in the time of Thomas Scott and point out his relationship to these tendencies. There is no attempt to write a chronological account of religious thought or an ecclesiastical history; but rather, there is an endeavor to mark out some of the salient features, both conceptual and practical, of the religious 'atmosphere' in which Scott lived and worked.

Chapter two will deal with the early years of Scott. We shall consider, especially, his spiritual pilgrimage and theological advancement from Socinianism to Evangelicalism.

There will be, in chapter three, a record of Scott's life and work following his acceptance of Evangelical truth. We shall emphasize his personal and ministerial usefulness as it is evidenced in his influence on outstanding leaders and in his pioneer efforts in several great enterprises.

With this presentation we shall include an examination of
each of his published writings. The occasion out of which each work arose, its main argument, and its significant features, will be given.

In chapter four Scott's *magnum opus*, his *Commentary on the Scriptures*, will be treated. We shall note the unusual circumstances in which it was composed, as well as its widespread circulation and influence. Then we shall define the *Commentary's* presuppositions, that is, Scott's concept of revelation and Scripture. His principles and method of exegesis will be explained and illustrated. A summary and evaluation will complete this chapter.

Chapter five will be an analysis and systematic statement of the Commentator's theological thought. By means of a positive exposition, we shall allow Scott to speak for himself. But we shall also make personal criticisms and relate various elements of his thought to modern theological thinking.

In the final chapter our study will be concluded by a general summary of the thesis and a critical estimate of Scott's life, work, and thought.

There are many to whom I am indebted in the preparation of this thesis. Among those who have been most helpful I must mention Miss Joan Ferrier of the Church Missionary Society Library in London, Mr. H. Cobb, archivist, and Miss Belcher, assistant archivist of the Church Missionary Society. Miss Dorthy Pratt (great granddaughter of Josiah Pratt) kindly allowed me to use the manuscript form of Josiah Pratt's
"Eclectic Notes" as well as her own copy of the printed form, for an extended period. The Rev. Michael Hensel, Vice-Principal of St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, provided useful bibliographical references. Mr. John Morton, Secretary of West End Hospital, London, and former Secretary of the Board at Leek Hospital, loaned me *A Short History of the Leek Hospital* and supplied me with other valuable data. At Asten Sandford Mr. and Mrs. MacPherson, present owners of Scott's Old Rectory, graciously entertained me and explained historical points of interest in that hamlet.

I also want to express my appreciation to the Ph. D. Committee, University of Edinburgh, for making possible a leave of residency to pursue further work at Cambridge University. To the Rev. Dr. Norman Sykes, Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Cambridge, I extend my gratitude for introductions to both men and material. John D. Walsh, Bye-Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, gave numerous illuminating insights into the work and thought of the Early Evangelicals. I am indebted to Dr. L. E. Elliott-Binns, Canon Emeritus of Truro and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, for his cordial interest and advice. To Canon Elliott-Binns' two books on the Evangelical Movement I also acknowledge my indebtedness. Although not directly related to this particular study, the instruction and inspiration received under Dr. Herbert H. Farmer, Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, will always be remembered with deep appreciation.
My professorial supervisor, the Rev. Principal Charles S. Duthie, has faithfully and patiently guided me all through this project; to him I am especially grateful. His wisdom and encouragement have been invaluable. The Very Rev. Principal John Baillie has kindly read portions of the manuscript and offered suggestions which have been adopted.

Lastly, I thank the staffs of the following libraries for their services: The National Library of Scotland; the British Museum; the Evangelical Library, London; the libraries of the Universities of Edinburgh, Cambridge and Oxford (Bodleian); in particular, Dr. J. A. Lamb and Miss E. R. Leslie of the New College Library, Edinburgh.

The spelling and punctuation in this work, with the exception of direct quotations which are true to the source, follow standard American usage.

A. B. G.

Edinburgh
15 May 1955
OUTLINE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTLINE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. THE AGE OF SCOTT: PREVAILING RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES 1

- Characteristics of the Eighteenth Century English Church 2
- Currents of Theological and Ecclesiastical Thought 3
  - Deism 3
  - Anti-Trinitarianism 14
  - Christian Evidences 19
  - Latitudinarianism 25
- Complacency of the Clergy 30
- Moralist Preaching 31
- Pluralism and Non-residence 31
- Contentment of Non-Conformity 33
- Act of Toleration 33
- Spread of Unitarianism 35
- Coarseness and Irreligion of Society 35
- Compassion and Revival of Evangelical Religion 37

II. SCOTT'S EARLY YEARS: GROWTH OF AN EVANGELICAL 42

- Conflicts of Youth: Life in Lincolnshire 42
  - Boyhood and education 43
  - Brief apprenticeship to a surgeon 44
  - Benefit of his discharge 45
  - Bitterness toward grazing business 46
  - 'Buried' literary aspirations 47
- Change of vocation: Ordination 48
  - Difficulties in obtaining orders 49
  - Distinguished performance at examination 50
  - Deceitful motives for seeking orders 50
- Commencement of Ministry: Curacies of Buckinghamshire 51
  - Ecclesiastical duties 52
  - Earnestness in study 52
  - Emptiness of his personal religion 52
- Change of Views: Spiritual Pilgrimage 53
  - Deep concern for the work of the ministry 53
  - Disturbing example of John Newton 54
  - Disagreement with Athanasian Creed 55
  - Determined search of the Scriptures 55
  - Doctrinal Development 56
### III. Evangelical Ministry: Personal Influence and Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint Cure of Ravenston-Weston</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprecedented Success</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of The Force of Truth</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cure of Clayey</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of Antinomianism</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective ministry to a few</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with William Cowper</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence upon William Carey</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Ministry</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain to Lock Hospital</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of Lock Rescue Home</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Lectureship</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence among a select group</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expository Publications</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writings against infidel and anarchial principles</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrinal and devotional Publication</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern over national difficulties</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer enterprises</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British and Foreign Bible Society</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Ministry at Aston Sandford</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish work</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last theological writings</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Training College</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of respect enjoyed</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence within Family circle</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of Scott</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death and Epitaphs</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. His Magnum Opus: The Commentary on the Holy Scriptures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of the Commentary</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition and Publication</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation and Influence</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commendations of Individual Readers</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosuppositions: Concept of Scripture</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration and Authority</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidential Proofs of Divine Inspiration</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supremacy and Sufficiency</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception and Understanding</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Summary</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles and Projections: Method of Exegesis</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Exposition</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure of the Expositor</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

viii
SCOTT AS A THEOLOGICAL WRITER

"Mr. Scott was an eminently useful minister of the Gospel. His sound, judicious, and practical writings form a most valuable accession to the theology of our country."
---Thomas Chalmers, Introduction to Thomas Scott's Tracts.

"... the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul, - 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. . . ."

"Thomas Scott, who has bequeathed to the Church, in ages yet to come, writings of impishalable value, and the memory of a life passed in no unsuccessful emulation of those whom this unhallowed world was the least worthy."
---Sir James Stephen, Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography.

"But after all my new authors, I turn back to my old commentator, Scott, with a fresh zest . . . I have now been reading him for forty years, and my judgment is that he surpasses all other commentators by far: with the single exception of John Calvin. . . ."

"I esteemed Mr. Robinson [Thomas Robinson of Leicester] the greatest preacher in England; as Mr. Scott is the greatest divine."
---Dr. Claudius Buchanan, John Scott, Life of Thomas Scott.

"All commentators will fail you at times. Doddridge is good; Henry is good; Scott perhaps best. . . ."
---Charles Simeon, Recollections of Conversation Parties.

"Of his works in general . . . we make no doubt . . . that they fully entitle their Author to be considered as the most laborious and useful writer of his day."
"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..."

Charles Dickens
Description of Year 1775

Thomas Scott was born during the reign of George the Second. He saw George the Third come to power and witnessed the stirring events of his reign. He lived during the ministries of Fox, Burke, and Pitt, and throughout the turbulent days of the French Revolution. He received the news of the victories of Nelson and of Wellington, of Trafalgar and of Waterloo. During his early ministry the American Colonies declared and achieved their independence. As Scott preached, studied and wrote, Watt was toiling at his steam-engine, Gibbon was completing his history, Cowper and Burns were penning immortal verse. John Keats was voicing his most exquisite songs and Shelley was inditing his ethereal lines. These momentous episodes, inventions and artistic productions received only
minor consideration from Scott for he was concerned with what appeared to him to be of infinitely greater importance—the explicitly religious life and thought of his day. Thus it is to this particular sphere that one must turn his attention if he is to gain an accurate understanding and proper appreciation of this man who attained international fame as an Evangelical divine.

The Eighteenth Century into which Thomas Scott was born was a critical period in the spiritual progress of mankind even though the human spirit has been known to survive worse eras. England was tired of the constant struggle for ideas which had marked the age of the Stuarts. What she wanted was reason and repose. Fanaticism was held to be dangerous. Common sense must rule the minds of men. This attitude was exemplified in the Hanoverian Church by its love for a quiet existence. A morbid dread of falling either into the Scylla of Romanism or the Charybdis of Puritanism tended to make men put undue value upon the virtues of caution and sobriety. Although significant controversies existed, they only tended to dull the spiritual senses of the greater part of the Church. To display any great interest in spiritual matters was to run the risk of earning the epithet of "enthusiast," a term with a most unpopular connotation in this age.

A period of Church activity and growth had existed

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under Queen Anne from 1702 to 1714 and had had a tempering effect upon the Non-juring schism. But with the accession of the first George all the symptoms of activity gradually faded away. Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745), the cunningly powerful Prime Minister, made it his policy to curtail the authority and activity of the church. He began early to subject the church to his maxim, quiesa non movere, and in his conception it was to be little more than an instrument of the state. Bishop Berkeley's (1684-1753) plan for missionary endeavor in Bermuda was suppressed; the building of new churches began under Queen Anne came to an end; the hope of consecrating a bishop for the American Colonies was dashed; and the Convocation was silenced. By the time the reign of George the First (1714-1727) was in progress three controversies were taking the minds of leading clergy from their spiritual duties.

Outstanding in importance was the Deistic dispute. A study of it leads into the very heart of Eighteenth Century theology. It is a brief struggle, but it reflects the whole theological mind of the time; and in spite of its brevity the results lived on. The fundamental problem of the Deistic controversy was this: "How has God revealed Himself and how is He still revealing Himself to man?" It was an effort to


discover the valid, rational grounds for belief in Christianity and to decide between the claims of reason and revelation. At the Reformation the authority of the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church had been disposed of; the Deists now proposed to dispense with the authority of the Bible. Contending churches, sects, and parties during the Seventeenth Century had all claimed the authority of the Biblical revelation for their contradictory doctrines. Now it was thought that the Scripture ought to be interpreted on a purely rational basis; and the Deists, while not always in complete agreement with each other on certain points, were united in seeking to discredit anything Biblical which could not be conclusively supported by human reason. They were guided by the maxim which roughly but not unfairly may be stated thus: "I will believe nothing I cannot understand, and I understand only what conforms to the acknowledged rules of logic and what can be explained to anyone of normal intelligence." Deism implied the certainty and obligation of natural religion; and its very essence was that God has revealed Himself so plainly to mankind that there is no necessity, as there is no sufficient evidence, for a further revelation.

The growth of Deism was due in a large measure to the growing intellectual atmosphere of the age. It was the age of the Enlightenment known in Germany as the Aufklärung, in England as the 'Illumination'; it gave to mankind a new world

view, and, in establishing a new intellectual order, transcended many previously accepted standards. Philosophers of the period were finding a new source of judgment in conscience and in the new scheme of the universe which came from the scientific movement of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. The findings of men like Copernicus, Bacon, Descartes, and Newton produced a 'climate of opinion' in which supernatural explanations of natural phenomena ceased to satisfy. Randall has claimed that the history of thought in this age "is largely the history of the spread to all fields of human interests of the methods and aims of Newtonian science."¹

The universe came to be regarded as the Great Machine working by inflexible laws of material causation.² The God of Deism was a Divine Mathematician and Mechanic who revealed his power in the formulation and application of inviolable laws.³ Creation testified with convincing authority to the wisdom,


³It is interesting to notice here that there is a most remarkable difference between eighteenth century Deism and modern 'freethinking.' In spite of the changes in interpretation brought by science there was a great absence in Deism of arguments derived from its discoveries. These discoveries had a real influence in discounting many forms of superstition, but the direct antagonism between science and theology which appeared in Catholicism at the time of Copernicus and Galileo was not seriously felt in Protestantism until geologists began to impugn the Mosaic account of Creation. Cf. William Edward Hartpole Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (3rd ed., London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903), II, 524-525.
majesty, and universality of its Creator. Thus with Pope it could be exclaimed:

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night; God said, Let Newton be; and all was light." 1

God was the Supreme Being and the Universal Father of mankind. There was thus developed a new theology which pronounced a natural religion based upon divine beneficence.

The roots of Deism are traced back to Lord Herbert of Cherbury 2 (1533-1648) who asserted, in his treatise De Veritate (1624), the ability of human reason to attain certainty in the fundamental truths of religion and insisted on the connection between religion and practical duties of life.3 This was precisely the theme on which Deistic writers enlarged, for the heart of the whole controversy was the disputed question of the sufficiency of natural reason to establish religion and enforce morality. And the way for the controversy was further prepared by the Cambridge Platonists in their attempt to synthesize reason and faith. "In the use of Reason and the exercise of virtue," said a leading Platonist, "we enjoy God." 4 But it was John Locke who most immediately—and unwittingly—promulgated the principles which underlie the


Deistic Controversy. In his *Essay on the Human Understanding* (1690) and in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) Locke maintained that there is no contradiction between reason and revelation and that reason is capable of judging revealed truth. Going directly to the Scriptures he finds that in the New Testament there is "a full and sufficient rule for our direction; and [it is] conformable to that of Reason."\(^1\) A study of the Scriptures also leads him to believe that the essentials of Christianity can be reduced to the proposition that Jesus was the Messiah whose coming was foretold by prophecy and whose mission was attested by miracles. But, says Locke, because true faith is simple, it is no less profound and obligatory; it must issue in a good moral life.

Locke's emphasis upon reason, simplicity, and morality\(^2\) provided the key to Eighteenth Century religion, as his empirical philosophy based upon sensation supplied the dominant principle for the philosophical thought of the period. Orthodox and unorthodox, Deist and Apologist were all influenced by his basic assumption, as were also certain Evangelicals. Wesley's insistence on 'degrees' in faith has been attributed to Locke's theory that assent of every kind must have its degrees.\(^3\) Other thoughtful Evangelicals such as William

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Romaine were attracted to Locke's works. Before he became an Evangelical, Scott held the reasonableness of Christianity in high esteem and perused many of Locke's other books with 'a bigoted fondness.' Later he regretted his attachment to the works, but he never ceased to value Locke's *Letters Concerning Toleration*. Although certainly not due to his influence alone, Locke's emphases are reflected in Scott's writings even after his expressed repudiation of such works as the reasonableness of Christianity. In the preface to his *Commentary*, Scott endeavors to show that "it is highly reasonable to believe the Bible to be a divine revelation..." and then that it is very reasonable to take our standards of truth from it. Also in his *Essays* he maintains that though revelation "be connected with things above our reason, it may imply nothing contrary to it." His appeal to miracles and prophecy as evidence of the divine inspiration of the writers of Scripture recalls Locke's strong reliance on these features in Christianity. Also Scott would join Locke (as Chillingworth before him) in saying that "The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants."  

1Ibid., p. 59.  
3Thomas Scott, *Commentary on the Holy Bible* (London: Printed for L. B. Seeley & Son, 1832), I, 64.  
Deism's period of greatest vitality began in 1696 with the publication of John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious*. Locke had maintained that there was nothing in Christian truth that was contrary to reason. Toland pressed the claims of reason still further; he asserted that there was nothing in religion above reason. He would eliminate all mystery from religion and require absolute demonstration for belief. So long as a thing is only probable, says Toland, our judgment must remain in suspense, for God has endowed "us with the power of suspending our judgment about whatever is uncertain; and of never assenting but to clear perceptions." Toland was followed among others by Anthony Collins (1676-1729) with his argument against the literal fulfillment of prophecy and by William Woolston (1660-1729) with his attack on the literal interpretation of miracles; while the climax of Deism was reached in Matthew Tindal's (1653-1753) *Christianity as Old as Creation*. Tindal insisted that Christianity was not a new thing, but was a republication of the law of nature, being in fact, as old as the creation. And he regarded the human mind as capable of formulating a Religion of Nature in the earliest ages as in the latest. Representing a high-

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3 John Toland, op. cit., p. 20.

water mark of reason, he declares that "the very attempt to
destroy Reason by Reason is a demonstration that Men have
nothing but Reason to trust to."¹ Although he did not direct-
ly attack historical Christianity, his argument tends to show
that a revelation is superfluous. This was the clearest ex-
pression of Deism and most of the Deistic writers who followed
Tindal patterned their works after him while the Apologists
directed their defense primarily against him.

A singular merit of the controversy was that it brought
forth many notable treatises in defense of the Biblical reveala-
tion. Chief among the many champions of the Faith were Bishop
Berkeley (1685-1753), William Warburton (1693-1779), John
Conybeare (1692-1755), William Law (1696-1741) and Joseph
Butler (1692-1752).

Bishop Butler’s Analogy of Religion, without directly
attacking anyone,² towers over all other anti-Deistical
writings. This brilliant work, often considered the greatest
theological work of the century, is a closely reasoned argu-
ment that precisely the same kind of difficulties are found
in ‘natural religion’ as in ‘revealed.’ In Butler’s own
words:

"... that the several parts principally objected
against in this moral and Christian dispensation, in-
cluding its scheme, its publication and the proof which

¹Ibid., p. 160.

²Butler’s work is remarkable among other things for the
fact that it produced no contemporary controversy. A bi-
ographer has uncovered only a single pamphlet in which the
Analogy was attacked. Leslie Stephen, History of English
Thought in the Eighteenth Century (London: Smith, Elder & Co.,
1881), I. 279."
God has afforded us of its truth; that the particular parts principally objected against in the whole dispensation, are analogous to what is experienced in the constitution and course of Nature, or Providence."

Butler uses the inductive method of Bacon, arguing from facts which are known to facts which are like them. He does not profess to give a final demonstration but simply a probable proof. "To us," he asserts, "probability is the very guide of life." His conclusion is that the course of Nature is congruous not only with the principles of Natural Religion but equally congruous with the principles of Reformed Religion made known by a special dispensation and supported by particular proofs. He met each objection of the Deists with such meticulous logic that there was little more to be said. Butler's desire to be fair and not to press the evidence for a conclusion beyond its legitimate limit, his emphasis upon conscience, and his vital sense of God as a personal and moral being, will always earn for him a place of importance in the argument for theism.

Under such severe blows as this, Deism rapidly declined. The Chubb, Morgans, and Annes were largely a repetition of Tindal's argument against the internal evidences of Revelation. Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works were not published until 1744 and so were too late to be of great significance to the course of the controversy. With his Deism in its strictest sense gasped one of its last strong breaths. A hazy form of


2Ibid., p. 3.
it lived on, however, and became an ingredient in other forms of heterodoxy or open infidelity.

Scott's most direct encounter with Deism came late in the century in his reply to Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* (1793-1795). Vehemently proclaiming Deism to the common man, Paine asserted that the creation is the only word of God and natural philosophy the only preaching. This theory, says Scott, fails because there are so many who do not so much as believe there is a God, or that He created and governs the world. He agrees that the invisible things of God "from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made even his eternal power and Godhead. . . ." (Romans 1:20) so that idolators and atheists are without excuse. Yet, he argues, it is evident that men have almost as much neglected, misinterpreted, or differed about, this 'revelation,' as about that contained in the Holy Scripture. Also he adds, "the deists, who profess to believe in one God of infinite perfection, almost universally spring up in places where the Bible is known." Finally, he contends that Deism does not provide, as does the Bible, an adequate and effectual remedy for the needs of sinners.

The controversy between the Deists and Apologists

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3 Ibid.
maintains a place in the history of religious thought because it illustrates what can, and what cannot, be affected by a purely rational approach to theology. Theologians were forced to come to grips with some of Christianity's most vital doctrines such as the authority of Scripture and the relation between revelation and reason. Further, as shall be noticed, Deism is also significant for the impetus that it gave to historical theology and Biblical criticism. Apart from these contributions, however, there is little of current value. Most of the writings both in style and substance are victims of the age. The Apologists were able men and performed a very necessary service for the Christian Faith; but they made the same fundamental mistake as their opponents, for they too exclusively courted the appeal to reason. The Christian Apologists of the Eighteenth Century

"... valiantly opposed the deistic attack upon Christianity, though standing upon the selfsame typically eighteenth-century platform so that today we are almost more struck by the resemblance between the outlook of the deists and the apologists than by the difference between them."

Moreover, while the defenders of the Faith made every effort to prove that there was nothing in the content of revelation which was not agreeable to reason, little concern was displayed for any application of this content to life. Deism died but Christianity hardly lived. Thus neither side won a decisive victory and in many respects the laurels went to the

sceptics who, under Hume, carried the assumptions of the new school of thought to their logical conclusion. "Hume's scepticism completes the critical movement of Locke."¹ The resulting scepticism was not as widespread in England as in France under the influence of Voltaire. Nor did the scepticism of the age directly affect the Evangelicals such as Thomas Scott. Nevertheless Scott was certainly sensitive to Hume's ideas. For example he lashed out against that philosopher's famous argument that miracles are incredible because they are contrary to universal experience and observation.² Briefly, Scott declares that the African who doubted the credibility of the Europeans when they told him that they had seen rivers and seas congealed by frost as hard as stone, was of the same reasonable disposition as Hume. This was contrary to the universal experience of all those who inhabited the torrid zone. Furthermore, says Scott, miracles are extraordinary events performed in order to fulfil a particular supernatural purpose. Therefore, they are never so common that everybody sees or observes them.³

The era's religious tendencies are further marked by struonous discussions on the doctrine of the Trinity. Arian, Socinian and eventually distinctly Unitarian ideas were wide-

¹Leslie Stephen, op. cit., I, 43.


³Thomas Scott, Answer to the 'Age of Reason', in Works, V, 222-223; The Rights of God, in Works, 1, 33-35.
spread and sharply advocated. In the Trinitarian Dispute of
the late Seventeenth Century and early Eighteenth Century
there was a revived discussion of some phases of the Chris-
tological question which had troubled the early Church. Both
Arian and Socinian views were represented on the Unitarian
side with the Socinian gaining the ascendancy during the later
period. Among the many writers whose names are found on books
and pamphlets called forth by this controversy two stand out--
one on each side. The great anti-Trinitarian work was Samuel
Clarke's (1675-1729) Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity pub-
lished in 1723. In this treatise Clarke endeavored to collect
and compare all the New Testament texts which relate to the
doctrine of the Trinity. Clarke maintained that the Father
alone is Supreme God, that the Son is a Divine Being only in
so far as divinity is communicated by this Supreme God, and
that the Holy Spirit is inferior both to the Father and the
Son, not only in order but in dominion and authority.

During his quest for Biblical truth, Scott came under the
influence of this work. In fact, the whole controversy which
it aroused became a favorite part of his study. Clarke's
argument so impressed Scott that he relinquished his Socinian
principles as untenable, and for a long time maintained
Clarke's Arian position. Later he observed that he was not

1Samuel Clarke, The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity
(London: Printed for James Knapton, 1712), pp. XVI-XVII.
3Ibid., pp. 11-12. We need to qualify Scott's use of
aware of the flaw in Clarke's reasoning, that is, "that the
Son and Holy Spirit, however highly exalted and dignified
with names and titles, must either be mere creatures, or
that otherwise there must be three Gods." ¹

Clarke's book was violently attacked by many writers but
it was most conclusively answered by Daniel Waterland (1683-
1740). Among other works, his Vindication of Christ's Divinity
(1719) and Case of Arian Subscription (1721) incisively in-
dicated the weaknesses and inconsistencies of Clarke's posi-
tion. Waterland insisted that by paying divine honors to
Christ and yet denying that He is very God, Clarke had be-
come a polytheist. And he contends that Clarke and his
followers are actually Arian because in their scheme Christ
is only a mutable, corruptible creature.² Then he accurately
accuses Clarke of trying to find a medium for Christ between
his being essentially God and being only a creature—"a medium",

the term Arian when referring to Clarke. Roland Stromberg,
in his recently published work on Eighteenth Century thought,
points out that although Clarke was opposed to the orthodox
doctrine of the Trinity, he was neither a strict Arian nor
Socinian. Clarke, says Stromberg, denied the accusation of
being Arian but he did wish to abandon those portions of the
Anglican articles and liturgy that embraced the Athanasian
Creed. In contrast to the Arians, he held Scripture to teach
that the Son and Spirit have existed since the beginning; on
the other hand, he found nothing to substantiate the Nicene
Creed that the Son and Spirit are substantially one with God
the Father. Roland H. Stromberg, Religious Liberalism in
pp. 63-85.

¹ Thomas Scott, The Forces of Truth, in Works, I, 41.
² Daniel Waterland, A Vindication of Christ's Divinity (3rd
declares Waterland, "you find not, nor indeed can there be any." Overton and Bolton concisely (though perhaps too simply) describe the contest as follows:

"The controversy now resolved itself virtually into a duel between Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) and Daniel Waterland, and it was a duel between giants. . . . There is logically no middle ground between the Trinitarian position and Unitarianism pure and simple; and when Dr. Clarke and others tried to find one, they were standing on a descending slope down which Waterland pushed them with remorseless logic."²

About the middle of the century there was a revival of one phase of the Trinitarian controversy in the move to abolish subscription to the Articles and Liturgy.³ Archdeacon Blackburn was the most active promoter of this movement and he was supported by Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, who boldly asserted that his purpose was to open the door for different views of the Trinity in the Church. He maintained that the Logos was the Archangel Michael and the Holy Spirit the angel Gabriel. The strongest answer to Clayton was by Jones of Nayland in *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity* which consisted of a series of well-selected texts with brief explanations on each showing its application to the doctrine of the Trinity. He wisely insisted that every article of Christianity depends on the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity. In the year 1782 another Trinitarian dispute was aroused by the publication of

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¹Ibid., p. 209.


³See below p. 29.
Dr. Priestley's *History of the Corruption of Christianity*. Priestley declared that Christianity was originally Unitarian and that foremost among its corruptions were the Catholic doctrine of Christ's divinity and the Arian notion of his pre-existence in a state far above the human. Priestley's greatest opponent was Bishop Horsley who, first in a Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of St. Albans, and then in a series of letters addressed to Priestley himself, maintained with exceptional ability the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. Among other rebukes, Horsley strikes at Priestley on the matter of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity. He shows that so far from the Church being originally Unitarian, there was no Unitarian before the end of the second century when Theodotus expressed the idea that Jesus was only exalted to heaven like other good men.\(^1\) In the end the one point which was significantly and thoroughly agreed upon was that there could be no medium between making Christ a mere man and owning Him to be in the highest sense God. The line between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism thus became clear cut.

Deism and Anti-Trinitarianism were contemporary manifestations of the spirit of rationalism that permeated the whole domain of religious thought in the Eighteenth Century. Both sprang from the effort to make Christianity logically demonstrable and freed from all its mysteries. Though the Deists and Anti-Trinitarians disclaimed any intention of opposing Christianity, they both in reality allowed no place

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\(^1\)Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, I, 433ff.
for the essential doctrines of a Biblical Faith. The Deists struck at the very root of Christianity by abjuring the Divine revelation upon which it rests. The Unitarian divested it of everything distinctive; there was no place for the full Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ or the complete expression of divine love shown in God's unseen presence even now in His Church by His Holy Spirit. With these doctrines removed there was left only a residuum of ethical teaching. There was little sense of sin and slight need for salvation. Instead there was confidence in the fundamental goodness and rationality of man.

Scott himself, before his Evangelical experience, reflects the effects of this popular theology:

"Wrapt up in the proud notion of the dignity of human nature, I had lost the sight of the evil of sin, and thought little of my own sinfulness: I was filled with a self-important opinion of my worth, and of 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 believe them."  

Apart from Evangelical theology the rationalistic spirit continued to dominate religious thought throughout the century; but there was a significant shift to what are called the evidences of Christianity. As has been noticed, the Apologists' chief endeavor in the first part of the century was to show that there is nothing in revelation which is not agreeable to reason; from about 1750 onward, however, the defenders of the Faith endeavored to demonstrate the historical genuineness

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and authenticity of the Christian records. Particularly instrumental in this change in the course of Christian apologetics were the works of Henry Dodwell and Conyers Middleton, tending to scepticism and the historical method respectively, they aimed in so far as they represent 'Critical Deism,' to upset the orthodox doctrine of the plenary inspiration of scripture.

In 1742 Dodwell published Christianity Not Founded in Argument, claiming that reason could not possibly, from its own nature, and that of religion, be the principle by which God intended to lead man to the true faith. External proofs have no evidential value and the miracles of the New Testament were merely acts of benevolence on the part of Christ and the Apostles. Religion, he declared, offers only two alternative guides: infallible authority or the continuous inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Protestantism cannot allow the first with Rome and therefore only the second remains. In the last analysis Dodwell would say that there can be no other way in religion but to believe because you want to believe. This tendency in the direction of pure doubt was manifest in England in encouraging a kind of indolent scepticism which is a characteristic of the last half of the century.


3ib. id., pp. 142-143.

4Dodwell's argument exercised a considerable influence.
Middleton in his *Free Inquiry* (1749) tried to show that miraculous powers were not continued in the Church after the days of the Apostles. He restricts miracles to the Biblical period, suggesting that acceptance of miracles by one age and not by another can be explained only by the general intellectual bias of each age. The general intellectual background of a period, he claims, can be reconstructed through sound research—a true historical method—which means a study of the past detached from the prejudice of the present. He would apply this historical method to religious history as well as to secular. Middleton, thereby, challenged the assumption which had characterized the whole school of the apologists and their opponents, namely, the broken continuity between sacred and profane history; and he challenged it in such a way that evasion was impossible. Middleton himself disowns any attempt at disparaging the Gospel miracles but it was an easy step to extend his argument to miracles recorded in the canonical Scriptures. Hume, Gibbon and others took the step. And eventually with the growing sense of history it led to

on Wesley and William Law and therefore had a positive effect on the Weslayan and Evangelical Revival. Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 93.


2Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, I, 269-270.

3Storr properly calls this 'sense of history' one of the significant legacies of the Eighteenth Century and he lists the names of Morgan, Middleton, Hume and Gibbon as the most important in its development. Vernon F. Storr, *The Development of
the method and canons of historical criticism. Immediately, however, it constituted a crude attack upon the hitherto unchallenged infallibility of Scripture.

Defenders of the Christian religion were now compelled to substantiate the authenticity and fidelity of the Biblical records. This they attempted by an appeal to the evidences of revelation, giving particular attention to the place of miracle, prophecy and the proof of historical facts. The most learned contribution to Christian Evidences was made by the Non-conformist Nathaniel Lardner. Endeavoring to turn the Deistic controversy toward the direction of historical fact, he wrote the *Credibility of the Gospel History* (1723-55). In this work he undertook to demonstrate how the facts occasionally mentioned in the New Testament are confirmed by passages of ancient authors who were contemporary with Christ or his apostles or who lived near their time. The same evidential and historical tendency is continued by William Hutton's Boyle Lectures of 1769, the *Evidence of Christianity from Facts and the Testimony of Sense*. This development may be said to have culminated in the Eighteenth Century in Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity* which has been called a reintegration of Butler's method with Lardner's data. Designed to meet Hume's argument against miracles it has as its

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main thesis "Once believe there is a God and miracles are not incredible."¹ With brilliant ability Paley argues that the presence of miracle proves Christianity to be of divine origin. It was because they saw miracles performed that the first Christians became believers. "His [Jesus'] miracles gave birth to his sect."² Miracle therefore is the heart and center—the cause and proof—of divine revelation. He also attempts to show that there are good historical grounds for accepting the New Testament record of miracles.

Evidential theology continued to occupy a prominent place in the early part of the Nineteenth Century especially as an antidote to the unbelief introduced into England through the French Revolution.³ Included in publications of this nature were Archbishop Whately's Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Buonaparte which appeared in 1819, and John Bird Sumner's Evidence of Christianity (1825). Whately's brochure was an especially effective contribution to evidential literature. His object was to show that the same doubts which were alleged against the Scripture might be applied to the history of one whose name had been on everyone's lips, and in whose existence they had had only too good reason to believe. Hume argued that "we entertain a suspicion concerning any matter of fact, when

²Ibid., p. 130.
witnesses contradict each other; when they are but few, or of a doubtful character; and when they have an interest in what they affirm; when they deliver their testimony with hesitation, or on the contrary, with too violent assertions. Very cleverly applying Hume's arguments to the newspaper accounts of Napoleon, Skottely shows that the newspapers fail in all the essential points in which their credulity—according to Hume's reasoning—depends. Daniel Wilson also published an able work on The Evidence of Christianity Stated in a Popular and Practical Manner which was a course of lectures he had delivered in the parish church of St. Mary's, Islington, in the years 1827-30. He properly considers both the internal and external evidences of Christianity with a strong Evangelical emphasis.

In his frequent employment of evidences Thomas Scott reveals himself to be a man of his time. In his search for Christian truth he had been helped by Soame Jenyns' View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion, and in turn he uses both internal and external evidences such as prophecy, miracle, and the nature and tendency of Scripture to establish its divine origin and authority. But with a conviction like that of Calvin that Scripture 'shone sufficiently by its own light,' Scott restricts most of his evidence to the more intrinsic aspects of the Biblical account. His intention, as

1David Hume, op. cit., pp. 112-113.
2Thomas Scott, The Force of Truth, in Works, i, 40.
3Thomas Scott, Commentary, i, 25-35.
shall be fully discussed in another chapter, is not only to show the Scriptures' authenticity but also to indicate its divine inspiration.

Another reflection of the religious character of the century is found in Latitudinarianism. The very term has an inherent complexity which defies treatment in a limited space. Our brief consideration will only serve to indicate how it echoes the period's religious opinions. The 'Latitude-men' on the whole were broad-minded men who were tired of controversy and the intensity of religious feeling in which they had grown up and were anxious for a quiet life in the pursuit of goodness and righteousness. They represented a type of religion which was reasonable, sincere, and within reach of ordinary men. Like other movements of the day, Latitudinarianism emerged in the new 'climate of opinion,' in the desire for simplicity of creed, and in the growing confidence in human reason.1 Seventeenth Century Latitudinarians such as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Patrick were taught by the Cambridge Platonists2 (to whom the term Latitudinarian was originally applied) and like them they had as their prevailing theme the reasonableness of Christianity. Although this is the characteristic watchword of this period in general, it was especially the favorite term, the most congenial topic, upon which Latitudinarian Churchmen loved to dwell. Like the

1See above, pp 6-7.

Platonists, too, the later Latitude men opposed rigid doctrinal adherence and advocated toleration of diverse theological opinions. Unlike the Platonists, however, most of the Latitude men of the Eighteenth Century lacked the spiritual depth and intellectual perception necessary to carry out their ideas.

The moderate Latitudinarianism of a thoughtful and religious churchman at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century is best exemplified by the Seventeenth Century Archbishop Tillotson (1630-1694). He was regarded by both friend and foe as a 'Latitude man' and he is recognized by historians as "the dominant influence" in the Anglican Church of the Eighteenth Century. His printed sermons were extremely popular and widely imitated. Robert Nelson and Joseph Addison regarded them as the best standard of the English language. John Wesley and Voltaire placed him in the front rank of great preachers. In his early ministry Thomas Scott confesses to transcribing Tillotson's sermons and with slight alterations preaching them to his congregation. The content as well as the style of Tillotson's writing suited the men of the period, for their own thoughts were raised to a little

1 Abbey and Overton, op. cit., p. 113.
3 Abbey and Overton, op. cit., pp. 116-117.
4 Thomas Scott, The Force of Truth, in Works, I, 30. Later in his life Scott referred to his preaching at this time as "that smooth palatable mixture of law and gospel which corrupts both by representing the gospel as a mitigated law, and accepting sincere instead of perfect obedience." Ibid.
higher level, and expressed just in the manner which they aspired to imitate. He wrote with sound practical sense and unaffected piety on the moral obligation of religion; he stressed duty rather than doctrine. On all matters of religion he appealed to reason for "The Doctrine of Christianity was such as might have recommended itself to impartial men, by its own reasonableness." Any gift of spiritual intuition he distrusted because it departed from ordinary powers of understanding. And he acknowledged the right of private judgment and the blamelessness of error where there was sincerity of purpose.

These basic Latitudinarian principles which Tillotson embodied were expressed in varying degrees in the Eighteenth Century by Latitude-men like Bishops Hoadly (1676-1761), Watson (1737-1816) and Archdeacon Blackburne (1705-1737)

Hoadly's extremism provoked the Bangorian Controversy. In a publication entitled Preservative Against the Principles and Practices of Non-Jurors and in his famous sermon "The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ" preached before the king on March 31, 1717, Hoadly proclaimed doctrines which were subversive to the whole theory of the High Church Party. He denied the very existence of the visible Church, ridiculed the value of any tests of orthodoxy, and poured scorn upon the claims of the Church to govern itself by means of the State.

1 Abbey and Ovorton, op. cit., p. 115.
Headly’s Latitudinarianism was attacked by the Non-Juror on the one hand and by Church leaders on the other. Hundreds of pamphlets appeared during the two years’ conflict over the nature of the Church. According to Plummer, more than seventy pamphlets appeared in a single month.\(^1\) The Lower House of Convocation adopted an elaborate remonstrance against Headly’s work, but it was never submitted to the Upper House. In May 1717 the Government prorogued Convocation and it did not meet again to transact business for nearly a century and a half.\(^2\) The Established Church thus lost one of its highest functions, that of discussing the handling its own affairs at the highest level. Headly’s attack upon clerical claims is extreme but it is characteristic of many who hold, like him, that religion in its essence is a matter of conduct; that the religious relationship exists only between God and the individual; that sincerity is the virtue which signifies in God’s sight; and that the Church is essentially an organization for teaching religious knowledge.\(^3\)

In asserting the right of private judgment tested only by sincerity, Latitudinarianism expressed the individualism of the Age and gave impetus to the religious tendencies of Unitarianism and Arianism. As the century progressed these

\(^1\)Alfred Plummer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.


\(^3\)E. W. Creed and J. Sandwith Boys-Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.
forces increased in strength, becoming manifest in a disregard for authority and a growing repugnance to the Articles of Faith and the Liturgy. The disdain for creeds found fullest expression in the English Church in the Anti-Subscription movement, instigated partially by Unitarianism, the movement was led by Archbishop Blackburne who held no heretical opinions on the Trinity but was merely intent on finding release from what he considered were man-made impositions. Blackburne’s book The Confessional, published in 1766, was directed not only against the whole system of clerical subscription to the Articles and Liturgy but against the Creeds themselves. In 1772 a considerable body of clergymen, in conjunction with some prominent laymen, petitioned Parliament to relieve them of the burden of subscription. Edmund Burke, arguing that there was not sufficient demand for such action, gave the most important speech in the debate which defeated the initial anti-subscription appeal to Parliament. The problem of subscription, however, continued to receive much anxious discussion.

Parallel with the rebellion against subscription was the extreme latitude allowed in the interpretation of the Articles. And it was a latitude that became open to abuse in a disturbing way. Avowed or suspected Deists and Arians were known to have signed the Articles on the ground of general conformity to the Church of England. In fact, Arian subscription became quite a familiar term. Such an extreme latitude in an atmosphere

2Abbey and Overton, op. cit., p. 193.
so heavily coated with a rationalized indifference to doctrine, as well as a prevalent carelessness in ordinations, partially explains Scott's situation at the time of his taking orders. He held strongly Unitarian views but did not consider this any difficulty in the way of ordination. And thus he can describe his experience:

"... after having concealed my real sentiments under the mask of general expressions; after having subscribed articles directly contrary to what I believe; 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 20, 1772, I was ordained a deacon."2

The prevailing state of the Church in Scott's day is indicated also by the temper of the clergy. It is not accurate to say that the preachers of this period entirely ignored the distinctive doctrines of Christianity but it is true to say that they took them too much for granted. They felt that doctrine was too controversial and that it too often appealed to merely prudential motives, with a dread fear of being over-zealous—'enthusiastic'—the orthodox preachers of the Hanoverian Church usually became too lifeless and colorless.

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3. Abbey and Overton, op. cit., pp. 300-301.
The typical Eighteenth Century sermon was stiff, formal, cold and artificial, appealing more to the reason than to the feel-
ings, and more calculated to convince the understanding than to affect the heart. Taking Tillotson as their example most clergy spoke as if morality were the most important element in Christianity, but even the ethics of its Founder and of the
New Testament were neglected. There was a lack of spiritual vitality in the Church; clergy and laity alike seemed to have lost that personal experience of God's grace reaching down into their hearts to motivate Christian living. The "keen east wind of rationalism was chilling the very life of Ministers and people."

Little could be expected when bishops and clergy were more interested in prevenient than in the prophetic message. Pluralism was widely prevalent and the objections were few. The resulting non-residency left the common people without pastoral care. It has been estimated that well over half the incumbents of English parishes in the Eighteenth Century were absentees. Clergy were merely following the example of delinquent bishops. Modestly, for example, never set foot in the Diocese of Bangor during the five years that he was Bishop but it did not occur to his bitterest enemies to reproach him for such selfish neglect. Non-residence was defended by some.

John Douglas (1721-1807), later Bishop of Carlisle and

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Salisbury, writing against Romaine in 1755, declared:

"Certain it is, that non-residence is a nursery for the clerisy. By means of it, there is kept up a body of reserve, over and above the number of parish ministers, ready, upon any vacancy to succeed to an office, which they have already learned to execute."

Balleine thus described the scene in rural England on Sunday mornings:

"Squadrons of curates galloped out from the towns early on Sunday morning, each man meaning to visit six or seven villages. The sextons kept watch on the church towers for the coming of the parson, and when he was sighted rang the bell to summon the congregation. As soon as the prayers were gabbled through, the curate mounted his horse and rode on to the next village, and was not seen again for a week."

Many clergy were not only selfish but pleasure-loving. Late in the century George the Third remonstrated with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Cornwallis (1713-1783), over the unseemly succession of gay balls at Lambeth Palace. In a letter the King wrote:

"From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold those improprieties ... and on still more pious principle, I trust you will suppress them immediately; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure to interpose in a different manner."

Undoubtedly there were exceptions to this prevailing type of clergy. Men like Gilbert Burnet who was at Salisbury from

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2 G. R. Balleine, op. cit., p. 12.
1689 to 1715, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London \(^1\) from 1723 to
1748, and Seilby Porteous (1731-1808), who was Bishop of Lon-
don the last twenty-one years of his life, were capable, de-
voted, and conscientious. But the most sympathetic observer
must admit that these men were exceptions and that the Church
leaders and clergy in Scott's time were characterized by
complacency, worldliness, and a concern for personal advance-
ment. The Church was thus left without any genuine spiritual
leadership in a day when it was sorely needed. In the end the
Church was saved not by its natural leaders but by a small
group of dedicated men\(^2\) such as Thomas Scott.

A similar stagnation is also witnessed outside the es-
stablished Church. Non-Conformity still labored under many res-
trictions, for the keynote of the Toleration Act of 1689 was
more toleration, not equality.\(^3\) Under certain conditions,
Dissenters were relieved of the penalties of the Act of Uni-
formity, the Conventicle Act and the Five Mile Act. But the
oath of allegiance and supremacy had to be taken, and the
statutory Declaration against Roman superstitions made. Until
1779 Non-Conformist ministers were required to subscribe to
the Articles of the Church, with the exception of three, and

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\(^1\)See Norman Sykes, *Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London* (Ox-
ford: University Press, 1926).


\(^3\)Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth*
Century*, pp. 32-33.
in the case of Baptists, four. Individual meeting houses had to be certified by bishops, archdeacons, or justices and the doors were not to be locked during services.1 Roman Catholics and Dissenting Unitarians were excluded from participating in the benefits of the Act. It did, however, afford protection of a sort to those who were able and willing to take refuge under it and for these it was a welcome relief from the previous persecutions.2 Although many minor crises still lay ahead, the crucial struggle for existence was over. "For the Toleration Act signalized the close of Non-Conformity's long struggle for existence."3 Unfortunately many Non-Conformist groups settled down to a relaxing rest; and in doing so they failed to realize their great opportunity for constructive action. A decline in spirit and ideal set in and endured for much of the century, although an increased vitality came about under the influence of the Evangelical Revival.

