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THOMAS SCOTT AND EVANGELICAL MISSIONS

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THOMAS SCOTT AND EVANGELICAL MISSIONS

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I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Jennifer, and our three children, Ryan, Zachary, and Adam, who have lovingly supported me throughout the completion of this project.

May the Lord reward you greatly for your sacrifice, patience, and love.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BDCM</i>	Gerald H. Anderson, ed., <i>Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions</i>
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
CMS	Church Missionary Society
<i>DCC</i>	F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., <i>Dictionary of the Christian Church</i> , 3 rd ed.
LMS	London Missionary Society
LSPCJ	London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews
SPCK	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
<i>VE</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>

PREFACE

Mark Twain once said that “all good things arrive unto them that wait—and don’t die in the meantime.” I am well aware that the sloth-like pace with which I have progressed in my writing has caused a great number of my friends and family to wonder whether or not they would live to see the completion of this dissertation. This was particularly the case with my uncle, Allen Scott, who has reminded me several times over the past few years that he would like to see me graduate and that he was not getting any younger. To all those who have continued their support of this project, through more years than would normally be expected, I wish to express my immense gratitude.

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Finally, my wife, Jennifer, deserves as many accolades as I can squeeze into this preface for being my superhero. For nine years, she has run our household, mothered and schooled our children, served in our church, and lovingly cared for her husband. She made Ph.D. work possible, and I simply could not have done it without her.

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Florissant, Missouri

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Carlyle once famously remarked that “Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.”¹ While the present author hesitates to endorse fully Carlyle’s view of history, an element of truth is found in what he said, which can be applied to the history of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England.² After all, the Evangelical Party became prominent in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through the work of a number of individuals who set out to transform the Church of England and England itself into a realm of fervent Christian devotion.³ Charles Smyth sounded very

¹Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. Archibald MacMechan (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1901), 1.

²Unless otherwise noted, the phrases “Church of England,” “National Church,” and “English Establishment” will be used synonymously throughout this dissertation to refer to the official, state-established Christian church in England. Similarly, the term *Anglican* throughout this dissertation will be used as shorthand for persons, churches, or organizations associated with the Church of England. As Cross and Livingstone say, the Anglican Communion is “the Church in communion with, and recognizing the leadership of, the see of Canterbury, whether in Britain or abroad” (*DCC*, s.v. “Anglican Communion”).

³It should be noted that the term “evangelical” will be used in two senses in this work. On one hand, the term will be used as a reference to someone who is a member of the world-wide movement that bears the same name, that is, the evangelical movement. Throughout the course of this dissertation, when reference is made to members of the larger evangelical movement, the words *evangelical* and *evangelicalism* will not be capitalized. However, when speaking about the Church of England, historicans commonly talk about the “Evangelical Party” as a subset of the National Church. Not every member of the Church of England was sympathetic to evangelical principles; and consequently, clergyman in the Church of England can be divided into Evangelical and non-Evangelical parties. The “Evangelical Party” consisted of those in the Church of England who were sympathetic with the revivals that took place in the early 1700s. In the course of this dissertation, the words *Evangelical* and *Evangelicalism* will be capitalized when used in reference to Evangelicals who are members of the Church of England or the Evangelical movement *within* the Church of England. As J. D. Walsh observed, these men “were variously known as ‘awakened clergy’, ‘Gospel clergy’, even the ‘serious clergy’” (J. D. Walsh, “The Anglican Evangelicals in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Aspects de L’Anglicanisme*, ed. Marcel Simon [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974], 90). For historical information pertaining to the evangelical movement at large, see David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1989); D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The*

Carlyle-like when he wrote that “the history of the Evangelical Revival is essentially a history of personalities rather than opinions.”⁴ Kenneth Hylson-Smith echoes this sentiment when he says that the Evangelical movement in the Church of England “was made heroic, not by the might and magnificence of its onward surge, but by the sacrificial, dedicated lives of a small dispersed band of men who preached Christ to the best of their ability.”⁵ What is perhaps striking about the Evangelical clergymen who rose to greatness was the unlikeliness that *these* particular men would be able to do so much; but what many Evangelicals lacked in learning, social standing, or finances, they made up with passion and energy, as William Lecky observed:

With much narrowness and fanaticism of judgment, with little range of learning, and no high order of intellectual power, all these [clergymen] possessed, in an eminent degree, the qualities of heart and mind that influence great masses of men; and they and their colleagues gradually changed the whole spirit of the English Church. They infused into it a new fire and passion of devotion, kindled a spirit of fervent philanthropy, raised the standard of clerical duty, and completely altered the whole tone and tendency of the preaching of its ministers. Before the close of the [eighteenth] century the Evangelical movement had become the almost undisputed centre of religious activity in England, and it continued to be so till the rise of the Tractarian movement of 1833.⁶

Spirit of Early Evangelicalism: True Religion in a Modern World (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); John T. McNeil, *Modern Christian Movements* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), 75–103; Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, vol. 1 of *A History of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney*, vol. 2 of *A History of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007); David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*, vol. 3 of *A History of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005); Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott*, vol. 5 of *A History of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013). For histories of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England, see G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911); Leonard Elliott Binns, *The Evangelical Movement in the English Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, 1928); Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734–1984* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988); H. C. G. Moule, *The Evangelical School in the Church of England* (London: James Nisbet, 1901); George W. E. Russell, *A Short History of the Evangelical Movement* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Son, 1915); J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the 18th Century* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990); Roger Steer, *Church on Fire: The Story of Anglican Evangelicals* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998).

⁴Charles H. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 8.

⁵Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England*, 19.

⁶William E. H. Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans,

According to Lecky the Evangelical Party transformed much about the character and spirit of the Church of England. However, being “the almost undisputed centre of religious activity in England,” as Lecky put it, was not necessarily a desirable state of existence. Religious activity, after all, can come in a variety of forms. On one hand, religious activity can simply consist in the day-to-day performance of religious services, private prayer, reading Scripture, and the like. This sort of activity is not normally ominous or undesirable. However, religious activity can also involve conflict between two religious parties that view doctrine and practice in dramatically different ways. This type of commotion can be unpleasant and mean-spirited, resembling something more akin to warfare than religious devotion. Religious conflict normally rages fiercest when the parties involved are both members of the same religious organization, such as a specific church or denomination. In these circumstances the situation becomes essentially a religious civil war, with both parties vying for control of whatever institution is involved. Being at the center of this kind of religious activity can be extremely difficult and trying, and the early members of the Evangelical Party in England found themselves in just such a situation. Evangelicals in the Church of England soon discovered that there would be serious difficulties associated with being simultaneously “Evangelical” and “Anglican.”

The subject of this dissertation will be Thomas Scott (1747–1821), an Anglican minister who experienced this tension firsthand. Scott was a second-generation Evangelical who was not personally the product of the Evangelical revivals that so transformed the English landscape in the mid-1700s. In fact, Scott opposed Evangelicalism at the time he began his ministry, but in the course of time, he came to embrace Evangelical principles and became one of its most influential proponents.⁷

Green & Co., 1905), 3:134–35.

⁷For a fuller treatment of Scott’s Evangelical conversion, see chap. 2 below.

Scott's decision to identify with the Evangelical Party in the Church of England would have profound implications for the rest of his life. In all probability, he would have lived out a rather peaceful ministerial existence had he remained a part of the Anglican mainstream, but by joining the Evangelical movement, Scott became a member of a beleaguered minority who had been battling with Anglican leadership for their very existence in the National Church since the 1730s.

The Tension of Being an Evangelical Anglican

Recent scholarship has begun to recognize and appreciate more fully the complexities and tensions inherent in the Evangelical Anglican mindset, and the corresponding possibility of ecclesiastical secession from the Church of England by committed Evangelical churchmen.⁸ From a purely pragmatic standpoint, it is not overly difficult to see why Evangelicals might be tempted to abandon the Church of England for the greener pastures of English Dissent. From the outset the non-Evangelical members of the English establishment possessed no small disdain for those clergymen who were sympathetic to the revivals of religion that took place in the 1730s.⁹ Evangelicals were labeled as “enthusiasts,” “fanatics,” “sectaries,” and “Methodists.”¹⁰ They were seen to

⁸See Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c. 1800–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Elizabeth Elbourne, “The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society: The Anglican Missionary Impulse,” in *The Church of England c. 1689–c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 247–64; Harold H. Rowdon, “Secession from the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *VE* 3 (1964): 76–88; Walsh, “The Anglican Evangelicals,” 87–102.

⁹One can get a good idea of the extent of opposition by perusing Richard Green's annotated bibliography of anti-Methodists' works. See Richard Green, *Anti-Methodist Publications Issued During the Eighteenth Century* (London: C. H. Kelly, 1902). He found 606 written attacks on the Methodists, all written during the eighteenth century.

¹⁰See, e.g., William Warburton, *The Doctrine of Grace, or, the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit Vindicated from the Insults of Infidelity and Abuses of Fanaticism*, in *The Works of William Warburton, to Which is Prefixed a Discourse by Way of General Preface; Containing Some Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author [Works]*, ed. Richard Hurd, vol. 8 (London: Luke Hansard & Sons, 1811); George White, *A Sermon Against the Methodists, Preached at Colne and Marsden in the County of Lancaster, to a Very Numerous Audience* (Preston, UK: John Stanley and John Moon, 1748). It should be noted that the term *Methodist* was often used in the eighteenth century as derogatory shorthand

be irrational and too inclined to look for direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. They were seen as a modern manifestation of Puritanism, which had divided the country and propelled it into civil war, and they were disorderly to boot.

This antagonistic reaction to Evangelicalism was due in part to the simple fact that the revivals brought unanticipated change and disturbed the peaceful religious landscape that had been achieved in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution in 1688. John Moorman has observed that “peace and propriety were qualities which the eighteenth-century Church most desired, and such as threatened to disturb the one or outrage the other were deeply suspect.”¹¹ This coveted peace was disrupted when Evangelical preachers, particularly those of the Methodist persuasion, began scurrying around the English countryside, preaching in fields, streets, barns, and most shockingly—outside the predefined boundaries of their own parishes. George White complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury about these types of things, saying, “We are surpriz’d, my Lord, to see *Religion* (so amiable in its rational Precepts and Practices) become as *savage* as the Hills around us.”¹² The “savagery” though, was even carried out by high-profile persons like John Wesley (1703–1791) and George Whitefield (1714–1770), men who had been ordained in the Church of England and had Oxford educations. The former famously declared that the world was his parish, and he felt justified on the basis of Scripture to preach anywhere and to anyone he liked.¹³ Irregular conduct like that found

for someone who was serious about religion. The term was not necessarily used as a reference to the Methodist denomination. One correspondent to the Evangelical magazine, *The Christian Observer*, listed thirty-five ways the term *Methodist* could be used. See “To the Editor of the Christian Observer,” in vol. 4 of *The Christian Observer* (London: C. Whittingham, 1805), 94–95. The gist of most of them is that someone is more serious about religion than someone else, usually whoever is using the term.

¹¹John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 3rd ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1980), 281.

¹²White, *Sermon Against the Methodists*, iv.

¹³See John Wesley, *Journal and Diaries II (1738–43)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 19 of *The Works of John Wesley [Works]* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 67 (journal entry for June 11, 1739).

in Methodism often broke the tenets of English canon law and was openly opposed by the regular clergymen in the National Church, who were committed to the decency and good order canon law ensured.¹⁴ Furthermore, in an age in which revolutionary ideas were stirring in France and in America, resistance to traditional forms of ecclesiastical government was viewed as a seditious threat to England itself. In 1744 the *Gentleman's Magazine* recorded the findings of a grand jury hearing related to the Methodists. The Methodists were accused of conducting “illegal Field and other Meetings of Persons” and these meetings were said to “endanger the Peace of the Kingdom in general.”¹⁵ The article added that these meetings could “prove of dangerous Tendency, even to the Confusion of our established Religion, and consequently the overthrowing our good Government, both in Church and State.”¹⁶

Compounding the ecclesiastical strain was the Evangelical emphasis on the gospel, an emphasis that provided the justification for irregularity, at times called into question the spiritual genuineness of professing Christians who were in good standing with the Church of England, and tended to downplay the importance of denominational distinctions. It was the Evangelical commitment to the gospel that prompted the use of unusual methods and the transgression of ecclesiastical law by some of the movement's leaders. As John Wesley argued:

¹⁴It is common to see two types of clergyman within the Church of England—“regular” and “irregular.” The “regular” clergy were those that chose to abide by the traditional rules and regulations of the Establishment. The regular clergy, for example, refused to preach in another parish without permission and typically maintained the liturgical forms of the church and respected the governmental structure of the Church of England. The “irregular” clergy were those that did not feel constrained to abide by the traditional rubrics that governed the National Church. For example, they crossed parish lines without permission and allowed non-ordained people to conduct ministerial tasks that had traditionally been confined to recognized clergymen.

¹⁵Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle*, vol. 14 (London: Eward Cave, 1744), 504. For a similar contemporary attack, see also [Edmund Gibson], *Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect, Usually Distinguished by the Name of Methodists* (London, c. 1740).

¹⁶Urban, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 504.

God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, to do it at all, seeing I have no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom then Shall I hear? God or man? 'If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge you.' 'A dispensation of the gospel is committed to me, and woe is me if I preach not the gospel.'¹⁷

Likewise, George Whitefield was fearful that sinners in England might die in their sins because of the lack of knowledge of the gospel. On August 3, 1739, he encouraged Evangelical preachers to do whatever it took to make sure that all hear the good news of salvation:

O my brethren, have compassion on our dear Lord's Church, which He has purchased with His own blood. Suffer none of them to be as sheep having no shepherd, or with worse than none, those blind leaders of the blind, who let them perish for lack of knowledge, and are no better than wolves in sheep's clothing.¹⁸

This statement from Whitefield not only reveals his justification for irregularity, it gives a good indication as to what he thought of his non-Evangelical counterparts. They were in effect "blind leaders of the blind" and "no better than wolves in sheep's clothing."

Whitefield thought it acceptable for Evangelical ministers to preach in parishes where the resident clergyman had abandoned his responsibilities to the gospel because it was more important that the gospel go to everyone than to worry about the scruples of ministers who were, in his mind, really false shepherds. The non-Evangelical clergy got the hint and were deeply offended. William Warburton (1698–1779), the Bishop of Gloucester and a strong opponent of Methodism, saw in the Methodist practice of field preaching a subtle indictment of the existing ministers: "What does FIELD PREACHING (for instance) imply, but a *famine of the Word*, occasioned by a total neglect in the spiritual Pastors appointed by Law? And what can it produce, but strong resentments in behalf of the Ministers of Religion, thus injuriously treated?"¹⁹

¹⁷John Wesley, *Journals and Diaries II, Works*, 19:67 (journal entry for June 11, 1739).

¹⁸George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (London: Banner of Truth, 1960), 317.

¹⁹Warburton, *Works*, 8:353.

While Warburton was certainly right about the growth of resentment among non-Evangelicals, Whitefield's concerns were not without complete justification. The English clergy in the eighteenth century certainly possessed a good number of ministers whose commitment to orthodox Christianity could justly be questioned. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Church of England was already home to men like Edward Fowler (1632–1714) and Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), who in various ways denied or denigrated the Trinity and the full deity of Christ.²⁰ In 1751, Robert Clayton (1695–1758), the Bishop of Clogher in Ireland, openly attacked the teachings of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.²¹ Daniel Whitby (1638–1726) rejected the Augustinian doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin.²² Many English clergymen felt little need to keep their personal beliefs strictly in line with the Thirty-Nine Articles, which was supposed to be the doctrinal standard for the Church. William Paley (1743–1805), for example, argued that requiring strict subscription to the entire document was unreasonable:

They who contend, that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, than the *actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in*

²⁰For their relevant works, see Edward Fowler, *Certain Propositions, by which the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity is Explained, According to the Ancient Fathers, as to Speak It Not Contradictory to Natural Reason* (London: Brabazon Aylmer, 1694); Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: James Knapton, 1712).

²¹In the preface to his work *An Essay on Spirit* Clayton said, "As I am clergyman of the established Church, and have for some years been possessed of an ecclesiastical preferment, into which, before I could be admitted, I was obliged to subscribe to the four first canons, which include my assent to the Articles of our religion, and also to declare publicly my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing, contained in *The Book of Common Prayer*. And, as I have not been so much employed about my temporal affairs, but I have found leisure to apply some time to my books, and to *think* as well as read; I find that I do not now agree exactly in sentiment, either with my former opinions, or with those persons who drew up the Articles of our religion, or with the compliers of our liturgy, and, in particular, with the Athanasian Creed" (Robert Clayton, *An Essay on Spirit wherein the Doctrine of the Trinity is Considered in the Light of Nature and Reason; as Well as in the Light in Which It was Held by the Ancient Hebrews: Together with Some Remarks on the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds* [London: J. Noon, G. Woodfall, and M. Cooper, 1751], iv).

²²Daniel Whitby, *A Full Answer to the Arguments of the Reverend Dr. Jonathan Edwards, for the Opinion of St. Austin Concerning the Imputation of the First Sin of Adam, for Guilt to All His Posterity; Proving to be Contrary I. to the Common Principles of Mankind, II. To the Clear Evidence of Reason, III. To the Scriptures Expounded by the Holy Fathers, IV. To the Sentiments of Most of the Ancients before St. Austin's Time, and of the Greek and Eastern Churches at, and after That Time* (London: John Wyatt, 1712).

them, must suppose, that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any, who observed the incurable diversity of human opinion upon all subjects short of demonstration.²³

Later on in the same work, Paley would contend that “creeds and confessions” were at times useful for “purposes of order and tranquility,” but he apparently believed that the “judgment of mankind” could make doctrinal statements obsolete, and their only real purpose was to preserve some measure of unity.²⁴ Hence, he wrote:

[Creeds and confessions] are at all times attended with serious inconveniences: they check inquiry; they violate liberty; they ensnare the consciences of the of the clergy, by holding out temptations to prevarication: however they may express the persuasion, or be accommodated to the controversies or to the fears of the age in which they are composed, in process of time, and by reason of the changes which are wont to take place in the judgment of mankind upon religious subjects, they came at length to contradict the actual opinions of the church whose doctrines they profess to contain; and they often perpetuate the proscriptions of sects, and tenets, from which any danger has long ceased to be apprehended.²⁵

According to Paley and his followers, the doctrinal position of the National Church was always in flux. The reader’s interpretation of the Articles became more important than the author’s original intentions, and thus the door to doctrinal change was opened. William Powell, the Archdeacon of Colchester, remarked that “we are not concerned to discover what was meant by the writers [of the Articles], but what will be understood by the readers.”²⁶ Following the same basic reasoning as Paley and Powell, John Hey (1734–1815) taught his students at Cambridge that it was possible for a religious society to “change its doctrines, and yet retain the expressions by which they were defined.”²⁷ One

²³William Paley, *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (Boston: N. H. Whitaker, 1828), 80 (emphasis added).

²⁴Paley, *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, 183.

²⁵Paley, *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, 183.

²⁶W. S. Powell, *A Defense of the Subscriptions Required in the Church of England: A Sermon Preached before the University of Cambridge on the Commencement Sunday, 1757* (London: Thurlbourn and Woodyer, 1757), 12.

²⁷John Hey, *Lectures in Divinity: Delivered in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: John Burges, 1796), 2:72.

of the outcomes for this approach to creeds was that it became possible for there to be “two different Churches of England, using the same forms,”²⁸ one church holding fast to the original, authorial sense of the creed and another church holding to a new, evolved sense of the same. Hey even recognized that such a state of affairs had become a reality in the National Church in the eighteenth century, citing the Methodists as those who read the Articles in a literal sense while other clergymen read them in another way.²⁹ Evangelical clergymen, generally speaking, understood subscription to require personal belief in the Thirty-Nine Articles in their original sense. “[The Church of England’s] doctrines,” wrote Thomas Robinson, “which are clearly stated in the Thirty-Nine Articles, are entitled to our belief and admiration, as firmly resisting dangerous errors, and comprising a well-compacted system of evangelical truth.”³⁰ He added, “Every important principle of the Christian Faith is here brought before us, and we are required to profess our unequivocal and cordial assent to the whole.”³¹ Evangelicals argued on this basis that they were in fact the true churchmen.³² Non-Evangelical clergymen, at least those of a more rationalist bent, wanted to deny that subscription necessitated such belief. This is, of course, not to say that there were no orthodox ministers among the non-Evangelical clergy. Not every non-Evangelical denied the Trinity, the deity of Christ, or original sin. A spectrum of orthodoxy no doubt existed within the non-Evangelical Party, but the Evangelicals were concerned that their non-Evangelical counterparts were embarrassed by traditional Church doctrine and were reluctant to preach historic Protestant doctrines

²⁸Hey, *Lectures in Divinity*, 2:73.

²⁹Hey, *Lectures in Divinity*, 2:73.

³⁰Thomas Robinson, *The Christian System: Unfolded in a Course of Practical Essays on the Principle Doctrines and Duties of Christianity* (London: Printed for Thomas Robinson, 1805), 3:414.

³¹Robinson, *Christian System*, 3:414.

³²E.g., John Overton, *The True Churchmen Ascertained, or an Apology for Those of the Regular Clergy of the Establishment, Who are Sometimes Called Evangelical Ministers*, 2nd ed. (York: T. Wilson and R. Spence, 1802).

like original sin and justification by faith alone because they feared the social and intellectual stigmas that went along with those doctrines. George Whitefield complained about this very thing in a preface to a sermon he published on the necessity of the new birth:

I hope it will be permitted me to add my hearty wishes that my Reverend Brethren, the Ministers of the Church of England, would more frequently entertain their people with discourses of this nature [on the subject of the new birth], than they commonly do; and that they would not, out of a servile fear of displeasing particular persons, fail to declare the whole will of God.³³

Yet, Arnold Dallimore recorded that shortly after Whitefield wrote these words, “two ministers told him that unless he withdrew [his words] they would never again allow him in their pulpits.”³⁴

One of the problems Evangelical ministers like Whitefield faced in convincing non-Evangelicals of the need for gospel preaching was the fact that there was disconnect between the Evangelical message of the gospel and the religious self-perception of many in English society. The gospel message was simple—sinful men must experience the new birth brought about by faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Obviously, this message was nothing new in Christian history. Christians have always held such things. What so enraged certain members of society was the Evangelical insistence that *everyone* needed to hear and respond to this message; and everyone meant everyone—poor, rich, politician, and even clergymen. The English populace had a difficult time with a message that called them all to repent of sin. After all, England was a Christian nation, more specifically, a Protestant nation. The majority of the population was part of the Church of England; and these people had all been baptized in their youth, a baptism which was thought to bring them into the Christian fold. How could it be that Christians needed to

³³George Whitefield, *The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus in Order to Salvation*, preface.