There were other reasons for the decline of spiritual life among the Dissenting groups. The Occasional Conformity Act of 1711 required Non-Conformist office holders to receive communion according to the rite of the Established Church. As a result, many of the affected men discontinued attendance at their own churches. Also, there was a movement of Non-Conformist youth back to the Church of England for the sake of


3 Henry W. Clark, op. cit., II, 119.
social advantage. Independents and Presbyterians lost something of their denominational distinctiveness through the moderating influence of frequent association. The Baptists suffered from cleavages on both doctrinal and practical issues. Most serious was the penetration of Socinianism (and/or Unitarianism) into the Dissenting bodies, particularly among the Baptists and Presbyterians. Efforts to resolve this doctrinal impasse, such as Salter's Hall meeting in 1719, only increased party bitterness, and many years were to pass before any unity was achieved in these denominations. And Unitarianism continued to attract more as the century progressed for, "In the last half of the century," says Leslie Stephen, "Unitarianism became the prevailing creed of most intelligent dissenters." ¹ Among the Quakers, the Toleration Act was succeeded by a greater emphasis upon organization and discipline. Many felt this constituted a dangerous move away from the original ideal of simple divine guidance, and only through controversy did the Quakers arrive at a renewal of faith toward the end of the century. Under conditions such as these it is not surprising that the Dissenting churches were unable to overcome the spiritual inertness of the day.

Inseparably connected with the ebbing tide of religion was the low moral tone of Eighteenth Century England in all classes of society. Kings and ministers lived in open adultery and few objections were raised. The effect of a debased literature and an indecent stage filtered down from the upper

¹Leslie Stephen, op. cit., I, 421.
classes to the lower. A coarseness and a passion for cruelty characterized the common people who reveled in such public amusements as the baiting of birds and animals, prize fighting between men and women, and public hangings. Cockfighting was so common that even clergymen became devotees of the sport, and on occasion victories were recorded in parish registers while church bells were rung. Public hangings wore the aspect of carnivals; vendors sold sweets and fruit to the spectators while they awaited the arrival of the condemned—women, and sometimes children—who were driven to the scene in carts to the tolling of church bells. Drunkenness was widespread with its accompaniment of family hardship and debased childhood. Robbery was so common that streets and roads were often unsafe. Eighteenth Century parish registers reveal the very large proportion of illegitimate children brought to the church for baptism.

Fattison notes the period of great prosperity in England which followed the peace of Utrecht from 1713 to 1714 and contrasts the material gains with the spiritual deterioration.

"The historian of moral and religious progress, on the other hand, is under the necessity of depicting the same period as one of decay of religion, licentiousness of morals, public corruption, profaneness of language—a day of rebuke and blasphemy." 2

One easily falls into the error of painting such an age

1 Lecky mentions 1724 as the year when gin drinking began to spread with the violence of an epidemic. W. E. H. Lecky, op. cit., I, 479.

in uniformly dark colors. The facile habit of unequivocally
condemning the Eighteenth Century has become rather monoton-
cous. For there were exceptions among the upper classes,
bishops, clergy¹ and common people. But apart from the
Evangelical Revival and its influence, one must concur that
the general moral tone was extremely low.

Certainly the most significant feature of Eighteenth
Century religion is the Evangelical Revival. In human terms,
it was a protest against two things—the immorality and ir-
religion of the day, and the rationalistic theology and the
frank worldliness of the Hanoverian Church.² The ablest di-
vines of the age were occupied with rationally proving the
truth of Christianity upon evidential grounds. High church-
men were occupied with maintaining a rigid Establishment.
Latitudinarians were intent on creodal, liturgical and in-
stitutional reform. The Evangelicals sought to fulfill the
church's primary task of evangelism.

The Evangelical Revival wrought a revolutionary renewal
of faith that spread over the surface of the Empire and per-
meated every area of religion and every section of society.
Forgotten doctrines of Christianity such as personal conver-
sion, forgiveness of sin, and justification by faith were
revived, recast and reiterated to a needy day. Religious life
was stirred with a new fire and passionate devotion which re-
captured the power of a transforming Gospel. In place of a

¹ See above pp. 32-33.

² J. P. H. Noormann, op. cit., p. 302.
superficial moral theology the Revival presented a message which appealed to the heart and will. Instead of demanding a cold intellectual assent there was an invitation to accept by faith God's offer of salvation. Deism and Scepticism were confronted with the supreme miracle of life—depraved men becoming 'new creatures in Christ.' People whose lives had been dissolute became pious and respectable. And not only was religious life revitalized, but those who were not touched as individuals were lifted to a higher plane of life morally and socially. Men began to take an interest in the condition of the poor and in the disgraceful problem of the slave-trade. Gambling became less common and brutal sports were discouraged. A wave of seriousness and earnestness spread over the land.

To pursue the familiar course of the Revival through the maze of its activity to its ultimate divisions and far-reaching accomplishments is unnecessary here. The initial symptom of spiritual stirring can be found in the interest taken in the two practical works by William Law, *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* published in 1726 and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* in 1728. They passed through many editions and there is hardly a leader in the Evangelical Revival who does not express his obligation to one or both of them. By powerfully pressing home the question: "Are you trying to live the Christian life?" Law's works provided

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a necessary impulse for a deepened Christian experience and concern.

The first widespread quickening of spirit began within the Church of England under the dynamic leadership of John Wesley (1732-1791), the field preaching of George Whitefield (1714-1770), and the influential efforts of the cultured Countess of Huntington (1707-1791). Later the stream divided and eventually the groups nurtured under these leaders separated themselves from the Established Church. But a group of men of the same spirit remained united in purpose within the Church of England. These Evangelicals increased until they became by the dawn of the Nineteenth Century "a large and important section of the English Church" as well as its "most active element" and its strongest spiritual force.

Even prior to the middle of the century such Evangelical clergymen as Grimshaw of Haworth (1706-1763), James Horvey (1714-1758), Walker of Truro (1713-1760) and William Romaine (1714-1795) had caught the spirit of the Revival and were radiating its inspiration. Before the close of the Eighteenth Century the Evangelicals within the Established Church included a truly historic group of dedicated men among whom were the Venns, Berridge of Erceton, John Howton, Joseph and Isaac Milner, Richard Cecil, Charles Simcox and Thomas Scott.

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the Commentator. The story of Thomas Scott is a record of
the Evangelical Movement in the Church of England illustra-
ting some of its most noble endeavors, most enduring achieve-
ments, and most courageous convictions.

Against this background one begins to obtain a proper
perspective from which to examine Thomas Scott. He was a
man violently opposed to prevailing influences and yet a man
of his time. For it is in the Age of Reason that we see him
in his appeal to the reasonableness of Christianity but it is
also here that he proclaims that "not reason but revelation,
is the standard of truth."¹ It is in an atmosphere so in-
fected with Deism and anti-Trinitarianism that he falls into
the error of a rationalistic Socinianism, but, struggling to
find the truth he emerges with an experiential and Trinitari-
ian faith. It is in a period when theologians place such
emphasis on 'historical proof' that Scott uses evidences to
establish the authority of Christian revelation but finds its
ultimate and incontrovertible evidence in its vindication in
human experience. It is in this era of cold complacency that
Thomas Scott maintains an ardent zeal for spiritual vorities.
It is in an age of widespread immorality that he fervently
urges holiness in living. It is in the context of the surging
religious awakening of the Evangelical Movement that he is
seen toiling so tirelessly, becoming one of its most revered
leaders and one of its most able theologians. Indeed, his
life and work form so vital a part of the religious activity

¹Thomas Scott, Works, VIII, p. 336.
of his day that one historian declares that even the most careless reader cannot fail to be struck by the continued appearance of the honored name of Thomas Scott in the accounts of the great undertakings and in the sketches of the great religious workers of the close of the Eighteenth and the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. Others have referred to him as "a noble specimen of a Christian (who) deserved a much wider recognition than he ever received in this world." Another has regarded him as "perhaps the most popular writer" of the Evangelical school. While others have ranked him "the most laborious and the most useful writer of his day."

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2 Abbey and Overton, op. cit., p. 384.
CHAPTER II

SCOTT'S EARLY YEARS: GROWTH OF AN EVANGELICAL

"We might put the point thus: no one should expect to be able first to decide whether what is said about God is true, and thereafter decide its practical relevance to himself; rather it is only by seeing in some degree its relevance to himself that he can ever be in a position rightly to decide the question of its truth."

R. H. Farmer, God and Men.

Thomas Scott was born on February 16, 1747, in a humble farm house in the sequestered parish of Braytoft. Here, in the low-lying fen country of Lincolnshire, with its wide stretches of marshy grazing-land, Scott spent the earliest years of his life. "My father, John Scott, was a grazier," says Thomas, "a man of a small and feeble body, but of uncommon energy of mind, and vigour of intellect; by which he surmounted, in no common degree, the almost total want of education." ¹ For years John Scott lived and worked in difficult circumstances, but by sheer diligence and tenacity he

¹John Scott, The Life of the Reverend Thomas Scott, Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself, and Conjectural Extracts of his Letters (London: L. B. Seeley, 1822), p. 3. This work is the primary and authoritative source for Scott's life. J. H. Ovorton asserts that "It is written in excellent taste, with filial appreciation, but without any undue filial partiality." The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 192. While that Ovorton says is true, it must also be said that the work contains much redundant material and is poorly arranged.
rose above his adversities, acquiring an honorable name and a more comfortable position in life. From his father, Thomas inherited a strong intellect, unrelenting perseverance and an unquenchable passion for reading. "Thomas Scott," affirms a modern historian, "had immense intellectual energy which revealed itself in his youth and continued into old age." Thomas' mother was of an old and respected family of Boston. From her, young Scott learned to read and write and received much practical wisdom.

When he became old enough, Thomas attended a day-school in Burgh, two miles away, where he acquired the elements of Latin. At the age of eight he was sent to a parish school at Bennington, near Boston. His education may have concluded here but his father keenly desired to have a son in one of the learned professions, particularly medicine. An elder son had been trained as a surgeon but his career was swiftly ended by a youthful death and so Thomas was selected to fulfill his father's ambitions.

With a medical career ultimately in view, Scott was sent to a boarding school in remote Scorton in Yorkshire. Here he spent five long lonesome years, without one visit from relatives or friends, without one visit to his home. He was taught to translate Latin "perhaps more readily and correctly than a local "[1]


2Mrs. Scott's maiden name was Tayett. The signature of one of this family is annexed to the warrant for the execution of King Charles I. John Scott, op. cit., p. 4 footnote.
than any other boy in the school, 1 but he could not compose themes nor could he write verse. "God had not made me a poet," 2 he commented in later years. During this time he would stare with amazement at large books, wondering how they could possibly have been written. And yet, he was the boy who was destined to write theological works that fill ten volumes, and a Commentary on the Bible that constitutes six large tomes, of which people in England and America have demanded and purchased many tens of thousands of copies.

Because of misconduct, Scott suffered some disgrace at school. He himself came to feel that his behavior was as immoral as a lack of money, fear of temporal consequences, and a natural bashfulness would allow it to be. 3 An unduly extended separation from his home and family was largely responsible for such degradation. And it was this experience that made him so acutely opposed to boarding schools in later life.

Finally he was allowed to return home in June 1762, at fifteen years of age. After a few weeks he was apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary at Alford. His master, though skilful in his work, was unprincipled in conduct and wielded a bad influence on the young apprentice. Nor was Scott helped by an interruption of his church-going habits. 4

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1 Ibid., p. 8.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 9.
4 Charles Hole, "A Memoir of Thomas Scott," The Charles
association, however, was short-lived. In two months he was dismissed and ordered home in disgrace for some unnamed act of misbehavior. Thus his father's cherished plan was destroyed and his family name discredited. Due to a dispute over his contract he could not be apprenticed to anyone else so that all hopes of a medical profession had to be entirely abandoned.

In spite of the humiliating displeasure which he suffered, Scott finds two great benefits in this experience. Of first and supreme value was an impression received from one of the surgeon's remonstrances. The surgeon had reprimanded him by warning that he "ought to recollect, it was not only displeasing to him, but wicked in the sight of God." 1 This admonition buried itself deep in the boy's conscience, marking the genesis of that conviction of sin which afterwards resulted in his conversion to God. Isaac Watts's hymn entitled "The All-seeing God" further deepened this childhood impression. 2 A second benefit, he observes, was his exclusion from the medical profession. 3 As with many endowed with a strong natural intellect he would no doubt have had success in whatever realm he would have ventured, but the whole history of

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1 John Scott, op. cit., p. 12.
3 Ibid., p. 17.
his life would have been changed.

Now in his sixteenth year, his father set him to doing the most repulsive kind of labor connected with grass-farming. For the next nine years he literally grovelled in the wet marshland of Lincolnshire. His duties were generally with the cattle, and in the spring season it meant following the lambing ewes. He learned the habit of hardness in encountering all kinds of weather; but constant exposure to the cold, wet climate laid the foundation for ills which afflicted him throughout his life. Even at this early age he suffered with fever, asthma and liver disorders due to the conditions under which he lived. Every illness, Scott records, produced a sort of 'paroxysm of religion' so that, 'having prayed for pardon in an earnest but ignorant manner, I felt satisfied that I should be happy if I died; though as soon as I was restored to health, all my religion vanished as the morning cloud.'

During this time he had only rough, uneducated, and irreligious companions who tried to quicken his rebellious spirit with taunting flattery. His mind fretted with smouldering discontent; his temper became soured beyond its natural harshness; and he was a source of trial to his family. And yet, even in such an irksome and distasteful period of his life, Scott never lost his consuming love for reading nor his insatiable desire for study. He constantly dreamed of the

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1 John Scott, op. cit., p. 19.
clerical profession or of literary distinction. "Various ideas
and imaginations concerning study; and learning, and even dis-
tinction of learning, formed no small part of my waking dreams," he recalls. In leisure moments and on winter evenings he read all that he could lay his hands on. But his keen desire to advance in learning was hindered by two obstacles: first, his father, though himself fond of reading, always considered Thomas' attachment to books entirely inconsistent with diligence in his business. Consequently frowns and rebukes were the only encouragement he received when he was seen reading.

The other hindrance was a lack of reading matter. Having left most of his books at school he had only a few torn Latin books, a small dictionary, and an Eton Creek Grammar. One can only conjecture as to what 'might have been' had Scott been allowed the advantages of an academic training. He had a naturally powerful intellect but it was drastically stifled. There was that default created by a disproportion between a man and his environment. And the effect is invariably harmful.

Meanwhile, the expectation that he would one day inherit his father's farm brightened his spirits. But the accidental discovery that the lease of the farm was left by will to his brother, and that he was merely to be an undertenant to him, crushed his hopes and brought his simmering discontent to a heated climax. He determined to submit to his low estate no longer, waiting only for the opportune moment to declare his intentions of leaving home in order to apply for Letters or

Ibid., p. 22.
Orders. Thus, to his father's astonishment, he began to study his Athenian Greek Grammar and to make what use he could of his Latin books.

Then one April evening in 1772, coming in wet and weary, he found himself the subject of undeserved blame. Flaming into indignation, he passionately flung aside his shepherd's cloak, and declared his resolution never to put in on again. But the next day a pricking sense of duty constrained him to care for a large flock of weaning ewes. Having thus soothed his conscience he made his way to Boston where he called on a clergyman with whom he had some acquaintance. Scott announced to him his desire to take Holy Orders. The shepherd boy's request was received with natural surprise but on being asked whether he knew anything of Greek or Latin, Scott freely translated several verses of the Greek Testament into both English and Latin. The astonished clergyman promised to mention him to the Archdeacon who was due in Boston the following week.

After an interview with the Archdeacon, he was encouraged to hope for an early ordination. Accordingly, he spent his small savings on books and went off to live in Boston where he continued his studies and succeeded in obtaining a title to Orders in the curacy of Martin. While in Boston, Scott wrote a letter to his sisters regarding the reactions of various relatives to his plans. Because it is one of his earliest letters still preserved and because it illustrates so strikingly some of his distinguishing characteristics—
particularly his strong determination, independent judgment, shrewd insight, and self-confidence—a large portion of the letter can be profitably transcribed here. It is dated Boston, May 17, 1772; he writes:

"As I expected, I had some difficulty in reconciling my friends here to my intended scheme. My uncle Jackson, as my godfather, reminded me of my duty to my father. My answer was, that I found I could not perform the positive part, I must therefore endeavor to perform the negative part: that, though in my former conduct I had too often transgressed, yet in the present instance, my conscience acquitted me. My aunt urged that, if I had not success, I could turn my hand to nothing else. I mentioned a school, for which I think myself well qualified, being so able to instruct myself. However, after a long and serious discourse on the subject, I left them both tolerably well satisfied... Mrs. Waytt endeavoured to rally me out of it: but, I must own, I thought her arguments weak. She urged the ridicule which poor persons meet with: but surely those who ridicule any one on account of his poverty, if he behaves in a manner worthy of his situation, are themselves persons whose opinions I despise. She said, she would not be of any profession, unless at the head of it: but this can be no rule for general practice, as some must be subordinate. She mentioned my not being brought up in a regular manner: but it is the ends, not the means, that is of the greatest consequence; and, if a man be qualified, it matters not at what place he procured his qualifications. It sometimes humbles my vanity to hear them all account of me as of one of the lowest order of the profession, not only in point for fortune, but also in other particulars. If I know myself, I am not deficient in abilities, though I am in the art of rendering them conspicuous. My vanity prompts me to say, that I am not without hopes of making friends in this way of life, as I shall be more conversant with men of letters, who are the companions I most delight in, and for whose company I shall spare no pains to qualify myself. But, let my condition in life be what it may, I will endeavour to suit myself to it. Pray heaven preserve me independent on any other for a livelihood, and I ask no more!"

In his attempt to secure an early ordination he was disappointed. Owing to a recent regard for decorum, Scott was

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suspected of Methodism. On the pretext that his papers had not arrived in time, the Bishop refused to ordain him; but after further earnest entreaties the Bishop said he would admit him at the next ordination. The Bishop insisted, however, that he also obtain his father's consent and a letter from any beneficed clergyman in the neighborhood.

Prospects of ever receiving his father's approval to take Orders were most unlikely; but the family, realizing the shame that would be brought on them because of his failure, prevailed upon the father so that he finally consented to the ordination. Scott thus became a candidate at the ensuing Michaelmas ordination. He passed his examination with credit, the examining chaplain complimenting him with the remark, "I perceive that Christianity has got an able advocate in you." He was ordained a deacon on September 20, 1772, at Buckden, and six months later at the age of twenty-six he was ordained to the priesthood in London.

The state of mind and heart in which Scott received Holy Orders was in several respects regrettable. His motives, as far as he could 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."  

During the time spent in his father's home Scott had read a

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1Ibid., p. 14.

2Thomas Scott, The Force of Truth, in Works, 1, 16.
commentary on the Scriptures written from the Socinian point of view and was deeply influenced by it. Therefore, as to theological conviction, he was, he says "a Socinian and Pelagian, and wholly an Arminian." He did not believe in the Trinity or the Incarnation, the Atoning work of Christ or the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and he trusted in his own morality to achieve favor with God. A few years later he refers to his ordination as "the most atrocious wickedness of my life." But he did not regard it as such at the time and much was to occur before his conscience was aroused to any deep remorse.

Soon after his ordination he took steps to obtain a B. D. degree at Cambridge, entering his name at Clare Hall. But he later abandoned the idea because of the expense and a growing dislike for preferments and distinctions. His mature judgment, however, caused him to doubt the wisdom of this decision.

Having received his ordination as deacon, Scott accepted the curacies of Stoke Goldington and Weston Underwood. Here, among the charming villages of Buckinghamshire, he began his parish work. The population of Stoke, about seven hundred in number, was poor and ignorant; half of the people had little knowledge at all outside their native trade of lace-making. There were no schools and few people came to church. At Weston Underwood, the people were mostly Roman Catholic.

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1 Ibid., p. 13.
2 John Scott, op. cit., p. 38.
while some were Methodists, but many also attended the regular services of the parish church.

Scott fulfilled his ministerial obligations with characteristic integrity. He took great care in his preparation for the pulpit as well as keeping up with his public responsibilities, "performing his ecclesiastical duties at both churches with remarkable exactness on all the festivals appointed." But his studies were closest to his heart. He applied himself to the study of all kinds of subjects including geography, chronology, logic, Herodotus in the original, in Latin, and in English, Hebrew, the Septuagint, a Socinian commentary on the Scriptures, and divinity. Writing to his sisters in a letter dated September 10, 1773—only six months after his ordination—he mentions his progress in Hebrew: "Of the Hebrew, some twenty weeks ago I knew not a letter; and I have now read through one hundred and nineteen of the Psalms, and twenty-three chapters of Genesis." He worked at what he loved so that he rigorously threw himself into his study with a methodic diligence.

In these days Scott lived without any real personal religion. "I lived," he says, "in the practice of what I knew to be sinful and in the entire neglect of all secret religion." Nor did he know much about doctrine; but he

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1 George Lipscomb, The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham (London: Nichols, 1843-47), I, 43.

2 John Scott, op. cit., p. 54.

could see the faults in morals and in one of his first letters from the pastorate he writes: "Whether I shall be able to make any reformation I cannot tell, but I tell them their duty pretty plainly."¹

In the summer of 1775, Scott exchanged the curacy of Stoke Goldington for that of Ravenstone while still retaining the curacy of Weston Underwood. It was while he held these two latter curacies and lived at Ravenstone that he experienced a revolutionary change in his religious convictions. "At this place," he states, "I resided about two years, and it proved, as it were, a Bethel to me. Here I read the Scriptures and prayed. Here I sought and I trust I found in a considerable measure, the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."² The course of his transformation is an intriguing spiritual pilgrimage as well as a suggestive chapter of theological development.

The alteration of Scott's religious life issued from a deep concern for the work of the ministry, and the concern was accentuated initially by a noble example set by John Newton of Olney. Although Newton was a close neighbor, Scott had little regard for him because he was "a Methodist"³ and an

¹John Scott, op. cit., p. 58.
²Ibid., p. 79.
³The term Methodist, explains Scott, "as a stigma of reproach, was first applied to Mr. Wesley, Mr. Whitfield, 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
enthusiast to a very high degree"¹; and he looked upon Newton's religious sentiments as "rank fanaticism."² But in January 1771, two of Scott's parishioners became critically ill and, though aware of their illness, he failed to visit them because he had not been called in. Then he learned that Newton had walked all the way from Olney to minister to them several times. Scott's conscience was seared by the thought of his own neglect. "Directly it occurred to me," he reflected, "that whatever contempt I might have for Mr. Newton's doctrines, I must acknowledge his practice to be more consistent with the ministerial character than my own."³ The next meeting with Newton was at a visitation of the clergy (at Olney we may presume)⁴ in May 1775. Scott confronted Newton in a room crowded with clergy and tried to engage him in a debate, but Newton prudently declined. A day or two afterward, though, Newton sent him a short note with a little book. Scott welcomed the opportunity as a means of drawing him into a dispute and, under a false profession to know the truth, wrote

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¹John Scott, op. cit., p. 63.
³Ibid., p. 20.
him a long letter on several controversial matters. To Scott's surprise Newton made a very kind and friendly reply. A correspondence was thus begun that was carried on until December. Newton's eight letters are preserved in Cardiphonia. They are an excellent example of wisdom and patience wherein he gives a tactful but unapologetic presentation of his own theological position. Scott's letters are missing but according to his own description of them they were subtle, ill-tempered endeavors to entangle Newton in controversy.

Probably Newton's paramount contribution at this time was his gracious encouragement to Scott. In his first letter Newton writes, "It is the strain of evident sincerity which runs through your letters, that gives me a pleasing confidence the Lord is with you." Then he adds that Scott's declared intention of seeking the truth by searching the Scriptures and by beseeching Divine guidance is the right method. "Go on," he admonishes, "and may his [God's] blessing attend you." Newton's succeeding letters describe many of the very doctrines to which Scott eventually gave assent, but they had little appeal at this stage so that Scott soon requested that the correspondence be ended. Later Scott acknowledges Newton's great usefulness, although he insists that had he never seen him, "At least from the time that his example had put me upon considering my conduct," he still would have arrived at the

1 John Newton, Cardiphonia or the Utterance of the Heart (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d.), p. 146.
2 Ibid.
same views of Evangelical truth.¹

In the meantime, Scott's doctrinal views created a disturbing problem for his ministerial career. Throughout these early years of his ministry he did not believe in a Godhead of co-equal Persons in unity and hold, as well, a keen dislike for the Athanasian Creed which embodied this doctrine. Then one Sunday morning in May 1775 his attention was abruptly arrested by the eighth Article of Religion with its explicit recognition of the Athanasian Creed. Suddenly he realized that he really did not adhere to the Articles of Religion² and that he could not honestly subscribe to them again. To refuse to subscribe, however, would mean to renounce all prospect of the preferment which he so earnestly sought and which, in fact, was in the process of being arranged for him. After a fitful struggle between interest and conscience he resolved not to subscribe to the Articles again whatever the personal loss might be. He would be content to be a poor, perhaps despised, curate rather than tell "a most audacious lie in the face of God."³ In spite of the severest censure, the


²Why "Scott did not realize this before is not clearly understandable since he expressed so much satisfaction with the liturgy of the Church into which the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity is everywhere woven. His biographer reasonably suggests that "This seems to have been one of those inconsistencies to which the human mind is subject until and except it is awakened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit." And that probably he "had become so familiarized to forms which he was continually using, and so settled in a certain mode of interpreting them, that they failed to make the impression which might have been expected." John Scott, op. cit., p. 99.

³Ibid., p. 88; Scott never completely explains why it
loss of income and prestige which actually did result from his decision, Scott found his choice to be highly beneficial. It caused him, he observed, to examine more closely the Holy Scriptures, and to consider more seriously the important trust committed to him as a minister "so as, while I preach to others, I may not be myself a castaway." 1

With the discovery that his doctrinal views differed from those of the Articles of Religion he determined to search the Scriptures to learn whether the Articles (particularly the Athanasian Creed) were in agreement with the Word of God. Few have been "so dreadfully in earnest" 2 as Scott when he launched out in his search for the truth. He had a profound concern for his personal integrity and his ministerial vocation, and the concern became so urgent that he could not rest until his mind was at ease.

The first passage of Scripture that stimulated his awakened conscience was James 1:5 "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." This and similar passages might not be equally wrong to retain thecuracy which he had obtained on his previous subscription to the Articles. The fullest elucidation is found in these words: "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... my heart was sincerely towards the Lord, and I dared not to venture on a known sin, deliberately, for the sake of temporal interest." Thomas Scott, The Force of Truth, in Works, I, 29.

1John Scott, op. cit., p. 92.
led him to a meager trust in Divine teaching. Then in the spring of 1776 Bishop Burnet's Pastoral Care brought forcefully to his attention his tremendous responsibilities as a minister. "I received," he records, "such a deep conviction of the importance of that work, in which I had thoughtlessly engaged... as laid the foundation of all my subsequent conduct and change of sentiments." Burnet's grave warning that the faithless clergyman will not perish alone but will carry with him those who were lost through his neglect or through his bad example, was especially sobering to Scott. As a result, he was excited to an attentive consideration of those scriptures that state the obligations of the minister. He was induced, also, to establish a weekday lecture in Weston and Ravenstone for the exposition of the scriptures.

The next significant advancement came by reading William Law's Serious Call. Scott had previously treated the book with contempt but suddenly he was struck with the spirit and force of its argument. By a perusal of the work he was sharply convicted of negligence in his devotional life and from that time on he earnestly endeavored to make his devotions more fervent and pertinent. He began to memorize Scriptural petitions and to compose his own prayers, becoming "more spiritual than heretofore" in his secret addresses to the Majesty of heaven. Like many others in his day

2Gilbert Burnet, Pastoral Care (1st ed.; Dublin: J. Hyde and R. Gurne, 1725), pp. 119-120.
Scott was deeply stirred by Law's penetrating thrusts into the innermost nature of consecrated Christian living. To a small degree he began to recognize that "all worldly attainments, whether of greatness, wisdom, or bravery, are but empty sounds" and that "there is nothing wise or great or noble in an human spirit but rightly to know and heartily to worship and to adore the great God" who alone gives and supports all life in heaven or in earth.2

Meanwhile, Scott's creed was undergoing a gradual but important change. In the article of Christology he had moved from Socinianism towards Arianism while in the question of Justification his views still leaned towards Socinianism. With Samuel Clarke he affirmed that though Christ was less than God He was highly exalted and had a certain divinity communicated to him by the Father.3 Like the Socinians, he thought of Christianity primarily in terms of morality; he did not recognize sin as a state of enmity against God. Nor did he acknowledge the death of Christ as a real atonement which was necessary or possible to satisfy Divine justice because of man's sin.4 Eventually, though, it was through

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3 See above pp. 15-16.

4 Albrecht Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian*
the Reformed doctrine of justification that Scott reached
an orthodox Christology and Catholic Trinitarianism.

'Judicious' Richard Hooker's works were responsible for
such a doctrinal progression. Particularly helpful to Scott
was Hooker's Discourse on Justification which convinced him
that man cannot be justified by any inherent quality or by
his good works, but only by God's free grace through faith
alone. From Hooker he learned that "The best things we do
have somewhat in them to be pardoned." He became persuaded
that all men are such notorious transgressors of every law
of God that no one could possibly be justified in God's
sight by his obedience to any of the divine commandments.

In some way, Scott now recognized, man's justification must
come by unmerited mercy and must be realized through faith.
Yet, he did not understand how God's grace reaches down to
man. The other words employed by Hooker: "God made Him which
knew no sin to be made sin for us" failed to communicate any
meaning to him. But soon after this, by a perusal of Bishop

Doctrines of Justification and Reconciliation, trans. by John

1 Joseph Milner, another famous Evangelical, was also
awakened by this discourse. Milner was noted for his History
of the Church of Christ which ranks with Scott's Commentary
as one of the outstanding literary productions of the Evange-


2 Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse on Justification,
and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown," in Works (4th

3 Thomas Scott, Force of Truth, in Works, I, 46.

4 Richard Hooker, op. cit., p. 490.
Beveridge's sermons (popular reading among many of the Evangelicals), ¹ he came to comprehend "the real satisfaction made by the death of Christ for the sins of believers."² The essence of the Evangelical doctrine of Christ's Atonement for sin was thus accepted and it quickly became an integral part of Scott's preaching as well as of his thinking.

On Good Friday 1777, he preached a sermon on Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He avowed 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 offences."³ All his former explanations and interpretations on this matter he denounced as erroneous perversions of Scripture. At the same time, however inconsistently, he still retained his Arian view of the Person of Christ and the Holy Spirit. That is, his faith was fixed upon a crucified Saviour though he dishonored His person and denied His deity.

An understanding of the nature and necessity of the 'new birth,' was the next step in the pilgrimage that eventually led Scott out of the labyrinth of perplexities and inconsistencies in which he was engangled. A volume of John Evans' sermons entitled The Christian Temper enabled him to perceive that the natural man, both in body and soul, is "carnal and

¹Elliott-Binns, op. cit., pp. 129-130.
³Ibid.
sold under sin" and completely destitute of spirituality. Fallen man, he acknowledged, must be renewed in the spirit of his mind—must be "born of the spirit" (John 3:6)—before he can possibly be prepared for, or admitted into the kingdom of God. The foundation for Scott's Evangelical conversion experience was laid. And from this time onward the 'new birth' constituted the cornerstone of the religion which he lived and taught.

He now felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the system of doctrine which he termed 'Methodism' (or Evangelicalism). This tendency created his sharpest trial. He had always held the Evangelicals in sovereign contempt, speaking of them in derision and declaiming them from the pulpit as persons of bigotry, enthusiasm and spiritual pride. Now he found himself moving in the very direction of their beliefs and it was almost more than he could endure. He could sustain the loss of preferment, of personal advancement and of income, but he could not bear the thought of being regarded with disdain as an ignorant, deluded enthusiast. Consequently, he was extremely cautious of the doctrines to which he acceded. Although he faithfully preached the doctrines he had accepted, he would temper his messages by charging the Evangelicals with fanaticism. It was while he was in this state of mind that he read Henry Venn's treatise, Essay on the Prophecy of Zacharias.

1Ibid., p. 58.
2Ibid., p. 59.
3For his definition of 'Methodism' see above, Ch. II, pp. 53-54.
He was particularly struck with such words as "Abhor ... 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 commands, without saying you are a methodist." The entire argument of the book came to him with such conviction that, in Scott’s own words, "it produced that victory which faith alone can give, ... and I have never since been much troubled, about being called an enthusiast, or a methodist." Although delivered from the dread of unmerited censures, Scott always guarded against falling into the error of an ‘enthusiasm’ that he felt was out of harmony with the true dignity of a Biblical Faith.

The doctrine of the Trinity still was not settled in his mind. He had begun to doubt his Arian sentiments and to suspect the truth of Clarke’s hypothesis; but he was unwilling to become a Trinitarian in the orthodox sense of the word. It was exceptionally difficult for him to accept the idea of the one true God having a Son and Holy Spirit of equal divinity, authority and power. But finally, through an intensified study of the Scriptures, he was constrained to relinquish his Arian sentiments. He could no longer avoid seeing that the offices and works attributed, in the Scriptures, to the Son and Holy Spirit are such as only the Infinite God

2Thomas Scott, The Force of Truth, in Works, 1, 64-65.
It 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,'"\(^1\) asserts Scott, "nor could the Holy Spirit give spiritual life and dwell in the hearts of all believers . . . were he not the omniscient, omnipotent, infinite God."\(^2\) Thus he concluded that the only reasonable, Scriptural, and consistent view is the doctrine of a 'Trinity in Unity.'

James Harvey's widely circulated work *Theon and Aspasio* proved useful to him at this time. Although Scott always regarded Harvey's writings on religious experience as "narcotic to those within, and calculated to excite prejudice and give plausibility to those without,"\(^3\) he nevertheless found him instructive concerning the lost estate of man and the believer's acceptance by a holy God. Prior to this, the concept of original sin had been most repulsive to him. But Harvey's illustrated dialogue\(^4\) caused him to see the doctrine in a

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) John Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 598.

\(^4\) Harvey presented his doctrines by means of an imaginary dialogue between two characters that he named Theron and Aspasio. For an interesting account of the effectiveness of his method, particularly from a literary point of view, see W. E. W. Brown, *The Polished Shaft: Studies in the Purpose and Influence of the Christian Writers of the Eighteenth Century* (London: S.P.C.K., 1951); the ultra-Calvinism contained in *Theon and Aspasio* and especially the emphasis on the "imputed righteousness of Christ" aroused a minor controversy soon after its publication in 1755. See Robert Campbell, *Theon and Aspasio: The Controversy*.
more acceptable light so that he adopted it as a definite part of his changing system of belief.

The last doctrines to which he gave consent, during this initial quest for Biblical truth, were those of Predestination, Personal Election, and Final Perseverance. As late as August 1777 he told Newton that he would never share his opinion on these matters. Then he read the *Economy of the Covenants* written by the Dutch theologian Herman Witsius and he began to see the practical use of these doctrines in comforting penitent Christians. Scott was convinced that if the doctrine of Personal Election were true it would afford the encouragement which numbers of people needed. Many, who had been awakened from a carelessness in their religious lives and who were truly penitent, desired some assurance that they would not again fall back into their former course of sinful living. If, thought Scott, such inquirers could be told that the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit—which originally awakened their hearts and minds—was actually wrought as a consequence of "the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God," a message of security could be offered. For then the anxious believer could be assured that the unchangeable, faithful God would certainly carry on and complete the good work of His


Witsius was a leader of the Dutch Covenant or Federal School of Theology which had been initiated by Cocceius. The *Economy of the Covenants* was an effort to line up the Federal system more completely with Scripture, Charles Augustus Briggs, *History of the Study of Theology* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1916), pp. 156-157.
grace, and would "keep them by his power." Moreover, a serious examination of the Scriptures to find their teaching on these points led him to conclude that they would teach Predestination, Election and Final Perseverance, in spite of all his contrary twisting and turning. He discovered, too, that the doctrines were admitted into the creeds or articles of all Protestant Churches at the beginning of the Reformation and that the Articles of the Church of England expressly maintain them. Fully aware of all the abuses to which the doctrines are subject, Scott finally accepted them. They were, he felt, necessary to the completeness and consistency of his present doctrinal scheme.

As his doctrinal advance continued, Scott's acquaintance with John Newton was renewed. Soon the revived association ripened into a steadfast and life-long friendship. Newton's diary is therefore revealing as he writes: "September 2, 1777. A visit from Mr. Scott yesterday morning. O my Lord, I thank Thee for Thy goodness to him; I think he gets forward into the light of Thy truth." "September 15, Drank tea yesterday with Mr. Scott... he seems enlightened and established in the most important parts of the Gospel and will, I trust, prove an instrument of usefulness in Thy hand."

1 Thomas Scott, The Force of Truth, in Works, I, 70.
2 Ibid., p. 75.
4 Ibid., p. 225.
In Scott's changed life Newton's patience was rewarded; his confidence in God's power was vindicated; and his sincere concern for his friend's welfare was satisfied.

At the close of the year 1777 Scott became fully settled in his new religious opinions. Being furnished with a number of books written by the old divines, both of the Church of England and of the Dissenters, he discovered that the doctrines which he felt compelled to accept—doctrines which were currently called novel and 'Methodistical'—were actually doctrines held by the Reformers. Indeed, the essence of the system of belief, which for nearly three years Scott had been hammering out for himself, he found to be the teaching of most of the revered theologians of the Church. Of particular service in this final confirmation of his renovated views were the Works of Bishop Hall and John Reynolds. To these men, declared Scott, no true friend of the Church of England could reasonably object; and what they, in general, believed and taught, he now embraced as Scriptural truth.

The cycle of conviction was complete. For almost three years, from morning till night, nearly every day, he had prayerfully meditated on the Scriptures. He had read the Bible over many times in every part, repeatedly, diligently examining those parts which relate to doctrine. Sheets of paper were filled with religious discourses, sermons, expositions and letters—all of which he compared with the Biblical record. At last the struggle ceased; he exchanged his
rationalistic opinions for Evangelical convictions. The
foundation of his theology and succeeding ministry was
established. From this point onward he lived and worked
within an Evangelical 'frame of reference,' formulating his
religious views upon a solely Scriptural basis, with a
moderately Calvinistic emphasis, and in general agreement
with the Articles of Religion of the Church of England.
"The longer I live the more I am certain that the great difference between men, between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant, is energy - invincible determination - a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory. That quality will do anything that can be done in the world."

--Sir Powell Buxton

The years which followed Scott's concerted quest for Biblical truth were years in which he came to experience more and more the effect of Evangelical doctrine upon his life and ministry. Immediately his work in the joint curacy of Ravenstone-Neston became so productive that he was able to look on it as the favorite center of his ministerial labors. "A considerable number of persons," he claims, "who had previously been ignorant and careless about religion became consistent and zealous Christians."¹ A general seriousness, with marked attention to religion matters, was excited beyond anything he had ever personally witnessed. Years later he was gratified to learn that his work was still effectual, especially among the young people of Ravenstone.²

¹John Scott, op. cit., p. 31.
It was during his Ravenstone-Weston ministry that Scott penned *The Force of Truth*, the most famous work of his life apart from the *Commentary*. Published in February 1779, the book was designed chiefly for the use of his family and former friends in order to give them an account of the new religious views which he had adopted. The remarkable narrative describes the spiritual pilgrimage in which the author was led out of a low Socinian creed into the warm light of Evangelical truth. In style the treatise was improved by the poet William Cowper, but the contents came straight from Scott's own heart. Like John Bunyan's spiritual autobiography it is a clear and candid history of a fierce inner conflict.

Or again, *The Force of Truth* has been favorably compared, in style, as well as in contents, with John Henry Newman's *Apologia*. For like the *Apologia*, it records the long, gradual progress of a mind towards the adoption of views which it had once firmly rejected. Daniel Wilson observed that although it cannot be equated with the *Confessions* of Augustine, nevertheless, it bears a definite similarity as it exemplifies the salient features of a truly Christian conversion; affords a striking illustration of the work of Divine grace; and presents

1In the spring of 1777, while still holding the Ravenstone curacy, Scott moved from Ravenstone to Weston Underwood. His residence at the time of writing *The Force of Truth* is described by Thomas Wright as "the one [house] near the church... which commands a view of the whole street." Thomas Wright, *The Town of Cowper or the Literary and Historical Associations of Olney and Its Neighborhood* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1893), p. 93.

2Elliott-Binns, op. cit., p. 408.
an impressive picture of a laborious, successful investigation of truth.\(^1\) Overton has declared it to be "one of the most striking treatises ever published by the Evangelical school."\(^2\) The biographer, Alexander Gordon, maintains that "a more impressive piece of spiritual biography has rarely been written."\(^3\) Ten years passed before the first thousand copies were sold, but after that as many were sold in each new year. There were many English editions and it was circulated on the Continent, being translated into both Dutch and French. A signal instance of its effectiveness is found in the case of the poet Henry Kirke White who was reclaimed from the error of Deism by reading The Force of Truth. When first given the book, White told the person who had brought it to him that he would soon write an answer to it. But about two weeks later, when his friend inquired how far he had proceeded in his answer, White had a surprising reply. He said that "to answer the book was out of his power, and out of any man's power, for it was founded upon eternal truth."\(^4\) The entire course of White's life was changed and from that time on he sought to embrace and promulgate what he believed to be true Christianity.\(^5\) By this treatise Scott became known to a far

\(^1\)John Scott, op. cit., p. 531.


\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 30-32.
wider public than that contained within the narrow limits of his parishes. His efforts as a theological writer were begun.

In 1779 John Newton left his parish at Olney, moving to London where he became vicar of St. Mary Woolnoth. It was Newton's earnest desire that Scott should succeed him at Olney. But Scott hesitated to accept his friend's gracious offer, for he was happy at Ravenstone and had no real desire to move. Furthermore, he gravely doubted that the people at Olney would appreciate his comparative youth, his strict doctrine, or his plain preaching. At length, though, he gave unwilling consent to Newton's persuasions. But the people of Olney, as soon as they learned of the proposal, raised such violent opposition that the plan had to be temporarily discarded. Newton records his disappointment: "To my surprise and grief, I have found a strong opposition against Mr. Scott, so that he has given up the thought of coming. Contempt has been cast upon one whom God has honoured. . . ."¹ It was less than a year, however, when the man selected in preference to Scott was obliged to resign; and the very people who had objected to Scott's coming sent an earnest plea asking him to accept the curacy. Reluctantly he consented.

Curacy of Olney

Olney, a small market town, was known in the eighteenth century for its lace-making. Almost every woman toiled at the village trade, working ten hours a day besides keeping

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¹Josiah Bull, op. cit., p. 239.
her household. Men joined in when farm work was impossible and some were even full-time workers. Children were put to work in the factory almost as soon as they could walk. Wages ranged from five shillings a week for a full-time laborer to a few pence a day for children.\footnote{Cowper summarized the condition of Eighteenth Century Olney when he called the little town "a populous place inhabited chiefly by the half-starved and ragged of the earth."\footnote{William Cowper, "Letter to Unwin," dated November 13, 1782. \textit{Correspondence}, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), II, 26.} Altogether it was a most depressing place, not only in atmosphere, but in the ministerial career of Thomas Scott.}

Scott was not popular at Olney. His congregations were small and his efforts were largely unappreciated. In spite of Newton's ministry of fifteen years, many deep-seated problems still existed. There was much religious profession but little practical holiness; there was rigid dogmatism but with it an Antinomian licience. Scott wrote of the parish in April 1784:

"There are above two thousand inhabitants in this town, almost all Calvinists, even the most debauched of them ... they are become like David, \textit{wiser than their teachers}; that is, they think themselves so, and, in an awful manner, have learned to abuse gospel notions to stupify their consciences, vindicate their sloth and wickedness, and shield off convictions."\footnote{"Letter to the Rev. G. More," dated April 14, 1784. \textit{John Scott, op. cit.}, p. 207.}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{\textit{Bernard Martin, John Newton} (London: Willian Heinemann, Ltd., 1950), pp. 215-216.}
  \item \footnote{\textit{William Cowper, "Letter to Unwin," dated November 13, 1782. \textit{Correspondence}, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), II, 26.}}
\end{itemize}
It was a difficult and discouraging sphere of labor but Scott patiently persevered. He found encouragement in his continued success at Weston and was comforted, too, by the few at Olney who benefitted greatly from his faithful ministry. Thus Newton could observe: "Mr. Scott has some, and some of the best, who are affectionately attached to him."¹ In general the people regarded him as an upright man and a good preacher; but his abrupt manner and blunt insistence on genuine holiness called forth the false charges of legalism and Arminianism.

An exacting emphasis on holiness as the evidence of a living faith is a singularly distinguishing feature of Scott's entire ministry. Vigorously, constantly, he opposed and exposed the woeful dangers of Antinomianism—"one of the vilest heresies that ever Satan invented..."² In a letter to his good friend Rev. John Mayor, vicar of Shawbury, Scott declares his resolute intention of opposing this heresy.