³⁴Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone Books, 1979), 1:134.

be converted? The issue was an apparent discrepancy between Evangelical practice and the official teaching of the Church. As David Bebbington has observed:

The problem was one of reconciling the conviction of Evangelicals that conversion is the time when a person becomes a Christian with two statements in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. According to the order for baptism, an infant is declared regenerate at the end of the ceremony; and according to the catechism, baptism is the occasion of our new birth. Evangelicals who were also Anglicans had a tangled knot to untie.³⁵

In practice, Evangelicals called upon people in English society to repent of sin and believe the gospel, people who already considered themselves Christians by means of their baptism. This message of the heart's sinful condition was especially grating on the ears of England's social elite. Roy Porter points out that "the Duchess of Buckingham loathed Methodists because 'it is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting and at variance with high rank and good breeding.'"³⁶ Fearing the scorn of English high society, many clergymen in the Church of England were hesitant to preach a gospel message that called on sinners to repent. When clergymen failed to preach as Evangelicals thought they should, the Evangelicals became suspicious of the spiritual state of those men. Ford Brown has noted that from the Evangelical perspective,

the Regular clergy were either Archdeacon Paley Christians or venal characters of the Gentile world; the Evangelicals were true shepherds, 'gospel-preaching' ministers; in the gulf between there was no resting place. Between false shepherd and true shepherd there was nothing.³⁷

Not surprisingly, the Evangelical distrust of non-Evangelicals in respect to the gospel and Christian orthodoxy created a considerable amount of tension between the parties.

³⁵Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 9.

³⁶Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 48–49.

³⁷Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, 63. Gilbert Tennent's famous sermon *On the Danger of an Unconverted Ministry* is an example of this phenomenon among American Presbyterians. See Gilbert Tennent, *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry Considered in a Sermon on Mark 6:34* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1740).

Another major area of tension between Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals formed around the subject of ecclesiology. If Evangelicals questioned non-Evangelicals for their faithfulness to the gospel and Christian doctrine, non-Evangelicals questioned Evangelicals as to their loyalty to the Church of England. Since Evangelicals placed so much stress on the gospel and those who truly embraced it, they tended to give greater priority to the Church Universal and were less concerned with denominational affiliations. This phenomenon has been observed by Grayson Carter, who wrote, “While they prized the visible Church into which they were all ordained, Evangelicals maintained that its interests should be subordinated to those of the real church, the ‘Church of Christ’, or the invisible body of all believers.”³⁸ Thomas Robinson wrote that the church “in its highest sense and full extent, includes all those of every age and place, and none but those, who partake of the benefits of Christ.”³⁹ He went on, “The different members of this society may be fixed in very different circumstances upon the earth, far removed from and unknown to each other, diversified by a thousand external modes and customs, and divided into a thousand denominations.”⁴⁰ Once again the gospel took center stage in the Evangelical concept of the church. If the true church was to be found among those who believed the gospel, that is, among those who believed in evangelical principles, then Evangelicals felt that they had good cause for being friendly with people who held the same convictions but were outside the structures of the National Church. The opposite was also true. On occasion, Non-Conformists would identify ministers in the Church of England who shared their evangelical convictions and would go to hear them preach. Charles Wesley (1707–1788) recorded that Dissenters even came and

³⁸Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 9. I am greatly indebted to Carter’s work for much of what is in this section.

³⁹Robinson, *Christian System*, 400.

⁴⁰Robinson, *Christian System*, 400.

partook in communion with him at an Anglican church.⁴¹

This friendly interaction, however, became problematic for Evangelicals as they came to be viewed as something of a fifth column in the Church; and some actions by Evangelicals, particularly those in the Methodist circles led by John Wesley and Selina Hastings (1707–1791), the Countess of Huntingdon, gave just cause for concern. On the same day that Charles Wesley recorded the presence of Dissenters in an Anglican Communion service, Wesley also reported that he had instructed Dissenters to go to their own churches for services rather than encouraging them to attend those of the National Church.⁴² The Methodist ministry model itself, centered as it was around para-church societies that were commonly led by laymen rather than ordained clergymen, suggested to many churchmen that the Methodists were operating more like Dissenters than men of the establishment.⁴³ As early as 1739, Samuel Wesley the Younger (1690–1739), John and Charles Wesley's older brother and a person not at all sympathetic to his brothers' ministry methods, expressed concerns about the direction their ministry was taking them. In a letter to his mother, Susanna Wesley (1669–1742), he wrote of his brothers:

But they design separation. Things will take their natural course, without an especial interposition of Providence. They are already forbid all the pulpits in London, and to preach in that diocese is actual schism. In all likelihood it will come to the same all over England, if the bishops have courage enough. They leave off the liturgy in the fields; though Mr. Whitfield expresses his value for it, he never once read it to his tatterdemalions on a common. Their societies are sufficient to dissolve all other societies but their own. . . . As I told Jack, I am not afraid the church should excommunicate him, discipline is at too low an ebb, but that he should excommunicate the church.⁴⁴

⁴¹Charles Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 2:138 (journal entry for October 31, 1756).

⁴²Charles Wesley, *Journal*, 2:137 (journal entry for October 31, 1756).

⁴³For treatments of the society system in Methodism, see Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970); John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies* 3rd ed. (London, Epworth Press, 1952).

⁴⁴Joseph Priestley, ed., *Original Letters, by the Rev. John Wesley, and His Friends, Illustrative of His Early History, with Other Curious Papers, Communicated by the Late Rev. S. Badcock, to Which is Prefixed, an Address to the Methodists* (Birmingham, UK: Thomas Pearson, 1791), 110–11.

Samuel Wesley's sentiments represented the views of many clergymen, and his prediction would eventually come true; but it would be a long while before it would actually take place.

The move toward secession would be a long and gradual one, and the fact that many churchmen in the establishment did not make remaining a part of the Church particularly easy must not be overlooked. Samuel's comments indicate that Evangelicals were barred from pulpits. In some cases Evangelical ministers had difficulty conducting ministry in their own churches. William Romaine (1714–1795), for example, was appointed to be the lecturer of St. Dunstan's in London in 1749.⁴⁵ His own Rector, however, did everything in his power to keep him out of the pulpit from which he was legitimately entitled to minister. He was granted access to the pulpit only after a public court ruled in his favor. Even then, the churchwardens refused to open the doors of the church until the exact time the services were supposed to start, and they also refused to light the church building. The church sanctuary being engulfed in total darkness, Romaine was forced to preach "by the light of a single candle, which he held in his own hand."⁴⁶ During his time in London, Romaine was also invited to be the lecturer at St. George's parish church. After several years of ministry there, the congregation grew so much that the regular seat-holders got upset by the crowds. These church members complained to the Rector who removed Romaine from the lectureship.⁴⁷ Romaine was actually removed from his ministry because too many people were coming to church! The hardships at both St. Dunstan's and St. George's may well have made a move into English Dissent attractive for Romaine, who had other options on the table. Ryle records that

⁴⁵The details of this story can be found in Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, 156–57.

⁴⁶Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, 156.

⁴⁷Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, 159–60.

Lord Dartmouth offered him a living in the country. Whitefield urged him to accept a large church at Philadelphia, in America. Hot-headed friends pressed him to let them build him a chapel. It seemed far from improbable that he might fulfill the predictions of his enemies, and end by leaving the Church of England and becoming a regular Dissenter.⁴⁸

Romaine remained in the State Church, but it would have been difficult to fault him for leaving. He was not alone in receiving this sort of treatment. G. R. Balleine tells of a similar circumstance that took place in Cirencester, where a certain Samuel Johnson was the curate. He explains what happened:

Cirencester, for example, had had no Vicar since the Reformation; the living had been called a perpetual curacy, and had been held by license from the Bishop. But when, in 1778, Samuel Johnson, the Perpetual Curate, became an Evangelical, the office of Vicar was at once revived, and a Mr. Smith appointed, who dismissed the Curate, let the vicarage, and continued to live in Gloucester.⁴⁹

In this case Samuel Johnson was removed from his ministry office on an ecclesiastical technicality that had been ignored for nearly two hundred years, simply because he was an Evangelical. From the non-Evangelical standpoint, it was better to have no minister in Cirencester than to have an Evangelical one.

In addition to being barred from pulpits, Evangelical ministers faced other obstacles that hampered their ministries and prodded them toward Dissenting ranks. On rare occasions the difficulties were of a physical nature. In one instance, George White, using a pint of ale for a bribe, stirred up an angry mob to attack a service led by William Grimshaw and John Wesley.⁵⁰ Grimshaw himself was thrown to the ground in the scuffle, and some of the people attending the meeting were trampled. More commonly though, Evangelical trials were of an institutional nature. The challenges could range from Evangelical college students at Oxford being forbidden from attending Evangelical churches and chapels in London by the school's faculty⁵¹ to the more serious issue of

⁴⁸Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, 163–64.

⁴⁹Balleine, *History of the Evangelical Party*, 62.

⁵⁰Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, 125–26.

⁵¹Balleine, *History of the Evangelical Party*, 84.

obtaining legal recognition for Evangelical ministers and meeting houses that operated beyond the bounds of the parochial churches. English bishops were reluctant to ordain Evangelical ministers, especially if those ministers were suspected of Methodism. As a result, the problem of ordination became the deciding issue on the question of church loyalty for many Evangelicals. Ordination in the Church of England typically required a person to pass Greek and Hebrew language exams and to obtain letters of recommendation from established clergyman. Quite often lay ministers who operated in Methodists circles did not have the education to pass the language exams, but even those who could pass them commonly had difficulty obtaining the proper letters of recommendation due to clerical antipathy to Methodism. John Newton (1725–1807), who was not himself a Methodist, was refused letters of recommendation by the first three vicars from whom he asked them because they suspected that he was a Methodist.⁵² Thomas Scott’s ordination was also delayed because the ordaining bishop thought he was a Methodist.⁵³ Both of these men eventually obtained ordination, and both remained in the National Church.

However, not everyone was so privileged. Cornelius Winter (1742–1808), a man who had worked with George Whitefield and was associated with Selina Hastings was refused ordination because the Bishop of London adjudged Winter’s teaching among American slaves to have been illegal. Also factored into the bishop’s refusal was the fact that the SPG had refused to endorse Winter, and the bishop “was afraid the young gentleman had drank deep into Mr. Whitefield’s doctrine.”⁵⁴ This rejection ended Winter’s hopes of working as a minister in America, and he was later ordained as a Dissenting minister in England. Similar troubles led Lady Huntington to withdraw her

⁵²Aitken, *John Newton*, 153.

⁵³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 32.

⁵⁴William Jay, *Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Rev. Cornelius Winter* (New York: Samuel Whiting, 1811), 99–101.

Connexion from the Church of England, and the Connexion began ordaining its own ministers in 1783. In 1784, John Wesley felt compelled to ordain two priests in America who could not obtain ordination otherwise. Wesley's act of ordaining ministers without the approval of the Church was soon followed by his allowing Methodist societies to register as Dissenting meeting houses in 1787.⁵⁵ Wesley's actions put Methodism on a trajectory that would have vast implications for both the Church of England and Methodist history. Though Wesley himself died in the Church of England, his followers, many of whom did not share his commitments to the National Church, soon moved themselves into the realm of English non-conformity.

The Evangelical Anglican Tension and Missions

The issues of orthodoxy, ecclesiology, persecution, and church order discussed above created a challenging environment in which Evangelicals struggled to find their place. The temptation to leave the Church of England was always present. However, the tension of being both evangelical and Anglican was not restricted purely to domestic affairs. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, evangelicalism broadly was developing a growing passion for foreign missions. Missionary societies began to be formed, and strategies for reaching the world with the gospel began to develop. Evangelical Baptists formed the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in 1792.⁵⁶ The evangelically-minded, inter-denominational London Missionary Society (LMS) was formed just a few years later in 1795.⁵⁷ Anglican missionary societies also existed at this time. The Society for

⁵⁵For a brief overview of some of the issues resulting in the Methodist split from the Church of England, see Anthony Armstrong, *The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700–1850* (London: University of London Press, 1973), 108–17.

⁵⁶For a history of the BMS, see Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792–1992* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992).

⁵⁷For histories of the LMS, see Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795–1895*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Frowde/Oxford University Press, 1899); Roger H. Martin, *Evangelicals: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795–1830*, Studies in Evangelicalism, no 4. (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1983).

Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) had been established in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in 1701.⁵⁸ However, Anglican Evangelicals who were interested in foreign missions found themselves in a difficult position just before the turn of the century. On the one hand, their participation and support of missionary societies like the BMS and LMS brought them under the scrutiny of the non-Evangelical portion of the Church who would see their association with Non-Conformists as a lack of loyalty to the English establishment and as further confirmation that the Evangelicals were really Dissenters within the Church. On the other hand, Anglican societies like the SPCK and the SPG were unsympathetic to Evangelicals and were reluctant to endorse their missionaries or grant them much authority in their societies.⁵⁹ Evangelicals who wanted to maintain their loyalty to the National Church and engage in foreign missions needed an alternative to the societies that existed at that time. The alternative would ultimately come in 1799 with the establishment of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The founders of the CMS “sought to take the techniques and ideology of domestic evangelical revival and apply them to politically safe ends within the restrictions of church order.”⁶⁰ While the CMS provided a missional outlet for Evangelical churchmen, the Society did not totally alleviate the Evangelical Anglican

⁵⁸See W. O. B. Allen and Edmund McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1698–1898* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970); H. P. Thompson, *Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands 1701–1950* (London: S.P.C.K., 1951). Technically, the SPCK’s charter did not stipulate that it was an Anglican society exclusively, but it acted this way in practice. This society was not as concerned with foreign missions so much as it was concerned with protecting the Church of England against infidelity on the home front. See Craig Rose, “The Origins and Ideals of the SPCK 1699–1716,” in *The Church of England c. 1689–c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 172–90.

⁵⁹The case of Cornelius Winter described above is an example of this phenomenon. The SPG refused to recommend Winter for ordination, and as a result, he gave up on his quest for missions work in North America.

⁶⁰Elizabeth Elbourne, “The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society,” in *The Church of England c. 1689–c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 248.

tension for its members. Many of the CMS founders had Non-Conformist friends with whom they continued to associate after the founding of the CMS, and their opponents still questioned their loyalty to the Church on this account. Even Evangelical sympathizer Henry Thornton (1760–1815) complained that Josiah Pratt (1768–1844) was too friendly with Dissenters. Writing to William Wilberforce (1759–1833) in 1804, he said:

[Collaborating with Dissenters] tends to prove what I have often thought that the evangelical mins[ters] in the Church who are warm on points of doctrine & talk much of '*seeing clearly*' & indeed most of those who are serious find themselves so naturally connected with Dissenters that consid[er]ing human Nature it is scarcely possible for them to be very staunch friends of the Church under the present Circumstances of the Establishment.⁶¹

In the same year Thornton made these comments, Thomas Scott preached a sermon before the LMS. No doubt sensing the objections of men like Thornton, Scott felt the need to justify his presence at the LMS by opening his sermon with his reasons for being the keynote speaker, noting that he was “well aware that some persons might misunderstand my intention, or object to my conduct.”⁶² Evidently, Scott’s and Pratt’s interactions with English Dissent evoked suspicion from their Anglican counterparts despite the fact that these men represented the first and second secretaries of the CMS respectively. Both men were loyal churchmen, and both men were happy to support the spread of the gospel irrespective of a missionary’s or a missionary society’s ecclesiastical affiliation. However, maintaining dual commitments to the National Church and the cause of missions generally sometimes placed an individual Evangelical in a difficult place ecclesiastically, and the opposition of other Anglicans to participation with Dissenters could govern, at least to a certain extent, the way an individual minister might involve himself in missions.

⁶¹Bodelein Library, MS Wilberforce c.51, fo. 30: Thornton to Wilberforce, November 21, 1804, cited in Elbourne, “Foundation of the Church Missionary Society,” 254.

⁶²Thomas Scott, *A Call to Prayer for the Sending Forth of Labourers* (London: L. B. Seeley, [1804?]), 7.

Purpose and Methodology of This Dissertation

Historians have generally recognized that Evangelical Anglicans had to contend with some unique ecclesiological challenges when they purposed to involve themselves in foreign missions. Normally, those challenges are discussed in relationship to the founding of the CMS, with the motivation for the Society's establishment being the chief point of emphasis. What has received little attention in the scholarly literature is the manner in which the Evangelical Anglican tension affected the missionary enterprises of individual Evangelicals. If Thornton's reaction to Pratt is any indication, it cannot be assumed that every Evangelical handled the tension in the same way. How then did individual Evangelicals work out this problem on a personal level? How did their understanding of the gospel impact their ecclesiology, and how did their ecclesiology work its way out in the cause of missions?

One way to answer questions like these is through case studies, and this dissertation will consist in a study of one of the prominent founding members of the CMS—Thomas Scott. Scott is a good candidate for such a study for several reasons. First, he was an Anglican his entire life. He was committed to the Church of England, and his reasons for remaining in the Church can be informative for how he personally addressed the Evangelical Anglican tension. Second, Scott was someone who was not initially an Evangelical but became one through his personal reading and Bible study. In his early days he opposed Evangelicals but then became one by conviction. His change of allegiance, so to speak, means that he knew what it was like to be in both parties within the Church of England. Once a member of the Evangelical Party, he knew full-well the difficulties associated with being a part of a despised minority within the Church, and his articulation of Evangelical principles would come with the added weight of one who had changed sides. Third, Scott on a few occasions had a crisis of conscience about his allegiance to the Church of England. He was someone who highly prized biblical doctrine, and there were times in his ministry that he was not sure that his biblical beliefs

aligned with the teachings of the Church of England. On at least one occasion, he felt the temptation to move toward English Dissent, and consequently he is representative of someone who did feel the weight of the Evangelical Anglican tension personally. Fourth, Scott was heavily involved in Anglican missions work. He was the first secretary of the CMS and was the man the CMS called on to train the Society's first missionaries. That he was chosen for these important tasks shows that he was one of the leaders of the Evangelical Party and someone his contemporaries thought of highly. Furthermore, he was someone who had thought carefully about Anglican missions and became active in the implementation of means to advance that cause. Fifth, Scott was also involved in non-Anglican missionary work. This fact allows questions to be asked of Scott as to how he reconciled his commitment to the Church of England and his commitments to other missionary causes. Finally, very little scholarly attention has been paid to Scott's role in evangelical history, especially in regards to his contributions to missions. By examining his missions work and his thought on evangelicalism and Anglicanism, more can be learned about a man who has been largely neglected by evangelical scholars.

Given that Thomas Scott is a good candidate for a case study on how individual Evangelicals dealt the Evangelical Anglican tension in the context of missions, the goal of this dissertation is to answer this question: "How did Thomas Scott combine his evangelical commitments and his commitment to the Church of England in his involvement in the cause of missions?" In order to answer this question adequately several related issues will have to be considered in the course of this study. First, it will be important to discover what principles drove Scott to be involved in missions at all. After all, having a missions mindset could not be taken for granted in the religious environment of the eighteenth century, particularly for those whose theology was Calvinistic in bent. Second, it will be important to ascertain something of Scott's general ecclesiology. What did Scott think about the Church of England and why did he think

Anglicanism preferable to other Christian organizations? Also, how did Scott see himself as an evangelical, and what did that understanding mean for this relationships with non-Anglicans? Answering questions like these will be important for understanding how he could participate in both Anglican and evangelical missionary work. However, it will be impossible to answer the question proposed above without also examining what Scott actually did to advance the cause of missions in a direct and tangible way. Therefore, it will be necessary to examine how Scott's missiology and ecclesiology manifested themselves in his involvement with various missionary societies. The goal will be to determine how Scott's evangelical and Anglican ideologies correspond to his actual missionary activity.

Statement of the Thesis

This dissertation will argue that Thomas Scott's personal commitments to the Church of England resulted in him devoting the majority of his missional efforts to the CMS. Since the CMS was both evangelical and Anglican, Scott could naturally and comfortably operate within that society and have no conflicts with his personal beliefs. Scott devoted himself to this society above all others, with his chief contributions being his work as Secretary and as missionary trainer. However, this dissertation will also show that Scott's evangelical principles allowed him to participate in the activities and efforts of non-Anglican missionary societies. His commitment to the Church of England did not prevent him from fellowshiping with English Dissenters or participating in limited ways in their missionary efforts. What was most important to Scott was the advancement of the gospel itself, and he had no qualms about supporting those outside his own tradition, so long as the cause of Christ was advanced.

The Importance of the Study

Exploring Thomas Scott's evangelical and Anglican theology in the context of

missions is beneficial for several reasons. First, detailed attention will be put on Thomas Scott's theology and missionary involvement. Scott is normally remembered for his work as a Bible commentator, but his intellectual contribution to Evangelical history has been largely overlooked by historians. Additionally, his missionary efforts have never been given a full treatment. What little is said about Scott's missionary work is normally confined to his work with the CMS. As will become evident in the course of this study, Scott's missionary endeavors included participation in missionary societies other than the CMS. Therefore, this dissertation will seek to fill an important *lacuna* in Evangelical historiography by looking at these aspects of Scott's life and thought in greater detail than has been done previously. Second, exploring Scott's handling of the Evangelical Anglican tension will shed greater light on how Evangelical Anglicans viewed their own position in the Church of England. What were some of the challenges Evangelicals had to address in order to pacify their consciences with regard to their continuation in the Church? Why were they loyal to a Church that was at times quite hostile to them? What benefits did they see in staying in the establishment? Answers to these questions will be found in an examination of Scott's ecclesiology. Third, Scott's interactions with non-Anglicans will be instructive on how Evangelical Anglicans related to evangelical Dissenters. In many cases, Anglicans like Scott were extremely friendly with Christians outside of the State Church. Seeing Scott's interactions with men like Andrew Fuller and John Ryland, Jr., for instance, will build a greater appreciation for the ecumenical spirit that existed among the various denominations that formed the broader evangelical movement. Yet, before taking a look at the particulars of Scott's Evangelical Anglicanism and his missionary contribution, a more detailed examination of Scott's life and legacy will be helpful as it will enable the reader to place Scott's missionary endeavors in the context of his own life and ministry.