"The conversion of the Antinomian, notwithstanding all his good feelings, only leaves him tenfold more a hater of the God of the Bible, then he was before. This my friend, I am sure of, and see more and more clearly every day: and enmity of loose professors against searching practical preaching, is full proof of it: and by God's grace, I purpose to spend my whole life in bearing testimony against it; and shall rejoice in having you for a helper."³

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¹Josiah Bull, op. cit., p. 272.
²"Letter to Rev. Mr. Mayor," April 29, 1783, John Scott, op. cit., p. 201.
³Ibid.
principles, but also his insistence on their practical character, and his doctrinal opposition to the Antinomian spirit (which too frequently accompanied the careful adherence to Calvinistic doctrine) place him in the ranks of the truest prophets of his day.

Because of his small income and heavy family responsibilities, Scott was obliged to have additional resources in order to stay out of debt. Therefore, in October of 1782 he gladly rented the first floor of the vicarage to Lady Austen. Lady Austen's purpose in staying with Scott was to be near William Cowper and Mrs. Unwin who lived next door. A doorway was made in the garden wall so that the three friends became as one family, dining alternately in Mary Unwin's house and in Lady Austen's rooms. It was in Scott's vicarage that Lady Austen suggested Cowper's celebrated poem The Task. In the same rooms she also told the story of John Gilpin which Cowper afterwards turned into verse. But the friendship between the ladies cooled and, to Scott's financial regret, Lady Austen left his home in the summer months of 1784.

The relationship between Cowper and Scott was friendly but not intimate. Like many others in Olney, Cowper probably found it difficult to adjust to the sharp contrast between the gentle Newton and his plain-spoken successor. The relationship has been described in the following manner:

"His [Cowper's] long and intimate association with Newton did not predispose him to regard Thomas Scott favourably; and, while the two men sometimes met on amicable terms, the poet never greatly liked the future author of the Commentary. Scott, indeed, whose life
from the humblest origin to his position as Look preacher in London, and his international success as a theological writer, makes a remarkable record of courage and determination, does not seem, when Cowper knew him, to have been a very attractive character."

Cowper's own words would tend to confirm this description. "Mr. Scott," he wrote to Newton, "would be admired were he not so apt to be angry with his congregation... Warmth of temper, indulged to a degree that may be called scolding, defeats the end of preaching... But he is a good man, and may perhaps outgrow it."² Remembering Scott's natural bent to ill temper, the harshness suffered in his early years, and his severe zeal, such criticism at this time was no doubt partially valid. Nevertheless, Scott properly defended himself when he retorts: "Mr. Cowper, it should be known, never heard me preach: neither did Mrs. Unwin; nor their more respected friends. Mr. C's information concerning my preaching was derived from the very persons, whose doctrinal and practical antinomianism I steadily confronted."³ Although we cannot detect any influence that the one may have had on the other, it is interesting to reflect on the brief contact between the renowned Evangelical poet and the famous Evangelical commentator.

Another more congenial relationship with a far-reaching

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offset did occur while Scott was at Olney. During this period of his ministry he carried on a great amount of itinerant preaching.\(^1\) One of his hearers on several occasions was William Carey who later became the illustrious Baptist missionary. While Carey was still a shoemaker at a place called Hackleton, Scott frequently prayed and talked with him, and endeavored to answer his penetrating questions.\(^2\)

Nearly forty years later, in the twilight of his life, Scott learned of his usefulness to Carey. The great missionary pioneer wrote of him to a mutual friend in these stirring words, "If there be anything of the work of God in my soul, I owe much of it to his [Scott's] preaching, when I first set out in the ways of the Lord."\(^3\) To be so useful to such a man as William Carey was a gratifying privilege. One might well say that Thomas Scott was a spiritual father to the father of the Modern Missionary Movement.

At Olney, Scott published a Thanksgiving Sermon which he had preached in July 1754 in commemoration of the close of the American War. Then, nine months later, he issued a Discourse on Repentance. Although he felt that this latter work was more valuable than The Force of Truth, he had little success with its circulation. At first he could hardly dispose

\(^1\) For a full statement of Scott's view of itinerant preaching see his "Observations on II Chronicles 18:7-9." Thomas Scott, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Vol. II.

\(^2\) John Scott, op. cit., p. 173.

\(^3\) "Letter written by William Carey to Dr. Ryland of Bristol," dated February 15, 1921, Ibid.
of an impression of only seven hundred and fifty copies. A similar disappointment with The Force of Truth caused him to complain: "so discouraging a beginning had my labors from the press." Later, both of these works were to pass through many editions.

The Discourse on Repentance is, observed the Monthly Review, one of those useful tracts which apply important truths to the heart, in a plain and affectionate manner. The treatise exhibits several points that are characteristic of the author's views of the Christian religion. He insists strongly on the inexorable obligation of the divine law—its equity as well as its purity; and he emphasizes the inexcusable weakness of man's transgression of God's law in spite of the 'fallen state' of human nature. Carefully he indicates the connection of repentance with faith, with the forgiveness of sins, and with every part of true religion. Then a decisive distinction is made between true and false repentance. A holy life actively manifest in good works, declares Scott, is conclusive evidence of true repentance. For though men be abundant in shedding tears and in making the most humiliating confessions, though they be zealous in promotions of religious faith, though men have orthodox opinions, "yet, except they 'do works meet for repentance,' all the rest is nothing, they

1Ibid., p. 173.

are still in their sins." In all his writings the author continued to connect, categorically, doctrine and duty. Fortunately, however, his succeeding works are somewhat relieved of the excessive haranguing about God’s awful judgment and punishment.

After almost five years, Scott’s labors in Olney drew to a close. He left with the feeling that his ministry had accomplished very little. And yet, besides the evidence of his unusual usefulness which has been noted, he was able to observe years later that "The effect of my ministry in the vicinity of Olney appears much more evidently than when I left that situation. . . ."²

London Ministry

In September 1796, he received an invitation to consider a vacancy at Lock Hospital³ in Grosvenor Place, London. The Board of Governors wished to appoint a morning preacher and a visiting chaplain to the patients. From what they had heard of "Scott they felt that he would be well-suited for the work. Although the surprised candidate doubted that he was properly

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¹Thomas Scott, A Discourse on Repentance, in Works, I, 181-182.
²John Scott, op. cit., p. 217.
³The hospital was a place of treatment for social diseases. The name "Lock" was borrowed from its customary use for leper asylums. Walford says that the name may have been derived from the old French word loques, 'rags'—referring to the linen rags applied to the sores, but with more probability it comes . . . from the Saxon lag or leg, equivalent to 'shut' or 'closed' in reference to the isolated condition of the leper." Edward Walford, Old and New London (New ed.; London: Cassell & Co., n.d.), V, 215.
equipped for such a position, he agreed to preach for them. Delivering two sermons in his usual homely, plain-spoken style, Scott returned home to Olney without even making any application for the position. But when the election took place he was unanimously chosen by the Board. Scott was only too conscious that he did not possess the attractive manner nor the eloquence to which the Lock has been accustomed. But stirred by the needs of the poor miserable patients, he decided to accept the post. "The Governors," reflects a subsequent member of the Board, "are to be congratulated on having found such a good man and zealous worker."  

The decision was, in many ways, a regrettable one for Thomas Scott. He soon discovered that disfranchising difficulties and trials awaited him. The Hospital Board was split into parties with the chapel itself being the very center of the division. Moreover, wealthy, titled men comprised the Board but they had little concern for the chaplain's material well-being. At the same time they were inclined to judge the preacher by the money returns from the pew-rents.

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1Rev. Martin Madan, a popular and eloquent preacher, had successfully served Lock for more than twenty years. Due to a literary venture entitled Thalypthera, in which he advanced some rather unorthodox views of marriage, he was forced to retire from public ministrations.

2A Short History of the London Lock Hospital and Reseue Home (1746-1906), p. 11. This history was compiled by an un-named member of the Board of Lock Hospital, and is based upon the Records of the Hospital and Minute Books of the Board of Governors which existed from the foundation (1746) to the year 1906. No printer or date of publication is given.

3The record of Scott's financial burdens and sufferings at the hand of the Lock Board are amply pointed out by
Scott was appointed to preach at the morning services, and the Rev. Do Cootlogon at the evening, while the weekday lectures on Wednesday evening were to be shared by both men. In 1790, following the death of Mr. Madan, Scott and Do Cootlogon were appointed as joint-chaplains. Then twelve years later, when it was decided to consolidate the two chaplains into one, Scott became the sole chaplain.

The Lock Chapel was permeated with that 'loose religion' of high doctrine and low living which Scott felt himself especially bound to oppose. Many of the congregation, he wrote, held to that superficial, notional, and erroneous religion which had become so fashionable in London at that time. Because he set himself against this misrepresentation of true Christianity with all the force of his rugged character and massive intellect, he soon came into open conflict with the Board as well as with his colleague, Mr. Do Cootlogon. The Board went so far as to attempt to dictate to Scott as to his preaching. But he met his employers with


1Services were conducted twice on Sundays "when all the patients who were able to leave their wards are required to be present; and though they are placed out of sight they have every advantage of hearing." A. Richmore, *Ristae Londinensis: The History, Design, and Present State of the Various Public Charities in and Near London* (London: Richard Phillips, 1810), p. 194.

2A Short History of the London Lock Hospital and Rescue Home, p. 17.

a reply that is "on record as an immortal memento of true faithfulness." He said,

"Gentlemen, you possess authority sufficient to change me for another preacher whenever you please, but you have no power to change me into another preacher. If you do not convince my understanding that I am in error, you can never induce me to alter my method of preaching."  

This stand cost Scott many years of unpopularity and obscurity; but his high principle and his lack of compromise were major factors in saving the Evangelical part of the Church from sinking into a useless, uninfluential insignificance. It has been claimed, too, that in Scott's unflinching contention that doctrine must produce holy living, there is found the beginnings of that spirit that led to movements for the Deepening of Spiritual Life and the promotion of Practical Holiness which have taken shape in Parochial Missions, the Keswick and other conventions.

Most of the opposition to Scott's preaching came from an incomplete or a perverted understanding of doctrine, particularly of the Calvinistic system. Therefore, he decided to preach a sermon that would demonstrate the consistency of Calvinistic views with the inculcation of true holiness. This was the origin of his widely circulated sermon on Election and

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2 John Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

3 A. C. Downer, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Final Perseverence. It was immediately printed and a thousand copies sold in three days. As a result of the discourse, some of the misrepresentations of Calvinism were silenced and a wholesome spirit of inquiry was engendered.

"During this time," writes Scott, "almost my whole comfort, as a minister, arose from my labours in the hospital, which, with all the disquieting circumstances of the service, were far more pleasing and encouraging to me than preaching in the chapel." He was the first clergyman to perform the unpleasant task of personal ministry to those who were suffering from loathsome, social diseases. A great compassion for these poor people led to the foundation of an asylum for the rehabilitation of female patients who desired to return to a better life. Scott realized that something had to be done if the women were to be reclaimed for society as well as redeemed from evil. When discharged from the hospital they had little alternative under the present facilities but to return to their former life of the street. To arouse a concern for an asylum, he wrote a pamphlet entitled, On the Fatal Consequence of Female Prostitution. He pleaded that a compassion for the unfortunate women; a concern for both their temporal and eternal welfare; a love for society, associates and relatives; and a regard for the interests of religion and morality should prompt the establishment of such an institution. At length several

1John Scott, op. cit., p. 239.

2Thomas Scott, Thoughts on the Fatal Consequences of Female Prostitution with the Outline of a Plan to Check Those Horrourous Evils, in Yorks, VI, 203.
of the Governors of the Board became interested in the scheme 
so that an asylum was formed on a very small scale. The in-
stitution had to weather many storms, but finally it won its 
way. Besides being the founder of the Asylum, Scott became 
its chaplain and for several years acted as its chief adminis-
trator.

Lock Rescue Home (as the asylum came to be called) appears 
to have been the first of its kind and it seems to have sug-
gested similar asylums which were later founded in cities like 
Dublin, Bristol, and Hull.¹ Both Lock Hospital and Lock Res-
cue Home have now been closed² but this work at the Lock 
offers a striking example of Thomas Scott's energy, foresight 
and profound concern for human needs.

To supplement his meager salary, Scott held one of the 
lectureships which were then a feature of church life in 
London and which were served by many Evangelicals.³ His 
lectureship was in the afternoon at St. Mildred's, Broad 
Street; the audience was small, but very attentive. For 
some years he also had the lecture at St. Margaret's, Loth-
bury where he preached every alternate Sunday at six o'clock 
in the morning.

¹Ibid., p. 240.

²The Hospital and Rescue House were closed on October 31, 
1952 by the Ministry of Health because the demand for "in-
patient" accommodations dropped; new drugs, especially peni-
cillin, have made "out-patient" treatment more feasible and 
economical. (Information learned in conversation with Mr. 
John P. Norton, who served as Secretary to the Board of Manage-
ment of London Lock Hospital from 1930 until 1948 when the 
Board was dissolved.

³J. H. Overton and F. Welton, op. cit., p. 156.
These lectureships, in addition to his regular church duties, made Sunday an exceedingly full day. In a letter written by a lady "of highly respectable station and connection in life," who frequently stayed with the Scotts in London, there is an illuminating description of Scott's Sunday labors. She writes:

"At four o'clock in the morning of every alternate Sunday, winter as well as summer, the watchman gave one heavy knock at the door, and Mr. S. and an old maid-servant arose, for he could not go out without his breakfast. He then set forth to meet a congregation at a church in Lothbury about three miles and a half off; I rather think the only church in London attended so early as six o'clock in the morning. I think he had from two to three hundred auditors, and administered the sacrament each time.

... From the city he returned home, and about ten o'clock assembled his family to prayers, immediately after which he proceeded to the chapel, where he performed the whole service, with the administration of the sacrament in the alternate Sundays, when he did not go to Lothbury. ... I have calculated that he could not go much less than fourteen miles in the day frequently the whole of it on foot, besides the three services, and at times a fourth sermon at Longacre Church, or elsewhere, on his way home in the evening; and then he concluded the whole with family prayer, and that not a very short one."2

His preaching did not attract large numbers, but Scott was effectively used to instruct a select few while he ministered in London. William Wilberforce was among them. In the winter of 1785, Newton told his young friend Wilberforce that a minister of very superior understanding and eminent piety was about to move to London. After hearing Scott, Wilberforce remarks:

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1John Scott, op. cit., p. 223.

2Ibid., pp. 229-230.
"I soon found that he fully equalled the strongest expectations that I had formed of him and from that time, for many years, I attended him regularly, for the most part accompanied by ... the Hon. Henry Thornton. We used to hear him in the morning; Mr. Thornton and I often gladly following him for the afternoon service into the city, where he had the lectureship of Bread Street Church."1

A few of the entries which Wilberforce made in his diary indicate his appreciation for these sermons. "Jan. 1, 1790: Lock-Scott ... Most impressed with serious things"; again he records: "February 13, 1791: Scott—an excellent sermon—very serious thoughts."2 Nor did Wilberforce ever forget the impact of these messages. Many years later he writes of Scott’s preaching:

"All objections arising from an unfavourable manner were at once overruled by the strong sense, the extensive acquaintance with scripture, the accurate knowledge of the human heart, and the vehemence and powerful appeals to the conscience with which all his sermons abounded in a greater degree than those of any other minister I ever attended."3

And Wilberforce held this high regard for Scott the man, as well as for Scott the preacher. He speaks of the Commentator in these glowing terms: "Mr. Scott is a man of whose strength of understanding, correctness of religious views, integrity, disinterestedness, diligence, and perseverance, I think very highly."4 Then, just after Scott’s death, Wilberforce extols

1 "Letter written by William Wilberforce to John Scott," dated Marden Park, 16 April, 1822, ibid., pp. 616-617.


4 Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, op. cit., II, 398.
him in these words: "What a truly great man old Scott was . . . I always valued him, but now that his character is viewed more distinctly, he really appears to have been a Christian here!"¹ Finally he adds, "He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile."² All the besetting difficulties of Scott's London ministry could find compensation in his being able to exert such an influence on one of the most outstanding laymen in the history of the Christian Church.

Scott's influence upon select men of God did not stop here. Upon moving to London, his friendship with John Newton had been quickly renewed. Newton does not hesitate, at this time, to call Scott "perhaps the most ready and fluent extemporaneous preacher amongst us."³ The refined Richard Cecil became a close associate, being a never-failing source of comfort to Scott in the discouraging trials at the Lock. Henry Venn had met Scott while he was at Olney. Just prior to Scott's departure for London, Venn, in a letter to his daughter, reveals his high regard for his colleague:

"No sooner was I come to Orlingbury than Mr. and Mrs. Scott from Olney . . . came in, and very glad we were to meet. He is a man of right spirit, always about his master's business; and has a tongue given him, which is a 'well of life,' always ministering grace to the hearers."⁴

¹Ibid., V, 132.
²Ibid.
³Josiah Bull, op. cit., p. 333.
Through Henry Venn, Scott came to know Charles Simeon who later welcomed him to the pulpit of his famous Trinity Church in Cambridge. Daniel Wilson, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, was one of Scott's hearers at the Look. Preaching Scott's funeral sermon, he recalls his indebtedness to that ministry:

"I myself was, five or six and twenty years ago, one of his very small congregation at his lecture in the city; and I derived, as I trust, from the sound and practical instruction which I then received, the greatest and most permanent benefit."2

The great missionary statesman, in his later years, said that Thomas Scott and Josiah Pratt were among the two that had done more than all others to establish his mind in the study of theology and to build his character on the pattern of Holy Scriptures. Hannah More, Lord and Lady Dartmouth, and the distinguished naval officer Admiral Lord Gambier4 were also among the attenders at the Look. Scott won the respect of

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1 In his youth Charles Bridges heard Thomas Scott preach at Cambridge. A sentence of Scott's--"It is too much honour to be an errand boy for Christ"--remained with him for many years. H. G. G. Holle, The Evangelical School in the Church of England (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1901), p. 16.


4 In 1807 Admiral Gambier commanded the naval squadron to which the Danish fleet (then under Bonaparte's control) surrendered, and in 1809 he was in command of the Channel fleet which defeated the French fleet that opposed it. He was also distinguished in the religious realm being appointed the first President of the Church Missionary Society in 1812. Eugene Stock, History of the Church Missionary Society (London: Church
the Christian philanthropist John Thornton and was instrumental in bringing his son, Henry Thornton, to the point of decision in his religious life. Just a year before his death, Henry Thornton wrote to Scott in these words of deference:

"Having in more early life been an attendant on your ministry, I cannot at this later period be forgetful of my obligations to you; and, though I may have assisted you in some degree in what may partly be called your carnal things . . . I still feel myself in the whole your debtor; since my advantages, like those, I trust, of many others, are not capable of being estimated at any pecuniary price."

It was while he was engaged in his preaching ministry in London that Scott began extensive labors as a theological writer. The great production of his life—by which he became internationally known—was his *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*. It developed from a series of notes on the books of the Bible which he was requested to write in 1737. Though it must be noted as a part of his life-work at this time, it will be reserved for fuller description in a succeeding chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that it was the *magnum opus* of his career, consuming his best energies for the remainder of his days.

Other principal publications of the Commentator in the course of his residence in London includes *A Treatise on Growth in Grace*. First preached as a sermon on a visit to Cincy in 1787, it was printed and repeatedly published. In


what does "progress in the divine life consist"\(^1\) is the question the author strives to answer. To achieve his purpose he exalts the love of God and traces its origin and development in the life of the believer. "Love is the first principal or main spring of a believer's conduct,"\(^2\) but love, cautions Scott, cannot be its own regulator. Therefore, God's law must serve as the rule by which love is directed, for "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3).\(^3\) He concludes with an extremely practical particularization of the evidences of genuine growth in grace.

Near the close of 1792, *An Impartial Statement of the Scriptural Doctrine in Respect of Civil Government* appeared; the Rights of God, a title suggested by the eager discussions then carried on concerning the 'rights of man,' was printed in 1793; and *A Vindication of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, which was an answer to Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, was issued in 1796. These three publications were all directed against the infidel and anarchical principles so prevalent at that time. In *An Impartial Statement of the Scriptural Doctrine in Respect of Civil Government* the author moderately and simply contends that the worst form of government is preferable to entire anarchy. He asserts that subjects are bound to obey not only equitable laws but all laws, for

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 235.

\(^3\) Ibid.
if we do otherwise society would be "like an inverted pyramid: constituting all the inferior relations, lawgivers, and judges over their superiors, who must previously inquire of every individual what commands he would choose to obey!"

The command to honor the king he finds as express as that to honor father and mother: "It is our indispensable duty to honour our rulers, and to behave with respect and deference towards them."2

The Rights of God was perhaps unfortunately titled and the work attracted less attention than any other of its author, although in point of style, it is probably one of his best written publications. Moreover, it is unique among his writings because of the relative absence of Scriptural references. He pleads the case for Christianity not by citing Scriptural proofs, but by defending revelation against the charge of being so unreasonable as to be rejected without listening to its evidence. The thesis of the defence is that whether we contemplate the glorious perfection of the infinite and eternal God; or whether we consider what He has done for His creatures— and continues to do for them; we must be convinced that He has "an inalienable right to universal dominion, worship, love and obedience; and that 'His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.'"3


2 Ibid., p. 295.

There are two major parts to the Vindication of the Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture. In the first the author follows Paine's objections to the Scriptures through several portions of the Old and New Testaments, endeavoring to answer each criticism which he feels merits notice. Such subjects as the Genesis account of Creation, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, chronology, and the apparent acts of injustice committed in the name of God, receive particular attention. Scott maintains, with regard to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, that the books would be authoritative even if it were known that Moses did not write them. But he is far from conceding that Moses did not write them, consequently, he attempts to give reasons for believing both that Moses wrote the books and that he wrote them under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit. An example of the way in which Scott exposes some of Paine's superficial objections to Scripture is seen in his observations on the books of Kings and Chronicles. Paine had asserted that the genealogy from Adam to Saul takes up the first nine chapters of Chronicles. Actually, says Scott, the descendants of David to four generations after Jerubbabel are found in the third chapter; and the succession of the high priests till the captivity are recorded in the sixth chapter—besides other matters of the same

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Also Paine considered the books of Chronicles as a mere repetition of the books of Kings. Again, declares the Commentator, the critic is in error. For the second book of Chronicles contains the history of Judah only, and of the kings that succeeded David until the captivity; and it gives a more copious and methodical account of them than is found in the books of Kings. The books of Kings, from the division of the nation into two kingdoms, resemble a history of England and Scotland carried on together, with continual transition from one to the other. Whereas, continues Scott, the book of Second Chronicles is like the history of England alone, in which the affairs of Scotland are only mentioned, when they are connected with those of England. How then can we expect the two accounts to be in precise agreement, asks Scott, and "what then shall we think of a man, who charges two historians with being impostors and liars, because they do not exactly relate the same events?"

The latter part of the Vindication treats more generally of the controversial subjects of Revelation, Miracles, Mysteries, Prophecy, the Canon of Scripture and Deism. On the subject of miracles Scott reasons most carefully and shows that Paine has mistaken the meaning of the word. "No one thing," Paine said, "is a greater miracle than another. The elephant

2 Ibid., pp. 143-144.
3 Ibid., p. 144.
though larger, is not a greater miracle than a mite, nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. ¹ Scott counters that this is beside the point, for these things fail to constitute a proper miracle. A miracle in the Scriptural sense is "a deviation from the ordinary course of nature, or of second causes, effected for wise and holy purposes, by the omnipotence of the Creator, the First Great Cause of all."² Some of Scott's other arguments are, however, less incisive. He attempts too much when he contends for the minute inspiration of all the historical parts of Scripture. His firm declaration that the Song of Solomon is a very useful part of the Word of God, and that Christ made His quotations from the Septuagint are unfortunate assertions to make in defence of the Biblical record. A summary of his 'vindication' concludes the Commentator's reply to the Age of Reason. All of his considerations, that is, the evidence of man's need of a revelation and the reasonableness of expecting one; the incontestable miracles by which both the Old and New Testaments were introduced; the prophecies contained in the Scriptures, and their fulfillments; the suitableness of Christianity to our wants and the answers it provides to our most perplexing questions; its obvious tendency and actual effects; the sublimity of its truth and the beauty of its precepts; its

¹Thomas Raine, op. cit., Part I, p. 56.
existence after so many ages, though assaulted from without and disgraced from within; and the remarkable agreement of our present copies of the Scriptures with ancient versions; all of these things taken together, declares Scott, demonstrate that the Bible is the Word of God.1

Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion were issued in the years 1793, 1794; Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress with Original Notes in 1794, 1795; twenty-one Sermons on Select Subjects with some prayers for families annexed to them in 1796; The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ in 1797; and Four Sermons on Repentance unto Life in 1802.

The author's design in each of these works is to explain the great truths of the Christian religion and to indicate their practical relation to daily living. All of the discourses have been frequently reprinted, especially the Essays which have been republished eight or nine times in England as well as in America. They are, claims the author, "a compendious system of the Christian religion," according to his view of it.2 Daniel Wilson describes them as "incomparable for the plain exposition of truth"; 3 Henry Martyn, the missionary educator, has made the following remark about them: "Began Scott's Essays, and was surprised indeed at the originality and vigour of the sentiments and language."4

1Ibid., pp. 274-275.
4Henry Martyn, "Journal Entry for April 26, 1807," in
well as Notes on Pilgrim's Progress were first published in separate numbers. One of the Essays, "On the Ten Commandments," was on the list of the Religious Tract Society receiving a wide circulation through that channel.

The Notes on Pilgrim's Progress are vivid illustrations of the various scenes and characters contained in the immortal allegory. There is a brief key given to the outline of the story and then a delineation of the views of Christianity that Scott believed Bunyan wished to express. Since the Commentator appears to be in essential agreement with Bunyan, there is ample opportunity for him to unfold many of the religious views which he himself always maintained.

Published at the insistence of William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, the volume of Sermons on Select Subjects had as its specific purpose "To show the absolute necessity of evangelical principles in order to holy practice." The sermons are lengthy, for Scott always preached a full hour. His sermon style is heavy and homely, yet vigorous, for like Anthony "he spoke right on—a plain blunt man." A cautious, logical development gives the impression of a carefully reasoned theological argument. Unlike many sermon outlines of the Eighteenth Century, Scott's usually do not appear in an involved form; three or four major headings constitute the basic structure. His procedure is in harmony with Clement Roger's


1 Thomas Scott, Sermons on Select Subjects (2nd ed.; Buckingham: Printed by J. Seeley, n.d.), p. 611; Works, IV, 82.
admonition that "The whole sermon outline should have order, one thing should lead to another, while all should be in the line that leads to the point." The content is saturated with Scripture and with strong appeals to the moral conscience. There is always a full consideration of the text, then illustrations of the textual truth as it is found in other parts of Scripture or in human experience, and finally there is an explicit indication of how the truth may be applied to the practicalities of life. Scott's own account of his preaching accurately depicts the method he used to reach the minds and hearts of his hearers. He declares:

"The truth of the matter is, upon mature deliberation I am convinced that the preaching of the present day is not practical enough, or sufficiently distinguishing between true and false experience. I therefore speak more fully than most do of the moral character of the Deity: of the excellency, glory, and loveliness of that character as described in the word of God. From this I deduce the reasonableness and excellency of the holy law of God, which I endeavour fully to open in its extensive requirements. Thence follows man's obligation to love God, both on account of his infinite loveliness, and of our natural relations and obligations to him. Then I demonstrate the evil of sin, as acastancy from this lovely and glorious God and being, and transgression of his perfect law. Thence I show the justice of God in the infinite, the eternal punishment of sinners; . . . Thus I suppose I dig deep to lay the foundation for the gospel of free grace; the necessity, nature, and glory of the vicarious obedience and sufferings of Emanuel; the sufficiency of his one sacrifice; and his ability and willingness to save to the uttermost all that come. Thence I show that all who will may come, ought to come, and that all sin atrociously in not coming; that, however, it is in no natural man's heart to come; because each man is proud, selfish, worldly and carnal: therefore without excuse. But a God of sovereign grace, having mercy on whom he will, according to his own

purpose makes some willing, by regeneration. This 
changes the prevailing bond of the heart, and hence-
forth the man is not only humbly willing to be justi-
fied by faith, and saved by grace, but hates and 
repents of sin, loves God's law, loves holiness, and 
leads a holy life, sincerely, progressively, though 
imperfectly,—daily receiving from Christ grace so to 
do: and that all experience which has not this effect 
is false. 1

This is a portrait of Scott the preacher. And, to an extent, 
it also serves as an introduction to Scott the theologian, for 
these convictions formed the basis of his theological system. 

The treatise, Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ, was 
written in order to clarify the Scriptural view of saving 
faith. Some rigid Calvinists, strongly emphasizing the 
doctrines of Election and Predestination, were disputing over 
the question of whether or not it is the duty of a sinner to 
believe in Christ, or to obey the invitation of God's Word; 
and consequently, whether or not the sinner should be exhorted 
to any such obedience. 2 If God, they claimed, has ordained 
that only the Elect be saved, then only the Elect ought to be 
invited to receive salvation and only the Elect could be 
expected to respond to God's Word. Indeed, the Elect, in 
their view, were provided with an inherent warrant to believe; 
others simply had no qualification—no warrant—to seek or to 
expect salvation. With this opinion in mind, the first part 
of Scott's work consists in showing that it is the "duty of 
all, who hear the gospel, to believe in Christ..." 3

1Letter to the Rev. G. More," April 14, 1704, John Scott, 
cit., pp. 208-209.
2Thomas Scott, The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ, 
in Works, I, 403.
3Ibid., p. 424.
and that "no man wants any further warrant for his faith, than the Lord's own word; his testimony, invitation, and command, and his promise 'in no wise to cast out any one who comes to him.'"\(^1\) Scott insists that there are no personal qualifications or qualities or dispositions requisite to making obedient application to the Savior. All, he continues, have an equal warrant to believe in Christ and expect salvation from Him. Those who do not respond when they hear the Gospel have as good a warrant as they that do; but they merely fail to avail themselves of it.\(^2\) To substantiate his position, the author examines many of the invitations of Scriptures which are unequivocally universal in scope and in intention. He points out also that to refrain from extending a free and general offer of salvation only serves to quiet the conscience of the prejudiced unbeliever, and to throw "impediments in the way of discouraged souls."\(^3\) Furthermore, Scott suggests, it encourages a self-preference inconsistent with the pure Gospel of Christ.

The second part of the *Warrant and Nature of Faith* is a discussion of the essentially holy nature of saving faith, although a treatment of this kind appears rather superfluous, there seemed to be a need for it. A number of people contended that any human exertion in the matter of faith was merely a presumptuous effort that interfered with the work of God's grace. Stressing the imputed righteousness of Christ,

\(^1\)Ibid.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 413.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 414.
justification through the free grace of God, and the absolute sinfulness of man, they denied that there was any place for man's groping, faltering steps toward an acceptance of God's peace. Salvation, they declared, is the gift of God and man is merely its passive recipient. Exploiting the Scripture text "Now to him that worketh not but believing on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5), they asserted that the presence of human efforts (i.e., cries of repentance, attempts to do good, etc.) particularly in the early stages of faith, was evidence of self-righteousness and such a 'faith' was, therefore, unholy.\(^1\) Scott disagreed with this opinion. He believed that this view overlooked many portions of Scripture and gave encouragement to an inert reliance upon God and an indolent expectation of salvation.\(^2\) In the development of his argument, Scott directs attention to Scriptural exhortations that admonish one to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling" and to "give diligence to make his calling and election sure."\(^3\) He then outlines what he perceives to be the Scriptural doctrine of faith wherein both the divine and human elements are preserved in proper balance. The key to his

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 444.


\(^3\) Thomas Scott, Warrant and Nature of Faith, in Works, I, 445.
scheme is a decisive distinction between *justification* and *sanctification* and, in the present argument, the more particular distinction between *regeneration* and *conversion*. Justification, he hastens to affirm, is all of God; "From first to last we must be justified by mere grace and mercy . . . ."¹ At the same time there is that process of renovation called sanctification in which we grow in holiness and likeness to God. Then, within the context of this distinction, says Scott, there must be a recognition of the sequence of events involved in the process of saving faith. First, he declares, faith must be regarded not as the cause but as the effect of regeneration for "the first effect of the Lord's special love to those who are dead in sin, and slaves to divers lusts, consists in quickening and regenerating them; and they are regenerated that they may be justified, by being made capable of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ."² Scott cautions his readers to mark this well for this postulate makes faith dependent upon the initial action of God's grace and not upon human merit. "We become alive to God not by our apprehending Christ but by his apprehending us."³ Then follows what the author calls a subtle but significant distinction between regeneration and conversion. "We are passive in receiving divine life . . . but we are active in turning to the Lord by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The former is

¹Ibid., p. 444.
²Ibid., p. 463.
³Ibid., p. 473.
regeneration, the latter conversion . . .

Thus regeneration precedes both faith and conversion as the cause and source of them in the same way that life precedes all kinds of vital motion. Upon the basis of this argument, Scott declares that faith is always holy for it is ever dependent upon God's initial work of regeneration. Faith "even in its feeblest form, its first trembling application to Christ--while the sinner cries with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief' . . . has this holy nature. . ." Immediately following conversion there begins the necessary process of sanctification wherein good works give evidence of a living faith. According to Scott, the divine and human elements involved in saving faith are hereby interrelated as the Scriptures intend them to be and the holy nature of faith is sufficiently substantiated as God designed it to be. He concludes that "according to the word of God, saving faith is always the effect of regeneration, and consequently . . . it is holy in its nature, as well as in its fruits."

In 1793, several clergymen in the metropolis, concerned about the serious difficulties with which the nation was faced, agreed together to preach weekly lectures on the matter. The year following, Scott drew up at their request and published with their approval Observations on the Signs and

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1Ibid., p. 464.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., p. 507.
4Ibid., p. 493.
Duties of the Present Times. The pamphlet embodies an earnest appeal to recognize the ills of the nation to be the result of personal negligence: "national guilt is the aggregate of the sins committed by the several individuals who constitute the nation." 1 Every Christian is encouraged to renew his personal repentance while he prayerfully pleads to God in behalf of the guilty land. 2 The lectures were continued until 1802 when the peace of Amiens was signed. Scott then concluded the series of lectures by preaching and printing a sermon of thanksgiving on the text "Because he both inclined his ear unto me, therefore, will I call upon him as long as I live" (Psalm 116:2). To the common objection that peace will not be permanent, Scott replies: "if God hath, after a tremendous storm, brought us to a commodious anchorage, in answer to our prayers, let us trust him that, in answer to our future prayers, he will prevent further storms or carry us safely through them." 3 Besides these, the Commentator published fast sermons in 1793 and 1794, and a thanksgiving sermon in 1793.

In addition to his frequent preaching and extensive writing, Scott was an eminent pioneer in two great enterprises of the Christian Church while he was in London. He was involved, first, in the events which led to the founding of

1 Thomas Scott, Observations on the Signs and Duties of the Times, in Works, V, 523.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 522.
the British and Foreign Bible Society. The first historian of the society writes:

"The primary occasion of all these measures, out of which grew the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society was the scarcity of Welsh Bibles in the Principality, and the impracticability of obtaining adequate supplies from the only source existing at that period."  

His history consequently begins with a correspondence in the year 1787, "between a clergyman in London, and a brother clergyman in Wales." which first brought the existing scarcity into notice in England. The London clergyman was Thomas Scott. He had visited a friend who had told him that he could provide a few Welsh Bibles if they would be of use to him. In turn Scott wrote to request another friend in Wales to explore the situation. He received the reply that no reasonably priced Bibles could be purchased "unless some poor person, pinched by poverty, is obliged to sell his Bible to support himself and his family." With characteristic vigor, Scott set to work to meet the need. He wrote back on May 15:

"In consequence of what you write concerning the scarcity of Welsh Bibles, I have received twenty-five from the society for distributing Bibles among the soldiers and sailors. Besides this I am collecting money to send you a hundred."  

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2 Ibid., p. 3; cf. William Canton, op. cit., I, 6-7.  
4 "Letter written by Scott to a Welsh friend," dated May 15, 1787. Ibid., pp. 263-264.
Those were sent as promised; later he intended to collect another thousand copies and send them. But his plans were thwarted when he could obtain only 500 Bibles at a much higher price than he could arrange to pay. It soon became apparent that there were no more to be obtained because the S.P.C.K. had not issued a single copy of the Welsh Bible for thirty years. Scott's letters tell how at length the S.P.C.K. agreed to bring out a reprint of the Welsh Bible so that a limited edition of ten thousand Bibles and two thousand New Testaments was printed in 1799. Of this edition, Scott appears to have procured eight or nine hundred copies of the whole Bible. But in May 1800 he concludes his correspondence with the remark that "The demand has already so far exceeded the impression, that each person is put off with fewer than he applied for." Because the S.P.C.K. felt they could do no more, Charles of Sala appealed to the Religious Tract Society in London. It was out of this appeal, in 1804, that the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed. Scott, who had already moved from London, rejoiced to hear of its progress. Speaking for the Bible Society at a county meeting in 1816, he expressed feelings that accurately characterize his life and work:

"While, then, the Bible is our own invaluable treasure, the source of all our knowledge, hope and comfort, let us do what we can to communicate the precious treasure to others also, all over the world . . . . Time was, since I can remember, when, if I had possessed the means in other respects, I should hardly have known how to reach out the blessing beyond my own contracted circle. But this society, and others of a similar nature, so to speak, lengthen my arms; and

1 Ibid., p. 268; John Owen, op. cit., I, 11.
by concurring heartily in the designs of those who conduct them, we may stretch out our hands to the inhabitants of the east and of the west—of Africa, of Asia, of America, as well as of Europe—and give to them the light of life.”

The Commentator’s deep concern for the entire world is most evident in the prominent place which he occupied in the establishment of the Church Missionary Society. In a sermon preached before the London Missionary Society in 1804, he attributes his interest in the missionary enterprise to his early acquaintance with the works of Edwards, Brainerd and the New England Divines. His interest was actively displayed at a meeting of the Eclectic Society of which he was a member. On February 8, 1796, Charles Simeon proposed the question to the Eclectic as to how a Mission from the Established Church could be attempted. Seventeen members of the Society were present and ten took part in the discussion. The majority would merely recommend that young men be educated for this purpose. Only two or three seemed to think more should be attempted. Scott was a member of the minority; he remarked that to take a more positive step would “set things stirring—set up a spirit of prayer.”

1John Scott, op. cit., p. 387.

2The Eclectic Society was a club, founded in 1783, to which almost all the London Evangelical clergy belonged, as well as two or three Evangelical laymen, including John Bacon the sculptor, and two evangelically-minded dissenting ministers. They met once a fortnight in Richard Cecil’s vestry to drink tea and discuss ministerial and doctrinal questions. G. R. Balleine, op. cit., p. 146. See also Josiah Pratt’s Eclectic Notes, ed. by John H. Pratt (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1865).

meeting proved to be the origin of the Church Missionary Society. Three years later, when the same question again came before the Eclectic, it was decided to call a special meeting to give it full consideration. At this meeting, on March 13, 1799, John Venn proposed the motion: "What methods can we use most effectively to promote the knowledge of the Gospel to the Heathen?" Scott urged that more should be done than had yet been attempted. With Venn, Charles Simeon, and a few others, he recommended that a society should be formed within the Church of England that would be based upon Evangelical principles. As a result of these promptings, the Society for Missions to Africa and the East was instituted at a meeting on Friday, April 12, 1799. One of the twenty-four members of the founding committee was Thomas Scott, the Commentator. Three days later he was elected as the first secretary: "Resolved, that the Rev. Thomas Scott be requested to act as temporary secretary; with which request Mr. Scott, being present, readily complied." This office he held until his departure from London three and a half years later.

Humanly speaking, Scott and John Venn were responsible for the success with which this missionary enterprise emerged.

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1 Eugene Stock, op. cit., I, 62.
2 Josiah Pratt, op. cit., p. 96.
3 Committee Minutes of the Church Missionary Society (Unpublished, bound Mass. in Church Missionary Society Archives, April 15, 1779 (Vol. I, p. 4)).
4 Ibid., December 6, 1802 (Vol. I, p. 95).
from its early difficulties. It was Scott's courage and faith, claims one of the historians of the Society, that again and again carried the day when more timid advice nearly prevailed. Indeed, the very force and energy of his character was a distinctive element in the development of the newly-born enterprise. The first annual sermon before the Society was preached by Scott. And even after retiring to Aston Sandford he continued to labor for its cause, by preaching for it, by raising money for it and by personally training some of its first missionary candidates. In 1812, he was elected by the Society as one of its first honorary life governors. At the anniversary meeting of the Society in 1821, a few weeks after Scott's death, the Society expressed its debt of gratitude for his labors in the following words of homage:

"With that comprehensive knowledge of the heart and of scripture, which stamped on his sentiments an early maturity, that for almost half a century grew more mellow, but without withering or decay, he laid down for us those principles of action, stimulated us by those motives, encouraged us by those promises, and suggested those practical measures, the truth and wisdom of which are receiving fresh evidence every returning year."3

Final Ministry at Aston Sandford

After seventeen difficult but productive years, Thomas Scott left London. In July 1801, he accepted the living of

1 Charles Holo, Early History of the Church Missionary Society, p. 38.


3 Quoted in John Scott, op. cit., p. 317.
the small, country parish of Aston Sandford. Then, two years later, having built his own parsonage, he moved there for his final ministry. He had spent the years from 1772 to 1795 in the country and from 1795 to 1803 in the city; he was now to spend his last eighteen years, from 1803 to 1821, in the gentle privacy of a little Buckinghamshire village. Aston was very small with only two farmhouses, and a few laborers' cottages; but Scott came to have a remarkably useful ministry there. Although the roads were poor so that in bad weather they were impassable, there was generally a good congregation. Lipscomb declares that Scott

"... was so popular a preacher that in the summer months it was usual to pitch a tent in the churchyard, having one of the windows of the church opening into it, for the accommodation of great numbers of persons who habitually or occasionally resorted to hear him."  

The rural people loved his plain, countrified preaching which was so intelligible to them. Communicants came from all parts, growing so in number that he could count on a hundred who would meet at the Lord's Table. A group of serious,

1 Although the parsonage is now completely remodelled with many additions, there are still sections of the original structure standing. One of the rooms most intact is used by the present resident, Mr. McPherson, an International Banker, as a study. He is inclined to think that it may have been Scott's own study.

2 The Church was last refinished in 1952 and this window has been cemented over, but the general outline, which indicates that it extended almost to the ground, is still evident.

3 George Lipscomb, op. cit., I, 48.

4 Josiah Bateman, Life of Daniel Wilson, I, 158.
well-instructed Christians was established; schools were built; and societies for the relief of the sick and needy were formed. Altogether it was a happier, more satisfying parish than he had had since leaving Ravenstone.

With more leisure for study, the Commentator continued his literary endeavors. One of his grandsons, Sir George Gilbert Scott, the famous architect, recalls that "His amusement was gardening, but he was almost constantly at work in his study."¹ He poured over his Commentary in order to improve each new edition. On his last visit with Scott, Daniel Wilson remarked that the Commentator was very busy with his new edition of the Commentary on the Bible: "He has now finished the whole of the first volume, and parts of the second and third. He finishes four or five sheets a week . . ."² Untiring efforts enabled him to enrich each edition with more mature observations.

Besides the improvement and repeated publication of his Commentary, he thought out and printed several other works. All of the writings are distinguished by careful argument, independent insight, and a determined tone of Biblical truth. A collection of his Theological Works in five volumes was published in numbers between the years 1805 and 1808; his reply to Bishop Tomline's Refutation of Calvinism in 1812; an Answer to Rabbi Croell's Restoration of Israel in 1815;


²Josiah Bateman, op. cit., I, 153.
Letters on Ecclesiastical Establishments in the same year; and his History of the Synod of Dort in 1618.

The Answer to Bishop Tomline's Rebuttal of Calvinism was a contribution to the Calvinistic controversy which arose in the early part of the Nineteenth Century. Tomline's Rebuttal was an able, scholarly piece of work, but his bigoted antagonism toward Calvinism caused him to make numerous exaggerated misrepresentations. Such sweeping indictments as the claim that Calvinistic doctrine leads only to a self-assured, self-righteous attitude toward life, and that nothing Calvinistic can be found in the liturgy or articles of the Church, was more than Scott could bear. He felt that his whole system of theology and the central convictions of the Evangelical party were being erroneously undermined. Moreover, he contends that Tomline had not only unfairly attacked Calvinism, but in doing so, he had also abused truths which belong to "our common Christianity." Thus Scott's answer necessarily takes a broad approach, with particular emphasis on a few doctrines such as original sin, the free will of man, universal redemption, and election. Especially does Scott strive to show that the Calvinistic doctrines of original sin and total depravity are Scriptural. He defends these doctrines against Tomline's contention that they produce a hopeless despair in man for salvation.