CHAPTER 2

THOMAS SCOTT'S LIFE AND LEGACY

Any student who seeks to know something about Thomas Scott's evangelicalism almost certainly must consider in some way the story of his life.¹ Naturally, having a knowledge of Scott's life story will provide some of the key blocks required for building an understanding of who the man was and what role he played in evangelical history, but in Scott's case, his life story is in reality an expression of his evangelicalism. Scott viewed the story of his life, particularly his conversion narrative, as an evangelistic and discipleship tool in itself. In the preface to his famous autobiographical work, *The Force of Truth*, he stated as much:

Reader, the effect of this publication respecting thee I have much at heart, and have had, still have, and shall continue to have it much in my prayers. If thou art a believing servant of God, I hope thou wilt see cause to bless God in me, and wilt be established and comforted thereby, according to the fervent desire of my soul, for all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; if thou art one, whose experience answer in many things to what is here related of me, as face answer face in the water; may the Lord, the Spirit, who convinceth of sin, alarm thy drowsy conscience, and bring thee under a serious concern for thy precious soul, and its eternal interests; may he incline thine heart diligently to use the means here spoken of, as far as conscience evidences it to be thy duty; and may he bless the means for enlightening thy mind with the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and guiding thy wandering feet into

¹For biographical information on Thomas Scott, see Andrew Crichton, *Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Scott, Late Rector of Aston Sandford Bucks: With General Remarks on His Life, Character, and Writings* (Edinburgh: H. S. Baynes, 1825); A. C. Downer, *Thomas Scott the Commentator* (London: Charles J. Thynne, 1909); Charles Hole, "A Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Scott," unpublished manuscript CMS/ACC87 D17, Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK; Marcus L. Loane, *Oxford and the Evangelical Succession* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950), 132–91; John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself and Copious Extracts of His Letters*, 6th ed. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824); Mary Seeley, *The Later Evangelical Fathers: John Thornton, John Newton, William Cowper, Thomas Scott, Richard Cecil, William Wilberforce, Charles Simeon, Henry Martyn, Josiah Pratt* (London: Seeley, Jackson, & Halliday, 1879; Forgotten Books, 2012), 150–87. There is also some helpful biographical information in the two funeral sermons Daniel Wilson preached for Thomas Scott. See Daniel Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Wilson, 1825), 1:475–591.

the ways of peace.²

Scott's purpose statement is laced with evangelical ideology. "Serious concern" for "precious" souls and their "eternal interests," the necessity of loving Christ "in sincerity," the need to use "means," and the presence of a catholic love for "all that love the Lord Jesus Christ" are all important aspects of what it means to be an evangelical. The story of Scott's life, then, not only embodied evangelical principles, it was intended to promote them.³

Ironically, the life story that was designed to promote evangelicalism has largely been forgotten by evangelicals themselves. For one reason or another, contemporary evangelicals have failed to pay much attention to Scott's life and ministry. That not one selection from his approximately fifteen-volume *corpus* found its way into a recent collection of early evangelical primary sources is testimony to this fact.⁴

Apparently, the phenomenon of "Thomas Scott memory loss" is nothing new. A. C.

Downer sensed the same problem at the turn of the twentieth century. He wrote in 1909

²Thomas Scott, *The Force of Truth: An Authentic Narrative* (London: G. Keith, 1779), vi–vii. *The Force of Truth* went through twelve editions over the course of Scott's lifetime. The first edition was produced in 1779 and the last in 1821, the year of his death. For something of a critical edition of *The Force of Truth* containing the major textual variants which developed throughout the work's publication history, see Gordon Bruce Rumford, "Thomas Scott's *The Force of Truth*: A Diplomatic Edition from the First and Final Editions with Introduction and Notes" (M.A. thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1992).

³Using one's life story to promote evangelical religion was not unique to Thomas Scott. In fact, the practice was widespread among evangelical writers, to the extent that a literary genre focusing on "conversion narratives" developed. Jonathan Aitken points out that "in the religious world, phrases such as 'faithful narrative' or 'authentic narrative' were coded signals to the evangelical community that a book was a personal testimony about conversion experiences" (Jonathan Aitken, *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007], 167). Thus Scott's subtitle for *The Force of Truth* of "Authentic Narrative" fits right in with the common practice of the day. Other famous examples of this practice include Jonathan Edwards, "A Faithful Narrative," in *The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen, vol. 4 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards [Works]* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 97–211, and [John Newton], *An Authentic Narrative of Some Remarkable and Interesting Particulars in the Life of *****: Communicated in a Series of Letters to the Reverend Mr. Haweis, Rector of Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire; and by Him (at the Request of Friends) Now Made Public*, 3rd ed. (London: S. Drapier, T. Hitch, and P. Hill, 1765). For a detailed study of this genre, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴Jonathan M. Yeager, ed., *Early Evangelicalism: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

that his purpose in writing another biography on Scott was “to bring before the present generation, in the style of the day, the personality and career of a truly great man, not duly honoured in his own time, at least till the closing period of his life, and now in danger of being forgotten.”⁵ More recently in a published lecture on Scott, John Marshall said to his audience, “It is possible that you have heard his name, but if you have, it will be in connection with his massive commentary on the Bible. As to who he was, what was his character and worth, it is probably fair to say most of you have little or no idea.”⁶ The fact that I have been able to locate just two works written directly on Thomas Scott since Marshall made these remarks nearly forty years ago suggests that little has changed with regard to Scott’s general popularity.⁷ Given both the importance of Scott’s life for the character of his evangelicalism and the lack of knowledge about him generally, it will serve this study well to consider briefly his life and legacy before examining his evangelicalism, Anglicanism, and missionary contribution in greater detail.

The Life of Thomas Scott

It is fairly common practice among Thomas Scott’s biographers to describe him as the “rector of Aston Sandford.”⁸ However, it is important to recognize that Aston Sandford was the place where Scott concluded his life and ministry and that many important happenings in his life took place prior to his time there. Scott’s Aston Sandford

⁵Downer, *Thomas Scott the Commentator*, ix.

⁶John E. Marshall, *Thomas Scott (1747–1821) and “The Force of Truth”* (London: The Evangelical Library, 1979), 3.

⁷See Fergus Pearson, “Thomas Scott: ‘Very Busy, Very Unpopular, and a *Little* Useful,” *Churchman* (2013): 29–45; Rumford, “Thomas Scott’s *The Force of Truth*: A Diplomatic Edition.” A Ph.D. dissertation was done on Thomas Scott in the 1950s. See Aaron Edward Gast, “Thomas Scott the Commentator (1747–1821): A Study of His Theological Thought” (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1955).

⁸E.g., Crichton, *Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Scott, Late Rector of Aston Sandford Bucks*; Scott, *Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks*. Many of Scott’s published works also reference him as the “rector of Aston Sandford” on the title page.

residency is really the final chapter of his life, albeit one that lasted approximately twenty years. Therefore, a more comprehensive examination of his life will better set the stage for the present study.

From His Birth to His Ordination:

Thomas Scott was born on February 16, 1747, in the town of Braytoft, Lincolnshire, to John and Mary Scott.⁹ His father was a shepherd by trade and a Socinian by theological conviction.¹⁰ The shepherd's life taught Scott what it meant to work hard, and his father shaped his earliest theological convictions in a Socinian mold. Though his father had a strong influence on his spiritual development, young Thomas would spend much of his early life battling with, and ultimately disappointing, his dad. Much of the family infighting was over his education and career path. Early on, he received some instruction in Latin, Greek, and French, the common subjects of a classical education. He performed reasonably well in his studies and developed a desire to go to a university to continue his academic training. However, his father's desire to see one of his sons enter the medical profession thwarted his hopes of receiving a higher education. Several years

⁹The actual date given for his birth depends on how one deals with the change in historical dating in the eighteenth century. Thomas Scott cites the date this way: "I was born on the fourth of February, 1746-7, answering, since the change of the style, and the beginning of another century, to February 16, 1747" (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 3).

¹⁰Socinianism traces its roots back to two Italian theologians, Lelio Francesco Maria Sozini (1525–62) and his nephew Fausto Paolo Sozzini (1539–1604), who popularized a rationalistic form of Christianity in which traditional Christian doctrines such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the fall of man, and the need for Christ's atonement to forgive human sin were rejected. Socinians believe that the New Testament is God-given revelation to man, but it is to be understood by human reason, which is the final arbiter of truth. Socinians stress the absolute unity of God on a rationalistic basis and thus deny that there are three distinct persons in the divine nature. Socinians deny the eternity of Jesus Christ, though they do affirm his uniqueness in that he was supernaturally born of Mary. The atonement of Jesus Christ has no saving merit in and of itself. God simply chooses to accept Jesus' death as the basis of forgiveness by an act of divine willing. God could have forgiven men for any other reason had he decided to do so. Socinians also deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is obtained through faith, but it is a faith directed toward God and is not necessarily connected to the Christ's atonement. In terms of its basic belief system, Socinianism is part of the Unitarian tradition. For more information on Socinianism, see Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. William M'Gilchrist (London: Williams & Norgate, 1899), 7:118–67; James Hastings, John A. Selbie, and Louis H. Gray, eds., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), s.v. "Socinianism," by W. M. Clow.

prior to Scott's thoughts of the university, it seemed likely that his elder brother would fulfill his father's desire of having a son who practiced medicine. Scott's older brother had been apprenticed to a surgeon and eventually joined the Royal Navy as a doctor. Had family circumstances been different at the time, his dream of a university may well have come to fruition, but the reality was that his brother had died several years earlier at the age of twenty-four, while trying to treat the crew of an English war vessel for some deadly disease. Therefore, Mr. Scott turned to Thomas with the hope that he instead would become a doctor, and Thomas' hopes for the university were disregarded.

In September of 1762, the teenage Thomas was apprenticed to a surgeon, whom he later described as a person who "was in all respects unprincipled" and "an infidel."¹¹ Apparently, his own behavior was not much better, for after a period of just two months, his master dismissed him for his poor conduct. What specifically he had done, we do not know, but the fallout of his dismissal was monumental, as he himself noted:

As to things which I was required to do, no fault was found: but, in other respects, I behaved very ill, and gave my master just cause of complaint, and, at least, a plausible reason for dismissing me. This he accordingly did; and at the end of two months, I returned home in deep disgrace. Thus my father's favorite plan was disappointed, through my misconduct; a family, respected for morality, was dishonored; and I was left to encounter a degree of displeasure, and mortifications resulting from it, which were hard enough in themselves to be endured, and to which my unhumiliated heart was by no means properly disposed to submit.¹²

The dismissal from his apprenticeship resulted in a broken relationship with his father

¹¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 11.