2Thomas Scott, Remarks on the 'Rebuttal of Calvinism', in Works, VII, 2.
3George Tomline, A Rebuttal of Calvinism (London:
s Scott, do indicate that the disease of sin is in itself so desperate that recovery is hopeless except by the grace of Christ; but they "induce despair, not of salvation, but of any other salvation than that of the gospel." Tomline strongly advocated the free will of man and denied that Calvinism leaves any place for it. In reply Scott maintains that Calvinism does not destroy man's free agency but simply interprets it in the light of God's grace and man's true nature. Employing Calvin he demonstrates that Calvinism recognizes the place and power of free will: "We rank among the natural powers of man, approving, rejecting, willing; attempting, resisting. . ." He then finds support from both Calvin and Augustine for the preservation of man's free-will: "the agency of man is not destroyed by the influence of the Spirit, because the will which is guided to aspire to what is good belongs to his nature." But to avoid the idea that the natural man can help to achieve salvation and to avoid encouraging indolence, the true Calvinist, declares Scott, reconciles divine agency with man's in this way: "that to will is from nature, to will what is good is from grace."

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1 Thomas Scott, Remarks, in Works, VII, 29.

2 Ibid., p. 76.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.
The Commentator maintains that by such an interpretation God, in influencing the will, neither destroys it nor interferes with the exercise of it. 1 The minute particulars involved in the relationship between the work of God's grace and the exercise of man's free will are then discussed—is God's grace compulsory? what is the place of human exertion in the work of salvation? what is the ability or inability of man to keep God's law—are aspects which receive attention. The doctrines of regeneration and justification are carefully defended by Scott from an Evangelical and Calvinistic point of view. To counteract Bishop Tomline's accusation that the Calvinistic doctrine of justification excludes good works, Scott insists that "Faith alone justifies, as the eye alone sees, yet justifying faith is never alone in him who has it," for it produces good works. 2 In the last part of the Remarks there is an examination of Tomline's charge that the Evangelical clergy, especially those that maintain the doctrine of personal election, hold what is called particular redemption. Scott points out that in actual fact very few of the Calvinistic Evangelicals believe this doctrine; indeed, he thinks there is little practical difference between the view of Calvin himself and many of the Calvinistic opponents. Calvin says, in effect, that "redemption is sufficient for all, effectual only to the elect." 3 His opponents say it

1 Thomas Scott, Remarks, in Works, VII, 79.
2 Ibid., p. 596.
3 Ibid., VIII, 6; John Calvin, op. cit., Bk. III, Ch. xxiv, Sect. 17.
is "sufficient for all, effectual only for believers." The only question is whether God determines to give faith to one man at the moment or whether he previously decreed to do it. In his own opinion Scott tries to avoid the pitfalls of a particular redemption on the one hand and an indiscriminate universal redemption on the other. He maintains that God's salvation in Christ was intended as a general benefit to all, without exception, but it becomes efficacious only to those who have faith. And the faith, asserts Scott, is a gift of God, decreed from all eternity for God's elect.

The Remarks include, too, the author's attempt to demonstrate that the doctrines commonly called Calvinistic (though not every tenet of Calvin) are those which are found in the liturgy, articles, and homilies of the Church of England.

The last section of the Remarks is an analysis of Tomline's extensive quotation from the Church Fathers. Tomline had used the quotations as evidence that the great thinkers of the early Church were in direct opposition to the tenets of Calvinism. Scott's reply to the Bishop in this point is, first of all, that the Scriptures and not the Fathers are the infallible rule of faith. With respect to the Fathers, he observes that they may be read with benefit and that their personal thoughts ought to be honored, but that they have no

1 Thomas Scott, Remarks, in Works, VIII, 6.
2 ibid., pp. 8-9.
3 ibid., p. 373.
more authority over our creed than we have over the creed of
our remote posterity. He then proceeds to show that in very
many passages used by the Bishop from the Fathers, the opposi-
tion is not so much to Calvinism as to the great doctrines of
Biblical Christianity. And except for Augustine, continues
Scott, nearly all the Fathers, directly or indirectly, intro-
duce Pelagianism or some type of heathenism into their concept
of Christianity. At the close of the Remarks Scott adds an
appendix of translations from several of the Confessions of
the Reformed and Lutheran Churches. The chief object of
these extracts is to show that even in Confessions of Faith
such as the Helvetic, the Gallic, and others (which were
drawn up under the sanction of Calvin, or his friends or col-
leagues) the peculiar tenets of Calvin are stated in much more
moderate terms than occur in the Reformer's own writings.
Furthermore, contends Scott, in many instances the language
is strikingly similar to that of the Articles of the Church
of England. This work of Scott's has been called "one of the
first theological treatises of the day . . . pregnant with
valuable matter not merely on the questions directly discussed
but on almost every topic of doctrinal and practical divinity."°
Certainly it can be said that this is one of the Commentator's
best efforts at theological writing. Tomline's scholarly
arguments cause him to reach a similarly high standard in his
reply. At the same time Tomline's inaccuracies become boldly

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1Ibid., VII, 361.

2Daniel Wilson, quoted in John Scott, op. cit., p. 659.
apparent under Scott's incisive judgment and his thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.

A discussion of the Jewish question is found in the *Answer to Rabbi Crooll*. Rabbi Joseph Crooll's work was a presentation of the 'case for Judaism' and being a professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University he was a qualified linguist so that he argued his case in a scholarly manner with a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament. Some of his cardinal assertions were that the "Messiah is to be only a man" with both a father and a mother; that the "Messiah is not yet come"; that the Gentiles are not to receive a Messiah; and finally, that the Messiah's kingdom is "not spiritual but absolutely earthly." Scott's purpose in his *Answer* is not only to meet Rabbi Crooll's challenge to Christianity point by point; but also to show more generally that the views of Christianity to which the Jews object are either contained in the Old Testament or are not inconsistent with its leading principles. He attempts to reason with the Jews on the sole authoritative ground of the Old Testament. The question of the Messiahship of Jesus and fulfilled prophecy, of course, occupy a central place but he also deals with the subjects of sacrifice and oral tradition. For the vindication of Christ's Messiahship, the Commentator depends not only upon Scriptural genealogies but upon the entire life of Jesus. During Christ's personal ministry, claims Scott, there were many who, by comparing his character, miracles, and doctrine, with the ancient prophecies of a Messiah--without previous
knowledge of his genealogy—confessed Him to be the 'Son of David'; and certainly, affirms Scott, "Every proof of his resurrection proclaims him as 'the son of David,' independently of all genealogies."¹ From here the author continues to develop his argument by indicating that the Messiah, in the Old Testament sense, was also to be a Savior—a deliverer, one who "shall save his people from their sins." If the Messiah, asks Scott, was not predicted as a Savior, or Deliverer, in one sense or another, what was the object of His coming? For Jews as well as Christians expect a Deliverer.² Then the Commentator goes on to show that the Messiah was not to have an immediate human father nor was he to be a mere man: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel" (Isaiah 7:14) and "The goings forth of him" who should be born at Bethlehem, to rule over and feed Israel, will be "from of old, from everlasting," (Micah 5:2). Do not these words, observes Scott, bear a striking similarity to John's prologue: "In the beginning was the Word . . . " (John 1:1).³ With the Old Testament words from Isaiah and Micah, Scott then joins the familiar words of Isaiah 9:6 "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince

¹ Thomas Scott, An Answer to Rabbi Joseph Crook's 'Restoration of Israel,' in Works, IX, 150.
² Ibid., p. 155.
³ Ibid., pp. 164-165.
of Peace."

After a delineation of the effects of Jesus' coming and the offices he fulfilled, the Answer is concluded by listing some important omissions that Scott feels Crooll has made. The omissions which Scott cites and then examines himself come under three main headings: (1) Prophecies of the Old Testament which predict the reception (rejection) which the Messiah would meet from the nation of Israel, (2) the Old Testament prophecies which foretell the violent death of the Messiah and (3) the prophecies in the Old Testament which proclaim the Messiah's resurrection and the establishment of His universal and eternal kingdom. Of this work generally the Christian Observer comments:

"Should it prove the cyana vox, the dying note of this truly great man, which we trust it may not, we shall say much for this publication if we pronounce it worthy to be so; and state it to be inferior neither in matter nor temper to any of the truly Christian productions of his powerful mind . . . ."

The Letters on Ecclesiastical Establishments were first published in 1815 then revised and republished two years later with an "Essay on the Religious Establishments of Israel" annexed to it. The initial Letters were addressed to Rev. Peter Roe, Minister of St. Mary's, Kilkenny. They were written with reference to the revival of the opinions of Robert Browne of Dublin. In 1531 Browne had formed a church on the principle that the members of it regard the Church of

1Ibid., pp. 168-169.

2"Review of R. Joseph Crooll's Restoration of Israel and an Answer by Thomas Scott," Christian Observer, XIV (December, 1815), 310.
England discipline as popish and unscriptural; and that they renounce association with all Reformed churches, except those which were of the same model as theirs. Every church, Browne believed, should be a single congregation and its government should be democratic.\(^1\) To explain and defend his views, Browne had written several treatises, the three most important of them being published in 1682. In *A Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anio* (the work most frequently associated with him) he affirmed the mutual independence of Church and State, avowing the incompetence of the magistrate either to reform or control the Church. He expounded, in the book which Sheweth the Life and Manners of All True Christians, the principle of congregational independency. And in his last important tract *Treatise upon the 23 of Matthewe* he dealt with what he calls anti-reforming authorities, showing how to avoid the 'popish disorders and ungodly communions of false Christians.'\(^2\) Scott's Letters are not a vehement attack upon these opinions nor are they even a forceful reply. Rather, they are a moderate defence of establishments; he attempts to state the Scriptural and historical basis for ecclesiastical establishments. Expressing toleration and respect for dissenting bodies, he, nevertheless, clearly declares his preference for the Established Church: "I am decidedly of the opinion that it gives a faithful and

\(^1\)Note prefixed to the Letters on Ecclesiastical Establishments, in Works, IX, 271.

conscientious minister more advantages for usefulness . . .

than can be found elsewhere.\(^1\) That an establishment is

Scriptural and not evil in itself is evident, claims Scott,

from the religion of Israel which was an establishment in-

stituted by God Himself.\(^2\) This is the central point of his
defense. He does not plead, he assures his reader, for the

divine right of any particular form of church government or

for any certain establishment—or even the necessity of an

establishment: "I only state that, whatever faults there may

be in any existing establishment, or in any that have existed,

the thing cannot be evil per se. Otherwise God expressly

appointed, and not only permitted, what was evil per se.\(^3\)

The many advantages provided by an establishment such as

places appropriated for worship, funds devoted to the cause

of religion, national observance of the Sabbath, and a stated

form of public worship concludes his temperate plea for an

established church. The "Essay on Religious Establishments

in Israel" is a further elucidation on establishments that

Scott believe to be quite novel. The principle which he ad-

vances is that the conduct of the righteous kings and rulers

of Judah (i.e., Hezekiah, Josiah, etc.) in promoting religion

among their subjects was not "according to any express com-

mission, or injunction given to them as kings, by the law of

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 549.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 576.
Moses" but was only the "proper improvement of their important talents." Such a performance of duty is the obligation of anyone in a similar position and it should, therefore, serve as an example for authorities today who profess Christianity. If the rulers of today would follow this example, declares Scott, they would have the same success that the righteous rulers mentioned in Scripture enjoyed.

The History of the Synod of Dort arose out of the Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism. Scott felt that he had aided in the circulation of a misrepresentation of the Synod in his Remarks by relying on inaccurate abbreviations of the Articles of the Synod instead of the Articles themselves. Discovering his oversight, he determined to counteract any errors and to vindicate the Synod from the atrocious calumnies with which it was being subjected. Besides, the author wanted to leave behind him, in print, his deliberate judgment on several controversial subjects like toleration, religious liberty, terms of communion, and other ecclesiastical questions. This proved to be his final theological treatise.

Several of the Commentator's sermons were also published during this period. They included three funeral sermons, three addresses to Missionary Societies and one address made before the London Female Penitentiary. Scott excelled in the exercise of preaching funeral sermons and altogether seven

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2 Ibid., p. 607.
of those sermons were published separately. In such discourses he does not notice the individual too directly, but instead he speaks of the virtues of their characters in a general way. The funeral sermon, for example, of Mr. Pentyecross entitled *The Duty and Advantage of Remembering Deceased Ministers*, is used to describe the Christian minister, the practical workman who faithfully cares for souls. There is then an exhortation to the people "to imitate the faith of their deceased pastors, both in grace of faith and in its fruits." Apart from separate periodical articles, these sermons, with the above-mentioned works, comprise Scott's publications.

At Aston Sandford the veteran pioneer continued to make an important contribution to the missionary movement. The embryonic Church Missionary Society sent young missionary candidates to Aston to study under him, the first group of four German students coming in 1807. These and other men sat under his instruction until poor health forced him to relinquish the work in 1914. It was a sacrificial labor of love beset with the trials of old age and ill health, but it was wrought with a humble, far-reaching success. Today the Islington Church Missionary College can trace its germinal

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1When introducing his Birkbeck Lectures in 1937, Charles Smyth remarks that if he were to have a sub-title for the lectures he would borrow it from Thomas Scott's title for the funeral sermon for Mr. Pentyecross. Charles Smyth, Simon and Church Order. A Study in the Origins of the Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: University Press, 1938), p. 6.

beginning to Scott's diminutive but determined efforts.  

As an independent institutor, Scott devised his own plan for the instruction of the missionary candidates. The outline of his program proceeds as follows:

"I mean to allow them about an hour every day and to put them in a way of improving the rest of their time to advantage. . . . I purpose to take different subjects for my observations each day: one or two for English . . . one for expounding some parts of Scripture; another for lecturing in Divinity in a more systematic manner, making my Essays the text; another for reading and making observations on the diaries of missionaries, or the history of missions."  

Nothing could deter him from giving the students the training that he believed they needed. A somewhat startling request came from the Committee when he was asked to instruct the candidates in Susoo and Arabic. He had no knowledge of either of them but with an indomitable spirit he began to learn them. Susoo was mastered without much difficulty and in a few months the students knew it as well. Arabic was more troublesome, but before long the Tutor was reading the Koran with his pupils. To master a dialect like Susoo and a major language like Arabic, in his sixtieth year under the strain of failing health, illustrates the unflinching energy, the powerful persistence, the immense mental capacity of Thomas Scott.  

The influence of the Commentator upon his students is revealed in their words of affectionate appreciation of him. Four of them testified in pairs on the occasion of their

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2Charles Hole, Early History of the Church Missionary Society, pp. 120-121.
departure for the mission field, January 7, 1814, at Free
mason's Hall. Morton and Greenwood, two Englishmen whom
Scott had converted from mechanics to clergymen, expressed
themselves in these words:

"We cannot conclude without paying the feeble tribu-
tute of our gratitude to that dear and venerable man,
the Rev. Thomas Scott, our tutor, who has ever been as
a father to us. He has carefully watched over us and
assiduously prepared us, under great bodily infirmi-
ties, for our future labours."¹

Two of the German students, Rhenius and Schmarro, added:

"With pleasure and reverence we mention here also
the director of your Seminary. We have often had
occasion to wonder at his indefatigable exertions
in the cause of God, especially in his old age, and
to take an example of his ardent Christian love
toward all mankind."²

Visitors as well as candidates for the mission field
found their way to Aston, for by his unceasing perseverance
the Commentator had earned recognition as a truly learned man,
a wise and deep theologian. Many years later William Jowett
claims that Scott "being endued with a strong and capacious
understanding and possessing unwearied perseverance, . . .
made himself a thoroughly learned man, especially in theology."³
On March 11, 1907, the Commentator writes that he has received
from the Dickensonian College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, U. S. A.,
a parchment conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.
And within the Evangelical movement he became esteemed as one

¹Ibid., p. 413.
²Ibid.
³William Jowett, Church Missionary Society Jubilee Tract,
Powder and First Five Years, quoted in Eugene Stock, 92,
cit., 1, 79.
of its most loyal, useful, and prominent leaders.\footnote{Marcus Loane, supra, cit., p. 183.} An indication of the cordial esteem which he enjoyed in these latter years is remarkably illustrated on one occasion in particular. Due to the small income he had received for his ministerial labors throughout his life, Scott generally found great difficulty in meeting the various financial demands made upon him. His publications had only served to involve him in additional embarrassment rather than increase his resources. But he confidently anticipated a material relief by the sale of his Commentary. "What I am to receive," he says, "with what my bookseller will owe me, will cover all my debts."\footnote{John Scott, supra, cit., p. 420.} He found, however, on totalling up his accounts, an alarming deficiency. Great quantities of his books, especially of the works in five volumes, which he presumed to have been sold, were still in the printers' warehouses. It seemed impossible for him to escape from his pressing difficulty and he was deeply disturbed because of the fear of dying insolvent, thereby leaving a stigma upon his character and profession.

He decided to state his predicament to a few close friends, and, if possible, procure a sale for those theological works which were lying in the warehouse. The appeal was promptly and effectively answered. His zealous friend Charles Simeon responded with £590. "Your visit to Cambridge," he wrote to Scott,

"was a blessing to many, who are anxious to testify towards you their respect and love, and who earnestly
request your acceptance of a few hundred pounds, which they have desired me to remit you in their name, and in the name of some others who have been benefitted by your writings."

There was also included a considerable sum for books. Many others from widely scattered places readily responded. "The demand for his books as we remember to have heard at the time, was so great, that the binder could scarcely prepare them fast enough to meet it." He was soon placed in easier circumstances than he had probably enjoyed at any former period in his life.

Scott's family was a further source of comfort to his later years. "All my children are, I trust serving God..." he wrote in February 1821. As a father he had been strict but also very loving: his children had hardly known rebuke or punishment.

Family worship formed the integral center of the household life vindicating Balleine's description of Evangelicalism: "Puritanism had centred round the State; the Oxford Movement was to centre round the Church; but Evangelicalism was essentially the religion of the Home. Family life, family joy, family worship were its interests."5

There was thorough religious instruction but no undue pressure

1Ibid., p. 425.


3"Letter to a friend in Northumberland," dated February 27, 1821, John Scott, op. cit., p. 469.


5R. Balleine, op. cit., p. 75.
in Scott's home. And the finest testimony to his fatherly wisdom and to his noble fulfillment of the ministerial vocation, is to be found in the fact that all three of his sons took Orders and his daughter married a clergyman. Even in the fourth generation a fourth Thomas Scott became vicar of West Ham (1863-1891). 1

The natural weaknesses of Scott's character lay in a sharp temper, an intellectual arrogance, and an overbearing self-confidence. From the time that he received the truth of the Gospel, however, he so struggled against these tendencies that in his later years he was noted for the very opposite qualities. Throughout his life he was hindered by an absence of a sense of humor and imagination; he did not possess that quickening flare of the poetic—that winsome dash of wit—which would have enriched and enlivened his life and writings. Lacking a higher education his mind was restricted in its compass, sometimes crude in its judgments, and devoid of a polished precision or profundity. His appearance was severe and unattractive; his features were large and coarse; his voice was asthmatic and dissonant; and his manner was blunt and unpolished. "A certain roughness of exterior," records his son, "impressed many persons with the idea that he was harsh and severe"; but those who knew him well became fully aware how kind and feeling a heart he carried within."2


2 John Scott, op. cit., pp. 139-140.
Strong natural powers of mind and will enabled Scott, in spite of his weaknesses, to accomplish significant tasks. He applied his powers with determined diligence and pregnant persistency to whatever duty he performed. With an undaunted courage he faced and overcame many disconcerting difficulties. Decisiveness, boldness, and inflexible integrity characterized his unceasing activity. Keenness, soundness, and saneness distinguished his independent judgment. Above all else, he was steeled by a desire to serve God, and God alone. And this determination combined with all his qualities to form the basis of a most forceful character.

Though endowed with a hearty constitution, he did not enjoy good health. He was constantly plagued with asthma, cold, fever, and various internal disorders. In his last years he was frequently restricted to his home because of acute attacks of asthma and fever.

On Sunday, March 4, 1821, the faithful laborer delivered his last discourse. As usual, in the evening, he expounded to several of his parishioners, applying to himself the prayer of the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." By this humble plea he closed his public ministry. In dramatic eulogy a reviewer of his biography describes the incident in the following manner:

"It was not in a crowded and popular congregation, where some lurking worldly motive might tempt a man to use sentiments of self-abasement which he did not feel; it was not the language of contrition, however sincere, in the part of a young convert, who had hitherto done nothing in the church of Christ: it was the prayer of
one who, for a period of nearly fifty years, had given himself, with all his powers, to the work of the ministry; of perhaps the first Biblical scholar of his time; of a man who, both by his preaching, his example, his writings, his encouragement of every great project for the conversion of the heathen world, and his unwearying and indefatigable labours in every department of the Christian ministry, had done more to adorn the Gospel which he taught than almost any man of the age.  

Scott suffered severe bodily pain in the last weeks of his life but his final day exhibited a tenacious faith. In the end there was no struggle and he gently passed away on Monday evening, April 16, 1821. His death has been compared to that of Richard Hooker, the great divine from whom he learned so much. On the following Monday he was laid to rest and on the next Friday Daniel Wilson preached his funeral sermon at Haddenham Church.

Today at Aston Sandford one can still witness the reverent respect with which Scott is buried. On the north wall of the chancel is a modest memorial tablet of white marble bearing this inscription:

"Near this spot
Are deposited the remains of the Reverend Thomas Scott
Twenty years Rector of this parish
He died April 16, 1821 age 76 years
But
in his writings he will long remain
and widely proclaim to mankind
The unsearchable riches of Christ."


2A. C. Downer, op. cit., p. 83.

3Transcribed while visiting Aston Sandford March 1954. According to the List of Rectors, Thomas Scott was the thirty-ninth Rector of 'St. Michael's and All Angels' as the church
Some years after his death, a writer of ecclesiastical biography paid Scott an eloquent tribute with which this chapter may well be concluded. With words of moving appreciation he thus writes of Thomas Scott:

"He died unknown, even by name, to all, or nearly all, of the statesmen and warriors, to whose glory the annals of the reign of George III are dedicated, although no one of that illustrious band had really hewn out for himself a monument so sublime and imporishable. He died unknown or unheeded by the poets, the philosophers, the historians, and the artists, who during the same momentous era, had established an intellectual sovereignty in his native land, although he had laid the basis of a wider and more enduring dominion than had been acquired by the most triumphant of their number. He died neglected, if not despised, by the hierarchy of the Church of England, although in him she lost a teacher, weighed against whom those most revered, right reverend, very reverend and venerable personages, if all thrown together into the opposing scale, would at once have kicked the beam. But he died amidst the regrets, and yet lives in the grateful remembrance, of numbers without numbers, who, on either side of the Atlantic . . . had found in his writings such a mass of diversified instruction, such stores of intellectual and of spiritual nutriment, such completeness and maturity of divine knowledge, so steady and so pure a light to lighten the dark places of Holy Scripture, so absolute a devotedness to truth, and so indefatigable a pursuit of truth, as they had not found in any or in all of the theologians who wrote or spake in his own times, and in his own mother tongue."1

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CHAPTER IV

HIS MAGNUM OPUS: A COMMENTARY
ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

A critic on the sacred text should be
Candid and learned, dispassionate and free;
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From fancy's influence and intemperate zeal;
For all of arts sagacious dupes invent
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is - Scripture warped from its intent.

---William Cowper.

Scott's invaluable Commentary on the Scriptures would of itself entitle him to rank at the head of the theologians in his day, as at once the most laborious and most useful writer, declared the Eclectic Review in 1821. 1 Another has claimed that the Commentary was the greatest theological performance of Scott's age and country. 2 Certainly, it was the greatest production of his strenuous life. No work carried the reputation of the author so far and no achievement has done more to perpetuate his fame. Through his Commentary Scott addressed a public in several lands and spoke by the mouths of hundreds of other preachers. From the rostrum of his humble study he commanded an audience that even Whitefield

1 "Review of The Aged Minister's Encouragement to his Younger Brethren" (Two sermons preached by Bishop Daniel Wilson on the occasion of Thomas Scott's death) in Eclectic Review, XVI (July-December 1821), 96.

and Wesley failed to reach. The *Commentary* consumed the largest portion of his energies, excited some of his most alarming fears, and awakened many of his highest hopes. It provided, too, an inexhaustible subject for his study and thought; and in turn, it affords a vivid reflection of his mental capacities and his theological convictions.

**Preparation of the Commentary**

Seldom has any great work been composed under such unusual circumstances. As he repeatedly read over the Scriptures, Scott frequently considered how almost every verse might be expounded if he had been called to preach on it. "I had often thought," he says, "I should like to preach through the whole Bible; for instruction from every part crowded upon my mind, as I read and meditated from day to day." While he was in this frame of mind an enterprising but impoverished publisher by the name of Bellamy proposed that Scott make notes on the Bible which could be published, with the sacred text, in weekly numbers. If he would begin at once, the publisher promised him a guinea for each issue. It was an inviting offer. For besides providing an opportunity to work through the Bible as he longed to do, the remuneration of a guinea for each number would be a welcome addition to his scanty income. The first number was written on January 2, 1793 and the last was completed on June 2, 1792. The one hundred and seventy-four numbers issued in these

1John Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 269.
four and a half years proved to be the first edition of the
*Commentary*.

To give a detailed account of the anxieties and difficulties that were involved in writing and publishing this work would fill a volume and only serve to weary the reader. Briefly it can be said that it was disheartening, discouraging, and disconcerting enough to make almost any other man give up in despair. It was compiled in distressing haste in order to meet the weekly deadline. Because publication started immediately after he had begun to write, each number had to be written in a week. "Sick or well, in spirits or out, lively or dull; the tale of bricks must be delivered," wrote Scott. "I have known him," recalls his son, "with great difficulty and suffering prepare as much copy as he thought would complete the current number, and then, when he had retired to bed, and taken an emetic, called up again to furnish more; what he had provided being insufficient for the purpose!" The gruelling pace allowed little time to consult other authors. A week was, in fact, hardly enough time to think out his own exposition, to compare it with parallel passages in other parts of the Bible, and to write it out in intelligible English. "By my utmost exertions I can scarcely

1*ibid.*, p. 237.
2*ibid.*, p. 297.
3The first edition of the *Commentary*, which can be seen at the British Museum, is almost entirely void of any references to other expositors. But, as shall be noticed, the succeeding editions are enlarged with a more frequent use of other sources.
keep on to supply a number per week of the Bible to finish it in the manner I would," he wrote to his niece; and with characteristic integrity he adds, "and I consider it as my duty to let no number go forth less clear, distinct, and exact than I could make it with proper diligence."¹

Nor was the exacting pace of publication the only problem. Scott was not a businessman and he was deceived from first to last by his publishers. When fifteen issues had appeared, the publisher informed him that he had no more money and that if the publication was to continue the Commentator must find his own funds. Scott succeeded in borrowing what was needed, only to learn that the publisher was bankrupt and to find himself burdened with a heavy debt. Finally, when the first edition was completed Scott calculated that he had neither gained nor lost but had performed all his work for nothing.² But the narrative is not clear and it appears that he actually lost £500 over it, and £200 more given to him by his friends.³

In spite of constant opposition from swindlers, critics, and suits in Chancery, Scott would not abandon his task. "The indomitable perseverance exercised in carrying out this work," says Sir James Stephen, "is beyond all praise. Animated by one changeless purpose—devoted to one inexhaustible task . . . blest with a resoluteness of understanding which turned

¹Thomas Scott, Letters and Papers Never before Published, p. 109.
²John Scott, op. cit., p. 272.
³Ibid., p. 272.
aside from no difficulty . . . he went on interpreting the
word of his God."¹ He had found the sphere in which he was
most at home and with tireless industry he sought to bring
his monumental work to a higher standard of accuracy and use-
fulness.

Altogether Scott toiled at his Commentary for thirty-
three years. After the first edition had appeared, he applied
himself to a renewed study of the entire scriptural text in
the original languages and to a revision of the marginal
references as found in John Brown's Self-Interpreting Bible.²
On the basis of such studies, which he continued to carry on
with increasing proficiency, he published three more revised
editions of his exposition. He was in the process of com-
pleting a fourth at the time of his death. This last edition
eventually became the author's fifth and finest one. He had
labored on it from 1818 until his final illness in 1821,
carrying his completed revisions to II Timothy 3:2 and leaving
a corrected copy of the preceding edition that extended to
the very end of the book of Revelation. From the corrections
the Commentary was finished and published in 1822 in stерeo-
type—the largest work that had ever been submitted to that
process.³ In his last edition the Commentator stressed three
major improvements. First, by taking a collation of the

¹Sir James Stephen, op. cit., p. 274.
²John Scott, op. cit., p. 286.
³Ibid., pp. 294-295; Charles Hake, Mag., Part VIII,
op. 301-303.
the different editions of the Bible that had been printed, he attempted to provide an accurate copy of the sacred text according to the authorized version. Secondly, he not only completely revised the marginal notes, but he also inserted in the notes and practical observations frequent references to other parts of his Commentary. The third and most important emendation consisted in the copious critical remarks that were introduced. Many of the critical remarks occur in the Old Testament where the original words in printed Hebrew characters are substituted for the English words by which they had been previously expressed. In the New Testament the remarks are numerous. New authorities are here adduced in support of criticisms that had been made before but not substantiated. J. F. Schleusner's Novum Lexicon Graeco-Latinum in Novum Testamentum appears to have been particularly helpful in this final improvement.

The reception which Scott's Commentary received is extraordinary. "The success of the work was immediate," records Balleine. During the lifetime of the author at least eight editions were sold out in America while the combined sales in Britain and America amounted to thirty-seven thousand complete sets, the retail price of all the English copies totaling nearly £200,000. Probably no theological work, observed John Scott in 1822, produced an equal sum by its sale, during the author's lifetime.\(^1\) From the time of Scott's

\(^1\) R. Balleine, op. cit., p. 31.

\(^2\) John Scott, op. cit., p. 295.
death in 1821 until 1850 the figures were more than doubled by steady sales. "The constant and increasing sale of Scott's Commentary proves the high estimation in which it is deservedly held," comments Thomas H. Horne at that time.¹ In the ten years from 1850 to 1860 another 10,000 copies were sold. On the whole, it may safely be estimated that between 1790 and 1860 approximately 85,000 sets of Scott's Commentary were sold to the English-speaking world for a sum that exceeded £500,000 sterling.²

The Commentary exercised a deep and lasting influence upon the character and opinions of a great number of people. A modern historian claims that "The best known of Evangelical expositors . . . was Thomas Scott, whose commentary had an immense and abiding influence."³ Scott's Commentary, acknowledges J. H. Overton, held an important place of its own in the Evangelical literature of its class, while its usefulness extended beyond the limits of the Evangelical party.⁴ Williston Walker refers to the Commentary as being "of immense popularity on both sides of the Atlantic."⁵ Balleine


⁵ Williston Walker, op. cit., p. 519.
declares that "it profoundly influenced the religious life of its time. It was read aloud at family prayers in almost every Evangelical home, and it stamped its sane and sober methods on the minds of most of the party." Although lacking any intense, personal appreciation for Scott's exposition, Charles H. Spurgeon, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, admits that, "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, even as Adam Clarke is the prophet of the Wesleyans..." The fact, too, that Spurgeon spent the first pulpit fee that he ever received in London for a set of Scott's Commentary is indicative of the following it had obtained. Another has affirmed that no man since the days of Matthew Henry had produced a commentary which was so well fitted to mould the religious life and thought of the times. For many years, those of an Evangelical spirit, both within and without the Church of England, regarded Scott's Commentary as a thoroughly sound and illuminating interpretation of the Scriptures. It was thus an outstanding spiritual force in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.

1G. R. Balleine, op. cit., p. 31.
3Ibid.
4Marcus Loane, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
as it promoted and sustained Evangelical doctrines.

Besides the responsible testimony of those mentioned above, one can grasp the impact that Scott's *Commentary* had in its day by the appreciative witness of numerous individuals who personally benefitted from its instruction.

Daniel Wilson prized Scott's comments above all others, with the single exception of the incomparable John Calvin.\(^1\)

Bishop Wilson always read his Bible with Scott's *Commentary*,\(^2\) never tiring of its exposition but growing more fond of it as the years passed. After forty years of constant perusal he writes of the Commentator's work in these words: "I sit with astonishment at many of his grave and deep remarks; and I hope turn them into prayer. That book," he adds, "is not yet sufficiently valued."\(^3\) Through Wilson's efforts, Scott's comments on the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans were translated into French. Wilson's intention was to have the entire *Commentary* translated and printed in French but health and strength failed him so that the project had to be abandoned.\(^4\)

Thomas W. Horne, author of an *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* expresses a favorable, personal regard for Scott's exposition. Although


\(^2\) Ibid., p. 436.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 145.

\(^4\) Ibid., I, 216; Portions of Scott's comments have also been translated into Gaelic, Swedish, and Welsh.
he states that he does not view all topics in precisely the same way as Scott, nevertheless, he asserts that he never consulted it in vain on difficult passages of the Scriptures.  

As a case in point Horne writes:

"While occupied in considering the various objections of modern infidels, he [Horne] for his own satisfaction thought out every answer . . . for himself; referring only to commentaries in questions of more than ordinary difficulty. And in every instance--especially on the Pentateuch--he found, in Mr. Scott's commentary, brief but solid refutations of alleged contradictions, which he could find in no other similar work extant in the English language."

To this may be added a commendation of an entirely different nature by Andrew Fuller, the well-known Baptist theologian and missionary advocate. Fuller said that he believed Scott's commentary exhibited "more the mind of the Spirit in the Scriptures, than any other work of the kind extant." The renowned and respected Charles Simeon, though cautioning against undue reliance on any commentator, considered Scott to be perhaps the best available in that day. Many Evangelical preachers of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries found Scott's comments helpful. A typical minister of the period was J. H. Evans who in 1852 remarked: "I never like to preach a sermon without having seen what Scott says about it. If he

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2 Ibid. The italics are Mr. Horne's.

3 Quoted in John Scott, op. cit., p. 635.

takes the same view, I consider then that I am tolerably safe.\(^1\) The illustrious preacher, William Jay of Bath, always deemed Scott to be the best expositor for the connected meaning of Scripture, and for the consultation of ministers in any difficulties.\(^2\) The very first page that Jay ever wrote that appeared in print was a recommendation of Scott's commentary and later in life he was able to say that he believed his recommendation to be fully vindicated.\(^3\) Probably the most unusual and best known appreciation for Scott's commentary comes from John Henry Newman. In his Apologia, Cardinal Newman records that he used Scott's commentary while he was an undergraduate and he attributes some of the most important religious instruction of his early life to Scott's writings.\(^4\) Of Scott's commentary, as well as of his other works, Newman writes:

"They show him to be a true Englishman, and I deeply felt his influence; and for years I used almost as proverbs what I considered to be the scope and issue of his doctrine, 'Holiness rather than peace' and 'Growth the only evidence of life.'"

Having considered the unusual composition of the commentary, its widespread circulation, and its extraordinary usefulness,

\(^1\) Quoted in Thomas Wright, The Town of Cooper, p. 93.


\(^3\) Ibid.


\(^5\) Ibid.
it is time to examine the work itself. The procedure for this task will be as follows: First, the Commentator's concept of Scripture—the presuppositions—upon which he based his interpretation will be discussed. Secondly, the aim—the purpose—of the exposition will be observed. Thirdly, there will be an indication of the principles of interpretation employed in carrying out his purpose. Finally, examples of his exposition—a practical projection—of his method of interpretation will be given.

Presuppositions: Concept of Scripture

"Without revelation," declares Thomas Scott, "there never was any true religion on earth, since the fall of Adam."\(^1\) Man was created to be religious, that is, "to be in . . . habitual regard to the one, true, living, and eternal God, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of us all."\(^2\) But since the fall of Adam, if man were left to himself, he would not know how, or would never be, truly religious. Man is a sinner and his only salvation is to know the truth about God "concerning the person and salvation of Christ." And man can only have a saving knowledge of God as God makes Himself known through

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\(^1\)The edition of the Commentary used in this examination is the fifth and final one issued by Scott (see above, p. 135). The frontispiece of the particular copy used by this writer reads: "A New Edition with the Author's last corrections and Improvements." (London: L. B. Seeley and Sons, Hatchard and Son; Baldwin and Cradock; R. B. Seeley and Burnside, 1832).

\(^2\)Thomas Scott, Preface to the Commentary, I, b2.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. b.
revelation. Reason and nature provide excellent truths and precepts but they are not able to provide a sufficient knowledge of the living God:

"Whatever speculators may assume of the sufficiency of man's reason to discover divine truth and moral obligation . . . stubborn facts confute the flattering hypothesis: and as far as God has . . . left men to themselves, they have dishonored him by the most absurd idolatries and superstitions."¹

Or positively, when reason has done its best to furnish religious truth it fails to be satisfactory. For example, in regard to the immortality of the soul,

"When reason, at her best advantage, has done her utmost, her boasted power of demonstration fails: for even were the arguments indubitably conclusive . . . who knows, or can know without revelation, how it may please a just and holy God to deal with the souls of his offending creatures?"²

In nature Scott sees the Creator's "invisible power and Godhead"³ but unlike the Deists he does not find this 'revelation' of God to be adequate. It is difficult, if not impossible, to perceive, by the light of nature, the consistency of perfect justice with boundless mercy, "it still remains dubious, except to those who possess and believe revelation, whether God will punish at all, or pardon at all."⁴

Man, of himself, and by himself, is incapable of obtaining a full or saving knowledge of the true God. A revelation is imperative. Furthermore, the revelation must bear the mark of

¹"Observations on Romans 1:16-32," Commentary, Vol. VI.
²Preface to the Commentary, I, b2.
³"Notes on Romans 1:13-20," Commentary, Vol. VI.
⁴Preface to the Commentary, I, b2.
divine origin; it must be authoritative. The Bible, Scott hastens to affirm, is such a revelation, for it alone speaks of the truth of God by the authority of God. Or, as a modern theologian has said, we open the pages of the Bible and we find ourselves there confronted with "a strange, new world, the world of God." The Bible, alleges Thomas Scott, is "a divine revelation." The Scriptures are "the infallible word of God" and as such are an "infallible standard" for faith and duty.2

Scott maintains the traditional Christian view of the nature of divine revelation which was held prior to the Nineteenth Century. For him, divine revelation consisted of truth supernaturally communicated to men in propositional form.3 He believed that at creation God had endowed men with the power of reason, and that by the unaided exercise of this reason man was able to find out some things about God; but, at a later time, God added to the knowledge at man's disposal by communicating to him further information which he could not have found out for himself.4 The divine truth, which was beyond unaided human reason, in, in Scott's opinion, contained in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is the only source of man's

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2 Preface to the Commentary, I, 174-175.


knowledge of revealed truth. The Bible alone affords a full
knowledge of God and His redemptive work in Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures are acknowledged by Scott to be the Word
of God, primarily because they are divinely inspired
( Ἐγκυρούμενα ) . It is Scott's conviction that the
divine inspiration of the Scriptures attest both their divine
origin and their divine authority. It is the divine inspira-
tion that makes the Bible authentic and genuine; it is the
divine inspiration of the Scriptures that makes them authori-
tative in matters of doctrine and duty. This is a sentiment
set forth by a recent author who comments: "it is only as the
inspiration and authenticity of the record are a part (and a
necessary part) of the revelation that we make the Bible a
supreme rule of faith and life." 2

By "the divine inspiration of the Scriptures" the Commen-
tator means

"... such a complete and immediate communion by
the Holy Spirit to the minds of the sacred writers of
those things which could not have been otherwise known;
and such an effectual superintendency, as to those
particulars, concerning which they might otherwise ob-
tain information, as sufficed absolutely to preserve
them from every degree of error, in all things, which
could in the least affect any of the doctrines or pre-
cepts contained in their writings, or mislead any per-
son who considered them as a divine and infallible
standard of truth and duty."

1 Preface to the Commentary, I, b. 4.

2 G. W. Bromiley, "The Authority of Scripture," The New
Bible Commentary, ed. by F. Davidson, assisted by A. E. Stibbs
and H. F. Keegan (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1953),
p. 15.

In Scott's view of inspiration, every sentence must be considered as "the true testimony of God, in that sense in which it is proposed as truth."\(^1\) Facts occurred and words were spoken, "as to the import of them," exactly as they are now recorded; but the morality of words and actions, recorded merely as spoken and done, must be judged by the doctrinal and preceptive parts of the same book.\(^2\) With this concept of inspiration the Commentator believed that all apparent difference or disparity between the sacred writers is removed, for all spoke or wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The writers of Scripture "are the voice, but the divine Spirit is everywhere the Speaker."\(^3\) Commenting on 1 Corinthians 2:13, Scott quotes from Whitby to support his view: "it is exceedingly evident that the apostles spake and wrote by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as did the prophets of old time, and delivered only such things as from God, which God revealed them by the Holy Ghost."\(^4\)

The Holy Spirit first, last, and always, inspired and guided the writers of Scripture. At the same time, in his concept of inspiration Scott acknowledges the human element in the composition of the Scripture. He allows that each messenger wrote in a manner that was natural to his own talents,

\(^1\) Preface to the Commentary, I, b5.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

education, habits, and environment. But, he insists, the
peculiarities of the writers were always under such control
of the real Author of all, the Holy Spirit, that they mani-
ifested themselves exactly according to His requirements:
"The Holy Spirit so entirely superintended them, when writing,
as to exclude every improper expression, and to guide them
to all those which best suited their several subjects."1
However, says Scott, it does not invalidate the complete
inspiration of the sacred writer, to allow that they ex-
pressed themselves in "common language" rather than according
to learned or philosophical exactness: "Supposed or unimpor-
tant expressions, in such things are not in the least inconsis-
tent with that entire inspiration of which we speak: for
the scriptures were not written to render us exact philosophers,
or to instruct us in ancient history and geography, but to
'make us wise unto salvation."2 And yet, he does not presume
the writers of Scriptures to be wholly ignorant of their sub-
jects, nor to make no use of their knowledge and opportuni-
ties. He simply contends that the infallible supervision of
the Holy Spirit preserved the writers from "errors and preju-
dices, and all other causes of misapprehension or falsehood";
and immediately communicated such things as the writer "would
otherwise have omitted, through ignorance or forgetfulness."3

1Preface to the Commentary, I, 55.

2Thomas Scott, "Essay on the Divine Inspiration of Scrip-
ture," in Works, II, 7-3.

3Thomas Scott, A Vindication of the Divine Inspiration
of Scripture, in Works, V, 212-213.
In his work of inspiration, therefore, the Holy Spirit did not remove, but rather pressed into his service, all the personal peculiarities of the writers, together with their defects of learning and literary style. Moreover, in Scott’s opinion, inspiration included a bestowal of various kinds and degrees of knowledge and aid, according to the need. Sometimes the Spirit suggested new truth, sometimes he presided over the collection of pre-existing material and guarded from essential error in the final compilation. It is significant to notice that Scott does not regard the Bible as a textbook in philosophy or science but as religious truth designed to ‘make us wise unto salvation.’ Any view of inspiration which recognizes this fact is at least pointed in the right direction.

The Scriptures were penned under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But to what extent can the contents of the Bible be considered as divinely inspired? To Scott’s mind the Scriptures are to be accepted as divinely inspired in every part. There seems to be no alternative between claiming inspiration in the fullest sense and utterly denying it: “If some parts of the Scriptures are inspired, but others are not, we want either another revelation to enable us to distinguish between the word of God, and the word of man intermixed with it; or else an infallible authority on each to which we may appeal.”¹ He admits that if the whole Scripture be

received as divinely inspired, "sober criticism" may discover the interpolations and variations, which have occurred through transmission of the text. But these variations in "no degree affect our rule of faith and practice; and, if a few passages still remain doubtful, the cause of truth will not suffer from it."¹ The essential thing is, that there is an exact line drawn between the infallible word of God and human opinions. For if this is not done, everyone who has difficulty in maintaining his opinions in the light of Scripture, will simply evade particular portions of the Bible by contending that they are not inspired. Only as the Scriptures are recognized to be divinely inspired throughout their every page—only then—can they serve as the final standard of truth and duty.²

The Bible is to be accepted as a divine revelation, the infallible word of God, authoritative for faith and practice because it is divinely inspired. And, according to Scott, that the Scriptures are divinely inspired (and/or authoritative) can be substantiated by many striking evidences. In accordance with that era of evidential theology,³ Scott believes that evidences are vitally important for safeguarding the rationality of revelation and for attesting its divine origin. Thus it is to evidences that he devotes some of his

¹Ibid., cf. Preface to Commentary, I, by.
³See above, pp. 20ff.
most laborious efforts.

Briefly, the principal reasons which the Commentator advances for believing the Scriptures to be the inspired word of God are these:

1) Great numbers of wise and good men through many generations and in distant countries have agreed in accepting the Bible as a divine revelation. Many who have been distinguished for erudition and penetration through the ages have received the Bible as God's word. The tradition of the Church has great weight in this connection for

"... it must be allowed to be a consideration of vast importance, that the whole company of those who have 'worshipped the living God in spirit and in truth' have unanimously concurred in handing down to us the Scriptures as a divine revelation, and have very little differed about the books, which form that sacred deposit." 2

2) The agreement of the sacred writers among themselves is another cogent argument for the divine inspiration of the Bible. During a period of fifteen hundred years, writers of dissimilar abilities, education, habits, and employments wrote laws, history, prophecy, odes, proverbs, parables and doctrines, "yet they all exactly coincide in the exhibition which they give us of the perfections, works, truths, and will of God; of the nature, situation, and obligations of man; of sin and salvation of this world and the next ..."