¹²Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 12. Ironically, Scott later considered this event to be a blessing from God. He wrote, "Yet I must, notwithstanding, regard the short season of my apprenticeship as among the choicest mercies of my life. Not that I learned any wisdom, or self-government, or submission, by my deep and lasting disgrace and anguish: but for two reasons. The first and most important was this: my master, though himself, not only irreligious, but in many respects immoral, first excited in my mind a serious conviction of sin committed against God. Remonstrating with me on one instance of my misconduct, he observed, that I ought to recollect, it was not only displeasing to him, but wicked in the sight of God. This remark produced a new sensation in my soul, which no subsequent efforts could destroy; and proved, I am fully satisfied, as far as any thing proceeding from man was instrumental to it, the primary means of my subsequent conversion" (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 12–13)!

and an uncomfortable return to his father's farm, where he "was set to do, as well as [he] could, the most laborious and dirty parts of the work belonging to a grazier."¹³ At this time "his chief occupation consisted in attending to the cattle, and managing sheep, —a service in which he encountered every vicissitude of weather, and acquired habits of hardihood and activity."¹⁴ He was to spend nine years of his life doing the work of a common shepherd. However, he still possessed a strong desire to continue his academic pursuits, and he began self-educating himself in subjects suitable for religious employment. With just "a few torn Latin books" and "a small imperfect dictionary," he continued his Latin study, study which he supplemented with Greek lessons based on a single grammar book he owned.¹⁵ His diligent study in the original languages would prove to be immensely helpful for his future work as a Bible commentator, but his study had the more immediate effect of making him suitable for ordination in the Church of England.

Scott's desire to go into the ministry was remarkable for at least two reasons. First, his father, who was still bitter about the apprenticeship fiasco, strenuously opposed his "attachment to books" and his thoughts of Anglican ministry.¹⁶ Scott received absolutely no encouragement to go into ministry from his father, who must have marveled that his son, who had behaved himself so poorly in his youth, would desire a profession that normally requires some semblance of morality. Second, and perhaps more striking, he did not personally believe some of the core teachings of the Christian faith because he had embraced his father's Socinian views.¹⁷ Writing of his religious

¹³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 19.

¹⁴Crichton, *Memoirs of Thomas Scott*, 30.

¹⁵Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 23.

¹⁶Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 22.

¹⁷Scott's father possessed a Bible commentary written from a Socinian perspective, and the commentary evidently had a profound impact on Thomas Scott's theological development. In *The Force of*

sentiments prior to his ordination, he said:

I was nearly a Socinian, and a Pelagian, and wholly an Arminian: yet to my shame be it spoken, I sought to obtain admission into the ministry, in a church, whose doctrines are diametrically opposed to all the three; without once concerning myself about those barriers, which the wisdom of our fore-fathers have placed about her, purposely to prevent the intrusion of such dangerous heretics, as I then was.¹⁸

In *The Force of Truth*, he went to great lengths to show that he entered clerical ministry for all of the wrong reasons. He was not concerned about the spiritual well-being of others. He was not concerned with spreading the Christian faith. He was really concerned about himself. A great deal of his motivation was financial in nature, although ease of life and time for personal study were also given as reasons for his desire to enter the ministry:

My views in entering into the ministry, so far as I can ascertain them, were these three—1. A desire of a less laborious and more comfortable way of procuring a livelihood, than otherwise I had the prospect of. 2. The expectation of more leisure to employ in reading, which I was inordinately fond of—And 3. a proud conceit of my abilities, and a vain-glorious imagination, that I should sometime distinguish and advance myself in the literary world.¹⁹

His desire for financial improvement is understandable, considering his circumstances at the time. Shortly before he made the decision to pursue Anglican ministry as a career path, he had discovered that he would not be the heir to his father's farm, which came as a surprise both to himself and his family.²⁰ Perhaps, he should not have been surprised,

Truth, Thomas wrote, "A Socinian comment on the Scriptures came in my way, and I greedily drank the poison, because it quieted my fears and flattered my abominable pride. The whole system coincided exactly with my inclinations, and the state of my mind, approved itself to me. In reading such Expositions, sin seemed to lose its native ugliness, and appear a very small and tolerable evil; man's obedience, though imperfect, seemed to shine with an almost divine excellency; God appeared so entirely and necessarily merciful, that he could not make any of his creatures miserable without contradicting his natural propensity. These things influenced my mind so powerfully, that I was induced to conclude, that notwithstanding a few little blemishes, I was upon the whole a very worthy creature. Then further, the mysteries of the Gospel being, in the management of this argument, explained away, or brought down to the level of man's comprehension by their proud and corrupt, though specious reasonings; by acceding to these sentiments, I was, in my own opinion, in point of understanding and discernment, exalted to a superiority above the general run of mankind; and amused myself with looking down with contempt upon such as were weak enough to believe the orthodox doctrines" (Scott, *Force of Truth*, 7–9).

¹⁸Scott, *Force of Truth*, 13–14.

¹⁹Scott, *Force of Truth*, 17.

²⁰See Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 23.

given the strained relationship between himself and his father, but he rightly recognized that the lack of an inheritance necessitated him finding another occupation if he was to have any prospect of a suitable living. Therefore, in April of 1772, after a wet, horrible day working his father's farm, he decided he would shepherd sheep no more.²¹

Scott's love for reading and his background in languages made a ministerial career attractive, and he wasted little time in pursuing his goal with a new sense of determination prompted by the unwelcomed emergence of financial necessity. He presently enquired about obtaining clerical orders from a clergyman in Boston, Lincolnshire, and this unnamed cleric was impressed enough with his knowledge of Greek and Latin that he promised to mention him to Dr. Gordon, the archdeacon, "who was the examining chaplain to the bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Green."²² When he appeared before the archdeacon, he once again demonstrated himself learned enough, and Dr. Gordon promised to bring the matter before the bishop. The next ordination examination was to take place that June, and Scott was under the impression that he would be ordained at that time. Everything seemed to be in order until he arrived in London for the ordination proceedings. Upon arrival, he was informed that he had not submitted his ordination papers on time, and furthermore, there was hesitation on part of the bishop to ordain him because the bishop suspected Scott of Methodism.²³ Nevertheless, he was granted an opportunity to speak with the bishop about the matter, and his ordination would be reconsidered if his father would consent to his ordination and if a beneficed

²¹He did, however, continue to help his father during his quest for ordination.

²²Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 29.

²³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 30. This accusation was very far from the truth as Scott was then in no way associated with the Methodists or Evangelicals in the Church of England. Shortly after he was ordained, he did encounter a group of Methodists in his parish, but he "joined in the prevailing sentiment, held them in sovereign contempt, spoke of them in derision, declaimed against them from the pulpit, as persons full of bigotry, enthusiasm, and spiritual pride, laid heavy things to their charge, and endeavored to prove the doctrines, which I supposed them to hold, for I had never read their books, to be dishonorable to God, and destructive to morality" (Scott, *Force of Truth*, 22–23).

member of the clergy in Lincolnshire would sign off on it.

While it took both the pleading of the entire family to obtain his father's consent and a number of recommendation letters from respectable members of society to be presented to the local vicar, Scott was able to obtain the necessary requirements and was scheduled for ordination in September of 1772. After what must have been a fairly inadequate doctrinal examination, he was ordained. In *The Force of Truth*, he wrote of the event:

And thus, after some difficulty, I continued; with a heart full of pride and all manner of wickedness; my life being polluted with many unrepented, unforsaken sins, without one cry for mercy, one prayer for direction or assistance in, or a blessing upon what I was about to do. After having concealed my real sentiments under the mask of general expressions; after having subscribed articles directly contrary to my then belief; and after having blasphemously declared, in the presence of God, and of the congregation, in the most solemn manner, sealing it with the Lord's supper, that I judged myself to be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take that office upon me (not knowing or believing that there was a Holy Ghost), on September the 20th, 1772, I was ordained a Deacon.²⁴

And thus, Thomas Scott entered Anglican ministry. At the time of his ordination he denied the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ. He subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, but he did not believe them.²⁵ How, then, did this man become an ardent spokesman for these doctrines and a proponent of the Thirty-Nine Articles themselves? The answer to this question will be found in the next section, which will trace Scott's life from his ordination to his conversion.

²⁴Scott, *Force of Truth*, 14–15.

²⁵The Thirty-Nine Articles are quite clear on the doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ. Articles I and II address these subjects respectively. Article I says, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" ("Thirty-Nine Articles," in *The Creeds of Christendom*, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff, 6th ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 3:487–88). Article II says, "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, and very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that tow whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins" ("Thirty-Nine Articles," in *Creeds*, 3:488).

From His Ordination to His Conversion

Two weeks after Scott was ordained, he moved to Stoke-Goldington in Buckinghamshire, where he would minister at several small churches in the greater Stoke area, which included Stoke itself, Weston Underwood, Gayhurst, and Ravenstone.²⁶ The move to Stoke had the dual effect of taking him one hundred miles away from his father and his hometown of Braytoft, and of putting him within five miles of Olney, where the famous John Newton ministered. Immediately upon his arrival in Stoke, he committed himself to intense personal study of Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and the Bible.²⁷ In March of 1773, he was ordained as a priest, and during the summer of the same year, he had the first encounter with the man who would do more to lead him in the Evangelical way than any other—John Newton. Newton was a committed Evangelical, a Calvinist, and thoroughly orthodox.²⁸ Scott was made aware of Newton’s ministry by an apothecary who often travelled between Stoke and Olney. The apothecary described Newton as “a Methodist and an enthusiast to a very high degree,” but he talked Scott into going to hear Newton preach.²⁹ When Scott heard Newton for the first time, Newton was preaching on Acts 13:9–10, which records an account of the Apostle Paul rebuking a Jewish false prophet named Elymas for trying to turn the proconsul of Cyprus from the Christian faith. Paul’s words to Elymas were blunt and forceful, “Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”³⁰ Scott thought that Newton had seen him come into the church and had directed the sermon and

²⁶For a helpful historical overview of these areas, see Hole, “Memoir of Thomas Scott,” 20–38.

²⁷Thomas Scott’s son, John, records that by June of 1773, his father had read through the entirety of Josephus’ works in the original Greek (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 51).

²⁸For a good discussion of John Newton’s Evangelical theology, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 119–69.

²⁹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 63.

³⁰Acts 13:9–10 (KJV) says, “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”

Paul's words at him specifically.³¹ Scott was offended by what he took to be a personal assault, later saying that "at the time the passage was but too appropriate to my character and conduct."³² Though he would later find out that Newton knew nothing of his presence there that day and the passage was in no way directed at his visitor, Newton's message had struck a chord in Scott's heart that would continue to sound for some time.

In November of 1773, Scott moved his residence from Stoke to Weston Underwood. Shortly thereafter, in January of 1774, Newton once again played an important part in Scott's spiritual transformation. This time it was Newton's pastoral example that made an impression. During that month, two people in Scott's parish, a husband and a wife, were on their death beds. Scott knew about their situation but did not go visit them because he was not specifically asked to come. It was not until the wife died, that he finally went. However, he found out that Newton had already visited them several times and had ministered to them. Newton's ministerial diligence convicted Scott of his own negligence:

Immediately my conscience smote me, and reproached me with being shamefully negligent, in sitting at home within a few doors of dying persons, my general hearers, and never going to visit them: directly it occurred to me, that, whatever contempt I might have for Mr. — 's doctrines, I must acknowledge his practice to be more consistent with the ministerial character, than mine was. He must have more zeal, and love for souls than I had, or he would not have walked so far to visit, and supply my lack for care to those, who, as far as I was concerned, might have been left to perish in their sins.³³

In these words we see the early development of the evangelical mindset in Scott, a mindset which is characterized by a strong sense of duty, a commitment to zealous ministerial activity, and a love for souls.³⁴ There is also a growing awareness of his own

³¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 63.

³²Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 64.

³³Scott, *Force of Truth*, 25. In *The Force of Truth* Thomas Scott did not use Newton's name directly, but the referent for "Mr. —" is made clear in John Scott's biography. See Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 62–65.

³⁴See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1989), 10–

personal sin in these words, but it would be some time before full repentance would take place.³⁵

Newton's influence on Scott was far from over, but it would be over a year before the two would have major interaction again. In the meantime, Scott was married to Jane Kell, a young lady from Hexham in Northumberland, on December 5, 1774, and a few months later, the newlyweds relocated to nearby Ravenstone.³⁶ Not much is really known about the personal nature of Scott's first marriage, but there is no reason to believe it was anything but a happy union.³⁷ One of the few glimpses into their domestic life that remains is a short account of the family's morning and evening worship, which bears mentioning at this point as it speaks to one aspect of Scott's developing Evangelical piety.³⁸ With almost no personal history of family worship in either the Scott or Kell families, Scott felt the need to start the practice immediately after he was married. At first, the Scott family worship consisted in saying prayers from a prayer manual, prayers which before long were preceded by the reading of a chapter in the Bible. As Scott became more Evangelical in his sentiments, the family worship morphed into a chapter-by-chapter exposition of the Bible in which Scott preached the Word of God to his family and anyone else who may have attended. Both scripted and extemporaneous prayers were

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³⁵At this time, Scott's view of ecclesiastical ministry was also greatly influenced and changed by his reading of Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, which dealt at length with what a clergyman ought to be in the final volume. See Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (London: A. Millar, 1753), 4:409–61.

³⁶From the standpoint of Scott's later Evangelicalism, it is rather comical that Scott met his wife over a game of cards, a game that resulted in Scott's taking all of Ms. Kell's money. John Scott noted that "the perfect composure and good temper, with which she bore her loss, first attracted my father's attention to her" (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 67).

³⁷Very little is known of Jane Scott's life and character. When her son, John, wrote his biography on Thomas Scott, he only possessed one letter written by his mother, and this letter was written just eight days after Thomas and Jane were married (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 69–70). John speaks highly of his mother, but the lack of personal correspondence involving Jane and the absence of detailed contemporary accounts of her life makes it difficult to know much more about her.

³⁸See Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 71–77.

also a part of the program. More will be said on this subject in a later chapter, as Scott wrote prayers for family worship that had an expressed interest in missions.

Reference is made here to the practice of family worship because it shows that Scott was diligently reading and studying the Scriptures and was at least partially inclined toward certain aspects of Evangelical piety on the eve of his next encounter with John Newton. However, this interaction with Newton arose for reasons that can hardly be described as spiritual. In May of 1775, Scott decided to pick a theological fight with Newton. Thinking himself Newton's intellectual superior, he began a correspondence with the Olney curate on a number of important subjects, including the Trinity, Calvinism, the Athanasian Creed, and the Thirty-Nine Articles.³⁹ He wrote Newton a long letter under the guise of seeking the truth and personal friendship, but his real purpose was to create a doctrinal disputation in hopes that his "arguments would prove irresistibly convincing, and that [he] should have the honour of rescuing a well-meaning person from his enthusiastical delusions."⁴⁰ Newton replied by accepting his offer of friendship but he "carefully avoided the mention of those doctrines, which he knew would offend [Scott]."⁴¹ Thus began the exchange of letters between the two, an exchange that was characterized by argumentation on Scott's side and by kindness and a gentle pointing to the gospel on Newton's. All the while Scott thought he was winning the argument, but as he pointed out the opposite was quite true:

Yet all along he perseveringly told me, to my no small offense, that one day I should accede to his religious principles, that he had stood on my ground, and that I should stand on his: and he constantly informed his friends, that though slowly, I was surely feeling my way to the knowledge of the truth. So clearly could he discern the dawnings of grace in my soul, amidst all the darkness of depraved nature, and

³⁹Seven of Scott's letters to Newton are extant. See "Correspondence and Papers of John Newton," MS 3973 ff. 70–88, Lambeth Palace Library, London. For Newton's letters, see John Newton, *The Works of John Newton* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2015), 1:406–52.

⁴⁰Scott, *Force of Truth*, 31.

⁴¹Scott, *Force of Truth*, 32–33.

obstinate rebellion to the will of God concerning me.⁴²

At around the same time, another important event took place in Scott's life that had profound implications for his Evangelical change. These doctrinal discussions with Newton, and Scott's close reading of the Thirty-Nine Articles, prompted questions in his mind concerning the biblical teaching on the Trinity. He came to realize that his subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles meant that he was required to believe them as a prerequisite for church ministry, and this realization created a moral and ethical dilemma. In fact, he came very close to refusing to subscribe to the Articles any longer, an act that would have cost him his position in the church. However, some friends of his encouraged him "not so to believe what any man said, so as to take it upon his authority, but to search the word of God with this single intention, to discover whether the articles of the church of England in general, and this creed in particular [that is, the Athanasian Creed], were, or were not agreeable thereto."⁴³

Better advice could not have been given him. Scott soon set out to determine what the Scriptures actually taught on the main subjects of the Christian faith. This quest for truth would be a long process. He was reluctant to give up his long-held views, but his study of the Scriptures and his secondary reading began to have a transformative effect. Before long, he had softened his Socinianism into the Arianism promoted by Samuel Clarke.⁴⁴ A momentous change, however, took place in 1777, when he began reading Richard Hooker's work on the doctrine of justification.⁴⁵ Hooker's treatise clearly explained that all men have violated God's law and stand guilty before Him. Importantly, Hooker clearly articulated the Protestant position on justification, namely, that it is

⁴²Scott, *Force of Truth*, 36–37.

⁴³Scott, *Force of Truth*, 41.

⁴⁴Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: James Knapton, 1712).

⁴⁵Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown," in *The Works of Richard Hooker with a General Index: Also, Mr. Isaac Walton's Life of the Author*, ed. W. S. Dobson (London: G. Cowie and Co., 1825), 2:498–547.

obtained by faith alone and not by works. Scott's reflections on the book make it clear that he was beginning to see things differently:

I was sensible in my own case that if God should pass by all my sins, and only call me into judgment before him, according to the strictness of his perfect law, for the best duty I ever performed, I must be condemned a transgressor—when weighed in these exact balances, it would be found wanting—Thus I was effectually convinced, that, if ever I were saved, it must be in some way of unmerited mercy and grace, though I understood not clearly in what way 'till long after.⁴⁶

Hooker convinced Scott of the truthfulness of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and Scott discovered that this doctrine of justification was actually the teaching of the Anglican Church rather than a notion conjured up by the Methodists. His preaching was also transformed. As he began teaching that all were guilty before God's law in the manner he had learned from Hooker, he noticed that his people suddenly became very concerned for the state of their souls:

But I had scarcely begun this new method of preaching, when application was made to me by persons in great distress about their souls; their consciences being awakened to a feeling of their lost condition by nature and practice, they were anxious and earnest in enquiring what they must do to be saved? I knew not well what to say to them, my views being still greatly clouded, and my sentiments very perplexed concerning justification; but, being willing to give them the best counsel I could, I exhorted them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, though I was neither capable of instructing them concerning the true nature of faith, nor in what manner they were to seek.⁴⁷

Pastoral concerns such as these prompted a more fervent searching of the Scriptures, and the breakthrough came in April of 1777. After reading and meditating on a sermon by William Beveridge (1637–1708), Scott finally understood that the death of Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin. In a Good Friday sermon based on Isaiah 53:6, he clearly preached the gospel for the first time out of a heart that understood it. He explained what he did in the sermon in this way:

I declared, and endeavored to prove that, what has ever since been the sole foundation of all my hopes, namely, that Christ indeed bare the sins of all who

⁴⁶Scott, *Force of Truth*, 75.

⁴⁷Scott, *Force of Truth*, 89–90.

should ever truly believe, in the whole of their guilt, condemnation, curse, and deserved punishment, in his own body on the tree; explicitly avowing my belief, that Christ, as our surety and bond's-man, stood in our law place, to answer all our obligations, and to satisfy divine justice, and the demands of the law for our offences: and publicly renouncing as erroneous, and grievous perversions of Scripture, all my former explanations and interpretations thereof.⁴⁸

Now convinced of the truthfulness of the gospel message about Jesus Christ, it would not be long before Scott would subscribe to the other core doctrines of Christianity. By that July, he would be a convinced Trinitarian and an Evangelical, and by Christmas, he had embraced a Calvinistic understanding of predestination. How far he had come in the space of about two years! The man who had had been a heretic when he entered Anglican ministry was now committed to the Evangelical Party.

In 1777, the year of Scott's conversion, several important things had happened in Scott's personal life. First he moved from Ravenstone to Weston Underwood, where he remained until he moved to Olney. In August of the same year, his father passed away. Sadly, his father was still firmly entrenched in the Socinianism he had held for all this life. The fact that his father died holding to Socinianism greatly distressed Scott. His mother also died that October, an event that also discouraged him as he had hoped to speak with her about the gospel in person before she died, a hope that was extinguished due to her sudden and unexpected death. It seems to have greatly bothered Scott that his parents never came to embrace his Evangelical views. The next year was uneventful for the most part, the only noteworthy happening was that he gave up playing cards because his parishioners used his playing as an excuse for their own sinful behavior. The year 1779, however, was more eventful. In February of 1779 Scott published *The Force of Truth*, which was his first major publication. On a more tragic note, Scott lost his youngest son that September, which was followed up the next year by the loss of a daughter named Anne in May 1780. As can be seen by the series of events described above, Scott had experienced both the highs of personal conversion and literary

⁴⁸Scott, *Force of Truth*, 95–96.

achievement and the lows of family tragedy by the time he accepted the call to Olney parish in late 1780 or early 1781.⁴⁹

Ministry in Olney

Scott's transition to Olney was anything but smooth. John Newton, who had by this time become Scott's close friend, was offered the living of St. Mary Woolnoth in London in September of 1779. It was Newton's desire to replace himself with a like-minded Evangelical minister, and Scott fit the bill perfectly. However, the people in Olney had heard Scott preach several times before, and many of them did not particularly care for his preaching style. Despite Newton's objections to the contrary, the people of Olney put tremendous pressure on the vicar to appoint Benjamin Page instead, who was then the curate of Clifton Reynes about a mile from Olney. In an attempt to keep peace, the vicar appointed Page curate in early 1780. However, "Page turned out to be a disaster. He quarreled with the congregation, cheated church workman out of their wages, and beat his own wife."⁵⁰ On account of such behavior, Page was driven from the pulpit in less than a year's time. The experience with Page also changed the attitude of the people toward Scott, and they asked him to reapply for the position once Page had vacated the parish. Scott agreed and was duly appointed to the post.