1Preface to the Commentary, I, b5.
2Ibid., p. b6.
3Ibid.
4Ibid.
Apparent inconsistencies can be explained and reconciled by realizing that each writer wrote under different circumstances with a message suited to the particular peoples whom he addressed. Furthermore, the sacred writers did not try to avoid inconsistencies; but the coincidence of their principles of faith and duty reveal that they wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."\(^1\)

Scott's insistence upon the unity of Scripture, in spite of its apparent inconsistencies, is a concept which is again receiving attention. After a period in which the diversity of Scripture was so constantly stressed, the approach of many scholars today is to recognize a 'unity in diversity': "the doctrine of unity in diversity (1 Cor. 12:4-6) ought to be inscribed as a motto over all our study of the New Testament." Indeed, it should apply to "every approach to the sacred literature of our religion."\(^2\)

Of course, the modern approach is formulated in the light of the revolutionary Nineteenth Century Biblical studies, so that the complexity of the concept is somewhat differently, and more deeply, understood. The recognition of 'sources' and the emphasis upon the "textual,"\(^3\) for example,

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 67.


\(^3\)A. M. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 20ff.
have provided significant changes. But modern scholars employ words that strikingly recall those of Thomas Scott when they affirm the Bible to be bound together by the chief principles of its central message:

"Everywhere it is man's response to the achieved work of God, his yielding to the constraint of grace, his fellowship with God and obedience to Him, his reflection of the Spirit of God in every aspect of life, and the lifting of his life into the purpose of God."

3) Miracles, by which the writers of Scripture confirmed their divine mission to their contemporaries, afford proof of the Scriptures' divine inspiration. Miracles, claims Scott, are supernatural testimonies to a supernatural revelation. And the miracle, which above all others, establishes the divinity of Christianity is the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is incontrovertible evidence of the divine nature both of Christianity itself and of the record of Christianity which is the Bible.

4) The prophecies contained in the sacred Scriptures, and their fulfillment, demonstrate that the Bible is divinely inspired. Prophecies "form a species of perpetual miracles, which challenge the investigation of men in every age." This is to enunciate the words of the Bampton Lecturer who, in 1865, said, "prophecy is one department of the miraculous." The

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1H. B. Rowley, op. cit., p. 186.
2Preface to the Commentary, I, b6.
3"Notes on John 20:21-29," the Commentary, Vol. V.
4Preface to the Commentary, I, b3.
prophecies of the Messiah and their fulfillment is evidence, the Commentator says, of a miraculous disclosure of God's secret purposes. Similarly, Bishop Butler argued that even if we were to consider the birth of Jesus as being, in the mode of its occurrence, a natural event, nevertheless, "the concurrence of our Saviour's being born at Bethlehem with a long foregoing series of prophecy and other coincidences, is doubtless miraculous."¹

5) The Bible is the inspired word of God because it alone introduces the infinite God speaking in a manner worthy of Himself—with simplicity, majesty, and authority. The Biblical description of God "comprises all possible excellence without any intermixture . . . ."²

Not only does the Bible offer an accurate delineation of the true God, it also, points out Scott, provides a valid description of men.³ As a Twentieth Century theologian contends, "It is not the right human thoughts about God which form the content of the Bible, but the right divine thoughts about men."⁴

In contradistinction to the general trends of his Age,⁵ Scott acknowledges the mysteries of the Bible and asserts that

²Preface to the *Commentary*, I, a2.
³Ibid.
⁴Karl Barth, *op. cit.* , p. 43.
⁵See above, pp. 9, 18-19.
they are vital to the Christian religion. He believes that the presence of mysteries in the Bible confirms rather than disproves the Bible to be the word of God. There must be mystery for incomprehensibility is inseparable from God and His works; and what is incomprehensible must be mysterious.\(^1\) However, the mysteries of God are intelligible as far as they are revealed, for even though the mysteries "be connected with things above our reason, they may imply nothing contrary to it."\(^2\)

6) The tendency of Scripture constitutes another proof of its divine inspiration.\(^3\) In the doctrines and precepts of Scripture there is all that is necessary to remedy the state of the world and to fit men for the worship of God and the eternal joy of heaven. If men would only believe and obey the Scriptures they would do justly, speak honestly, show love, exercise forgiveness, follow after peace, and lead godly lives— for this is the tendency of Biblical instruction. The holy tendency of Scriptural principles is exhibited very clearly in the godly characters of the Bible, and, above all, in the perfect character of Jesus Christ.\(^4\)

7) The actual effects produced by obedience to the Scriptures testifies to their divine origin. Countless numbers have been reclaimed from immoral living and have been enabled

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\(^1\) Preface to the Commentary, I, c2-c3.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., pp. c3-c4.
to live righteous lives by obeying the word of God. Many more "have been rendered more wise, holy and happy by believing the Bible." ¹

3) The Scriptures' unsurpassed combination of brevity and fulness make them an inexhaustible storehouse of divine knowledge. On the one hand, truths necessary to salvation are few and easily understood by those of even the lowest intellect.² In keeping with the true Reformed tradition, Scott hereby gives to Scripture the attribute of perspicuity--"by which the things necessary to be known for salvation are so plainly and clearly unfolded in Scripture, that they may be understood even by unlearned believers who read with devotion and attention,"³ On the other hand, maintains the Commentator, the most learned scholar cannot, in the longest life, obtain a complete knowledge of this one Book.⁴

9) "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." The inward testimony of what the Scriptures mean in one's personal experience is an evidence of the Bible's divine inspiration--an evidence that no argument can remove.⁵ Although Scott does not explicitly say that it is the witness of the Holy Spirit that ultimately authenticates the Scripture, the

¹Ibid., p. 28
²Ibid.
³Marcus Fredericus Wandelinus (Proleg., c. 3) as quoted in Heinrich Huppe, Reformed Dogmaties Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources, Ed. by Ernst Sizer (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950), pp. 32-33.
⁴Preface to the Commentary, I, ch. 4.
⁵Ibid., p. 25.
implication of his scattered affirmations is that he believes it to be so. In Scott's thinking, belief comes only by the grace of God through the activity of the Holy Spirit who continues to illumine the words of Scripture and confirm their veracity: "We must consider the Holy Spirit as the great Agent . . . in the inspiration of the Scriptures" who "confirms the divine original of the whole to every attentive and impartial inquirer." ² By well-founded implication, therefore, it can be said that Scott would concur with Calvin that

"... as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit testimonium Spiritus intus. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spoke by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely entrusted to them."

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10) Lastly, the divine inspiration of Scripture is demonstrated by its witness to itself. "Do not all the prophets, in the Old Testament, speak most decidedly of themselves and of their predecessors, as declaring, not their own words, but

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³ John Calvin, op. cit., Bk. I, Ch. vii, Sec. 4; of, "What is ultimately authoritative for us is that which commands the assent of our own best judgment, accepted as the witness of the Spirit within us. The ultimate basis of assurance is the witness of the Spirit with the believer's own spirit," Millar Burrows, An Outline of Biblical Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 50; for a critical statement on this emphasis see R. H. Rowley, The Authority of the Bible (Published form of the Joseph Smith Memorial Lecture, 1949), pp. 7-8.
the word of God."1 And, "Do not the apostles, and other writers of the New Testament, speak concerning the prophets who wrote the Old Testament, 'as Holy men of God, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit?'" Christ Himself, in numerous instances, quoted and referred to the Old Testament as of "divine authenticity."2

The New Testament, Scott accepts as inspired because of its apostolic witness. When Peter confessed Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter had spoken in the name of the other apostles, as well as in his own, explains Scott, and it is generally believed that the answer included them also. If it is true that the apostles alone were given this power, we must enquire how they could exercise the power after their death except by their doctrine. And where can the Church or the world look for that doctrine except in their writings?3 Thus, in current terminology, "the first apostles came into view as essentially and indispensably involved in the process of a historic incarnation and revelation,"4 Also, Scott emphasizes

1 Preface to the Commentary, I, 95.
2 Ibid., pp. 95-97.
3 Ibid., p. 97.
the promises of divine aid made by Christ to the apostles
and the special gift of the Holy Spirit which was enjoyed in
the apostolic period. The solidity of his argument on this
point is confirmed in the present century by H. B. Swete
who writes that the traditional belief in the divine inspiration
of the New Testament "finds its justification in the promises
of divine assistance made by our Lord to the apostles and
their company, and the special gift of the Spirit possessed
by the apostolic age." All the books of the New Testament,
concludes the Commentator, were written by the apostles them-
selves "excepting the gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts
of the Apostles: and these were penned by the attendants on
the apostles and under their immediate inspection." As to
Pauline writings, Scott states that though Paul was not, in
the strictest sense, an apostle he still wrote with complete
apostolic authority. This is substantiated first by the fact
that there is no alternative between denying all the facts
about Paul and accepting his apostolic authority in the fullest
sense. And secondly by the affirmations of Peter who attests
to Paul's epistles as being part of the Holy Scripture (II
Peter 3:14-16).

In all the above arguments, Scott is persuaded that there

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1Preface to the Commentary, I, d2-d4.
2Henry Barclay Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testa-
3Preface to the Commentary, I, d4.
is irrefragable proof that the Bible is the inspired word of God. Each argument by itself is actually sufficient evidence, he states, but when they are all taken together they provide overwhelming demonstration that the Bible is God's inspired and authoritative word.

Along with its divine nature and absolute authority, Scott asserts the supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture. All that is requisite for the needs of the mind and heart is contained within the pages of the Bible. God, the Holy Spirit, has omitted nothing from His revelation that is essential. Scott held, as does the Church of England, that

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed thereby as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."1

No religious practice is authorized, according to the Commentator which is not sanctioned by the divine oracles, for if it were desirable God would have ordained it. Silence is as much a revelation of God as words: "God's secret purpose and open declarations perfectly coincide."2 But whatever is good for us to know is expressly declared. As Calvin wrote, "The Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which, as nothing necessary and useful to be known is omitted, so nothing is taught which it is not beneficial to know."3 In Scott's

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1"Sixth Article" of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England.
2Thomas Scott, Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance, in Works, I, 371.
3John Calvin, op. cit., Bk. III, Ch. xx1, Sect. 3.
thinking, only the irreverent pry into the realm of what God has purposely kept mysterious; and any conjecture is useless, for it can arrive at no certainty. The Bible is a perfect and complete rule of righteousness. It delineates exactly what constitutes goodness and righteousness. No item is left out and none should be added: "We want no other directions, or encouragements, than such as are contained in the Bible: nothing can be added to this perfect rule of faith and practice."\(^1\) Moreover, if any one should attempt to add to the Scriptures, or to change them in any way "he may be compared to an optician, who should undertake, by new discoveries, and well-constructed glasses, to improve the light of the sun."\(^2\)

Immediately connected with the question of what may or may not be added to, or subtracted from Scripture, is the problem of its canon (κανών). The Old Testament, observes Scott, evidently stood a considerable time before the advent of Christ almost as we now have it. The Greek, Syriac, and Samaritan versions prove this, he adds. Christ and His disciples quoted from the books now received; and the writers of the New Testament generally used the Septuagint. It is commonly believed that Ezra, a learned scribe, and some associates of his, labored to distinguish the authentic books from the spurious, and thus formed the canon of the Old Testament.\(^3\)

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1. Thomas Scott, "Religion 'no vain thing'" (Deuteronomy 32:47), Sermons on Select Subjects, in Works, IV, 16.
2. Ibid.
All the books of the Old Testament which we now have "harmonize with each other and with the New Testament, in the grand outlines of religion, and indeed in more minute particulars when well understood," but, he charges, this is not so with the Apocrypha for "the apocryphal books often advance anti-scriptural doctrines, and relate most frivolous and romantic adventures."\(^1\)

As for the canon of the New Testament, the Commentator points out that most of the books which now comprise the New Testament were quoted as divinely authoritative by many ancient Christian writers. In fact, a vast proportion of the New Testament might, if it were lost, be recovered by using the works of writers who lived in the first two centuries. Writers of that period actually formed catalogues of the books and wrote comments on them. Both the orthodox and the heretics appealed to the currently accepted parts of the New Testament. Lectures on several parts of the books are still extant. Even the enemies of Christianity, though they opposed the contents of the books, recognized them as the authentic writings of the Christians.\(^2\) All of these facts, concludes Scott, provide proof that the books now collected in the New Testament were received and read in the assemblies of Christians in the second century with the exception of the books of Hebrews, James, Second Peter, Second and Third John, Jude and Revelation. Most of these latter books were extant and well-

\(^{1}\) Ibid.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 237.
known though they were not generally accepted as divinely inspired at that time. After thorough investigation, when the Church became fully convinced by internal evidence, these books were recognized as divinely inspired and were admitted as a genuine part of the Scriptures.\(^1\) Scott would agree with a present-day writer who explains that the New Testament canon "emerged from a movement of the mind of the Church as a whole, which recognized in the books selected the authentic expression of Apostolic Christianity."\(^2\) The canon of the Scriptures, for Thomas Scott, includes the thirty-nine books (Genesis to Malachi) now acknowledged as the Old Testament, and the twenty-seven books (Matthew to Revelation) received as the New Testament. No more and no less than these is accepted.

The essential elements of Scott's concept of Scripture are now before us. The question which inevitably follows is this: How is the divine revelation to be received? The Commentator has defined the Bible as

\[\ldots\] the 'testimony of God' to truth and facts, many of which are not otherwise discoverable; or are not acknowledged with sufficient clearness and certainty, to become principles of our habitual conduct. Things past, future, and invisible, truths most important, sublime and mysterious, are thus brought to our knowledge, attested by Him, who cannot mistake, who cannot deceive.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 237-238.


\(^3\)Preface to the Commentary, I, 43.
But how can this testimony from God, this knowledge of God, be apprehended? How can it be appropriated? To this question Scott replies, "Faith is the only exercise of our rational faculties, the only operation of the human mind, by which we can avail ourselves of this information." Faith is a gift of God's grace which enables a man to use his rational faculties properly; but faith is also an obedient response of the heart and will to God in Christ: "Faith in Christ is... the sinner's obedient application to the Saviour." With Emil Brunner, Scott would concur that *Glaube ist Gehorsam, ὁ μάτων η ὁμολογία* And this obedience, for Scott, applies unreservedly to the propositional truth of the Bible, for he conceives of faith to mean "readily to receive the testimony [of God], and to rely on the promises of God." In the Commentator's conception, faith in general "gives implicit credit to divine veracity, in respect of all the invisible things that God hath attested." Faith acknowledges as true such things as are recorded in the Scripture as the creation, the fall of man, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ. But faith in its more particular exercise embraces and looks forward to the future blessings which God has

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1. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
promised. Faith gives the soul a present possession of "things hoped for." Most especially, faith consents to "the centre of revelation" which is "the record which God hath given us of his Son, and of eternal life in him." By faith in the divine testimonies of Scripture man is able to see his need of a Savior and is influenced "to entrust his soul and all his eternal interests into the hands of Christ . . . "

For Scott, faith is an implicit reliance upon the testimony of God (the Bible) as truth, and an expression of this reliance by active obedience to its precepts.

What, in Scott's view, is the relation between faith and reason in comprehending God's truth? Faith means complete reliance upon God's Word and involves utter obedience. But such a faith, insists Scott, is not irrational. "It is . . . extremely absurd to oppose reason and faith, as if contrary to each other; when, in fact, faith is the use of reason in a certain way." By faith man's rational powers are enriched and supplemented. Reason of itself is blind and helpless in matters of ultimate truth; but by the light of faith ultimate truth is made available to man's reason:

"Faith (receiving and appropriating the testimony of God) is to reason, not unlike what the telescope is to the eye of the astronomer; who by it discovers objects...

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1 Ibid., pp. 225-226.
2 Ibid., p. 226.
3 Ibid.
4 Thomas Scott, "Faith, Hope, and Charity" (1 Corinthians 13:13), Sermons on Select Subjects, in Works, IV, 307.
invisible to all others; and sees, clearly and distinctly, those things, which to others appear obscure and confused. Reason, thus appropriating, by faith, the information communicated by revelation from the 'only wise God,' adds immensely to her former scanty knowledge; possessing at the same time certainty instead of conjecture: and thus, in the posture of a humble disciple, she received that instruction which must be forever withheld from her, while she proudly affects to be the teacher.'

In the actual application of God's revelation, Scott again contends for the 'reasonableness of Christianity.' He clearly emphasizes, however, that reason must always be connected with, and subordinate to, that which is revealed. He writes,

"The province of reason, therefore, in respect to revelation, is, first to examine and decide (with modesty and caution) on the evidence by which it is supported; to understand and explain the language in which it is conveyed; to discern, in many things the excellency of the things revealed to us; and to use them as motives, encouragements, and rules of obedience: and, in things evidently mysterious, to bow in humble submission to the divine teaching; to receive in adoring faith and love what we cannot comprehend; to rest satisfied with what is revealed, and to leave sacred things with God, to whom alone they belong." 2

God's revelation is received by a faith that is in harmony with reason; and the revelation which is received also corresponds with reason: "The Scriptures, in perfect harmony with the conclusions of our reason when soberly exercised, declare that God is from 'everlasting to everlasting.'" 3 That which is mysterious simply goes beyond our comprehension and cannot be considered as irrational but rather, as supra-rational.

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1 Preface to the Commentary, I, 46.
2 Ibid.
3 Thomas Scott, "Notes on Genesis 1:1," Commentary, I.
Which is to say of the relation between revelation and reason what Augustine says of the relation between miracle and nature: "nec non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota naturae."¹

Throughout the entire process of receiving and understanding God's truth, Scott acknowledges the influence of the Holy Spirit. By the inspiration of the Spirit, the Scriptures come into being; by the activity of the Spirit, man accepts the Scriptures as the Word of God; and by the illumination of the Spirit, man understands and applies God's word to his own heart and mind. It is "the silent teaching of the Holy Spirit, by which the true meaning of the scriptures is discovered";² and it is the Holy Spirit who is "the author and giver of all spiritual knowledge . . . illuminating the mind with the light of divine truth."³

To summarize the Commentator's view of the Scriptures: It can be said that he believed the Bible to be a divine revelation communicated to man by divinely inspired writers. He accepted this divinely inspired record as an authoritative, infallible, all-sufficient and complete standard for doctrine and duty. The center of God's revelation, he claims to be the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. Scott actually has little to

¹St. Aurelii Augustini, De Civitate Dei contra Paganos, ed. by J. E. C. Wellden (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1924), II, 536.

²Thomas Scott, Notes on 'Pilgrim's Progress,' in Works, III, 311.

say about the intricacies of revelation which occupy such a central place in the theological thought of our day. It is enough for him to distinguish between the religion of reason (and/or nature) and the religion of revelation and to show the inability of reason or nature to provide a saving knowledge of God. Revealed truth is identified with the Scriptures and unlike the religion of reason it affords an adequate and valid knowledge of the living God. The Commentator's theory of inspiration corresponds most nearly to what is called plenary inspiration. He believed that the Holy Spirit so completely superintended the writers of the Bible that the Scriptures have been preserved from all mistakes except some very minor 'variations' due to the inaccuracies of copyists. His view of the mode (or method) of inspiration is not very dynamic; but neither is it entirely mechanical. He does not treat the writers of Scripture as purely passive instruments of God; he allows for the expression of their individual personalities and peculiarities. The Holy Spirit guarded the writers of Scripture from all error in matters of doctrine and duty and even guided in the selection of expressions; but the writers also utilized their personal knowledge and, contends Scott, their records are subject to their individual defects of learning and style. Nowhere in his

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14. F. Storr observes that this was the theory of inspiration most commonly held at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. V. F. Storr, op. cit., p. 178; The Early Evangelicals are usually said to have believed in verbal inspiration. This is undoubtedly true of many of them, but it is more accurate to describe Scott's theory as plenary inspiration. See above, pp. 145-148.
writings does Scott venture beyond these assertions as to
the mode of inspiration. One will search in vain for an
extreme declaration like that which is found in the Helvetic
Confession,\(^1\) or the one advanced by Richard Hooker when he
wrote that the authors of Scripture "neither spoke nor wrote
one word of their own but uttered syllable by syllable as
the Spirit put it into their mouths."\(^2\) For Scott, the
Scriptures are fully inspired in every part, although not
every part is equally valuable for doctrine. His criterion
for determining the degree of importance of each passage is
not clear. He merely says that every passage of Scripture
must be judged by its doctrinal or preceptive truth. Since
he believes the center of revelation to be Jesus Christ and
His salvation this truth may well be said to be his final
standard of judgment. The Scriptures are for Thomas Scott
completely consistent. All apparent contradictions can be
readily reconciled so that the Bible is one harmonious whole.
Again the unifying factor is the Person and Work of Jesus
Christ. The divine origin and nature of the Bible are sub-
stantiated by external evidences such as miracles and prophecy
and by intrinsic characteristics such as the harmony of its
parts. In his great stress upon evidential proofs, Scott
falls victim to the rationalism of his day. Those evidences

\(^1\)The Hebrew C. T. codex which we have received from the
tradition of the Jewish Church to which the oracles of God were
committed, we receive today, both as to consonants and vowels
and punctuation, both as to facts and words as \(\Theta\) \(\epsilon\) \(\omega\)\(\nu\)\(\delta\)\(\nu\)\(\nu\)\(\tau\)\(\iota\)\(\omicron\)\(\nu\) (inspired by God).

\(^2\)Richard Hooker, Sermon V, p. 4, cited in The New Bible
Handbook, ed. by G. T. Manley, assisted by C. C. Robinson and
can be regarded as claims to the Bible's divine inspiration but not as proof of the validity of the claim. By believing that the Scriptures can be rationally demonstrated to be the inspired word of God he fails to give proper emphasis to the great Reformed doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit. In vindication of his acceptance of the canon of Scriptures as containing the whole word of God, Scott offers little that is convincing. When describing the formation of the New Testament canon, Scott again (as in his description of inspiration) fails to emphasize the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit as He guided the mind of the Church in selecting some books and rejecting others. Finally, in the view of Scott, the divine revelation can only be received by faith. By faith man relies upon the Bible as 'God's true testimony' and responds to its commands in living obedience.

**Principles and Projections: Method of Exegesis**

With Scott's attitude toward the Scriptures in mind, it is possible to proceed to his interpretation of them. First, the purpose he had in view in writing his Commentary must be clearly marked. Only by fully realizing the practical aim which he constantly set before himself, can his comments be properly understood and evaluated. Thomas Scott was essentially an experimental expositor. He felt that the pressing need of his day was to set life in the light of Scripture. Biblical ideas and ideals had become falsified by rationalism within the Church and scepticism without. At the same time
the force of the Eighteenth Century Religious Awakening created a mounting demand for Evangelical interpretations of the Bible.\(^1\) Those who had experienced the new life of faith needed doctrinal and practical instruction from the Scriptures. On what principles did God intend life to be lived, what examples and directions, what promises and assurances, what supports of faith and encouragement of hope had God given—these were the things which the Commentator was intent to declare. The value of the Scriptures, as of all doctrine, was for Scott its value for the practice of holy living: "The importance of revealed truth . . . is the seed or principle in the soul, whence all inward or real holiness proceeds."\(^2\) With this personal conviction, his primary object in interpreting the Scriptures was to speak "plainly and intelligibly to persons of ordinary capacity and information."\(^3\) More specifically, he endeavored

". . . to store the understanding with the knowledge of divine truth, to awaken and direct the conscience, to affect and improve the heart, to promote the comfort and fruitfulness of true Christians, and to assist young students in divinity, in acquiring those endowments which may qualify them for future usefulness . . . ."\(^4\)

These aims were ever foremost in the Commentator's mind and

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\(^2\)Preface to the Commentary, p. e.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. e5.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. e6.
not a few reviewers credit his work with "an impressive sincerity of aim." 1

To accomplish his purpose, Scott sought to avoid what he considered were two common faults of other commentators. Some expositors confined their interpretation of Scripture to its meaning and use for those immediately addressed by the sacred writers, leaving the reader in doubt as to its current relevance. While others so abruptly applied the passage to the reader that the comments seemed more like immediate revelations from God than an explanation of the revelation already given! Scott, therefore, included both aspects. And to avoid any confusion of the initial exposition with its application, he kept the two parts distinct. His procedure, in this respect, followed the one which was suggested by Philip Doddridge's Family Expositor. 2 In the first part of Scott's comment, there is a section entitled "Notes" in which he gives an exposition of the primary meaning of the text as it was addressed to the writer's contemporaries. Following this section is a second part called "Practical Observations" wherein he indicates "what we may learn from each passage" allowing for all differences of circumstance and need. 3

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2 Preface to the Commentary, I, 65; Philip Doddridge's Family Expositor is designated "A Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament with Critical Notes and a Practical Improvement of Each Section" (Published in London, 1760-62, in 6 vols., and also in 4 vols. in London, 1808.)

3 Preface to the Commentary, I, 65.
The leading principle of the Commentator’s Biblical interpretation was that "every passage of Scripture has its real, literal, and distinct meaning which it is the first duty of a commentator ... to trace out and explain" without accommodation or allegorization. The meaning perceived by the plain, intelligent man who reads with an unprejudiced mind and is earnest to know the truth, must always be the true meaning. No other was to be looked for.

"In explaining the Word of God, we should remember that there is in every portion one precise meaning, previous to our employing our ingenuity upon it; which meaning it is our business, with reverent attention, to investigate."2

The whole scheme of accommodation or allegorization received Scott’s severest denunciation. This is one of the reasons for his impatience with the Fathers. Erasmus relished allegorized meanings and said that the story of Adam was no more worthy of reading than that of Prometheus if you take it only in the literal sense.3 In contrast to such an opinion Scott remarks:

"No man knows how God taught Adam. But are not sin and misery in the world? Who can give a better account of their introduction? Where are we to stop, if we begin to allegorize? Some have allegorized even the Crucifixion and the Resurrection."4

1 John Scott, op. cit., p 636.


4 Thomas Scott, commenting in an Eclectic Society Meeting on the subject "What are the Objections brought against the Literal Sense of the Mosaic History of Creation, and What are the Proper Answers to them?" Eclectic Notes, p. 51.
With Calvin, Scott realized that allegorizing can reduce Scripture to a "nose of wax." ¹ By the allegorical methods, says the Commentator, "vain-glorious men" catch the attention and excite the admiration of "injudicious multitudes" who admire the man that detects deep mysteries, where more sober expositors find nothing but "unrelishing, practical instruction." But such interpretations, he warns, merely breed great mischief and destroy vital godliness.²

To discover the literal meaning of Scripture one "should soberly and carefully examine the context, and consider the portion in question in the relation in which it stands."³ Scott insisted that each passage of Scripture be studied in its original setting and the words taken at face value. He did not deny that there might be more in any passage than first appeared to be present. He believed, too, that each portion of Scripture should be examined for all the teaching that it contained and should be given the widest (legitimate) application. But this was different from finding allegorized meanings. For, in Scott's approach, exposition meant: letting the primary teaching of Scripture illuminate all that was related to the original setting and then, in turn, letting the primary meaning illuminate all of the areas of life to which its light


²Thomas Scott, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," in Works, x, 59.

³Ibid., p. 24.
These principles of interpretation are most clearly illustrated in two papers written by Scott. The first was published in the Theological Miscellany for January 1787. It was written in reply to a question concerning the passage, Ecclesiastes 9:13-16 which describes "a certain poor man, who, by his wisdom, delivered his city" but was "no more remembered" by the citizens. Some persons had construed this to be a description of Christ's work of redemption and of the ungrateful response of mankind to His sacrifice. Scott answers such an interpretation by pointing out that each passage has one original and precise meaning which can be discovered only by a thorough examination of the text in its context. Following his own admonition, he defines the main theme of the book of Ecclesiastes. The central purpose of the book of Ecclesiastes is "from experiment and observation to draw a practical proof of the vanity of worldly possessions, enjoyments, attainments, and distinctions" and to show that "'to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole of man'...all else being 'vanity and vexation of spirit.'" Relating the central theme of the book to the particular passage in question, Scott selects five points of practical religious instruction from the literal meaning of the text. The points are as follows:

1) We are taught to despair of happiness which comes from ourselves, even though it may be gained through personal wisdom or superior abilities. Instead, we are

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to seek true happiness from God alone.

2) Man ought to learn to do good from higher motives than the expectation of gratitude.

3) We ought to guard against judging action by the person rather than the person by the action; or condemning the very same thing in one person which we admire in another.

4) We are taught to prefer "solid usefulness to empty praise."

5) Lastly, we are instructed to beware of forgetting our benefactors.

Having set forth the lessons which he finds suggested by the plain meaning of the passage, Scott adds, "though they [the lessons] do not decide any question about justification, efficacious grace, or the believer's privileges ... yet they are important in forming the Christian's judgment, and directing his conduct." In a concluding denunciation of allegorized interpretation, the Commentator displays his own characteristic approach to exposition. He explains,

"I would gladly know by what authority any man overlooking these plain useful instructions, by help of a warm imagination, sets himself to find gospel mysteries in this passage? We should not, a priori, have looked for a delineation of doctrinal truth in such a subject as Solomon is treating of. We can scarcely, by fair interpretation, find one explicit word on the distinguishing doctrine of grace in the whole book; and it would puzzle the most ingenious of these fanciful expositors to accommodate the circumstance of the story to the work of redemption."

In the same article his manner of interpreting parables is indicated. He refers to the parable of the good Samaritan and applies his basic principle of literal interpretation. The

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2. Ibid., p. 57.

3. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
parable of the good Samaritan, Scott explains, is intended to illustrate and enforce the great commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Christ certainly fulfilled this commandment in His life and death; but, to apply Christ's redemptive work to this passage "is accommodation." The practical exhortation "Go and do thou likewise" is the primary teaching of the story.  

The other paper, which vividly reveals his principle of plain interpretation, is a letter addressed to a fellow clergyman in the year 1799. Most of what has already been said is reiterated. Therefore, one or two sentences from the letter will be sufficient simply to supplement what has been noted. Regarding his friend's preaching, Scott writes,

"Then you take a plain text, full of matter, and, from the real meaning of the text raise doctrines, draw conclusions, explain, illustrate, and apply the subject, there is great weight in your preaching. . . . But it appears to me and to others, that you frequently choose texts suited to give scope to fancy . . . and that you thus discover allusions, and deduce doctrines, and instructions, true in themselves, but by no means contained in the text nor, indeed, easily made out in the way of accommodation."  

With this criticism Scott reminds his correspondent that "What St. Peter says of prophecy, that it is not of private interpretation, is true of every part of Scripture." The Holy Spirit had, in every part of the Bible, one specific meaning, and

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2 Thomas Scott, "On the Accommodation of Scripture" (Extracts from two letters to the Rev. G. Patrick), in Works, X, 175-176.  

3 Ibid., p. 176.
every other instruction from the text must be in harmony with this initial meaning and be subordinate to it.

For the Commentator, no application of Scripture was of any value if it did not flow directly from the teaching immediately imparted by the text. To one of Scott's dogmatic temperament and strong Evangelical zeal, it must have been difficult to resist the temptation of fortifying fundamental doctrines with texts commonly employed by classical apologists. It says much for his honesty of purpose that he refused to rest the doctrine of the Trinity on such standard references as Genesis 1:1; Psalm 6:3 and 33:16. Commenting on Genesis 1:1, he indicates that the Hebrew word Elohim implies a plurality in the Godhead which afterwards became fully revealed. However, he says, "It would indeed be improper to rest a doctrine, which is of such importance in the Christian system, on these intimations ..." That the Commentator declined to read the central Evangelical doctrine of Christ's redemption into every passage is already evident from the examples given above concerning the book of Ecclesiastes and the parable of the good Samaritan.

Occasionally Scott's personal bias will deprive him of the integrity of purpose which he usually exhibits. On Daniel, chapter seven his personal antagonism toward the Roman Church is obvious. Following the historical school of interpreters and adopting their strongly Protestant attitude, he maintains that the little horn (verse 3) symbolizes "the power of the

1"Notes on Genesis 1:1," Commentary, Vol. I.
church and bishop of "rome," while the fourth beast is the Roman Empire which is antagonistic to the cause of Christ.

Again, displaying his anti-Roman Catholic feelings, he refers to Jesus calling his mother "woman" (John 2:14) as "expressly intended, as a prophetic protest against the superstitions and idolatries of the church of Rome." It is unlikely that Scott would have thought of this alleged intention except for his strong opposition to the worship of the Virgin. In his exposition of the Song of Solomon, the Commentator applies the allegorical meaning which has been used by Christian expositors since the days of Origen. He considers the entire book as "a divine allegory . . ., which represents the reciprocal love between Christ and his Church." Even if this treatment of the book is allowed, it constitutes a violation of Scott's professed aversion to allegorical interpretation. But such relapses are rare, and many of them are excusable, or at least understandable, in view of the lack of critical apparatus, linguistic and historical knowledge available for Scott's use.

According to the Commentator's theory of exegesis, the sense of Scripture is to be learned from the Scriptures themselves. He fully agreed with his poet parishioner, Cowper,

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1 "Notes on Daniel 7:7-8," Commentary, Vol. IV.
2 "Notes on John 2:1-5," Commentary, Vol. V.
3 J. Cameron, "Introduction to the Song of Solomon," The New Bible Commentary, p. 347.
4 "Preface to the Song of Solomon," Commentary, Vol. III.
who wrote:

"God is His own interpreter
and He can make it plain."

Scott endeavored to view each passage in the light of every other passage, so that the Scriptures would actually be a commentary on themselves. To this end, he devoted enormous effort to the examination and collation of passages and saturated his Commentary with marginal references. He credits John Brown's Self-Interpreting Bible with suggesting this method of exegesis.\textsuperscript{1} Brown, himself, refers to John Camm as the "author of the marginal references on the Bible."\textsuperscript{2} Nevertheless, Scott was one of the first to make extensive use of marginal references which today are so common. The fact that he spent seven full years in the collation of passages is indicative of the value he placed on this aspect of his exposition.

Besides the hint received from Brown's Bible, the principle of illuminating one passage of Scripture by another emerged from Scott's belief in the Bible's perfect consistency and harmony. He declares that "The Holy Scriptures being the word of God, are doubtless perfectly consistent\textsuperscript{3} and "are in themselves, completely harmonious."\textsuperscript{4} It followed then that what was


\textsuperscript{2}John Brown, Church History (Edinburgh: Gray and Alston, 1771), I, 235.

\textsuperscript{3}Thomas Scott, Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance, in Works, I, 341.

\textsuperscript{4}mid., p. 345.
obscure could receive light from what was plain, and ambiguities could be resolved by reference to what was certain. Contradictions in the Scriptures were impossible. If two texts appeared to clash then it was because the reader misunderstood the meaning or had failed to examine the whole of Scripture thoroughly enough. "Apparent inconsistencies may indeed perplex the superficial reader, but they vanish after a more accurate and persevering investigation." Supplemental expressions which declare that man is justified by faith alone (Romans 3:28; 5:1) are not contradictory to those that warn that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). These declarations are entirely complimentary when rightly understood: "St. Paul opposed those who objected to the doctrine of justification by faith, and St. James wrote against such as perverted it. Both views of the subject are useful to the humble, upright and attentive . . ." In his interpretation of Scripture, Scott would echo the words of Luther, "Scriptura sacra . . . ipsa per se sui ipsum interpres." The final arbiter in all difficulties was Scripture itself; it was both self-sufficient and self-interpreting.

The Commentary bears the distinct marks of originality. Scott's comments are independent and individual, revealing the stamp of his own mentality. As has been pointed out before in this chapter, the circumstances under which the first edition

1 Preface to the Commentary, I, b6.
3 See above pp. 133-134.
of the Commentary was composed prohibited any extensive reference to previous authors. Although each succeeding addition was enlarged with brief quotations from other writers, the Commentator never used sources at the expense of his own judgment. His chief concern was not to transcribe what various authors had said, but rather to set down the truth of Scripture which he, himself, had received from the Holy Spirit.

The writers quoted in the Commentary are not numerous. Although to compare the first and fifth editions is to realize Scott's increased reading and intensified acuteness. This progressive improvement deserves more than a casual remark, for it is characteristic of all Scott's works. There is a vast difference in the quality of his earliest and latest writings. The latter, to an amazing extent, exhibit a higher degree of learning, acumen, and preciseness. To compare his first publication (after The Force of Truth), A Discourse on Repentance, with one of his last works, Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism is similar to comparing the work of a secondary school student to that of a university man.

The principal authors and their works used by Scott are as follows: Daniel Whitby, A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament; Theodore Beza, Jesu Christi Domini Nostrum Novum Testamentum, cuius Graeco contextui respondent interpretationes duae: una, vetus; altera Theodori Bezae: cum ejusdem Theod. Bezae annotationibus; Bishop Patrick, his commentary on the historical and poetical books of the Old Testament as contained

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1 The fifth and final edition issued by Scott.
in Patrick, Lowth, Whitby, and Arnald's **Commentary on the Bible**;
Bishop Hall, **Contemplations on the Old and New Testaments**;
Bishop (Robert) Lowth, **The Books of Isaiah in Hebrew and English**;
W. Lowth on the Prophets as contained in Patrick, Lowth, Whitby, and Arnald's **Commentary**; Henry Hammond, **Paraphrases** and Annotations upon the Book of Psalms, and his **Paraphrases** and Annotations on the New Testament; Philip Doddridge, **Family Expositor**; Bishop (Thomas) Newton, **Dissertation on Fulfilled Prophecies**; Bishop (Beilby) Porteous, **Lectures on St. Matthew**;
Matthew Henry, **Commentary on the Bible**; and J. MacKnight, **Harmony of the Four Gospels**. Other, less frequently quoted, sources, include, Sir Isaac Newton's **Observations on Daniel**; Andrew Fuller's **Expository Discourses on Genesis**; Bishop (George) Horne on **Psalms**; and Archbishop Newcombe's **The Minor Prophets**. For strictly linguistic or critical aid, Scott depended, in the Old Testament, on Joannis Buxtorfii, **Lexicon Hebraicum et Chaldæum**, John Parkhurst, **An Hebrew and English Lexicon without Points**, and on Jacob Robertson's **Grammatica Linguae Hebraeae** and **Thesaurus**; and in the New Testament he used J. F. Schlesner's **Novum Lexicon Graeco-Latinum in Novum Testamentum**.

From an examination of the sources used by Scott, several illuminating points emerge. First, it is evident that the Commentator preferred to use authors who were recognized and established in the Church of England. The majority of the men he quotes are bishops. He had respect for the scholars of his own communion and he kept their works before him when correcting
his own interpretation. At the same time, Scott's selection reveals his tolerance and inclusiveness. He did not hesitate to employ the works of Non-Conformists if he believed them to be sound and accurate. Philip Doddridge, for example, is a great favorite of Scott's, and he frequently cites Matthew Henry and Andrew Fuller. Thirdly, the writers quoted by the Commentator indicate his determination to be doctrinally impartial. "I desire," he wrote, "light from every quarter, and I trust sincerely pray daily to be set right where wrong." That he sincerely sought to maintain this attitude is obvious from his copious use of Daniel Whitby, Bishop Lowth and Henry Hammond. Doctrinally, Scott was a moderate Calvinist, while Whitby, Lowth and Hammond were staunch Arminians, with patient restraint, Scott tried to avoid imposing a particular system of thought upon the Biblical record. Finally, in his dependence on other writers, the Commentator exercised a critical discrimination both in his selection and in his actual use of them. The quality of his source material is widely confirmed. The Commentary on the Bible by Patrick, Lowth, Whitby and Arnald, to which Scott refers repeatedly, was acclaimed in the Nineteenth Century, in these words, "The four volumes of Patrick, Lowth, and Arnald, are justly valued, as containing one of the best commentaries on the Old Testament.

1John Scott, op. cit., p. 511.

and Apocrypha which we have in the English Language.\(^1\) Whitby's work on the New Testament, which was contained in the above commentary, was also published separately. Of Whitby's comment in particular, T. H. Horne remarks, "Divines of every denomination concur in pronouncing Dr. Whitby's commentary to be, upon the whole, the best upon the New Testament that is extant in the English language."\(^2\) Philip Doddridge's exposition is often quoted by Scott, and of Doddridge's work, Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Durham, declared, "In reading the New Testament, I recommend Doddridge's Family Expositor, as an impartial interpreter and faithful monitor." Indeed, says Barrington, "for all the most valuable purposes of a commentary on the New Testament the Family Expositor cannot fall too early into the hands of those intended for Holy Orders."\(^3\) Concerning one of Scott's chief sources, Beza's Annotations on the New Testament, Philip Doddridge maintained that "Beza is undoubtedly the best critic on the Greek language of any commentator we have. There is no translation that I know of equal to his."\(^4\) The other authors employed by Scott, such as Bishops Hall and Porteous, and Matthew Henry, testify to the care with which the commentator chose his sources.

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2. Ibid., p. 245.


But he did not submissively accept all the views of even the finest of these authors. Scott exercised discernment and discrimination. His admiration for Whitby does not blind his critical judgment or disturb his resolute loyalty to the plain meaning of Scripture. Whitby is the author to whom Scott refers most frequently in the New Testament; and yet, when commenting on John 6:36-40, the Commentator is outspoken in his disagreement with Whitby. Scott denounces the respected author's interpretation as a "trifling gloss."\(^1\) Again, though Scott habitually uses J. Macknight on the Gospels, he finds him unsatisfactory on the Epistles. He writes,

"Macknight on the Epistles is not of great use. He is a verbose and roundabout writer. I find in him also things original: that is, he seems to have known all that the apostle, and his friends, and his enemies, said and did, when there is not a word on record. He is wise above what is written, in the strangest and most positive manner I have ever seen; and on these airy dreams he builds systematical expositions quite new to me.\(^2\)

Scott's purpose was to abide by what the Biblical record said; nothing else was accepted. No writer could deter him from setting forth the plain meaning of Scripture which the Holy Spirit revealed to his own mind and heart.

For an indication of Scott's characteristic method of interpretation, it will be helpful to select several passages and observe how he treats them. The first example will be rather lengthy and will be literally transcribed, without

\(^1\)"Notes on John 6:36-40," Commentary, Vol. V.

\(^2\)Thomas Scott, Letter dated April 7, 1808, quoted in John Scott, op. cit., pp. 419-420."
comment, in order to provide both a fair and adequate account of the Commentator's procedure. Turning to the Pentateuch, notice the exposition of Exodus 34:10-28 which records the renewal of the covenant between God and Israel.

Vs. 10. "The prayer of Moses being granted, the Lord again promised to make a covenant with Israel, that is, to renew the covenant which had been broken; and he assured Moses, that in fulfilling this covenant, he would do such wonders as had not been done on earth. The word signifies created (םְּכַלּוּ), and the astonishing miracles, by which Israel was brought into Canaan, and made triumphant over every foe, and which seemed to reverse in many things the settled order of creation, were especially meant. Yet the effects of Jehovah's power in the midst of the people, were as terrible to them when disobedient, as at other times to their enemies."

Vs. 11-17. "The covenant made with Israel was a marriage-covenant; idolatry was considered as adultery, and the name of God is Jealous; so that every approach to that sin, would provoke him to jealousy. (Notes, 5-7, XX:5). They were commanded therefore to destroy every monument of idolatry, however curious and costly; to reject all treaties of alliance, friendship, or marriage with idolaters, however advantageous; to refuse all invitations to idolatrous feasts (Marg. Ref. r.); and especially, not to repeat their old crime of making a molten image of God." "These name is Jealous (יהוה אלהים יָדָעָה). The idols of the nations were not characterized as jealous; at least in any degree. They were not supposed to be offended, by their worshippers paying occasional, or even stated worship to other deities, provided the number and value of the sacrifices offered to them, were not diminished. Hence arose what has been called an 'inter-community' of the worshippers of different idols with each other; who scrupled not to worship the gods of other nations, especially when among them. But this, Jehovah, the one living and true God, would not endure. Hence conscientious Israelites were universally counted bigots."

Vs. 13. "Marg. Ref. u.; Notes XII:15-20, XIII:3-7."

Vs. 19, 20 "Marg. Ref. v-s; Notes XIII: 2, 11-16."

"Every firstling among thy cattle... that is male (19) - יְֻּלְֹּדֵי בָּעָלִים) that is, Lexicographers suppose the meaning of the Niph. of יְֻּלְֹּדֵי (which occurs only in this place) to be taken from the noun יְֻּלְֹּדֵי a male; and the sentence is rendered by Buxtorf, 'Omne pecus tuum, quod masculum nascetur.'"
But יָבֵא is masc. and יָבֵא is either 3d. pers. fem. or 2d. pers. masc. of the future. They cannot therefore agree together - The Chaldee renders it 'Omne pecus tuum masculum sanctificabile.' But perhaps the verb has in this place also its usual significance of remembering, and we may translate it with Cocceius, 'quod omnes pecus tuum, facilest in recordatione esse.' Or taking in יָבֵא 'As to all thy cattle, thou shalt be mindful of the opening, of that which openeth,' viz. דָּנַי the word; as the phrase is completed in the beginning of the verse.

The word יָבֵא is not rendered at all in our translation, but the words 'that is male,' put in italics in its stead. - Parkhurst, by rejecting the points, translates it, 'From all thy cattle thou shalt make a memorial with the firstling of the ox and of the sheep.' - See Heb. Lex. under יָבֵא, Par. 11; and Robertson's Theo. Lex. יָבֵא, col. 40.

Vs. 21. "Marg. ref. a, b; Notes XX: 9-11, XXV: 2, 3, Gen. xliv. 6."

Vs. 22, 23. "Marg. Ref. c, d; Notes XXIII: 14-13."

"The Lord God, the God of Israel (23)."

Vs. 24. "Neither, &c. etc. This remarkable promise would form, while the people continued to observe the solemn feasts, a full demonstration of the divine origin of their religion; and three times in the year they would put this matter to a new proof. No instance is recorded, through the whole history of the land being invaded on these occasions, though scarcely any but women, children, and old men were left behind! No false prophet would ever have inserted such an engagement in his writings, by which his imposture would always be liable to detection."

Vs. 25, 26. "Marg. Ref.; Notes XII: 3-10, 19, 20, XXIII: 19."

Vs. 27. "Moses wrote in a book the judicial and ceremonial precepts that he had received; but God himself wrote the ten commandments, the substance of the moral law, on the tables of stone (Note 23). This difference strongly marked the permanency and perpetual obligation of the moral law, and the inferior importance and temporary obligation of the ceremonial institutions; and even of the judicial law, except as coincident with the moral. - Thus the national covenant was renewed on the same terms as before."

Vs. 28. "Moses was miraculously supported, this second time, to fast forty days and nights; and it is probable, he did not sleep at all, but spent much of his time in prayer and supplication for his people. - 'He wrote, 'that is, 'the Lord.' - (Marg. Ref. q; Note 1)."

The application of the above passage is contained under
"Practical Observation." Scott comments that

"While we take encouragement from the promises of God, we must observe to do his commandments; else every external advantage will only serve to increase our condemnation: and in seeking assurance that the Lord hath made us with an everlasting covenant of peace, we must break every covenant with sin, renounce all needless connexion with sinners, shun every snare and temptation, avoid all appearance of evil, and not spare or covet any object that tends to it: for 'the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God,' and will endure no rival in our affections. Nor is anything more enannating to souls, or more destructive to religion, than the marriages of God's people with those who are ungodly, or of a false religion. - Such is our forgetfulness in the concerns of our souls, that we need not only to have the same thing repeated in our ears, but to have them committed to writing, that we may have them ever before our eyes. (Note II Peter 1:12-15) — While we devote ourselves to the Lord's service, and attend with delight on his worship, we may entrust ourselves and our possessions to his keeping, with confidence that none can do us any real hurt: and when a due portion of our time and substance is consecrated to his immediate service, we secure a sanctified and comfortable enjoyment of the remainder. - What true believer would not willingly forego all sensual pleasures, to enjoy with Moses 'the sacred pleasure of the holy mount? But alas! though 'it is good to be there,' how backward are we to begin the sweet service of prayer and praise, and how apt to grow weary of it! In heaven it shall be otherwise: no leisure for such things as here occupy our time and engross our hearts, no thought of them, no desire after them."

On the interpretation of prophetic and apocalyptic books, Scott is cautious and comparatively straightforward. This is confirmed by J. H. Overton who observes that Evangelical leaders such as Thomas Scott and Charles Simeon opposed the crude, prophetic speculations so prevalent in those days,¹ In writing to his friend the Rev. John Mayor in 1821, Scott indirectly reveals his low opinion of prophetic

speculations. He writes, "so you are become a dabbler in prophecy, as almost every one is in these days." The Commentator, therefore, though he was writing through the French and Napoleonic wars, fails to find them mentioned in Daniel or the book of Revelation. But Scott does see in Old Testament prophecy predictions concerning Christ and the Gospel. Because he firmly believed that the central theme of the entire Scripture is Jesus Christ and His salvation, he also believed that the Bible must always be read in the light of this truth. The presupposition of all Scripture is 'Christ crucified.' Scott earnestly read the New Testament into the Old Testament because "most parts of the Old dispensation are representative of Christ and the gospel . . ." By this affirmation he followed the classical Christian view expressed by Augustine, "The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old becomes manifest in the New." It was, in Scott's opinion, because of Christ's presence in the Old Testament that it became a living word for the Christian. With Christ shining through, the darkest passages became brilliant transparencies. The Commentator saw Christ everywhere in Scripture. In the angel of the burning bush Christ

1 John Scott, op. cit., p. 511.

2 Comment by Scott at an Eclectic Meeting where the subject under discussion was "To what Extent does Scripture Authorise Typical Explanations?" Eclectic Notes, p. 61.

appeared to Moses,\(^1\) Solomon, the godly king described in Psalm seventy-two is confirmed in Christ: "As this is true in all godly kings so, it is chiefly verified in Christ, who, with his heavenly dew maketh his church ever to flourish."\(^2\) Scott's attitude to the Old Testament readily corresponds to that of the New Testament writers themselves:

"To them the whole story of the people of Israel; their divine call, their redemption from Egypt, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, the triumphant establishment of the worship of Jehovah in the Holy Land, the building of the temple, the tragedy of the exile, and the subsequent resurrection and return of the remnant of Zion - are all foreshadowings of the greater and final salvation given in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, apart from which they have in themselves no abiding significance and are not fully comprehensible."\(^3\)

All prophecy shone with the reflected radiance of the Light of the world which was to come. Commenting on Isaiah chapter forty, Scott explains,

Vs. 1-2 "We now enter upon the latter part of this book, in which the name of the prophet is not mentioned; but it proceeds, as in one continued discourse, is full of consolatory topicks, and treats almost entirely, and most clearly, of Christ and evangelical subjects. The whole seems to have been written after the deliverance of the Jews from the Assyrian invasion, and towards the close of the prophet's life; and the style and imagery are elegant, rich, and often most sublime ..., though some reference is made in many places to the return of the Jews from Babylon; yet the prophet is so carried above all temporal deliverances, in the foresight of the great redemption of Christ and its most glorious effects, that it would often be absurd and vain to seek for any allusion to inferior events, in the language employed by him."\(^4\)

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In the same magnificent chapter, he also comments,

Vs. 3-5 "It is generally supposed that the prophet here refers to the proclamation of Cyrus, and to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. . . . But the coming of Jehovah to his people, not their return to Jerusalem, is predicated; and though his protecting presence with them on that occasion may be alluded to; yet this forms a feeble interpretation compared with that of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. John the Baptist, in the desert land (an apt emblem of the barren state of the Jewish church at that time) was a herald sent to proclaim the approach of Christ as Jehovah their God." 1

In the New Testament, Scott maintains his principles of literal interpretation and he continues to allow the scriptures to illumine themselves by extensive marginal references. The coming of Christ, His sacrificial death, and His triumphant resurrection are treated as the fulfilment of the Old Testament record and as the supreme truth which runs from the Gospel of St. Matthew through the book of Revelation. Let us look at a few of his often masteristic New Testament expositions.

In the Gospel of John, chapter six, the Commentator maintains the Calvinistic view of verse thirty-seven: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." It is definite, states Scott, that God will never be without disciples, "for all whom the Father had given him, in his foreknowledge and choice of them, and by the covenant of redemption made with him as their Surety, will come to him." And none 'given to the son' shall be rejected or lost by Him, in life or death. 2

On verses thirty to thirty-five, and fifty-two to fifty-eight,

1 "Notes on Isaiah 40:3-5," Ibid.

2 "Notes on John 6:36-40," Commentary, Vol. V.
he affirms that the Person and work of Christ make Him the proper and sufficient sustenance of our spirits. "The flesh and blood of Christ . . . are as needful to the life and health of our souls, in our ruined state, as meat and drink are to the life and health of our bodies." ¹ He carefully guards against the opposite errors of Romanism and Socinianism, when explaining the nature of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood. He condemns, on the one hand, the doctrines of "Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, or any blessing inseparately connected with the act of receiving the Sacrament, independent of the faith or the unbelief of the receiver." ² On the other hand, Scott points out that the view which represents the eating and drinking as simply feeding on Christ's "words and doctrines"—"without explicit reference to 'faith in his blood'"—leads men by another way from the cardinal truth of Christianity. ³ The view held by Scott is succinctly described and reaffirmed by a late exposition: "The eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood is spiritual (6:63), and can only take place through the medium of faith (vvs. 35, 40, 47)." ⁴ It is indicative of the largeness and candour of Scott's outlook that he makes a distinct reference, in this passage, to the Sacrament of the

¹ "Notes on John 6:52-58," Commentary, Vol. V.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Lord's Supper.

The Commentator's remarks on Acts chapter ten, verse forty-seven, contain a defence of water baptism. Expounding on the fact that Cornelius and his household were baptized, Scott quotes Whitby against the Quakers who reject outward baptism:

"These words contain a plain and convincing demonstration of the falsehood of the Quaker's doctrine, that water-baptism is unnecessary to them, who have the inward baptism of the Spirit; since the apostle here, not only declares that water-baptism ought therefore to be administered to these persons, because they had already been baptized with the Holy Ghost; but also commands them to be baptized on that account."  

In Romans 6:3, he does not find the expression "buried with him by baptism into death" to be proof that immersion is necessary to baptism. The apostle "is evidently treating on the inward meaning, not the outward form, of that ordinance."  

Commenting on Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection . . .". Scott recognizes that there are two schools of interpretation. Some expositors, he notes, explain "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" as referring entirely to the instructions contained in the Old Testament which pertain to the Messiah's kingdom. Others confine them exclusively to the New Testament dispensation. Scott himself


2 "Notes on Romans 6:3-4," Commentary, Vol. VI.
interprets "the principles" as the "introductory elements of Christianity"; the more obvious and simple parts of Christianity that are connected with an initial profession of faith.\(^1\) The apostle, the Commentator continues, wanted to take his readers away from the introductory elements of Christianity into more sublime and spiritual doctrines.\(^2\) Moving on to verse two, "Of the doctrine of baptism . . . resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment," Scott inserts a long quotation from Whitby to show that Origen was wrong in putting a limit on the torments of the damned. Whitby cites Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Cyprian to indicate the endless duration of the sufferings of the condemned. Needless to say, many interpreters have not followed these honored Fathers on this point.

On the latter part of James 4:5, "The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy," he interprets "the spirit" not, with many later writers, as the Holy Spirit, but as the fallen human spirit. He discusses, though, the question of whether it might be understood to be the Holy Spirit. His verdict is that the Holy Spirit may be referred to; but, with such a view, the clause must be regarded as a question: "Does the Spirit, which dwelleth in us, lust to envy?"\(^3\) Expositors are still undecided as to the interpretation of the clause. J. B. Mayor believes it is best to take \(Τὸ \nuνθὸς\) as the subject

\(^1\) "Notes on Hebrews 6:1-3," *Commentary*, Vol. VI.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) "Notes on James 4:14-6," Ibid.
to ἐν τοῖς ἡμεραῖς --"the Spirit which he made to dwell in us jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart." God is thus represented as yearning for His own Spirit in us.

R. J. Knowling feels it is possible to take "the spirit" as meaning the human spirit (cf. Gen. 2:7, Ecc. 12:1, Eccles. 12:7) the main objection of such a rendering being that the human spirit would scarcely be spoken of as the spirit which God "made to dwell in us." The Abingdon Commentary does not indicate that there is any specific reference to the Holy Spirit. It identifies the spirit with "the immaterial part of man which God made to dwell in us at the creation (Gen. 2:7)."

Finally, on the book Revelation, Scott peruses his interpretation by emphasizing that the book consists chiefly of prophetic material. But, he immediately quotes from Bishop Newton and warns that the purpose of prophecy is not to make prophets out of the interpreters of Scripture:

"God gave this [The Apocalypse] and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities, by enabling them to foreknow things; but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and his [God's] own providence (or foresight), not the interpreter's, might be manifest thereby to the world."
One example of his exposition of the book of Revelation can be taken from chapter seventeen. The Commentator affirms that "No one can doubt that Rome is meant in this chapter." The only question is whether "Rome Pagan or Rome Papal" is designated. Scott, with many of the greatest Protestant expositors, decides that by the description none other than "Rome Papal" is intended.¹

Summary and Evaluation

A few points of evaluation will conclude this chapter. It is evident, first of all, that Scott was not adequately equipped for his task. He did not possess a precise knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. He had little familiarity with the literature or languages of modern Europe. His acquaintance with the Patristic or medieval writings was meager. He did not have a firm grasp of such related subjects as geography, chronology, political and natural history. And he lacked the highly developed acumen of a skilled textual critic.

There is the defect created by the circumstances under which the Commentary was composed. The great haste with which Scott wrote hampered the mature and methodical arrangement of his thoughts. This deficiency in his workmanship was, to be sure, improved with each revision; but the clumsiness of the original is never completely erased. Genuine exegesis requires time, detachment, and long periods of concentration—

¹"Notes on Revelation 17," Ibid.
assets that Thomas Scott did not possess until late in life.

There is, too, that weakness caused by the age in which the Commentary was penned. It is not to be expected that Scott could possibly anticipate all that historical and Biblical criticism, and modern exegesis have done to increase our understanding of Scripture. He naturally overlooks much that has become highly significant. Although Scott does not intentionally evade difficulties, he does frequently pass over them. Whether this occasional superficiality is due to the lack of knowledge at his disposal or to his personal unawareness of problems is not certain.

As a literary production the Commentary is desperately lacking. There is no elegance of exposition and no beauty of illustration. Scott treads a monotonous path and keeps close to the bleak, brown earth. Hardly any attempt is made to incorporate some warmth or vivacity into his comments. The light he sheds is straightforward without intriguing shadows or interesting shades of color.

But the Commentary is still useful despite its defects. "Those who know it best," writes Charles J. Abbey, "speak in high terms of this great undertaking. They see in every page of it the great diligence, the Scriptural knowledge, the deep religious feeling, and the independent thought of its author..."¹ And so it is. One cannot help but be impressed by the intellectual energy, the diligence, the originality, the

¹Charles J. Abbey, The English Church and Its Bishops, II, 143.
integrity and the piety that are so deeply embedded in the Commentary.

Scott was true to his purpose. He clearly and honestly relates to the person of average intelligence the meaning of Scripture for doctrine and life. There is no parade of learning, no extensive quotations, and no display of erudition. He faithfully gave the plain meaning of Scripture to the plain man. By the make and order of his intellect, by temperament and specific gifts, Thomas Scott had no patience with fanciful speculations and so-called spiritual allegorizing. He swept aside the beclouding mists of superimposed learning and went straight to the heart of the words before him.

A. C. Downer rightly recognizes that

"Each expositor has his own gift and his own contribution to make. Mr. Scott's was that of plain interpretation, clear doctrine, and faithful application. It has stood the test of time and ... in all the essential features that concern godliness here and eternal salvation it must forever hold its ground among the great books of the world."¹

The Commentary is strongly marked by originality. Almost all the comments are thought out by the author himself, and are not borrowed from others. A very competent Bible scholar and historian of our day justly claims that Scott's Commentary has "a certain originality and consistency which is sometimes lacking in similar works produced under more favorable conditions. His comments are often fresh and always sensible, ..."² It is not a mere rehash of previous

¹A. C. Downer, ibid., p. 73.
authors but a product of individual reflection and critical discrimination.

The principles upon which Scott based his interpretation of the Biblical text are sound; and they are faithfully employed. His determination to learn the literal meaning of a passage before looking for any other application is still being emphasized by Biblical scholars:

"It is a good rule that in trying to understand the Bible we should not have recourse to a figurative or allegorical explanation of any passage (outside these poetical and prophetical compositions which obviously have a symbolic intention) without first settling conclusions with the straightforward meaning, even if it seems offensive; for the offense may set up that tension in the mind through which we often reach the truth."  

And Scott's insistence upon the principle that Scripture must be the primary interpreter of itself is a bold but solid canon of interpretation. It is a method employed by many of the most able expositors of the Christian Church.

In addition to these primary principles of interpretation, Scott carefully abides by several other well-established and important rules of exposition. A modern Bible handbook defines the points that should be considered when interpreting a Biblical text. ² Besides the two principles already mentioned, the list includes six others—all of which the Commentator used consistently. The rules cited are the following: (1) Interpret the part in relation to the whole, (2) Recognize the general purpose of all Scripture, i.e., to reveal the ways

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of God with man, particularly His salvation for sinful men. (3) Regard Christ as the main subject of all Scripture. (4) Recognize that the truth is infinite and many-sided. (5) Recognize individual limitations and respect the judgment of other Christians. (6) Seek the enlightenment and testimony of the Holy Spirit. Each of these principles, as has been demonstrated in this chapter, is recognized and utilized in Scott's Commentary.

The chief asset of the Commentary is that it is infused with the profound piety of the author's own soul. A sympathetic critic declares that Scott has "descended further into the meaning of the sacred oracles, and has been baptized more copiously into their spirit than the most animated and ingenious and accomplished of his competitors." There is nothing coldly academic to rob the exposition of its spiritual helpfulness. Thomas Scott sought to supply men with the same nourishment that he had received from the hand of his God. "That the Bible was to himself he endeavored to make it for others—a light for the daily path, a shelter in the time of need, a storehouse of comfort and assurance. He is a witness to the fact that personal faith is the condition and source of all truly Christian Biblical interpretation.

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1Sir James Stephen, op. cit., p. 429; cf. above, p. 140.
CHAPTER V

SCOTT'S THEOLOGY: A SYSTEMATIC STATEMENT

It was a strong, systematic, outspoken, and determined reaction against the prevailing standards both of life and preaching. It aimed at bringing back, on a large scale, and by an aggressive movement, the Cross, and all that the Cross essentially implies, both into the teaching of the clergy, and into the lives as well of the clergy as of the laity.

--William E. Gladstone, Characterization of the Evangelical "School."

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analytic and systematic study of the theological thought of Thomas Scott. As an early Evangelical, Scott maintained most of the doctrines that are usually considered to be characteristic of that "party." But it is not to be thought that the commentator simply transcribed what he assimilated from other Evangelicals. Rather, he brought to his study of theology the depth of his own Christian experience, his own profound and comprehensive understanding of Scripture, his independent and discerning judgment; and by means of his creative faculties he formulated his own distinctive exposition of Christian truth.

As Calvin's thought was overshadowed by the one great concept of the sovereignty of God, so Scott's was dominated by the single overpowering fact of the crucified Christ. From his discussion of the nature of the Father to his exhortations for holy living, Scott views the Christ of the Cross as central and supreme. True knowledge of God comes only to the man who sees through the 'eyes of faith' what God has done in the person and work of His Son. Speculation about God, the Creator, may reveal an ordering supernatural will; conjecture about God as the sustaining power behind natural laws may reveal a carefully planned cosmos; but real knowledge of the Triune God is most fully revealed in His great Act of Redemption. But the Commentator does not stop here. He is vitally concerned about the implications of this cardinal truth. It is his conviction that a holy life should be a sign of the converted life; and it is important to recognize that Scott seldom, if ever, wrote or spoke doctrinally without speaking ethically. The knowledge of God, through the Son, must be ratified by the Holy Spirit in a life of evident and increasing holiness. With this telescopic glimpse of Scott's convictions before us, it is possible to turn to a detailed examination of his individual doctrines.

God: His Love and Holiness

Knowledge of God

Scott's theology begins with God. His theocentric approach is based upon a conviction that it is only through a
knowledge of God that man can realize his sinfulness and consequently see his need for redemption. Only through a prior knowledge of perfection can one recognize imperfection; only by viewing absolute holiness, can man become aware of his utter lack of holiness. To know God in all the splendor of His infinite and holy love is to become aware of our sin and guilt. And to become conscious of sin and guilt is to recognize the necessity of the forgiveness and reconciliation provided in the Cross of Christ.

For an accurate delineation of the character and nature of God, one must rely entirely upon the Biblical record. "Every attentive and intelligent student of the Bible will perceive, that . . . by instructing him in the character and perfections of 'the one living and true God,' and in the way in which he would be worshipped and served, was, in some respects, the principal end for which revelation was vouchsafed."¹ Man may try, apart from revelation, to describe the character of God, but all such efforts are futile: "When sinful men presume to delineate the character of God for themselves, however learned or sagacious they may be, their reasonings will inevitably be warped by the general depravity of fallen nature, and by their own peculiar prejudice and vices."² Without revelation God would not be known as the loving and just Father Who is willing and able to redeem from sin. As a Gifford Lecturer has said, "Natural theology, at best, will give us

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² Ibid., p. 50.
indications only of an 'architect of the universe,' not of a just judge of men, still less of an unseen friend and father. In order to learn the true nature of the God who saves, says Scott, man must not 'lean to his own understanding' but must carefully 'search the Scriptures.'

Character of God

Turning to the Biblical description, Scott finds that God makes Himself known in two distinct ways: (1) By express declarations; and (2) by His works and dispensations which illustrate the declarations. First, there are the Lord's express declarations. Jehovah is spoken of as "the high and lofty One, who inhabited eternity." "Heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool." "The heaven of heavens cannot contain him." "From everlasting to everlasting he is God." He is "the Almighty, the all-sufficient God." These and countless other declarations, asserts Scott, "expressly and emphatically ascribe eternity, self-existence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, incomprehensible greatness and majesty, and essential felicity and glory in full perfection, to the Lord our God." And God is not only infinite in power, knowledge, and greatness; He is also infinite in truth, justice, and goodness. Continually we read in the Scriptures that Jehovah "is

3 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works," "A God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he," God is thus declared to be both infinitely holy in his nature, and unalterably righteous in his government of the world. ¹

Above all else, God is merciful and loving: "Mercy, therefore is spoken of in scripture, as the peculiar glory of God, and the grand subject of the believer's confidence, joy, and grateful praise,"² And, "loving-kindness is his peculiar honour, which adds lustre to all his other attributes."³ Yet, when the Scriptures proclaim God to be "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering, and ready to forgive," it does not mean that He will countenance evil, for all His expressions of love are connected with "a holy abhorrence and righteous indignation against sin."⁴ God's love is a holy love. Or, in the words of a distinguished and insistent exponent of God's holiness: "If God's love were not essentially holy love, in course of time mankind would cease to respect it, and consequently to trust it ..., God's holy law is His own holy nature, His love is under the condition of eternal respect. It is quite unchangeable."⁵ Scott believes that from the very

¹Ibid., pp. 24-25.
²Ibid., p. 36.
³Thomas Scott, "God is Love" (1 John 4:8), from Sermons on Select Subjects, in Works, IV, 74.
beginning there has been an indication that God's mercy is always exercised in complete harmony with His justice, "and that Jehovah would, through the promised Seed, be 'a just God and a Saviour.' 1

All of God's attributes are explicitly illustrated in His works and dispensations. 2 In the works of creation and in the miracles wrought for the deliverance of His people from their enemies, indeed, in all of God's providential goodness the "natural perfections of God" are clearly displayed. Scott feels that the providential goodness of God is so obvious that it is not necessary to give a detailed description of it. His concern is not to speak in ambiguous generalities about God and His creation: he wishes to observe the specific relationship between God and His creations in terms of the plan of salvation. For it is in the light of God's redemptive purpose that the "combination of justice, holiness, truth, and mercy which has been stated as constituting the divine character, is manifested." 3 Infinite in holiness and justice, God denounced on fallen Adam and his race the awful sentence: "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return." The destruction of the old world by the deluge, the plagues of Egypt, and all of the judgments inflicted on the rebellious Israelites exhibit the "awful holiness" and the justice of God in working out the

2 Ibid., p. 53.
3 Ibid.
the salvation of His people.\(^1\) On the other hand, the Lord's patience, compassion, mercy, and grace are also exhibited in His dealings with fallen man. "He endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath." He has always been ready to forgive the penitent, to relieve the distressed, and to comfort the broken hearted. "His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation."\(^2\) If God has revealed His wrath in dealing with the rebellious people of Israel, He has also constantly displayed His faithfulness and mercy. God delivered His people from bondage. He gave them His holy law which illustrated so definitely the perfection of His character:

"The great Lawgiver prefaced his injunctions, by proclaiming his own essential and immutable glory and perfection: 'I am Jehovah.' As the source of existence, and consequently of all power, wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness, He is the standard of excellence and beauty; from whom all created amiableness is an emanation; of whose glory it is a feeble reflection. To Him alone the throne belongs. He only is qualified to be the universal lawgiver and judge; and he has the sole and unalienable title to that love and service which his law demands."\(^3\)

But primarily and ultimately it is "redemption by the Incarnation of Emmanuel and his atoning blood" that reveals the glory of God's character.\(^4\) All the divine attributes are seen "in perfect harmony only in the face of Jesus Christ."\(^5\) It is in

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\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Thomas Scott, "A Brief Exposition of the Ten Commandments, as Comprising the Substance of the Moral Law," in Works, II, 65.


\(^5\)Ibid.
the recognition of this greatest of all mysteries that we find the key to an understanding of all the other mysteries of the Deity. Through the realization of this truth, we are brought to worship the one true God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The Godhead: Doctrine of the Trinity

Fundamental to Scott's entire understanding of God is his decided views on the doctrine of the Trinity. The Commentator had once been anti-trinitarian and had almost left the Church of England because of his objections to this doctrine. But a study of the Scriptures eventually revealed the truth and importance of the Trinity so that he believed it to be "like the keystone of an arch" in his theological system. The Scriptures, he writes, most definitely teach that

"... the one living and true God is, in some inexplicable manner, triumphant, for he is spoken of as one in some respects, and as three in others. Nor is it a matter of subordinate importance; since the dependence, confidence, effections, and worship peculiar to Christianity, are manifestly connected by an indissoluble tie, with our sentiments in this respect."2

To deny the Trinity is to endanger the very being of the God of the Bible:

"Is it not possible, that the 'supreme Being' of Antitrinitarians, whether Jews, Christian, or Mohammedans, may be no more the true God, than Baal or Jupiter was? Not only the mysteries of his nature, but the perfection of his justice and holiness, are

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2Ibid., pp. 262 - 263.
(to say no more) grievously veiled and clouded by all Antitrinitarians."1

Scott does not pretend to be able to comprehend completely the doctrine of the Trinity. Instead, he confesses it to be "a mystery."2 We acknowledge, he says, that the trinity of persons in the Deity consists with the unity of the divine essence "though we pretend not to explain the modus of it, and deem those reprehensible who have attempted it."3 At the same time, to admit that the Trinity is a mystery does not mean that it is merely a vague, shadowy notion. It is simply to affirm that it cannot be known through the processes of man's speculation, but must be received as a fact of revealed truth. Because the Trinity (as all of the mysteries of God) is above reason, it is understood "not by reasoning but by believing."4 For Thomas Scott, as for Thomas Aquinas, the Trinity is the classic example of the kind of doctrine which can only be made known to man by divine revelation; and like Calvin, Scott's exposition of the Trinity is an exposition of what he accepts as the Biblical revelation.5 What God has clearly revealed, explains the Commentator, can be perceived

1Thomas Scott, "Answer to Crocoll's Restoration of Israel," in Works, IX, 476.


3Ibid.

4Thomas Scott, Answer to Paine's 'Age of Reason,' in Works, V, 244.

as a definite reality through faith; but surrounding all
the mysteries of God there still remains an element of dark-
ness. Even the man of faith "is still greatly in the dark,
and must wait for further light till the Lord sees that it
is good to afford it."\(^1\) Revelation, writes Emil Brunner,
"does not remove the mystery of God; on the contrary, the
revelation deepens the mystery of God." There is still "some-
thing which can never be said; something unfathomably myster-
ious."\(^2\) It is in this sense that Scott claims the Trinity to
be mysterious. He thus describes the Godhead in these words:

"The scriptures plainly ascribe divine perfections
and operations to the 'Father, to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit; and use the strongest language of personality
respecting each of them, even in plain commands and
promises: and, as there can be but one infinite and etern-
al God, we infer that He is revealed as subsisting in
three persons; being Three in one sense, and One in
another. But how these things are, we cannot comprehend,
and should not attempt to explain, further than the
oracles of God have done it. The doctrine is an article
of faith; the modus is not. We do not say that one is
three, or three one, which is a contradiction; but, as
man consists of a material body, an animal life, and a
rational soul, and is thus threefold in some sense, though
strictly one individual; so the Deity is One in essence,
but in some mysterious manner is Triune. This illustra-
tion is not meant as an illustration of the manner in
which the Deity is Three and yet One, for that cannot
be illustrated; but it shows that there is no contradic-
tion in saying that the same being may be threefold in
one sense, and one in another."\(^3\)

The Commentator recognizes that the doctrine of the
Trinity is only implied and not formally enunciated in the Bible.

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, trans. by

\(^3\) Thomas Scott, Answer to Paine's 'Age of Reason,' in
Works, V, 241-245.
His emphasis, therefore, is upon texts which ascribe divine titles and operations to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He points out that when Christ was baptized, the Father, by a voice from heaven, declared Him to be His beloved Son and publicly sealed His appointment to the mediatorial office; and the Holy Spirit, descending under the emblematic representation of a dove, lighted upon Him so that through Him the Spirit could be communicated to all His true disciples: "Thus the Three Persons in the sacred Trinity, evidently acted according to the parts sustained by them in the great work of man's salvation."\(^1\) The appointed form of Christian baptism Scott finds even more conclusive when he notes that the formula reads: "Baptizing them in the name (not the names) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Would it not, he asks, "greatly tend to mislead us, if a mere creature, attribute, or mode of operation, were joined with the one true God in this ordinance?"\(^2\) Again, the Godhead is seen as a 'Trinity in Unity' when Jesus says: "The Spirit of truth shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All the things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13-15). In these words, contends Scott, Jesus Himself "evidently establishes the doctrine of the Trinity."\(^3\) The Commentator lists many of the other instances

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\(^2\) *Ibid*.

in Scriptures where the Trinity is obviously implied. He concludes with a reference to the Apostolic Benediction (II Corinthians 13:14). Calling these trinitarian words of Paul a solemn act of worship, Scott writes: "It was a prayer in behalf of the Corinthians for all the blessings of salvation; and these he sought from the Lord Jesus and from the Holy Spirit, as well as from God the Father."\(^1\)

The problem of the Trinity Scott thus finds solved and resolved in God's work of salvation. When the Bible speaks of the Three Persons in their redemptive activity there is no shadow of inequality, for each Person of the Godhead is equally described as omnipotent. When Christ declared, "My father is greater than I," He spoke as Mediator, as God-man, not as God. Christ's reference to the Spirit as 'one sent' may seem to imply subordination; but here again, in the light of God's redemptive work, it becomes clear that the reference is to the Spirit's office, not to His person. The Spirit is sent for the purpose of making effectual in the heart of man, the redeeming power released by Christ.\(^2\)

To sum up Scott's doctrine of God, we may say: He accepts the God of the Bible on the basis of his conviction that the written Word is the infallible testimony of God. The Commentator is not interested in proving the existence of God. He is concerned about acknowledging the God Who has revealed

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 269.

Himself in the Scriptures. When describing the character of
God, Scott stresses the Father's infinite love and the ex-
pression of that love in complete harmony with His perfect
holiness and justice. The tension in which these attributes
always exist is important to notice, for it is upon this basic
supposition that Scott constructs the rest of his theological
thought. From Adam's fall and the ensuing sentence of death
pronounced upon his race, through the redemptive life and work
of Christ, to the final judgment of heaven and hell, Scott
sees the love and holiness of God displayed and vindicated.
In his concept of the Trinity, Scott again is not interested
in metaphysical speculations but is intent on acknowledging
the testimony of the Scriptures. He would concur with Brunner
that "The starting-point of the doctrine of the Trinity is
.. not a speculative one, but the simple testimony of the
New Testament."\(^1\) It is in the light of the work of redemp-
tion that Thomas Scott views and explains the Trinity. And
by means of this approach he can affirm the truth of the
Triune God without a dextrous manipulation of abstract ideas.
He retains the mysterious element involved in the Godhead and
at the same time he includes the concrete fact of Christian
experience where—after all—the reality of the Trinity must
ultimately be discovered.

Man: His Sin and Death

Man's wickedness: Presence of Evil

A central axis around which the whole of the Commentator's theological teaching revolves is the Fall of man and the consequent total depravity of every human heart. "When the root of our race thus fell," Scott emphatically reiterates, "all the branches fell with him, and became mortal and sinful." By his constant emphasis upon this fact Scott prepared the way for the heart of his theology—the need of redemption and the satisfaction of that need in the Cross of Christ.

First of all there is the undeniable presence of evil: "It cannot be denied that the world is full of crime and miseries; this is certain, whether men believe or disbelieve the Bible," Scott points out that even those who are opposed to the doctrine of human depravity show, by the caution with which they transact their affairs, that they consider mankind in general to be basically selfish and deceitful. Men are suspicious, growing increasingly distrustful of one another. Hatred, pride, malice, lust, falsehood, envy, and covetousness abound. Moreover, it is evident that "all our comforts are entwined with cares and disquietudes; every enjoyment, after a while, palls and grows insipid; all our possessions are precarious, and may either be torn from us, or become the

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1 Thomas Scott, "A Conversation becoming the Gospel" (Philippians 1:27), Sermons on Select Subjects, Works, IV, 467.

2 Ibid., p. 465.
causes of the most terrible anguish. Pain and sickness are all around us. Death casts its woeful shadow over the whole of man's uncertain existence. In order to escape the harsh realities of life, men turn either to dissipating pleasures or to the anguish of their solitude.

Man's Disobedience and Fall: Origin and Nature of Sin

The presence of evil is everywhere apparent, contends Scott. But how is its existence to be explained? If the righteous and holy God created man 'in His own image' and saw that all of creation was 'very good,' how have suffering, sadness, and chaos come into being? In his explanation, Scott provides a striking contrast to the general opinion of the Eighteenth Century. A modern study has revealed that in the Eighteenth Century it was thought that the conflict "between the idea that God made all things 'good,' and the experience that much exists, both in the material and moral worlds, which is 'evil,'" could no longer be resolved by the Christian doctrine of the Fall. A more favorable interpretation of the scheme of things was desired for that day.

"The Newtonian universe seemed to work as perfectly as if no Fall had taken place; perhaps, then, all things are even now still in their proper order? perhaps the status quo is what God intended and intends? Even man is not vile, but exactly what he should be--since everything that exists contributes perforce to the 'good' of the

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1 Ibid., pp. 465-466.
3 Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 46.
whole system?"¹

Shaftesbury exemplifies the Eighteenth Century attitude. He solved the problem of evil by denying its existence. What appears to be evil, explained Shaftesbury, is not evil at all, but it only appears as such because of our ignorance.²

The typical Eighteenth Century view appeared to Scott to be both unrealistic and unbiblical. He believed man's sinful state to be an undeniable fact of experience as well as an irrevocable declaration of God's Word: "experience and observation prove him [man] to be naturally and universally prone to evil, and averse from good; and if the scripture pronounce him evil, and 'abominable,' and 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart to be only evil continually'; he must be fallen from what he was originally."³ The presence of evil is, then, due to man's fallen nature. And man's fallen nature, Scott traces back to Adam's disobedience of God's commandment--"not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."⁴ He describes the Fall in the following words:

"... the first parents of our race ungratefully rebelled against their bountiful Creator, and disobeyed his express and easy command. Thus 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' The holy image of God was

¹Ibid.


³Thomas Scott, A Discourse on Repentance, in Works, I, 14².

effaced, and from that time man was naturally incapable of spiritual fitness, dead in sin, and prone to every kind of evil." 1

Because of Adam's disobedience, "all men are 'born in sin,'" being by nature inclined to evil and disinclined to good.

"It is the universal law of the creation, that every plant, or animal, possesses the properties of that from which it was derived. When Adam became a sinner he begat sons 'in his own likeness' and that which the Creator had pronounced 'very good' soon became very bad ..." 2

Scott does not attempt to explain the initial problem of how a righteous nature (God) can procreate unrighteousness. He simply says that man who was created good, was endowed with freedom to choose, and that God, having given Adam his freedom of choice, proceeded to test his obedience. Adam failed the test; he responded to his own desire rather than obeying the command of God. In his view of the entrance of man into the world, Scott is basically Augustinian. The Commentator maintained that Adam's sin was not due to the possession of a fleshly nature. Adam was created by God and his flesh as well as his spirit was good not bad. Rather, Scott believes, like Augustine, that man's 'fall' was "due to pride, the greatest of all sins, which means putting of self before God and a denial of one's absolute dependence on Him." 3

Man, through Adam, is a depraved creature. But how completely and in what sense is the natural man depraved? Scott maintains that "Adam, in that very day died; that is, became 'dead in sin,' and 'dead to God and holiness'; 'the Spirit of life' wholly left him; he entirely lost that 'image of God' in which he was created, as far as it consisted in holiness, and the capacity of choosing and delighting in God and things spiritually excellent . . ."¹ In the same way, all of Adam's posterity "bears his image as fallen, and not his image as God first created him."² Scott does not hold that natural man is incapable of any good. Fallen man "has life as a rational intelligent agent, and is capable of intellectual pursuits and pleasures . . . he is capable even of many things of a moral nature, and can take a kind of pleasure, on one account or other, in things good before men."³ But man, in his natural state, is completely void of any holiness that will meet the demands of a holy God: "he is entirely dead as to the holy image of God, and totally incapable of those employments and joys in which, according to Scripture, the happiness of heaven consists."⁴

2 Ibid., p. 15.
3 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
4 Ibid., p. 16.

irresistible power of sin as affecting man's being."\(^1\) And although we have begun by mentioning Scott's thought on the origin of sin, it must be said that his treatment of this aspect of the doctrine of man's sin is held soberly in check. The Commentator's emphasis is where Brunner says that it ought to be---on the power and consequence of sin.

Scott affirms that through a deliberate act of rebellion against the divine will, the spirit of evil has been introduced into every human heart. The first effect of the powerful presence of sin is man's alienation from God—his spiritual death: "Nothing spiritually good, or 'good in the sight of God' is found in our fallen nature."\(^2\) God had warned Adam that "'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die'; dying thou shalt die. But first Eve, and then Adam did eat; and thus they incurred the sentence of death."\(^3\) Not only spiritual death, but also what the Commentator calls temporal and eternal death were incurred.

"We determine then, 1. That death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, 'the second death' was implied in the sentence denounced against our first parents. 2. That spiritual death took place immediately, and temporal death gradually. They became at the fall mortal, and sufferers; and at length they died."\(^4\)

\(^1\) Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, trans. by Olivo Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1939), Pootnote, p. 120.


\(^3\) Ibid., p. 14.

\(^4\) Ibid., pp. 16-17.
Adam's disobedience also brought physical and mental suffering. "It is evident that Adam and Eve became liable to pain, fatigue, disease, sufferings and temporal death." All of this anguish, Scott insists, is not the lot of man as a creature; it is the result of the creature's disobedience—of his sin. It was only subsequent to the Fall that life became a struggle on the hazardous road which leads to death.

The consequences of sin are, therefore, spiritual and physical death with all the accompanying evils. Using Pauline language to express his conviction, Scott asserts: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Again he writes:

"In consequence of the awful sentence, 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,' millions through successive ages have yielded to the stroke... We too feel the consequences of sin in our own personal pain and sickness, which are the forerunners of our dissolution: we too must have the sentence executed upon us in all its rigour."

Adam, then, was not the only one to experience suffering and death. These were passed on to his posterity as well: "Every man lies under a two-fold condemnation for his sins; he is sentenced to various temporal sufferings, which are to be terminated by death." All men as members of Adam's race come into the world unholy and mortal. Scott affirms with

1Tid., p. 14.
2Thomas Scott, Discourse on Repentance, in Works, I, 132.
3Tid.
Calvin that we "... derive an innate depravity from our very birth."1

But what does such a doctrine do to the justice of God? Can it be possible that a just and good God would place the fate of all men in the hands of one man? Scott's answer to this problem is incomplete. In one instance he merely remarks that "If we cannot perceive clearly the justice of this, we must silence our objections thus: 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"2 He observes, at another time, that the proper answer to those who object to man's Fall in Adam as being inconsistent with divine justice and goodness is found in the apostle's words, "May but, O man, who are thou that repliest against God?"3

Unlike the Pelagians and Socinians, Scott does not accept the idea that Adam was made mortal and would have died whether he had sinned or not. Man is punished, say the Pelagians and Socinians, for his own vices and not for those of another; and to allow something like the imputation of Adam's sin to all mankind is to destroy man's freedom and to damage the concept of a just God.4 Nor does Scott accept the opinion that God willed man's fall. Instead, the Commentator believed that God permitted sin to enter the world by Adam's disobedience;5

1John Calvin, Institutes, Bk. II, Ch. i, Sect. 5.
2Thomas Scott, Discourse on Repentance, in Works, I, 143.
and that Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity in virtue of the organic unity of mankind by which the whole race at the time of Adam's transgressions existed, not individually, but causally.\(^1\) Scott's view is essentially the Augustinian theory of Adam's Natural Headship.\(^2\) It is not the strictly Calvinistic idea that God willed that all men since Adam be born in sin.\(^3\) But the important thing for Scott is not a vindication of God's ways; it is a recognition of man's sinful situation. He strongly affirmed that all mankind 'fell' in Adam, but he regarded a personal recognition of our present depraved state to be the point of supreme importance. He would urge, in the words of A. E. Taylor, that every man confess: 'Whether Adam ever 'fell' or not, I am a 'fallen creature,' and I know it.'\(^4\)

**Jesus Christ: His Mediation and Reconciliation**

**Necessity and Provision of a Mediator**

Thomas Scott's emphasis on man's sinfulness is balanced by a corresponding emphasis on the divine provision for man's reclamation. Although completely depraved and condemned to death, man has been granted a way of escape. Through the mediation and atonement effected by the Person and Work of

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\(^1\)Thomas Scott, "On Original Sin," *Answer to Bishop Tomline,* in *Works,* VII, 17.


\(^3\)John Calvin, *Institutes,* Bk. II, Ch. 1, Sect. 7.

\(^4\)A. E. Taylor, *op. cit.,* I, 207.
Jesus Christ there is salvation. Into the great gulf which separates sinful man from the Holy God, there has come the Mediator, the Second Adam.

"When the first Adam had broken the commandment, and forfeited the covenant of his Creator, and so sin and death had entered into the world, to pass upon the whole race which was about to descend from him, then, was 'the second Adam,' the Lord from heaven, promised to be 'the mediator of a new covenant,' under the title of 'the Seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head.'"¹

The entrance of sin into the world made the intervention of a mediator imperative. Man, in his sin, was powerless to save himself; God, because of His perfect justice, required a reconciliation that would satisfy His holy nature.² The sin by which man had become corrupted had to be removed; the love and holiness of God had to be vindicated and satisfied. It is in the Person, and most particularly in the Cross of Christ, that Scott finds the fulfilment of these demands. Through the mediation of Christ, "sinners are saved, and yet God does not so much as seem to favour sin! Nay, he in the most decisive manner shows his judgment of what punishment it deserves . . . ."³

It is the holiness and justice of God that demands a mediator. Were God's love other than holy, atonement would not be necessary. God could then forgive man without regard to judgment.

² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p. 162.
"... if a righteous and holy God had not viewed sin as so evil in its nature and effects, that it would be utterly inconsistent with his glory to show mercy to transgressors, unless some constitution of this kind were formed, that love, which provided the mediator, would have sufficed to induce him to pardon without one. We must not, therefore, imagine that the mediation of Christ is needful in order to prevail with God to pity, love, and save sinners: on the contrary, we should consider it as the grand effect of his compassion and good will; and as intended to render the exercise of his plenteous mercy consistent with the honour of his justice. "

Man had forfeited his Creator's favor and deserved the sentence of death, but God, in his infinite love, provided "the reconciliation, recovery, and eternal felicity, of an innumerable multitude of the fallen race." such a provision had to be executed in the harmonious display of all of God's perfections. As was pointed out earlier in this chapter, Scott insisted that God's love must always be expressed in terms of his holiness and justice. And if the Commentator's concept of the Person and Work of Christ is to be understood and appreciated, his insistence on this fact must be clear. In the doctrine of the Mediator, the holy love of God is epitomized.

"It did not . . . become him as the infinitely righteous and holy governor of the universe, to show such favour to the guilty and unholy, without adopting some decisive method of declaring his judgment concerning their crimes and deserts. Otherwise it might have been suppos-ed that he did not utterly abhor sin; that he meant to desist from the demands of his violated law. . . . To obviate such conclusions, it became the glory of God to devise some plan, according to which the largest exercise of his pardoning mercy and saving grace, might consist with the most affecting display of his avenging justice and hatred of iniquity. For this purpose . . . his infinite wisdom and love formed, and then revealed, the

1Ibid., p. 160.
2Ibid.
For Scott, both the need and provision of a mediator is plain. Man's communion with God, broken by his arrogant rebellion, must be restored. Restoration can only be wrought by God Himself. Through the Person of Christ, the God-man, reconciliation is accomplished.

The Person of the Mediator

"The doctrine of a Mediator, through whom a just and holy God deals mercifully with believers is," asserts Scott, "the grand peculiarity of revelation." Because of this fact, it is of utmost importance that we have a proper understanding of the Person of the Mediator.

To fulfil God's purpose of redemption, it was essential that Jesus Christ be both divine and human. Only by being, in the fullest sense, both God and man could the Mediator bridge the great abyss which separated the creature from his Creator. In Scott's day, the deity of Christ was being jeopardized by widespread antitrinitarianism, with a desire to counteract these attacks and to preserve what he felt to be Christianity's most central doctrine, the Commentator devotes a great amount of effort to establishing the divinity of Christ. He insists that the deity of Christ must be substantiated, for the very life of Christianity depends upon it:

1Ibid., p. 161.
3Ibid.
4See above, Chap. I, p. 14f.
We are not in all cases capable of determining exactly what things are essential to our holy religion, and what are not; yet the Scriptures most evidently declare some particulars to be so; and I cannot but consider the doctrine of our Lord's Deity as one of these essentials; nor do I hesitate to say that Christianity itself must stand or fall with it.1

In order to establish the divinity of Christ, the Commentator sets forth seven main proofs. His arguments consist primarily of collected Scripture texts which indicate or imply that Jesus Christ is divine. Because Scott devotes so much labor to this subject, and because the collation of Scripture texts is his favorite and most characteristic method of argumentation, we shall present his discussion on this point somewhat fully.

Scott argues, first that Jesus is expressly called God and Lord. He cites John 1:1-13: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (vs. 1); Philippians 2:5-8, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (vs. 6); Colossians 1:15-17, "...He is the image of the invisible God..." (vs. 15); Hebrews, chapter one, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person..." (vs. 3); and 1 Corinthians 15:47, "...the second man is the Lord from heaven."2

Secondly, Scott argues that several texts of the Old Testament concerning Jehovah are applied, in the New Testament,

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1 Thomas Scott, "The Doctrine of Christ's Deity Shown to be Essential to Christianity," in *Works*, II, 133.

to Christ. The prophet Joel declares that "whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered" (Joel 2:32); and the apostle Paul, states Scott, applies these words to Christ in Romans 10:13. Again, the Psalmist says, "Taste and see that Jehovah is good" (Psalms 34:8); and it is to this that the apostle Peter refers when he uses the words: "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:3). Scott points out that John mentions the extraordinary vision which Isaiah had of Jehovah in his temple; and then the Evangelist declares that the prophet "saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him" (Isaiah 6; John 12:39-41). Primarily, Scott rests this aspect of his argument on Christ's own references to Himself, in relation to the Old Testament. Jehovah, speaking to Moses, declared Himself to be self-existent, immutable, and eternal, by saying, "I am that I Am." This declaration Christ applies to Himself when He said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was I am," (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58). Scott contends that had Christ said, 'Before Abraham was, I was,' it would have been enough to indicate His pre-existence; but taking the expression as it actually stands, there is no meaning to the words unless Christ be acknowledged as the eternal God.\(^1\) And again, Isaiah introduces Jehovah saying, "I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God." (Isaiah 44:6). Scott shows that Christ repeatedly made the same assertion concerning Himself:\(^2\) "Fear not, I am the First and

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 112.

\(^2\)Revelation 1:8, 11, 17, 18; 2:8; 22:13.
the Last" (Revelation 1:17). 1

Thirdly, Scott argues that Christ's Deity is manifest in the things which Christ said concerning Himself and in the claims made by His disciples concerning Him. "Destroy this temple," said Jesus, "and in three days I will raise it up again ... but he spoke of the temple of his body" (John 2: 19, 21). Only if Christ had a nature that was truly divine could He possess "power to lay down His life and power to take it again," observes Scott, 2 when Jesus was reprimanded for healing on the Sabbath, He answered, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). The Jews considered this a declaration by Jesus that "God was his own (α̃λstruction Father," and by such words He was making Himself "equal with God" (John 5:18). Christ's reply to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9), and the similar words recorded in the Gospel of John: "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:10), Scott lists as evidence of Christ's deity. The language of the disciples is also noticed. The Commentator maintains that Peter confirmed the divine attributes of omniscience in Christ when he said, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17). The testimony of John, Scott believes to be especially significant. John testifies that Christ "came from heaven, and was above all" (John 3:31), and that when He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, we beheld his glory, the glory as

2 Ibid.
of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).1

Fourthly, Scott claims that the works of Christ evince His Deity. He "who created all things, and upholds them by the word of his power" (John 1:3-9), and who came as "a light into the world" (John 8:12), "to be the Light of the world," and to "enlighten every man that cometh into the world," (John 12:46), could only be God Himself.2 Christ alone was authorized to give eternal life, to prepare heaven for believers, to receive followers to Himself, to raise the dead by His word, to judge the whole world —"can anything," asks Scott, "except omnipotence and omniscience fulfil these engagements?"3

The attitude of Jesus towards those who honored Him reveals His divinity.4 Scott observes that in the Scriptures other servants of God refuse every degree of honor shown to them lest it interfere with the glory of God. But Jesus did not object to honors that implied that He was God. When the centurion compared Christ's power over all diseases to his own authority over his soldiers and servants, Christ commended the greatness of his faith (Matthew 8:8-10). When the afflicted parent besought Jesus to 'help his unbelief' (Mark 9:24), and when the disciples asked Him to 'increase their faith'

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1 Ibid., pp. 119-120.
2 Ibid., pp. 120-121.
3 Ibid., p. 121.
4 Ibid., p. 122.
(Luke 17:5), no intimation is given that their language was improper. Christ readily accepted the honors that other men of God dared not receive for themselves.1

Closely associated with the above argument is the fact that many people worshipped Jesus as divine. Scott explains that "worship, properly called, is an ascription to any being of the peculiar honour of the Deity."2 The petitions already mentioned, such as the plea for an 'increase of faith' were acts of worship paid to Christ. Thomas' address to Jesus, "My Lord and my God," was certainly an act of adoration. The form of baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is an appointed act of worship in which the Son is made equal with the Father. No doubt Stephen worshipped Christ when he prayed to Him to 'receive his spirit' (Acts 8:59). Paul addressed Christ concerning his "thorn in the flesh" (II Corinthians 12:7-10). And again, Paul prayed to Christ when he said, "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you" (I Thessalonians 3:11). Those and many other instances indicate that the apostle Paul honored the Son even as he honored the Father; indeed, he considered it to be an acknowledgment that brought glory to the Father (Philippians 2:11). Among numerous other examples which Scott cites, we shall only mention his use of Peter's words: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for

1Ibid., pp. 122-124.
2Ibid., p. 124.
ever" (II Peter 3:16). This exhortation and ascription Scott believes to be a most explicit affirmation of the deity of Christ.1

Finally, the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ, the Commentator finds confirmed by the absurdities into which the most able opponents of it have been driven.2 He lists many of the "ingenious" interpretations which have been made in an effort to destroy the deity of Christ. Having cited these criticisms, he endeavors to point out the futility of such critical expositions. One example which he selects and deals with will be sufficient to illustrate his procedure. Referring to I Timothy 3:16 he remarks that instead of reading, "God was manifest in the flesh," some would read it "who was manifested in the flesh." In such a case God must be the antecedent—as the context shows. Therefore, asserts Scott, the sense of the text remains precisely the same. Others would read it "which (mystery) was manifested in the flesh." In this rendering, the "mystery" must be that to which all the subsequent clauses in the verse refer. Scott contends that whatever may be thought of the other propositions, the clause "which mystery was received up into glory," could then hardly be considered the language of inspiration. Or, he adds, sometimes these interpreters are inclined to retain our reading and explain the expression to mean "that the wisdom and power of God were conspicuous in Christ." Scott concludes

1Ibid., pp. 125-126.
2Ibid., p. 126.
that this latter explanation simply expresses what can be said of Peter or Moses, and thus the "great mystery of godliness" is, at length, found to be no mystery at all.  

The Scriptures, without any twisting and turning, definitely ascribe complete divinity to Jesus Christ, maintains Thomas Scott. But if Christ is divine, He is also human: "No doubt he is truly man, and performs his mediation in human nature; for he assumed our flesh for this very purpose."² Again, the Commentator writes,

"Then, therefore, the Son of God undertook the Office of mediator between God and man, 'he took not on him the nature of angels,' as he meant not to mediate on their behalf, but he assumed human nature."³

Christ, in order to be our Mediator, and to know our infirmities, took upon Himself the form of man: "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14); "God was manifest in the flesh" (I Timothy 3:16).⁴ Jesus assumed our very nature:

"He divested himself of his divine glory, that he might appear on earth, like one of no dignity or reputation . . . . he appeared not like himself, 'the Lord of Glory,' but 'in the form of a servant' . . . . By this voluntary assumption of a new character, in order to accomplish man's salvation, 'he was made in the likeness of men,' he assumed our nature and became 'like unto us in all things but sin.' Thus the Only Begetten of the Father tabernacled here on earth 'in fashion as a man' being truly Man, but more than man at the same time; and he was pleased still more to abase himself, by submitting to the

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¹Ibid., pp. 127-128.

²Thomas Scott, "On the Mediatorial Office of Christ," in Works, II, 170,

³Ibid., p. 168,

⁴Thomas Scott, Answer to Rabbi Crook's Restoration of Israel, in Works, IX, 136.
most indigent circumstances, and the most accumulated hardships for our salvation: especially 'he became obedient' to the whole divine law, as our Surety, and 'fulfilled all righteousness,' amidst inconceivable difficulties and temptations. . . . He not only abased himself to become man, but he denied and humbled himself as man, to the very depth of suffering and shame."

If then, says Scott, one asks how Christ became a man, the answer is that "He emptied himself"; and if any question how He "emptied himself," the answer is: by "taking on him the form of a servant"; and if any still question how He "took on the form of a servant," the answer is found in the apostle's words: by "being made in the likeness of men." 2

Bringing together his assertions that Jesus Christ is both divine and human, the Commentator sums up his doctrine of the person of the Mediator in the following way:

"Jesus Christ is truly and really God, one with and equal to the Father; being from eternity possessed of all divine perfections, and justly entitled to all divine honours; yet personally distinct from the Father; and so called 'his own Son' and 'his only begotten Son.' But, in order to perform his mediatorial office, he assumed our nature into personal union with the Deity; and became one with us, truly man, like us in all things, sin alone excepted; and he is thus God and man in one mysterious, incomprehensible person; so that 'all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily!'" 3

In conclusion on Scott's doctrine of the Person of Christ: In an era when the Person of Christ, and consequently the position of Christ in the plan of redemption, was being

1 Thomas Scott, "Notes on Philippians 2:5-8," Commentary Vol. VI.

2 Ibid.

subjected to the widest variety of interpretation, Scott held to the Orthodox or Chalcedonian (451) view of Christ as the Mediator, perfect in deity and perfect in humanity. For Scott, Jesus Christ was in the fullest sense both God and man, not some intermediate type of being. The Commentator would readily endorse the definitive words of D. H. Daillier: "Jesus was not something between God and Man; He was God and Man." The history of Christian thought reveals the danger of placing an unbalanced emphasis either on the divine or human nature of the Person of Christ. Overemphasis on one aspect cannot be given without doing serious damage to the other. The doctrine which Thomas Scott advanced is one of lasting value because he proclaimed the divinity of the Redeemer and also recognized the function and importance of Christ's humanity.

It must be said, however, that though Scott verbally avows that Jesus was "truly man," in actuality he does not fully value the perfect manhood of Jesus of Nazareth. He interprets the whole of Christian doctrine too entirely from a Pauline point of view. Therefore, when treating of the Person of the Mediator, his emphasis on Christ's divinity is so overwhelming that he fails to grasp the importance which the writers of the Gospels attach to Jesus as Master and Friend. If the Socinians and Arians of the Commentator's day

did not properly acknowledge the Deity of Christ, some Evangelicals, including Thomas Scott, did not fully recognize the utter humanity of Jesus, the Man of Galilee.

Nor does Scott really wrestle with some of the delicate intricacies involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation. He is not a speculative theologian; and he is content to conclude that truly the Person of Christ is a great mystery. Whether one agrees with such a resignation or not, each individual must determine for himself. But Scott's conviction that the Person of Christ (as all doctrine) is only ultimately 'understood' in faith, is a sound principle. A later theologian confirms this conviction when he writes: "The key to the person of Christ is to be found, not in an intellectual conviction, philosophic or theologic, nor in a romantic piety, part mystical, part wise, but in a positive religious experience of Him."¹

Work of the Mediator: Atonement

The chief work of the Mediator is His Atonement for the sins of mankind. By His sacrificial death on the Cross, Jesus Christ fully and finally effected a reconciliation between the Holy God and sinful man. This truth is, for Thomas Scott, "the most prominent and central part of revelation."² All of the previously cited aspects of Scott's theology lead up to this


²Thomas Scott, "Behold the Lamb of God," from Select Sermons, in Works, IV, 399.
great Redemptive Act; and all the succeeding points of his doctrine proceed from this vital center.

For his concept of the nature of the Atonement, Scott turns first to the Old Testament. The Commentator believes that the meaning of Christ's sacrifice can only be understood against the background of the expiatory sacrifices of the Old Covenant.¹ In the Old Testament, a transgressor of the Law was required to bring an offering, from his own herd, of an unblemished male animal (Leviticus 1:2-3). Scott observes that the nature of the animal is significant: it had to be a valuable animal without blemish. Moreover, it had to be of a man's own property so that it could truly be a substitute for the man. Having presented his offering, the transgressor had to lay his hands on the head of the sacrifice (Leviticus 1:4) which, Scott says, "denoted the typical translation of guilt from him, by imputation, to the substituted animal."² The blood of the sacrifice was then shed, but the blood being 'the life' of the animal was reserved to make atonement and therefore was not allowed to be eaten. Afterwards, the body, or part of it, was burned upon the altar with the fire which had come immediately from heaven (Leviticus 9:24; II Chronicles 7:1-3).³ This sacrificial ceremony, Scott considers to be a prefiguration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross:

²Ibid., p. 173.
³Ibid., pp. 173-174.
Now who can help perceiving that this fire represented the avenging justice of God, (who is 'a consuming fire') and that, when it consumed the harmless, unblemished sacrifice, whilst the guilty offerer escaped, it aptly prefigures the way of a sinner's salvation, through the expiatory sufferings of the spotless 'Lamb of God.' The animal's violent death, by the shedding of its blood, denoted the offender's desert of temporal death; and the subsequent burning of its fat, or flesh shewed him to be exposed to future vengeance: but then they represented the guilt and punishment, in both respects, as transferred from him to the sacrifice, which bore them in his stead. The whole ceremony with the sprinkling of the blood... which evidently typified the believer's deliverance from guilt and punishment, from the sting and dread of death, and finally from death itself, from sin and all its consequences..."

All the expiatory sacrifices of the Old Testament Scott believes are typical of the sacrifice of Christ. But the paschal lambs "were most emphatically prefigurative of Christ and his atonement." Employing Paul's language, the Commentator says, "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Corinthians 5:7-8). Christ "is the true paschal lamb, the spotless sacrifice for sin." The sacrifice of animals was insufficient for the final atonement of mankind: "it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Hebrews 10:4). It

1Ibid., p. 174.
2Thomas Scott, "Behold the Lamb of God," in Works, IV, 393.
3Ibid.
might "suit the design of God" to appoint the sacrifices of lambs, bulls, and goats as types and shadows, as means of grace, or conditions of temporal remission; but these could not remove the guilt of sin "because they were not adequate exhibitions of the infinite justice and holiness of God."\(^1\) Nor did such sacrifices allow man to realize "God's holy hatred of sin and love of sinners."\(^2\) Only a sacrifice of infinite value could meet the requirement of a complete and everlasting atonement. For this reason, "the Father was pleased to wound and bruise his well-beloved Son for the transgressions of his people."\(^3\)

Expressing his belief in a substitutionary doctrine of the Atonement, Scott cites the following texts: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us . . . " (Galatians 3:13); "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for (or instead of) the unjust . . . " (I Peter 3:18); Christ was "made to be sin for us" (II Corinthians 5:21).\(^4\) As man's substitute, Jesus Christ bore the awful burden and penalty of sin.\(^5\)

"... he bore shame, pain, and death in all its bitterness; and what he suffered in his soul, during his agony in the garden, and when he exclaimed on the

\(^1\)Ibid.
\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 179-180.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 181.
\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 185-186.
\(^5\)Thomas Scott, "Notes on Galatians 3:10-14," Commentary, Vol. VI.
cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' we cannot perceive. . . . We may conclude that he endured as much of that very misery, which the wicked will suffer from the wrath of God, . . . as could consist with perfect innocence and love, and the sure hope of speedy and final deliverance."¹

Forgiveness through Christ comes because "sin was imputed to Christ and expiated by his sacrifice."² The perfect righteousness of Christ satisfies the justice of God and also makes it possible for man to regain the original righteousness which he possessed prior to the Fall. There is "a reciprocal imputation of our sin to Christ, and of his righteousness to us."³

Finally, Scott believed the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross to be completely efficacious. It fully satisfied divine justice: "when the Lamb of God came, and offered himself as an atoning sacrifice, the required satisfaction was made, and no further oblations were necessary."⁴ God accepted, without reservation, the offering which He Himself had appointed and provided. And Christ's sacrifice was entirely sufficient to atone for the sin of mankind. As man's substitute, the Mediator bore all the guilt and punishment of sin.⁵ Not only was the consequence of sin removed, but sin itself was

²Ibid., p. 103.
³Ibid., p. 103.
⁴Ibid., p. 396.
eradicated: "Christ not only bore our punishment, but our iniquities." ¹ Through the Supreme Sacrifice all sin is removed: "The propitiatory oblation made by the Lamb of God, being of infinite value, was sufficient to take away the original and actual sin of mankind, even as if it had been but one complex transgression."²

To conclude Scott's doctrine of the Atonement: It is evident that the Commentator, following both Anselm³ and Calvin,⁴ holds the Satisfaction Theory of the Atonement. He believed that Jesus Christ bore the punishment of sin in order to satisfy the righteous judgment of God. He rejects the Socinian contention that such a theory is unjust and says that it would have been unjust for God to do otherwise. If God had remitted sin without a satisfaction, Scott maintains, the justice of God and the majesty of the holy law would have been violated. The Commentator would agree with Forsyth's statement that "There is nothing in the Bible about the strife of attributes,"⁵ and that "it is in the exercise of His faithfulness to Himself and His observance of justice that He should forgive."⁶ Scott believes that in the death of

¹Thomas Scott, "Behold the Lamb of God," in Works, IV, 397.
²Ibid., p. 400.
⁴John Calvin, Institutes, bk. II, ch. xvi. sect. 2, 5, 6.
⁶Ibid.
Christ the inexorable demand of justice is met, while infinite love is revealed in full and final forgiveness.

As we relate Scott's concept of the Atonement to modern thought, we recognize many of its crudities and inadequacies. Both the satisfaction and Penal elements of the Atonement are found in his view in a form that today is considered to be excessively transactional and mechanical. By stressing so strongly the idea of Christ's sacrifice being a payment that will satisfy God's justice, Scott incurs the danger of dividing the Godhead and setting up a mediating and loving Son over against an infuriated and wrathful Father. The Commentator's ascent upon the two fold imputation—man's guilt imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness imputed to man—is open to criticism. Concentrating entirely upon the imputation involved in the death of Christ, Scott neglects the mediation wrought by Jesus' life and teachings. Principal Charles Duthie, in his recently published book, God in His World, reminds us of the necessity of considering the life and work of Jesus Christ in its wholeness. In an arresting manner he suggests:

"It is more enlightening if we see that the Cross, in showing the uttermost length to which the love of God has gone in order to redeem man, only brings out the inner meaning of Christ's whole life. We read depth into the Cross because the Jesus who hangs there is already the Jesus whose hand did not shrink from touching the leper and whose lips kissed the betrayer. How much could the Cross tell us of a love that never weary in its search for man, unless we had already seen something of such untiring love in Christ's

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1T. H. Hughes, op. cit., p. 32.
dealing with men and, not least, with His own disciples? From start to finish God is giving Himself to men and seeking to find men in His Son. The Cross is the final and clinching extension of the principle that operates through all the ministry of Jesus. It is the principle of urgently concerned and self sacrificing love.\(^1\)

The Commentator's 'Latin' view of the Atonement is in marked contrast to the 'Classic' theory which Bishop Aulen has advanced in the present century. Aulen classifies the Satisfaction and Subjective theories of the Atonement as rationalized doctrines that provoked the Reformation. The 'Classic' Theory, which Aulen contends is a revival of the doctrine of the early Church and of Luther, is expressed as "a Divine conflict and victory; Christ -- Christus Victor -- fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself."\(^2\)

There are certain elements of Scott's concept of the work of Christ that are valid and of lasting significance. Although his rigid satisfaction theory can be said to be legalistic, he does not limit it to a legalistic framework. Christ's death is not only a satisfaction to an angry God, but is also a chief factor in the divine economy, serving to awaken love and devotion in the hearts of men. Gratitude to the Christ of the Cross is to result, not only in repentance, but in the love and service of one's fellowman. There can be


found in Scott's doctrine that ethical element which is characteristic of the Abelardian position.

But Scott's view is essentially that of Anselm. And this is, perhaps, where his theory contains an element of continuing significance. Scott, like Anselm, attempts to safeguard the objective aspects of the Atonement. The Commentator insists that something objective has been done whereby the broken relationship between God and man is mended; the power and guilt of sin is removed. Any concept of the Atonement, if it is to be true to the Biblical record, must include this objective fact. Modern theologians are again acknowledging this side of Christ's work. In the latter part of the Nineteenth, and in the early part of the Twentieth Centuries, theologians emphasized the Moral Theory of the Atonement as set forth by Abelard: "Christ creating within us, by His passion, a love which itself delivers from sin." But the search, now, is for an objective Atonement in which the just claims of God and His judgment are made, and the tyranny of sin is overcome. Aulen's insistence on an objective Atonement has already been pointed out. In The Mediator, Emil Brunner endeavors to include the objective feature in his concept of the reconciliation effected by Christ. 

1 T. H. Hughes, op. cit., pp. 30ff.

2 Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, I, 19.

danger of subjectivism and in showing the need for an objective element in the work of Christ.\textsuperscript{1}

Lastly, although Scott viewed the Atonement as an objective fact, he did not overlook the subjective side. The Atonement is made solely by Christ's death, but the meaning of the sacrifice is realized subjectively by the activity of the Holy Spirit. Through the work of regeneration the Spirit enables a man to exercise the faith whereby he is justified; and by the continuing action of God's Spirit, the man of faith is sanctified, increasing in faith and holiness.

The Offices of the Mediator

The Mediator Work of Christ is not ended by His death on the Cross. It is the Resurrection of the Redeemer and His subsequent glorification that completes, in Scott's view, the mediation of Jesus Christ.

The Resurrection vindicates both the Person and Work of the Mediator. By the Resurrection\textsuperscript{2} God

"... confirmed beyond all reasonable doubt every part of the doctrine which he [Christ] had taught; proving especially that he was the Son of God, in the peculiar and appropriate sense in which he had claimed that high relation to the Father. ... He fully evinced that his atonement had been accepted, and had effectually answered those great and gracious purposes for which it had been made."\textsuperscript{3}

The Resurrection therefore is the just consequence of the

\textsuperscript{1}P. T. Forsyth, The Work of Christ, pp. 220-221.


death of Christ, doing justice to His perfect life and self-offering. But the Resurrection was not only the just result of Christ's sacrifice; it was necessary in order that He might continue to be our advocate before the Father:

"He thus became capable of possessing in our nature the mediatorial throne, which had been covenanted to him as the reward of his obedience and sufferings; and to appear as our advocate and intercessor in the presence of the Father; being our brother, and glorying in that condescending relation to us." 1

The Resurrection of Christ also displayed that ultimate victory over death which will be shared by all who accept His Atonement: "he was 'the firstfruits' of the general resurrection, the earnest pledge of that grand and interesting event." 2

Following His Resurrection, Jesus Christ ascended unto the Father. Here He intercedes for man as Prophet, Priest, and King. As our great High Priest, Christ appears "before the mercy-seat in the true sanctuary, in the immediate 'presence of God, for us'; bearing our nature, pleading in our behalf the merits of his perfect obedience and inestimable atonement, that we might be delivered from 'going down into the pit,' through the ransom which he paid in our behalf." 3

His intercession is in behalf of "all who come to God through him" or who pray "in his name." All men are invited and none, who come sincerely, will be turned away. 4

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1 Ibid., p. 193.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 196.
4 Ibid., p. 200.
As our exalted Redeemer, Christ appears not only as a merciful High Priest, but as the glorious King. As a king, "he confers blessings and affords protection; he enacts laws, demands obedience, obtains victories, and exercises authority; and he will at length administer justice to the whole rational creation."¹

Likewise, the ascended Mediator is the great Prophet of His Church.² While on earth He performed the prophetical office of His humiliation. He was the great teacher and He continues to be the great Teacher: "The Lord Jesus, as ascended on high, is the sole Prophet of the church, and teaches his people by his word, by faithful ministers, and by his Holy Spirit."³

Scott warns that the distinct offices of Christ cannot be separated, either from Christ's performance of them, or from our complete dependence on them. He illustrates the integral and inter-related work of Christ as exalted Mediator:

"Christ rules as a Priest on his throne: he intercedes with regal authority; and he teaches his disciples to rely on his atonement and advocacy . . . and to submit to his sovereign rule. He reveals as a prophet, what he purchased as a High Priest, and confers as a munificent Prince."⁴

Redemption: Its Extent and Appropriation

Through Jesus Christ the Mediator, God has provided redemption. But for whom is this redemption intended? And

²Ibid., p. 206.
³Ibid., p. 207.
⁴Ibid., p. 209.
how may it be appropriated? It is at this point in Scott's theology that God and man actually meet. In the mediation of the Son, God had displayed His infinite holiness and love; man has witnessed God's hatred of sin and God's love for the sinner. But these are only objective facts, and until they become subjective realities by God's further gift of faith, they are of no practical value.

**Election and Predestination**

The Commentator deals with the extent of God's redemption in his discussion of the doctrine of Election. Scott affirms first that the mediating work of Christ is a common benefit for all of mankind. Using the familiar words from John's Gospel, he declares that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Again he quotes: "His blood is the propitiation of our sin and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:22). He refers, too, to the Thirty-first Article of the Church of England: "The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual."

The atonement by Christ may therefore be properly called "the common benefit of mankind." Christ's sacrificial death was

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"a sufficient atonement for all" and is freely offered to all. 1

With the assertion that God has provided for the redemption of all men, Scott joins his conviction that all men are not saved. Christ's atonement is sufficient for all, but all do not actually benefit from it. 2

These two facts the Commentator thus finds in Scripture and experience: (1) God in Christ has provided salvation for the whole world; (2) All men do not receive this benefit. This apparent contradiction he attempts to resolve in the doctrine of Election. The way in which Scripture calls upon all—without distinction—to receive God's redemption is, insists Scott, evidence that salvation is "a general benefit." 3 But all do not accept the offer because "the want of a right disposition of heart, which fallen man has not, which God alone can give, but which he may justly withhold from a rebellious subject, effectually prevents the salvation of all who do not receive it." 4 The explanation for God's withholding a 'right disposition' from some and granting it to others is that 'before the foundations of the world were laid' God chose certain people for His salvation. These are the people referred to in Scripture as "given unto Christ" (John 6:39). They are the

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1 Ibid., p. 364.
2 Ibid., pp. 355-356.
3 Thomas Scott, Answer to Bishop Tomline's 'Refutation of Calvinism,' in Works, VIII, 6.
elect of God. "Others are invited, but these only, are made willing to come." God's elect are predestinated to receive eternal life through faith in Christ. Scott says that the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England exactly sums up his doctrine of Election and Predestination:

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid), he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen to Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour."

When speaking of election, Scott's moderate Calvinism becomes apparent. The system of Double Decrees advanced by Calvin cannot be completely identified with his position. In the interpretation of Romans 9:17-18, the Commentator treats the double-decree clauses with caution. He stresses the positive aspects of election—"election unto life"—and passes quickly over the negative side of election. Those who do not receive eternal life are simply "not made willing by any positive act of God; but their unwillingness is the consequence of their own pride, self-will, love of sin, and aversion to God and holiness." Some expositors now believe that the words in Romans 9:13, "whom he will he hardeneth," constitute a false step in Paul's argument. C. H. Dodd

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1Ibid., pp. 364-365.
2Ibid., p. 364.
4Thomas Scott, "Notes on Romans 9:15-18," in Commentary, Vol. VI.
writes:

"It was not necessary for his [Paul's] argument to show that God also creates bad dispositions in those who are not to be saved... It was enough for Paul's purpose here that the positive working of God's redeeming purpose should be self-determined in regard to its objects."

Scott does not altogether disregard the decree of reprobation but he does not insist upon it unduly. He is content to say that "election implies non-election." Also, the Commentator makes a qualitative distinction between the decree of election and that of non-election. The decree of election unto life "is absolute and implies an express engagement of God to exert omnipotence in carrying it into effect, by regenerating or creating unto holiness." But there is nothing in Scripture so explicit about the non-elect. "God determined to leave them unregenerate" is all that we can affirm about the non-elect. Non-election is then, "a negative decree... not an absolute decree of reprobation."

The Arminian concept of universal redemption appeared to Scott to be contrary to both revelation and reason. He could not believe that Christ would serve as Mediator for

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2 Thomas Scott, Answer to Tomline, in Works, VIII, 176.
3 Ibid., p. 178.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
sinful men without knowing who would accept His sacrifice. God, who knows the end from the beginning, certainly planned His work of redemption with greatest care. The recipients of salvation are those whom God eternally determined, for His purposes are "from everlasting" and He is unchangeable in all His perfections.\(^1\)

In answer to the question of why God has chosen some and not others, Scott asks, "may not the great Ruler of the universe bestow his unmerited favours on whom he will?"\(^2\) Again he remarks, "the Lord acts with the most perfect wisdom, in making this difference among sinners; but he deigns not to inform us of His reasons . . . ."\(^3\)

The moderate Calvinism of Scott is evident in his insistence upon 'the warrant' of all men to believe in Christ for salvation.\(^4\) For many Calvinists, the doctrine of Election was central in their thinking. As a result, they believed that if a man was not one of God's elect, he was helplessly lost—no matter how much he desired to be saved. Consequently, those Calvinists held that those who are not of God's elect have no right to apply for salvation; somehow the sinner must realize his election before he can approach God for acceptance. To

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\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 137ff.


such a supposition Scott gave emphatic dissent. He maintained:

"That the sinner wants no warrant of any kind for believing in Christ, except the word of God. No qualifications (or qualities, endowments, or dispositions in himself) are at all requisite to authorize his application, or encourage his hope of success; unless any one should choose, with manifest impropriety, to call his willingness to be saved in the Lord's way, a qualification. 'Him that cometh to Christ he will, in no wise cast out'; and they, who do not come when they hear the gospel, have as good a warrant as they that do; but they will not avail themselves of it because they comparatively despise the proffered benefit."

The Commentator believed in election but he also believed that those who are elect are known to God alone.

Man's task is not to determine the elect but to proclaim God's gift of redemption to all men. We must take as our example the apostles and evangelists of the Early Church:

"They always called on their hearers, without exception or limitation, to believe in Christ: knowing that all, who became willing by the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word, would be thus encouraged without delay to embrace the gracious invitation, and that the rest would be left without excuse."

What are the implications of Scott's belief in election when the doctrine is related to the Atonement? First, it implies that the power of the Atonement is not limited. Scott does not agree with those who claim that calculation was made as to how much suffering was necessary to expiate all the sins of the elect. Rather, he believes that the death of Christ is sufficient to atone for the sins of the entire world: "if the whole human race should at once apply for pardon and salvation by the blood of Christ, it would suffice to take away all their

1Ibid., p. 413.
2Ibid., p. 415.
A second implication is that the Atonement becomes meaningful only in terms of God's action and man's response. The elect are chosen according to the grace of God: "God's mercy takes the lead." But in order to make the grace and mercy effectual the elect must respond in faith: "The saving faith of the redemption of Christ is confined to those 'who believe and obey.'"

In conclusion on Scott's doctrine of Election: According to Scott, the sacrifice made by Christ is sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world. Only those who believe, however, will find the Atonement personally effectual. Those who do believe, believe because they are God's elect; and by their very belief they prove their election in Christ.

Critically, it can be said that Scott does not provide a satisfactory answer to one of the age-old problems involved in the doctrine of Election. He does not explain how the non-elect can be held responsible for rejecting God's redemption in Christ. In Scott's thinking, the reason that a man does not accept God's gift of salvation is because he prefers to go his own way--man chooses to turn away from God. But, if a man cannot choose to obey, unless God enables him to obey, the matter of choice does not really exist.

1Thomas Scott, "Behold the Lamb of God," in Works, IV, 400.


3Thomas Scott, Answer to Tomline, in Works, VIII, 153.
Positively, it can be said that the Commentator's concept of election does try to reconcile some of the seemingly contradictory statements of Scripture. He frankly acknowledges that the Bible declares, on the one hand, that Christ died for all men; on the other hand, that only those 'given to Christ' shall be saved. He does not develop a system of double decrees but is satisfied to treat the decree of reprobation as one of the ambiguities of Scripture. His concept of the decrees is not supralapsarian, that is, he does not place the decree of election before the decree of creation. 1 Furthermore, Scott properly views election in the light of God's grace as it is focused in Jesus Christ. And he insists, in the words of a modern theologian, that the eternal decree of election "should always be spoken of only in correlation with faith." 2 And, like Calvin, 3 Scott maintains that faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him are the fruits and effects of election, not the cause. There would be no need for election, he reasoned, if men possessed faith and holiness before they were chosen. 4

Justification by Faith

The appropriation by man of God's salvation, and the

1 Heinrich Böse, op. cit., pp. 146-148.
3 John Calvin, Institutes, Bk. III, Ch. xi, Sect. 3, 4.
4 Thomas Scott, Articles of the Synod of Dort, in Works, VIII, 568.
forgiveness of sins through the righteousness of Christ, is through faith. Justifying or saving faith is a doctrine which occupies a very central place in Scott's teaching. It is at this point that the benefits of salvation become available to man. Like the great Reformation theologians, Scott considered Justification by Faith to be the keystone of all truly Evangelical theology. Thomas Scott would say, with Martin Luther, that "the article of justification is master and chief, lord, ruler and judge above every kind of doctrine, which preserves and directs every doctrine of the Church."¹

Justification, Scott states to be an act of God's free grace, by which those who turn to God are treated as if they had never violated the law of their Creator.² Such an act involves not only a complete pardon from deserved punishment but also a gift of perfect righteousness:

"By breaking the holy law of God we have forfeited our title to the law, and have incurred the penalty of eternal misery. The justification, therefore, of a sinner must imply something distinct from a total and final remission of the deserved punishment, namely, a renewed title to the reward of righteousness, as complete and effective as he would have had if he had never sinned, but had perfectly performed, during the term of his probation, all the demands of the divine law."³

Justification signifies, then, that "God hath given the sinner a right and title to eternal life, accounting him righteous


³Ibid.
by an act of sovereign grace; so that 'there is no condemnation for him'; but, being thus justified, 'he is made an heir according to the hope of eternal life.'

God absolves the sinner of his guilt, and gives him the right to eternal life solely through Christ's obedience imputed to him and accepted by faith:

"This 'righteousness of God is without the law' being entirely independent of our personal obedience, either before or after justification; it becomes ours 'by faith in Christ Jesus'. As our sins were imputed to Christ, and he endured the curse which we deserved; so his righteousness is imputed to us, if believers, and becomes our title to the heavenly inheritance."  

Scott affirmed that justification is accomplished by grace alone, through faith alone. The one justified is judged in a state of complete unworthiness at the moment that he is granted the blessing of divine acceptance. The faith by which man is justified is itself a gift of grace, and not an element of man's own righteousness.

"It appears, therefore, that free grace . . . is the source of our justification; that the righteousness and atonement of Emmanuel are the meritorious cause of it; and that faith is the only recipient of the blessing; and we are 'justified by his blood,' because by shedding his blood he completed his obedience as our surety."

Man is entirely dependent upon the perfect obedience of Christ

1Ibid., p. 215.
2Ibid., pp. 223-224.
and His righteousness. Neither faith itself, nor any good work can contribute to our justification. We are justified by faith, because it is only by faith that we can receive the righteousness of Christ through which we are accepted by God. 

"We must not suppose, that we are justified by the merit of our faith, any more than by that of our good works: for, though true faith is pleasing to God, because honourable to his name, yet it cannot atone for sin, or purchase heaven: nay, the imperfection of our faith would condemn us. . . . But we are justified by faith alone, because by it alone we receive, and become interested in, that righteousness in which we are accepted by God."

With unrelenting emphasis, Scott affirms that man is accepted as righteous by God solely on the ground of Christ's righteousness. To give support to this doctrine the Commentator quotes from the writer through whom he first learned this truth, and then from another writer whose works were widely read in his day. From the judicious Hooker he cites the following:

"Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury, or whatsoever. It is our wisdom and our comfort; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered; that God hath made himself the sin of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God."

Then in the words of John Locke: "God now looking on them, there appears nothing but Christ; they are, as it were, covered over with him, as a man is with the clothes which he has put on; hence in the next verse it is said, they are 'all one person

1Ibid., pp. 227-228.

2Richard Hooker, Of Justification, Par. 6, in Thomas Scott, Answer to Bishop Tomline, Works, VIII, 223.
in Christ Jesus,' as if there were but that one person.\textsuperscript{1}

The righteousness of Christ is received through faith. What then does Scott mean by faith?\textsuperscript{2} He concisely describes faith as "a disposition readily to receive the testimony [of God], and to rely on the promises of God."\textsuperscript{3} Especially this means to receive as true God's testimony of His Son and salvation in Him: "The record which God hath given us of his Son, and of eternal life in him is the centre of revelation: faith therefore always pays a peculiar regard to it ...\textsuperscript{4}

Faith was, to Scott, something more than intellectual assent or even a recognition that the Bible is God's true testimony. It also included the implanting of divine life in the heart through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, through faith, convinces of sin and leads the sinner "to entrust his soul and all his eternal interests into the hands of Christ, relying on his power, truth, and love."\textsuperscript{5} Nor does a true faith stop here. It continues in a life of faith which consists of a holy obedience and enjoyment of God's provision in Christ. By faith, the believer

\begin{quote}
... comes to the Father through Christ and in His name; he shelters his soul from the wrath of God and the curse of the law, under the protection of His
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\textsuperscript{2}For another consideration of Scott's concept of faith, see above, pp. 163ff.

\textsuperscript{3}Thomas Scott, "On Justification," in Works, II, 225; the italics are Scott's.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 226.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.
atonishing blood: he confides in his power and grace to deliver him from all his outward and inward foes: he sits at the Redeemer's feet to hear and observe his directions: he lives by faith in him for everything; and this faith, 'working by love,' and learning daily lessons from his work and from the cross, gives him the victory over the fear of man and the love of the world, increases his humiliation and hatred of sin, and furnishes him with motives, encouragements, and assistance for all holy obedience. 

Faith is a gift of God. There are three essentials which thus go together in Scott's concept of justification: (1) On God's part there is grace and mercy; (2) On Christ's part, perfect righteousness, the satisfaction of God's justice; (3) On man's part a true and lively faith.

Regeneration

Faith, "the sole recipient of all the blessings of salvation, is the effect of a divine influence upon the soul." This divine influence Scott calls regeneration.

The Commentator describes regeneration first, by saying what it is not. Regeneration is not, he cautions, the ordinance of baptism. It is not merely a reformation of outward conduct. Neither is it a conversion from one creed or sect to another. Nor does it consist in "any kind of impressions, or new revelations." Rather, regeneration may be defined as

"A change wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the understanding, will and affections of a sinner."

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1Ibid., pp. 226-227.
3Ibid.
which is the commencement of a new kind of life, and which gives another direction to his judgment, desires, pursuits, and conduct.¹

Through the work of regeneration, the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind and heart of man. The atonement and mediation of Christ become meaningful to the sinner: "he now perceives in some degree the wisdom, and feels the power of the doctrine of the cross . . . and gladly receives Christ as his prophet, priest and king."² Scott explains that regeneration means to be 'born again'; it is to become a new creature. In Pauline language, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).³

At this point Scott makes what he feels is a slight but important distinction between regeneration and conversion: "We are passive in receiving divine life . . . but we are active in turning to the Lord by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The former is regeneration, the latter conversion. . . ."⁴ In this distinction the Commentator believes he preserves both the human and divine elements involved in the experience of faith. The initial work of regeneration is all of God; the succeeding act of repentance is man’s voluntary turning from sin and the simultaneous

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¹Ibid., p. 241.
²Ibid., p. 241.
³Ibid., p. 246.
realization of conversion.

Regeneration thus precedes both faith and conversion as the cause and source of them. And since regeneration depends entirely upon God's grace and the influence of His Holy Spirit, faith is seen to be ever dependent upon the initial action of God, not upon human merit.

Sanctification

Immediately following conversion there must begin the process of sanctification. Scott holds that though justification and sanctification are distinct from each other, they are complimentary. Justification means that "we are 'justified freely by the grace of God'... and we are 'justified by faith' alone: because faith alone constitutes our relation to Christ, that we may be 'made the righteousness of God in him.'"2 Whereas sanctification denotes "the renewal of an unholy creature to a right spirit... from its commencement in regeneration to its completion in glory."3 But sanctification should not be separated from justification by faith, for sanctification is "the proper, the only decisive evidence of justification."4

Sanctification, to Scott, was the work of the Holy Spirit whereby those who have been justified are renewed after the

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1Thomas Scott, The Warrant and Nature of Faith, in Works, I, 46h.
2Ibid., p. 443.
3Ibid., pp. 417-418.
4Ibid., p. 556.
image of God. It is by the sanctification of the Spirit that
"God Himself 'seals' and distinguishes those who are reconciled
to Him by faith in Christ Jesus." 1

His firm belief in election, and his insistence upon
justification by faith, might have led Scott to overlook the
necessity of 'working out one's salvation with fear and tremb-
ling.' The danger was removed, however, by his constant
contention that holiness and good works are a fulfillment of
election and an evidence of a living faith. He warns that

"... works are a necessary evidence of the Security
of any man's election; nay, the only proof imaginable
of his election itself. Indeed nothing, but works
indisputably 'good before God,' the 'fruits of the
Spirit,' can evidence our election of God." 2

The Commentator believed that a great responsibility was laid
upon the elect of God so that their election must be connected
"with diligence in the means of grace and in all holy duties." 3
He finds election filled with warning and admonition. His
sentiment is echoed in a modern treatment of the doctrine of
Election:

"The Biblical doctrine of election is therefore
penetrated through and through with warning. To be
the elect of God is not to be his pampered favourite.
It is to be challenged to a loyalty and a service that
knows no limits, and to feel the constraint of the
Divine love to such a degree that no response can seem
adequate and no service worthy." 4

1Ibid., p. 555.
2Thomas Scott, Answer to Bishop Tomline, in Works, VIII, 69.
3Ibid., p. 55.
The problem of the place of good works in the plan of redemption and in the life of the Christian, Scott attempted to solve by regarding works as a part of sanctification. They give evidence of a justified state. But good works, and, in fact, the entire process of sanctification, he considered of no value in justification itself. In order to avoid the fatal extremes of Arminian legality or Antinomian license, he held that

"No measure of sanctification can possibly form any part of a sinner's justifying righteousness: because, while it is imperfect, that imperfection needs forgiveness; and when perfected, it can make no atonement for past sins, nor can it merit eternal life. It however distinguishes a living faith from that which is dead and worthless; it forms our meekness for heaven; it enables us to rejoice in God, and it is a distinct part of our free salvation, no less valuable than justification itself."

Antinomianism received Scott's severest denunciation. He believed that the man who thought himself to be elect of God and then indulged in moral looseness, or displayed a spiritual indifference, or lacked works of love, was abusing the doctrine of grace. Instead of being an object of sovereign mercy, the Antinomian, asserts Scott, is a vessel of condemnation. The Commentator demanded that justification and sanctification result in a life of service and devotion. And a faith that did not produce the fruits of the Spirit be denounced as dead and worthless—a perversion of the Biblical

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2. See above, p. 74.
In the Commentator's theology, the Holy Spirit has a most vital place. It is by His influence that man first realizes his sin and his need for redemption. So, too, it is by the Spirit that regeneration is wrought; and it is the Spirit who subsequently bears witness with the spirit of man that he is truly 'born again.' Also, it is by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit that man continues to be renewed in the image of God.

Many writers on the Evangelical Movement have observed that a firm belief in the Person and power of the Holy Spirit has ever been a mark of the Evangelicals. One historian continues to illustrate this fact when he points out that by their implicit belief in the Spirit the faithful Evangelicals have ever with them the consciousness of the Divine Presence.

Through the continual activity of the Spirit there is experienced the only 'Real Presence' about which Evangelicals are concerned. Like Brother Lawrence, Thomas Scott and fellow Evangelicals can say: "The time of business does not differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter


of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."  

Christian 'Perfection'

In connection with the doctrine of sanctification, reference should be made to Scott's view of Christian 'perfection.' This subject was a burning issue in Methodist circles and was a question that had to be faced by every Evangelical. Wesley believed and taught that in an instant, and by a simple act of faith, perfection was "wrought in the soul." This, he insisted, was the second stage of Christian experience. First came justification and sanctification with God, together with the inner regeneration through the work of the Holy Spirit. But perfection was the next stage; it was entire sanctification, received as an immediate gift of God's grace, cleansing the heart from all sin. By this gift, the Christian "loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and serveth him with all his strength." He 'loveth his neighbour' (every man) 'as himself'; yes, 'as Christ loved us'. . . . In a word, he doeth the will of God 'on earth, as it is done in heaven.'

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Like almost all other Evangelicals, Scott rejected Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. The Commentator writes,

"A God of sovereign grace, having mercy in whom he will, according to his own purpose, makes some willing by regeneration. This changes the prevailing bent of the heart, and henceforth the man is not only humbly willing to be justified by faith, and saved by grace, but hates and repents of sin, loves God's law, loves holiness, and leads a holy life, sincerely, progressively, though imperfectly . . . ."

Anyone, says Scott, who believes he has achieved perfection in this world has failed to recognize the true nature of the believers' warfare:

"Indeed, all the falls, defects, complaints, rebukes, chastisements, and confessions of believers in every part of the scriptures, undeniably imply . . . conflict. We read not of any one who explicitly spoke of himself, or was spoken of by others, as free from all remains of sin, and made perfect in holiness; or as having accomplished his warfare while he lived in this world: we must therefore conclude that those persons who now profess to have attained to this kind of perfection, are in this respect deceived, or use words without a proper attention to their import."

As believers we are pardoned, reconciled to God, and enjoy peace and friendship with Him; but "complete and final deliverance from sin and all its consequences: and in this sense salvation, will not fully take place till the day of judgment."

2L. B. Elliott-Binns, Early Evangelicals, p. 301.
2John Scott, op. cit., p. 209.
4Thomas Scott, Answer to Bishop Torlinc, in Works, VII, 190.
Assurance

To Thomas Scott, the Christian Faith is a continuous process from which grow the sanctification and assurance of the believer. Justifying faith, sanctification, and assurance are distinct features of a living faith and they must be recognized as such. And yet, says Scott, these features are so interrelated that one cannot be considered apart from the others.

Assurance is only properly spoken of in relation to a deepening and increasing faith: "growth in grace is necessary in order to achieve the believer's abiding consolation, and assurance of hope." Again he says,

"... we may properly consider genuine confidence, as the effect of increasing faith and sanctification. Without a measure of holiness there can be no warranted comfort, or assurance of hope."²

By the word assurance, the Commentator does not mean "absolute certainty which admits of no degrees, and excludes all possibility of doubt."³ Rather, he defines assurance as "a persuasion and confidence, though capable of fluctuation, which gives habitual satisfaction and peace, and from time to time, joy and exultation to the soul."⁴ This is the kind of assurance that Scott believes the writer of Hebrews intended.

¹ Thomas Scott, A Treatise on Growth in Grace, in Works, I, 322.
² Ibid., pp. 322-323.
⁴ Ibid.
when he exhorted his readers: "We desire that every one of you do give the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Hebrews 6:11). The Commentator points out that in this text the writer also tells us that assurance is obtained and preserved only by diligence. Then he adds that not to have such an assurance is to neglect the facts of Scripture and to undermine our being 'patient in tribulation and joyful in hope.'

Assurance, then, is a reality in the Christian Faith for "no man ever had a due sense of the immense importance of the words Eternal Salvation and Eternal Damnation; no man ever had any adequate views of his guilt, and exposure to the latter, or any right value for the attainment of the former, who could rest satisfied without it." But, cautions Scott, the assurance of salvation does not rest upon "impulses, impressions, or new revelations." Assurance is obtained by continual diligence in Christian living and loving obedience to God:

"I therefore argue . . . that by diligence regulated according to the word of God; and by a consciousness of loving and obeying God, and of loving the brethren, and of other holy dispositions, connected with a holy tenour of conduct; true Christians may attain to such an assurance of their acceptance, and of 'having passed from death unto life,' as shall suffice for their joy and comfort in all troubles, sufferings, and dangers: according to the apostle's prayer for the Romans: 'Now the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy

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1 Ibid., pp. 250-251.
2 Ibid., p. 251.
3 Ibid., p. 252.
"Heb. 10:22" (Heb. 10:22) -- for what is it to 'abound in hope,' but to possess the 'full assurance of hope'?"

To conclude Scott's concept of assurance: It can be said that unlike some other early Methodists and Evangelicals, Scott did not rest the doctrine of assurance upon feelings. And in order to counteract Antinomianism, or any self-satisfied indolence, the Commentator emphasized the need for active obedience to the commands of Christ. The subjective experience of redemption from sin is carefully safeguarded. But Scott does fail to stress that religious certainty must rest objectively on the fact of Christ. In his view of justification, he is very clear on this matter, but in the doctrine of assurance he overlooks it almost entirely. This defect is due to his basic mistake of separating the on-going process of the Christian faith from the work of Christ. He dissociates, in his thinking, sanctification from justification. He fails to recognize that it is Christ Who is made unto us sanctification as well as justification and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30). Our justification is dependent upon the righteousness of Christ; our redemption depends upon the obedience of Christ; our sanctification depends upon the holiness of Christ; our assurance rests upon the completed, and yet, continuing work of Christ. Likewise, the Spirit Who sanctifies is not separate from the Spirit Who redeems.

1Ibid., p. 253.
Final Perseverance

The doctrine of Final Perseverance, contested by both the Arminians and the Romanists, Scott believed to be the privilege of all true believers. Employing the words of the apostle, Scott writes, "It is the believer's privilege 'to be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation!" (1 Peter 1:5). Not a single true believer shall perish: "Christ's commission reaches to the infallible and everlasting salvation of the body and soul of every individual, who 'is given to him,' who 'sees him, and believes on him."'

What of those professing Christians who have forsaken their faith? To this Scott asks, "Who can warrant their preceding sincerity?" There are, the Commentator reminds us, false teachers and false doctrines. There are, too, many persons who cannot be considered as apostates, but simply as backsliders. Nor can we say whether a man dies impenitent or not. Such knowledge belongs to God.

But the true Christian who habitually and sincerely abides in Christ, manifesting his faith by holiness, can be assured that by God's grace he will persevere unto the end.

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3. Ibid., p. 333.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 384.
Amidst all conflicts with corruption and temptation, the believer can have the confidence that at length he will be 'more than conqueror.'

"... the final perseverance of the true penitent believer in Christ, who is delivered from the dominion of sin: who through faith in Christ hath in some degree overcome the world and aspires after a more complete victory; who has learned to hate all sin, and delight in the law of God, and is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, is doubtless a truth of God's word. Yea, without peradventure, the meanest, feeblest, true believer on earth shall infallibly 'be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' For 'this is the will of him that sent me, that of all whom he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.'"

The Holy Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper occupy a vital place in Scott's conception of the life of the Christian. Obedience to God's commands—the imperative element in justification, sanctification, and assurance—demands observance of the Sacraments. Because they have been divinely instituted, the Sacraments are "considered as solemn engagements to be faithful and obedient to Christ ..." Moreover, to receive by faith all that is signified and assured in and by the Sacraments is to receive Christ and all His benefits.

The Ordinance of Baptism, Scott defined as follows:

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1 *ibid.*, pp. 335-336.
3 *ibid.*, pp. 463-464; 471-472.
"... the initiatory ordinance of Christianity, as circumcision, under the old dispensation, from Abraham to the ascension of Christ, was the door of admission into the visible church."¹

Further, the Sacrament of Baptism is

"... the constant and most expressive scriptural emblem of the pure and satisfying blessings conveyed to us by the gospel; especially of the purifying, enlivening, and consolatory influences of the Holy Spirit ..."²

More specifically, it represents "the purifying of the judgment and affections from the pollution of sin, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit."³

Scott emphasizes that baptism only represents the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Spirit. Baptism itself is not the actual regeneration by the Spirit:

"It hardly need be said, that the ordinance of baptism, however administered, is not 'regeneration by the Spirit.' They who resolve all that is said in scripture, on this matter, into the observance of an external rite, must suppose that none can enter Christ's Church on earth, or his kingdom in heaven, or even understand the real nature of them, unless they have been baptised with water. ... No doubt, baptism is (as circumcision) the 'outward sign' of regeneration; but they who are satisfied with the outward sign without the inward and spiritual grace, should return to school and learn over again a part of their catechism which they have no doubt forgotten; for it expressly states the inward and spiritual grace of baptism to be 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.'"⁴

As the children of the faithful Jews were admitted to the privileges of the Old Covenant, so the children of

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¹Ibid., p. 463.
²Ibid., pp. 463-464.
³Ibid., p. 464.
believers are now "admitted, as relatively 'holy,' into the visible church of Christ."¹ We maintain, writes Scott,

"... that, as the Jews also circumcised all the males in the families of the proselytes, who were incapable of personally rejecting the Jewish religion; so the apostles baptized the households of their converts, including the females, and only excluded such as, being able to answer for themselves, gave evidence, by word or deed, that they did not obey the truth."²

The adult convert, by receiving baptism, acknowledges that he is a sinner by nature, that he repents of his sins, and has believed in Christ for the forgiveness of them.³

Today, Karl Barth has seriously challenged the concept of infant baptism as held by the Reformed Churches and set forth by Thomas Scott. With a strict regard for the New Testament, Barth affirms that the truly Christian form of baptism is believer’s baptism based on personal faith; and he rejects the analogy made between baptism and circumcision:

"Circumcision refers to natural birth; it is the sign of the election of the holy lineage of Israel, which with the birth of the Messiah achieved its goal, so that therewith this sign lost its meaning... the succession of those called to the Church of the new covenant (according to John 1:12f.) is plainly not dependent on a racial succession, not on family or nation, but comes in this way: in the life of the individual... there comes an acceptance (λαμβανεν) of Jesus, a faith in his name. It is this that gives him the power to become a child of God. From the New Testament standpoint it is impossible to say that 'everyone who is born of Christian parents is born into the Christian Church (Gemeinde)."⁴

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Oscar Cullman, although he refers to Karl Barth's study as "the most serious challenge to infant baptism which has ever been offered," still affirms that infant baptism is scriptural. He points out that it is Jesus Himself who completes the general baptism of men. Therefore he argues: "It belongs to the essence of this general Baptism effected by Jesus, that it is offered in entire independence of the decision of faith and understanding of who benefit from it." Cullman also contends that "Christian Baptism takes over at the same time the function of proselyte baptism and circumcision."

In his examination of the Biblical doctrine of Baptism, P. C. Marcel defends the Paedobaptist position. He condemns the dependence upon New Testament texts, which Barth employs in his view, as a cleavage of the Bible that creates a wide chasm between the Old and New Testament. "We regard Holy Scripture as a whole," states Marcel. There is, therefore, an essential oneness in the Sacraments of the Old and New Testaments as regards their significance, content, nature of

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2Ibid., p. 19.

3Ibid., p. 20.

4Ibid., p. 64.


6Ibid., p. 23.
their efficacy, and their religious and moral demands. The position of Thomas Scott and of the traditional Reformed theologians is echoed in Marcal's major thesis, namely: that infant baptism must be viewed in terms of the Covenant of Grace where it replaces circumcision as the sacrament of admission, and where the seed of the Covenant necessarily includes the children of believers.¹

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Scott conceived to be "of the greatest importance in the system of Christianity."² For it is when receiving Holy Communion, that the Christian most solemnly reaffirms his faith in Christ, his cordial acceptance of Christ's salvation, and his desire to live according to God's commandments.³

The Lord's Supper is the believer's Passover and Jesus Christ is the new Paschal Lamb:

"Our blessed Saviour, the evening before his crucifixion, having celebrated the passover with his disciples, appointed the Lord's supper to be a memorial of his redemption; as the paschal lamb had been a pre-figuration of it."⁴

Jesus commanded all His disciples in every age to meet together to 'break bread.' Holy Communion was thus intended

"... to be a perpetual memorial of Christ, especially of his body broken and his blood shed for their sins. The body (for that alone could be represented by an outward emblem) was doubtless put for his perfect

¹Ibid., pp. 151-159.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
and entire human nature, as personally united to the eternal Word and Son of God. His blood (the shedding of which was the evident and immediate cause of his death) denoted the whole of his expiatory sufferings, which terminated when he expired on the cross.¹

Receiving the Lord's Supper signifies that we confess our sin and our guilt "from which we could not have been saved if Jesus had not died upon the cross to redeem us."² To partake of the Lord's Supper is also "a sacramental engagement to obey him as our Lord and Saviour, surrendering ourselves to him ... and a public uniting of ourselves to his redeemed people, to walk with them in Christian love and fellowship, in all the ordinances of divine worship, and in all holy conversation and godliness."³

Finally, Scott insists that the Body and Blood of Christ can only be received spiritually, by faith: "the action of eating the bread and drinking the wine illustrates the manner in which the sacrifice becomes effectual, even by 'feeding on him in our hearts, by faith with thanksgiving.'"⁴ Again, he declares that "any blessing inseparably connected with the act of receiving, independent of the faith, or unbelief of the receiver, doubtless perverts the words of Christ, serving to establish idolatry, superstition, formality, and self-righteousness."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 473.
²Ibid., p. 474.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., pp. 473-474.
To conclude the Commentator's view of the Lord's Supper: with his constant emphasis on the faith of the believer, Scott is a 'receptionist' in his concept of this Sacrament. The strength of this position is that the Sacrament does not work 
\textit{ex opere operato} with no relation to the life of faith. The weakness is that it tends to limit the significance of the ordinance merely to the human side. Whereas it is only when we try to view the Sacraments from the divine side that we begin to grasp their real significance. Holy Communion is the Lord's Supper, not ours. In the same way, Baptism is not something which we do to ourselves; it is something that God, by His grace, does for us.

\textbf{Eschatology: The Resurrection and the Judgment}

It is in his concept of Eschatology that the Commentator sets forth the final fulfilment of God's provision for man's redemption. According to Scott, man is not left in a state of endless uncertainty: "the revelation made in the New Testament, elucidating and confirming the Old, has removed all doubt and uncertainty about a future state of existence."\footnote{Thomas Scott, "On the State of Separate Spirits . . .", in \textit{Works}, II, 180.} The believer does not die without some knowledge that the pilgrimage of this life finds its triumphant completion in an after-life spent in God's presence.

The view of Eschatology set forth by Thomas Scott is important; not because it is unique, but because it plays such
a singular role in his thinking. He believes that "it is the grand design of revealed religion, to draw off our attention and affections from things present and temporal, and to fix them on things future and eternal." And it is around this theological conviction that much of Scott's thought revolves. Throughout his writings there runs the unrelenting refrain that man cannot live purposefully in the present unless he knows the end toward which he is striving. His clearly-defined doctrine of "last things" was used as an encouragement to professing Christians and as an awesome threat to the unbeliever. The man of faith could look with confidence to heaven and his reward; the unrepentant was reminded of the certainty of future retribution and eternal punishment. For Scott, every aspect of man's existence must be viewed in the light of 'that which is to come.'

The State of Separate Spirits

The immortality of the soul is a basic assumption in Scott's concept of our future existence. He writes:

"The immortality of the soul is fully established by the uniform testimony of scripture, which fully declares, not only that it is created capable of endless existence, but also that it is the unalterable purpose of the Creator that it should exist to eternity."

Not only is the soul immortal, but it is capable of exercising its powers and faculties in a state of separation from the body. In the words of the apostle: "Our earthly house of this tabernacle

\[1\text{Ibid.}\]

\[2\text{Ibid., p. 131.}\]
must be dissolved, that we may have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Corinthians 5:1). ¹

Having affirmed the immortality of the soul and its ability to exist separately from the body, the Commentator explains what happens after death: "The scriptures . . . teach us that both the righteous and the wicked, immediately on leaving the body, enter on a state of happiness or misery."² The idea of an intermediate state for the spirit after death, Scott denounces as unscriptural. He finds only two destinations explicitly stated in the Bible: heaven and hell. At death the souls of the righteous immediately ascend into the presence of God.

". . . the souls of the righteous, when their earthly tabernacle is taken down, are made perfect in knowledge, purity, and love; being freed from all remains of sin removed from every temptation, made conquerors over all enemies, exempted from all labours, sorrows, fears, and distresses, and admitted into the presence of Christ to behold his glory and enjoy his love; they are qualified to join the rapturous worship of angels, and to share their felicity, in full completion of all their spiritual desires, in communion with God . . . nothing is wanting to the absolute completion of their happiness, but that re-union with their bodies, for which they wait in joyful hope, assured that then "mortality shall be swallowed up in life."

But the souls of the wicked, when they leave the body, come under condemnation and the wrath of God:

". . . they immediately sink into a state of despair, and punishment proportional to their crimes: in which

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 482.
³Ibid., p. 485.
they will continue till the day of judgment, in fearful expectation of that event to complete their misery, by reuniting them in their bodies, the instruments of their crimes, and sharers with their souls in the righteous vengeance of their offended Creator.¹

The Resurrection of the Body

At length the bodies of those who have died will be raised and reunited with their spirits. This will occur at the Second Advent. Then the Savior "personally appears in the clouds, even as the apostles beheld him when he ascended into heaven."² The descent of Christ from heaven will be accompanied "by the change of all such believers as shall then be found alive upon this earth."³ Following this, there will be a resurrection of all the dead.

The Commentator's emphasis on the bodily resurrection is strong. He entirely rejects the Greek idea that the body is merely the prison of the spirit:

"As the body is part of our nature, and the instrument of the soul in doing good and evil, so it is meet that it should be raised from the dead, to share the happiness or misery which shall be awarded to every one according to his works by the righteous Judge of the world."⁴

This sentiment has been reiterated in recent years by C. B. Ross. He writes:

"Unless the body were destined to rise again, the spirit, though immortal, would still be separated from

¹ Ibid., pp. 435-436.
² Ibid., p. 436.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid., p. 433.
the body; man would still be rent asunder. But the resurrection of our Lord brings to us the good news that what is rent asunder by death is to be joined together again; it is as complete persons, not as disembodied spirits, that we are to be united with God in Heaven.  

Although Scott firmly and vividly sets forth his view of a bodily resurrection, he does not venture beyond the explicit words of Scripture concerning it. For example, he observes that there is very little said about the bodily resurrection of the wicked and as a result he says little about it himself. Questions such as the identity of resurrected bodies, he relegates to the realm of speculation. His confidence is that "the Lord Jesus shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body . . . ."  

Judgment and Eternity  

Using the words of the writer of the book of Revelation, Scott marks this verse: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them (Rev. 20:11). With Paul, the commentator declares: "we must all appear," or be made manifest in our true character, "before the judgment-seat of Christ." (II Corinthians 5:10).  

3 Ibid., p. 490.  
4 Ibid., p. 491.
At the Day of Judgment there will be three main 'types' that will be judged. When "the books shall be opened" there will first be found those who have "truly repented, and believed in Christ with a living faith."\(^1\) There will be no punishment brought against these true believers. They will only be rewarded according to their works:

\[\ldots\] nothing will be found written concerning them, but the account of the good works which they did from evangelical principles, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit; whether they have been spared to produce these good fruits for a longer or a shorter time.\(^2\)

Then there will be the judgment of those who have disguised their unbelief under a false profession of faith.

"Many who call Christ, 'Lord, Lord,' will be exposed as hypocrites and workers of iniquity."\(^3\) For these false professors, Scott predicts the worst possible judgment. They will be more severely punished than the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon.

Thirdly, there will be the judgment of the unbelieving and unprofessing man. "These shall go away into everlasting (or eternal) punishment.\(^4\) In this judgment, says Scott, divine justice will be illustrated. Scott refuses to enlarge on the punishment of sinners, feeling that such Scriptural phrases as "a never-dying worm, an inextinguishable fire" are sufficient to describe the eternal and awful horror.

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 492.}\)
\(^{2}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 493.}\)
\(^{3}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 494.}\)
\(^{4}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 497.}\)
He concludes by reminding the believer of his "incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance," and exhorting him in the words of Peter: "Therefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless." (II Peter 3: 14).

In conclusion on Scott's concept of Eschatology: The Commentator's view of the 'last things' is precise and ultra-literalistic. Scriptural descriptions of the future life are taken in the strictest possible sense. There is no hint that some of the expressions of the Biblical writers might have been symbolic. This, of course, is a dubious interpretation and can be as misleading as a purely symbolic conception. The great World Council of Churches Assembly in Evanston clearly revealed the complexity of this subject and this writer would be presumptuous to make a final pronouncement. It is our conviction, however, that such a thoroughly literalistic interpretation of Eschatology as set forth by Scott is both invalid and inadequate.

Within the context of Scott's own thought it must be pointed out that there are reasons for his clear-cut conception of Eschatology. As was indicated in his doctrine of God, Scott stressed the infallible justice of God as well as the all-embracing love of God. In his view of Eschatology the Commentator believes both of these attributes of God to be fully revealed and vindicated. Because of God's love the

1Ibid., p. 498.
redeemed are glorified. Because of God's justice the sinful are condemned.

Also, Scott wished to safeguard—to the very end—the fact that man is justified by faith alone. In the Last Day only those who are in Christ by faith are finally saved. At the same time he wanted to show that good works are important in the life of faith. This earthly life of faith he perceived to be a 'seeding time' for the 'harvest of heaven.'

Our examination of the Commentator's theological outlook will conclude on this note of the Christian's hope. The Second Coming of Christ and the hope of eternal life were important to Scott because he believed these truths to be both comforting and 'awakening to the soul.' It is not enough, he insisted, to acknowledge the certainty of death and the necessity of preparing for the final judgment. The apostles did not dwell on the certainty of death, but with confidence they proclaimed—as we ought—the Coming Again of the Son of Man.
CHAPTER VI

A SUMMARY AND CRITICAL CONCLUSION

"He became the laborious preacher, the voluminous writer, the wise commentator, the sagacious adviser, the opponent of every error in every shape, the leader in everything that was valuable."

Description of Thomas Scott
In The Life of Daniel Wilson

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine the life and work of Thomas Scott with special reference to his theological thought. We have sought to present what we consider to be the most significant aspects of his contribution and to evaluate them. In the foregoing pages, Scott's personal influence and his influence as a theological writer has been marked out. Summaries and criticisms of both his Commentary and his doctrine have been included. We have endeavored to relate his life and thought to the prevailing opinions and conditions of his day. There has been, too, an attempt to note some aspects of Scott's theology that are still of value. By frequent reference to modern theologians, we have tried to view various elements of his doctrine and interpretation in the light of present-day theological thinking. The preceding chapters, therefore, are meant to represent the main results of our study and the fulfilment of our purpose. And yet, we feel that a broad summary, as well as a general estimate, of the Commentator will be helpful and
As a man Thomas Scott was conservative and plain. His early life was spent as a grazier's son; later he was known for his countrified appearance and mannerisms. He lived modestly with a self-sacrificing frugality. Prior to his Evangelical religious experience, he only desired enough leisure for study. During his search for truth he refused preoccupation on the basis of personal integrity. After his revolutionary experience of faith, he avoided any form of worldly attainment. Except when among close friends, Scott did not mingle well with people. In our day of psychological terminology he would be known as an introvert. His natural reserve repelled the advances of some who were not persistent in seeking his friendship. Through the years, Scott became more mellow; but an austere bearing continued to hide a warm, loving heart. William Wilberforce accurately describes Scott as "a rough diamond, almost incapable of polish." But, just as properly, he refers to him as "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." And C. J. Abbey rightly claims that among the saintly men of the Evangelical party none were "more blameless in their lives than he." We conclude that Scott was a flint-like character, plain in appearance, solemn in manner, and consistently

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1Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, op. cit., II, 308.
2Ibid., V, 132.
3C. J. Abbey, The English Church and Its Bishops, II, 143.
Christian in conduct.

The most outstanding trait of his personality was his perseverance. By combining a naturally keen intellect with boundless energy and sheer will-power, Scott became a noble figure in his Father's world. Someone has said that the world's most distinguished workers divide themselves into three classes. There are those who, like the inventor, do extraordinary things. There are those who, like the poet or the composer, do ordinary things in an extraordinary way. They write; but they write what has never before been written. And then there are those who do quite ordinary things in a quite ordinary way, but because of their indomitable persistence, they do those things on quite an extraordinary scale. Their genius expresses itself in the fact that they keep on after other people have given up. It is in this last class that we place Thomas Scott. With unrelenting diligence he sought to do the will of his God. This meant, for him, to perform every worthy task with all the strength of his mind, body, and soul. The illustrious Thomas Chalmers recognized the forcefulness of such a determined dedication. With sober respect, Chalmers writes in the following way of Scott's experience as it is recorded in *The Force of Truth* and the exposition of doctrine in his *Tracts*:1

"The lessons of such a life, and of such an experience as he [Scott] has honestly delineated, are

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1 In addition to *The Force of Truth*, the 'Tracts' referred to are *The Terraria and Nature of Faith in Christ*, *A Discourse on Repentance*, *A Treatise on Growth in Grace*, and *On Election and Final Perseverance*. 
highly instructive to every class of Christian, but
to the sincere inquirer after truth, we would es-
specially recommend them; and under such convictions
as the 'Force of Truth' may produce, he will find in
the subsequent 'Tracts' . . . an excellent and
practical exposition of those more peculiar doctrines
of the Gospel . . . and these expositions will derive
a peculiar weight and importance, as coming from such
a sound and experimental Christian."\(^1\)

At the beginning of this century an able writer of Evangelical
literature could still write:

"Scott, steadfast servant of Christ, amid cease-
less difficulties, in the toils of the study and the
parish, died in 1821, at seventy-four carrying far
into our first period [of the Evangelical school] in
the Nineteenth Century] the noblest traditions of the
original church Evangelicals."\(^2\)

As a minister Thomas Scott did not gain wide popular-
ity. But he was especially effective in the instruction of a
select few. The purpose of his ministry is expressed by one
of the finest words that has become prominent in more modern
theological formulations. It is the word Reconciliation.
Scott declares: "the object of all my occupation is the minis-
try of reconciliation—beseeching sinners to be reconciled to
God."\(^3\) Having summoned the unrepentant to accept God's gift
of salvation, Scott regarded it as one of his primary res-
opnsibilities to counteract the Antinomian spirit—which he
thought largely prevailed. His printed sermons reveal that
he believed it was his special duty to protest, as a Calvinist,

\(^{1}\)Thomas Chalmers, "Introductory Essay," in \textit{Tracts by Thomas
Scott} (Glasgow: William Collins, 1826), pp. xxix-xl.

\(^{2}\)H. C. G. Moule, \textit{Evangelical School in the Church of

\(^{3}\)John Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 138. The italics are Scott's.
against the perversions of Calvinism.

His sermon delivery was hampered by a clumsy style and distracting mannerisms. The content of his messages was heavy and lengthy. Only those of an extraordinary would could fully appreciate his preaching. This is substantiated by a description of Scott that is recorded in the Eclectic Notes. The writer recalls:

"... when Mr. [Richard] Cecil used occasionally to ask Mr. Scott to preach in his pulpit, while others, less capable of appreciating the rich profusion of thought and original illustration which flowed from his well-stored mind, were wearied and dissatisfied, Mr. Cecil would involuntarily give vent in a whisper to bursts of admiration of the profundity of his knowledge of Holy Scripture and of the human heart, and of his surprising power of applying this knowledge to all the varied concerns of men in all their relations in life."

If Scott's sermons lacked appeal to most hearers in the Eighteenth Century, they certainly would fail to capture the praise of modern listeners. We have found them to be dull and uninspiring. But still, the usefulness of these messages to Evangelical leaders in Scott's day, is most unusual. Through his ministry the commentator provided invaluable edification to such men as William Carey, the father of the Modern Missionary Movement, John and Henry Thornton, the eminent banker-philanthropists, Bishop Daniel Wilson, the pioneer missionary statesman, and William Wilberforce, the renown emandipator.

In previous chapters we have indicated the specific influence of Scott upon the men mentioned above. A projection

1Eclectic Notes, p. 29.
of his impact on one of these men will, however, point up
the vicarious influence exerted by Scott. A. C. Downer,¹
observes that the Commentator's impression on William Wilber-
force was so great that "we trace the teaching and even the
very phraseology of Scott" in Wilberforce's Practical View
of Christianity.² A personal investigation of this claim
has led us to concur with Downer. With this fact we then
join J. H. Overton's statement: "No book since the publica-
tion of a 'Serious Call' exercised a wider and deeper in-
fluence than the 'Practical View.'"³ From this we conclude
that Scott's effectiveness—in this way alone—cannot be
easily overestimated. Certainly we can affirm that it earns
him a place of permanent significance in the history of the
Christian Church. Our criticisms of Scott's sermons still
stand; but so do the testimonies of a group of noble men who,
at one time, found them to be a source of profound challenge.

Thomas Scott was a bold but reasonable leader in the
Evangelical Movement. He avoided an obnoxious enthusiasm.
At the same time, he avoided a lifeless formality. In almost
every recorded instance, he showed himself to be courageous,
understanding, and kindly. The vigorous, yet sensible, course
of action followed by the Evangelical Anglicans in the latter
part of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century owes much
to Thomas Scott. By his counsel and his writings the Commentator

¹Memoir of Thomas Scott (1909).
²A. C. Downer, op. cit., p. 53.
contributed to the moderation of some of the Evangelical hyper-Calvinism; on the other hand, he detected and marked out some of the pitfalls of the Wesleyan Arminianism.

His most significant contribution as an Evangelical leader came through his membership in the Eclectic Society. Through the Eclectic group he became a founder of the Church Missionary Society and its first secretary. Indeed, it is Scott's efforts in this movement that provide the most tangible evidence, today, of his pioneer work. His sermons and writings may never be published nor read again; but the Church Missionary Society continues its magnificent service in the evangelization of the world.

He was a teacher, moulding the thought of missionary candidates, clergymen, and aspiring ministers. Having passed through a searching personal crisis in his own theological transition, Scott was able to assist many men in his own generation to achieve a satisfying faith. In a foregoing chapter we noticed the testimonies of missionary candidates who received his instruction. And there were others who regularly sought his advice. Among those seekers was Daniel Wilson. Bishop Wilson refers countless times to his friend and teacher, Thomas Scott. A typical reference is recorded when he writes that he sought Scott's advice on a sermon he was to preach before the Prayer Book and Homily Society. Still others came to the Commentator for instruction in Hebrew. He became a veritable Elisha of the Evangelical-

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1 Josiah Bateman, *op. cit.*, I, 153.
school-of-the-prophets.

The Commentator's leadership was not restricted to the purely religious realm. He had a deep social concern. Throughout his Evangelical ministry he used his pulpit, his pen, and his moral influence to help awaken a lethargical generation to the desperate needs of the poor and destitute. He believed that salvation through faith in Christ is the central message of Christianity. But for Scott, this message had social implications. The most obvious monument to his social concern was the Lock Rescue Home. Due to the advances of medicine, the Lock Hospital and Rescue Home have been closed. While it was functioning, however, the Rescue Home ministered to a needy, neglected class of society. It suggested, too, similar institutions at Bristol, Hull, and Dublin; and who can determine how many more such Rescue Homes that have been founded in later times?

Scott's publications were a vitally important part of his life and work. Many of his writings were reprinted year after year. Even after his death they attained a wide circulation among those of an Evangelical spirit. Both in his own day and well into the Nineteenth Century, his works were an important means of spreading Evangelical doctrine. He constantly reinforced his teaching with Scripture, quotations from the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of the Established Church. Evangelical convictions, he asserted, are no innovation. They are the very same doctrines as those held by the reforming fathers.
Everything Scott wrote was concerned with the great principles and practice of the Christian Faith. He had the ability to treat subjects in an original and decisive manner. Henry Martyn's remark can be repeated as a confirmation of this point. In his Journal, Martyn records his frank astonishment: "Began Scott's Essays, and was surprised indeed at the originality and vigour of the sentiments and language. With discerning, independent judgment, Scott dealt with almost every question involved in the life of faith. Such subjects as war and peace, crime and good government, Christian nurture and ecclesiastical establishments, are indicative of his scope. The practical illumination of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, however, comprise the major portion of his writings.

Few men were more thoroughly acquainted with Scott's writings than Bishop Daniel Wilson. Sometimes his remarks concerning the Commentator's works are too complimentary. More often, though, they are sympathetically discriminating. We believe that the following words of Wilson are valid. At least they express our personal, positive evaluation of Scott's publications:

"The characteristic excellency of his writings is a calm, argumentative, determined tone of scriptural truth; a clear separation of one set of principles from another; a detection of plausible errors. . . . His motto may be conceived to have been, Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel."


2 Daniel Wilson as cited in John Scott, op. cit., p. 63.
But there are also many inadequacies in the writings of Thomas Scott. Although his style is simple, it is gravely heavy. He desired to be easily understood by people of average intelligence; and to this end he tried to be straightforward. But he lacked any pungent, dashing directness of expression. Consequently, we receive the impression of a 'determined obliqueness.' In content, his writings lack philosophy. They are neither profound nor precise. The practical, devotional tone of much of his writing results in an unintriguing monotony. There is little variety, little imagery, or illustration with which the imagination may be quickened or the mind stimulated. The soul may be nurtured through Scott's writings; but seldom will the heart cry out in glad song.

It was as a Commentator that Scott achieved his greatest fame. As has been pointed out at length, his Commentary exercised a profound influence on the religious life of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries. Evangelical leaders and laymen both in Britain and America relied upon Scott's exposition for their understanding of the Scriptures. Parts of the Commentary were even translated into French for circulation on the Continent. Men like Charles Simeon, Bishop Wilson, and William Jay of Bath regularly read the Commentary with deep appreciation. Thomas Hartwell Horne had a high regard for it. Charles Haddon Spurgeon used it. It formed an integral part of John Henry Newman's Evangelical heritage. Literally thousands of lesser known men and women found it to be a valuable source of illuminating inspiration.
As a Commentator, his singular contribution is that of plain, sensible, independent interpretation. His principal rules of exposition were: (1) To discover the literal meaning of a passage in its proper context. (2) To allow the Scriptures, by extensive marginal references, to interpret themselves. He was highly successful in his endeavor. But his greatest asset became his greatest liability. That is, by emphasizing the literal meaning of Scripture he avoids the dangers of allegorization. On the other hand, his exacting literalism is sometimes misleading. He often fails to recognize that in some instances the writers of Scripture used metaphors or symbolic language to express revealed truth. The Commentary is a monument of devoted labor infused with the deep piety of the expositor. As such it will always be a source of inspiration. But as a present guide for Biblical exposition it is obsolete. It has been superseded by the progress of scholarship and criticism. Today a discerning student of the Bible would find that its interpretation leaves much to be desired.

In our exposition of Scott's theology we commented upon individual doctrines. We shall conclude this study by noting some of the most characteristic features of his thought as a whole. Critically, we must say, first of all, that his theology is rigid and undeveloped. Although he seriously studied some of the great Reformation and Anglican divines, Scott contributed little to the history of thought that is new or striking. Generally he maintained a moderately Calvinistic emphasis that
was consistent with the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England. He had a remarkably comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures. But his thinking often does not go beyond this. He does not actually wrestle with many of the intricacies of Biblical truth. A typical procedure for Scott when establishing a point of doctrine, is simply to cite a series of Scripture texts. As a result, the real problem is sometimes passed over with little illumination. The words are there; but we still do not know their meaning. There are therefore many instances in which the Scriptures are used to cover a theological superficiality.

We find ourselves in fundamental agreement with the Commentator's emphasis upon the authoritative standard of the Scriptures. Emil Brunner expresses a conviction to which both Thomas Scott and this writer readily assent:

"The Bible is the soil from which all Christian faith grows. For if there were no Bible we should know nothing of Jesus Christ, after whom we are called Christians. Christian faith is faith in Christ, and Christ meets us and speaks to us in the Bible. Christian faith is Bible faith."\(^1\)

And it is true, as Scott emphatically declares, that this faith is only meaningful when it is set forth in practice. But, we fail to discover in Scott's presentation any real recognition of the further truth, namely, that Christianity is not primarily the religion of a Book, but of a Person. Even the Scriptures, we believe, are subject to the criterion

of Jesus the Christ. Luther has poignantly written: "The Scriptures are the cradle of Christ." Thomas Scott fails to give supreme place to the first fact of Christianity: the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us. This in turn affects Scott's concept of faith. He explicitly states that faith is "a reliance on the divine testimony of God." This is truly Bible faith. But is it in the fullest sense a Christian faith? To prefer to think in terms of a personal relationship to The Person, even Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the least adequate part of Scott's theology is his doctrine of the Church. The early Evangelicals have frequently been charged with this weakness. Like any generalization, the accusation breaks down in individual cases. Furthermore, the allegation has sometimes been made by those who are not in sympathy with the Evangelicals. Some have defended the Evangelicals against the charge. But our concern is with Thomas Scott's doctrine in particular. Although a very loyal Anglican Churchman—even writing in defence of the Establishment—Scott gave almost no thought to a doctrine of the visible church. For him the true Church was invisible and spiritual. It was not an external organisation but an inward fellowship of the Spirit. Beyond this conception of the church he did not venture. He failed to formulate any intelligible theory on the church as a historical, visible society.

The theological thinking of Scott impresses us more with its discernment, directness, and devotion to the explicit truth of the Scripture rather than with its depth or profundity. At many points he lacked penetration. He had numerous keen insights but he did not always do those insights justice. For one thing, his lack of formal education prevented him from more precise, first-rate theological work. Also, he was interested in the broader, more practical issues of theology rather than an exhaustive treatment of its finer points.

Our final criticism of the theological thought of Scott is that it is an incomplete presentation of the Christian message. From the point of view of non-theological scholarship there is little challenge. He failed, though he regarded theology as the 'queen of the sciences,' to relate theology to other disciplines. His thought lacks a philosophical or historical basis. From a strictly Biblical or theological point of view, Scott's doctrine is more Paulinism than complete Christianity. He proclaimed the Gospel but he frequently overlooked the Gospels. The Incarnation becomes subordinate to the Cross.

Still there are several elements of Scott's theology that are of value. Though his thought is narrow, it was in certain respects comprehensive. He honestly tried to maintain a balanced view of the entire Scriptures. In certain areas he accomplished this purpose. The most obvious achievement in this respect is the way in which he writes the
of Paul and James, with unwavering confidence he asserts
that our justification is completely of grace through faith.
Yet he equally exhorts that only he 'who doeth righteousness
is righteous.' Because of this insistence the anti-Calvinists
criticized him for his Calvinism and the hyper-Calvinists
called him an Arminian. These very accusations indicate his
inclusiveness. We have found few words that more accurately
depict Scott’s position that those of a fellow commentator,
Matthew Henry. Henry warns us, as did Thomas Scott:

“Take heed to your doctrine—that it jostle not
cut God’s grace, nor man’s duty; but take both to-
gether. Arminianism makes grace a servant to man’s
goodness. Antinomianism makes it a servant of man’s
badness.”

If Scott’s theology did not possess real breadth,
it did have vitality, depth, and a stringent sense of ur-
gency. His doctrine became the heart beat of his living.

It took him onto ‘the Road.’ Motivated by his earnest
convictions, Scott experienced what Dr. John A. Mackay
elegantely describes as the Road:

“By the Road I mean the place where life is tensely
lived, where thought has its birth in conflict and con-
cern, where choices are made and decisions are carried
out. It is the place of action, of pilgrimage, of
crusade, where concern is never absent from the way-
farer’s heart. On the Road a goal is sought, dangers
are faced, life is poured out.”

As we relate Scott’s thought to his courageous, pioneering

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1J. D. Williams, Memoirs of the Life, Character, and
Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry (London: B. J. Holdsworth,
1829), p. 124.

2John A. Mackay, A Preface to Christian Theology (London:

3Ibid.
missionary endeavors, we witness most clearly his narrow but deep 'theology of concern.' Early in this century, P. T. Forsyth reminded us that the universal concern displayed in the Modern Missionary Movement issued from men who held what we would consider to be a narrow theology. Thomas Scott is definitely included in what Forsyth says with respect to those men and their doctrine:

"We know that the Christian movement which has spread around the world did not arise out of the liberal thinkers, the humanitarian philosophers of the day... but with a few men—Carey, Marshman, Ward, and the like—whose Calvinistic theology we should now consider very narrow. But they did have the root of the universal matter in them. A gospel deep enough has all the breadth of the world in its heart. If we are only deep enough the breadth will take care of itself... For the deep Christianity is that which not only searches us, but breaks us, and a Christianity which would exclude none has no power to include the world."

In his theological outlook, Scott was tolerant of those who disagreed with him on 'secondary' matters. He possessed a keen awareness of the unity of all believers in Christ. A loyal member of the Church of England, he nevertheless, found a basis of fellowship with those of other communions. One of the most important features of the Christian Church in the Twentieth Century is the movement toward greater unity. We are beginning to see above and beyond sectarian and denominational barriers to our essential oneness in Christ. Scott's stress upon our unity in the Faith thus has a prophetic ring. We, of course, desire a much

2Ibid.
deeper understanding of the nature of the Church than Scott had; but we plead with him for greater unity among those who profess Christ as Savior and Lord. More than one hundred and thirty years ago Thomas Scott wrote these timely, relevant words:

"I am not much attached to externals, being decidedly of the opinion, that, had the Lord Jesus intended all his people to be of the same sentiment about church government, he would have explicitly declared it, as under the Jewish dispensation, and have rendered it impossible for godly, reflecting, and judicious persons to differ much about these things: even as it is it is impossible for such persons much to differ about the method of a sinner's justification, or the nature and need of regeneration. Every man ought to be satisfied in his own mind about the lawfulness of communicati

Above all else, Scott's theology is Evangelical. The soul's direct relationship to God, the freedom of the Spirit, the authority of the Bible, the centrality of the Cross, and the need of Convorsion—these emphases formed the dynamic core of his theological thought. Herein lies the power of the

Commentator's life and doctrine. He recognized, too, the element of mystery which must be acknowledged in all efforts to speak of God. This is especially noteworthy for that era of rational theology.

An outstanding theologian of our day has said, "The test of a great theologian is, can he write a tract?" That is to say, after the flights of thought, can he reduce it all to something that the ordinary man can understand and act upon. Probably the finest tribute that can be paid to Scott's presentation of doctrinal truth, is that he was the theologian of the common man. He provides some satisfaction for theologians in such works as Remarks on Tomline's 'Refutation of Calvinism', An Answer to Paine's 'Age of Reason,' and An Answer to Crooll's 'Restoration of Israel.' It was, however, the ministry of his pen to Evangelical laymen that instituted his most direct avenue of usefulness. He shared the thoughts of greater thinkers with those who would otherwise have been uneducated in eternal truths. By his writings he exercised a rigid, but safe and sane leadership theologically. He was immovable in his convictions; and yet he was reasonable, his Christian temper fully as evident as his stern, insistent reasoning.

There is a final aspect of the Commentator's thought that is valuable, especially for our day. It is his insistence upon individual moral responsibility. In our sophisticated Twentieth Century, we have reacted against anything puritanical or authoritarian. With this reaction has come a floundering morality. The word holy has become too old-fashioned for
our thermo-nuclear age. We speak so frequently about man as a product of his environment or of his heredity, that we fail to think in terms of personal, moral action. Scott challenges our life and thought as to moral responsibility. God comes to man in love and grace. But, cautions the Commentator, that love is a love which judges—judges thoughts, motives, and actions. He exhorts us to a ceaseless dedication of our lives to the source of all life. In modern terminology, Scott insists that the Christian indicative always brings the Christian imperative. The indicative of the 'Good News' brings the imperative of the Christian ethic. No one can read the works of Thomas Scott without being struck by this recurring theme. John Henry Newman's description of the 'scope and issue' of Scott's doctrine reveals this fact. In Newman's words we find incisively expressed a most singular impression that we have received from Scott's writings. That is, his firm belief in 'Holiness rather than peace,' and that 'Growth is the only evidence of life.' Not many men have proclaimed these truths more forcefully or practiced them more faithfully than Thomas Scott, the Commentator.

"Those heart is warm
Those hands are pure,
Those doctrine and
Those life, coincident,
Exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest
In the sacred cause."

—William Cooper.
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