⁴⁹The exact timeframe of Scott's transition to Olney is a bit unclear. Scott wrote a letter to a relative, dated February 15, 1781, in which he says that he had "undertaken the curacy of Olney along with Weston, leaving Ravenstone; which will be attended with my removal to Olney at Ladyday, and a considerable consequent expense in furniture, &c." (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 191). Scott's wording implies that he had accepted the position in Olney sometime before February 15, 1781, but how long before he does not say. His wording also suggests that he had not yet relocated to Olney. Traditionally, Ladyday is celebrated in England on April 6 (at least after the calendar change in 1752), and an April relocation would coincide closely, though not exactly, with a letter John Newton wrote to Thomas Scott, dated March 31, 1781, in which Newton says that he "would wait till I could congratulate you and Mrs. Scott and myself on your removal to Olney, which I hope I may now do" (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 185). Newton goes on to imagine Scott "sitting in my old corner in the study," which suggests that Newton thought Scott had moved to Olney (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 185). However, there is a tone of uncertainty in his expression of congratulations as it is qualified with the clause "which I hope I may now do." Likely, Scott accepted the call from Olney in either late 1780 or early 1781, and he seems to have relocated there in either March or April of 1781.

⁵⁰Aitken, *John Newton*, 268.

Scott's time in Olney was destined to be extremely challenging. For one thing, he took a pay cut of £10 per year by moving from Weston Underwood to Olney.⁵¹ This cut in pay was supposed to be alleviated by additional funds raised by several wealthy individuals, as had been the practice when Newton had been minister there. However, interpersonal problems between Scott and the people prevented the collection from taking place, and Scott's financial situation would probably have been untenable had it not been for several ladies who boarded with his family and paid rent. Among the boarders was Lady Austen, the close friend of William Cowper, who lived next door. She arrived in Olney just after the Scotts welcomed their fifth child, a child that died just six months later. Lady Austen lived in Olney from 1782 to 1784, and she was a tremendous help to Scott financially, both by paying her rent and by reviving the collection for the Olney minister that had been promised to Scott but had not previously materialized. Her sudden departure in 1784 put added pressure on Scott's finances, but relief came when two sisters from London came and boarded with him until he left for London in 1786.

Scott's troubles in Olney were not confined to his ledger book, as two theological controversies occupied his mind and energy, though one was to outlast the other. The first theological struggle was more personal while the second was far more public. Scott's personal struggle was over the proper subjects of baptism. As a minister in the Church of England, Scott was, seemingly by default rather than conviction, a paedobaptist. Shortly after he had published *The Force of Truth*, he began to question the Scriptural truthfulness of his position. His uncertainty on the matter greatly distressed both himself and his wife.⁵² He wrote, "Many, very many prayers accompanied with tears did I pour out on this subject. I read books on both sides of the question, but received no

⁵¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 159.

⁵²Regarding his wife he wrote, "It is remarkable that, in this instance alone, my wife appeared greatly distressed, in the prospect of my changing my sentiments" (Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 165).

satisfaction. I became even afraid of administering baptism, or the Lord's supper."⁵³ So strong was the pull away from his long-held position that he would say that he "was almost ready to conclude, that the anti-paedobaptists were right."⁵⁴ Only after an intense study of Scripture did he determine that his position on infant baptism was in fact correct. He became convinced that baptism in the New Testament had taken the place of circumcision in the Old Testament as the sacrament of regeneration. He believed that the sign had changed but not the subjects. Since infants were properly the subjects of circumcision in the Old Testament, infants were legitimately the subjects of baptism in the New. Once he came to this conclusion, he never deviated from this position again.

The second controversy involved the issue of antinomianism, and Scott's views on the matter put him at odds with a great many persons in his parish. Antinomianism is the "general name for the view that Christians are by grace set free from the need of observing any moral law."⁵⁵ Antinomianism can exist in a variety of forms, but the species Scott encountered most was rooted in a hyper-Calvinistic abuse of free grace. In a letter written to the Scottish minister, Rev. G. More, on April 14, 1784, Scott described the situation in Olney:

There are above two thousand inhabitants in this town, almost all Calvinist, even the most debauched of them; the gospel having been preached among them for a number of years by a variety of preachers, stately and occasionally, sound and unsound, in church and meeting. The inhabitants are become like David, *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 conviction.⁵⁶

Apparently, many of Scott's hearers had misunderstood the nature of grace, believing that God's grace carried with it no demands for personal holiness. Scott countered this idea by

⁵³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 165.

⁵⁴Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 164–65.

⁵⁵*DCC*, s.v. "Antinomianism."

⁵⁶Thomas Scott to Rev. G. More, April 14, 1784, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 207.

saying:

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 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,—receiving from Christ daily grace so to do; and that all experience which has not this effect is false.⁵⁷

The last part of Scott's statement here is what was so offensive and created controversy. Scott argued that true repentance always evidenced itself in a life of holiness. Those who had no holiness in their lives had no just claim on salvation. Thus, he was calling into question many of his parishioners' professions of faith. Needless to say, a good number of people in the parish were not happy, and they in turn, accused Scott of being an Arminian. These accusations were very discouraging to Scott, who wrote, "I have a few even at Olney who cleave to me, and a small number of those who are my own: but I labor under great discouragement in this respect, and am generally looked upon as unsound, legal, Arminian."⁵⁸

The antinomian controversy in Olney made Scott extremely unpopular in the parish. His promotion of holiness and preaching against sin sullied his reputation, both inside and outside of Olney. Even some of his close friends like William Cowper and Mrs. Unwin accused Scott of scolding the congregation in his preaching.⁵⁹ What was said in Olney got around. A minister in London, for example, invited Scott to preach in his church but warned him, saying, "Do not *scold* my people, as I have heard that you do the people at Olney."⁶⁰ The evident effect that this controversy had on Scott's reputation put him in a rather awkward situation. He had an increasing desire, given the various

⁵⁷Thomas Scott to Rev. G. More, April 14, 1784, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 209.

⁵⁸Thomas Scott to Rev. G. More, April 14, 1784, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 208.

⁵⁹Scott. *Life of Thomas Scott*, 216. Neither of these people actually heard Scott preach.

⁶⁰Scott. *Life of Thomas Scott*, 216.

difficulties he encountered in Olney, to find a new place to minister. However, the fact that he had developed a reputation for being a mean-spirited preacher made it difficult for him to find a new church office. Furthermore, the controversy never really came to a satisfactory end. The best Scott could say about the whole affair was that

God blessed my ministry at Olney to the conversion of many; and to effectually repressing the antinomian spirit which had gone forth in the place: and thus it was made subservient to the usefulness of my successors, who are not bowed down with the same load of unpopularity that I was.⁶¹

The controversy did not, though, destroy his reputation beyond repair. In fact, the disputations at Olney over antinomianism ironically provided Scott with the means to boost his reputation as a writer. In 1785, Scott produced his first full-length theological work, *A Discourse upon Repentance*, in which he articulated his views on the true nature of conversion in the midst of the ongoing controversy.⁶² The work would have been in public circulation for approximately sixteen months when Scott received an unexpected and unsolicited request from London to be the chaplain of the Lock hospital.⁶³

Ministry in London

Shortly after Thomas Scott had moved to Olney, he began preaching in several places outside of his own parish.⁶⁴ In so doing, he was simply emulating the practice of

⁶¹Scott. *Life of Thomas Scott*, 216–17.

⁶²Thomas Scott, *A Discourse upon Repentance*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1786). I have not been able to locate a copy of the first edition of this work or the details of its publication. It must have been in existence by May 25, 1785, as John Scott notes that several copies of the work were attached to a letter from his father written on that date. See Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 209.

⁶³The Lock Hospital was opened in 1746 to treat venereal disease in women. Its partner institution, known as the Lock Asylum, was opened in 1792 as a place where women who had been treated at the hospital could learn trade skills in hopes that they could assimilate themselves into respectable society. Many of the women treated at the Hospital and the Asylum came out of lives of prostitution. For more information about the Lock Hospital and Asylum, see David Innes Williams, *The London Lock: A Charitable Hospital for Venereal Disease, 1746–1952* (London: Royal Society of Medicine Press, 1997); “The End of the London Lock Hospital,” *British Journal of Medicine* 4787, no. 2 (October 1952): 768; Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz, *The London Lock Hospital in the Nineteenth Century: Gender, Sexuality and Social Reform* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014).

⁶⁴For the details of this story, see Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 167–75; 281–96.

John Newton, who had preached in a number of locations in addition to Olney during his time there. This practice, of course, was tantamount to ecclesiastical irregularity and was generally despised by the regular clergy. Unlike Newton, Scott's irregularity was mostly limited to lectures in private homes and sermons in church buildings outside his parish. Only twice did he ever engage in open air preaching and that only by necessity. After he moved to London, his irregular activity became extremely rare. In September 1785, while still working in Olney, he returned from one of his irregular preaching engagements and found a letter from the secretary of the Lock Hospital waiting in his home. He was somewhat skeptical of becoming involved with the hospital, but he agreed to preach twice for the governors of the institution in what amounted to an audition. He spoke at the chapel as requested and returned to Olney with no intentions of taking the job or expectations that the job would be offered. However three weeks later, the hospital's leadership elected him chaplain. He was still not convinced that he should take the position, and only after much thought and several attempts to gain counsel from fellow ministers did he agree to accept, though he was to share the Lock's chaplaincy with Charles Edward de Coetlogon (1746?–1820).⁶⁵ Scott accordingly moved his family to London in January of 1786, and thus commenced one of the most important and productive periods of his life.

Scott's time in London should be remembered primarily for his involvement with several important Evangelical organizations and for his personal literary achievements. Of course, ministering at the Lock Chapel, which brought him to London in the first place, was to be his chief priority. Scott's ministry at the Lock Chapel proved to be quite challenging and not altogether different from his time in Olney. As in Olney, Scott's London sojourn was characterized by a mixture of personal and ministerial trials,

⁶⁵According to Charles Hole, "Mr. Scott's title was Morning Preacher, and the Evening Preacher, his colleague, was Charles Edward de Coetlogon" ("Memoir of Thomas Scott," 116).

though great things would also be accomplished. On a personal level, Scott welcomed another son, Benjamin, to his family in 1788. Two years later, however, tragedy struck as his wife of fifteen years died in 1790. Left with the strain of caring for a young child by himself and being himself often in poor health, Scott decided to remarry the next year to a woman named Mary, who would ultimately outlive him. On the ministerial front, the issue of antinomianism once again sprang up, this time as a byproduct of a Friday evening lecture series he had started on the book of Ephesians.⁶⁶ The congregation, which was strongly Calvinistic in doctrine, was content with Scott's preaching as he went chapter-by-chapter through the doctrinal portion of the book. However, the congregation turned against him when he reached chapter 5 and started exhorting the people with respect to their Christian duty.⁶⁷ Once again, he was charged with being an Arminian, and over half of the audience stopped attending the meetings. More problematic was the fact that Sunday attendance at the Lock Chapel dropped as well, and he was potentially facing the need to resign or the unsavory prospect of being terminated by the governors. Scott once again found himself extremely unpopular among his own flock. "Every thing, however," he wrote, "conduced to render me more and more unpopular, not only at the Lock, but in every part of London; and numbers, who never heard me preach, were fully possessed with the idea, that there was something very wrong both in my preaching and in my spirit."⁶⁸

Scott's main source of comfort during this difficult time was his ministry among the patients in the hospital itself. His work at the hospital also prompted the publication of two works directly related to his interactions with the patients at the Lock,

⁶⁶For this account in detail, see Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 233–42.

⁶⁷For an important sermon published in the midst of this controversy, see Thomas Scott, *The Doctrines of Election, and Final Perseverance stated from Scripture, and shewn consistent with exhortatory and practical Preaching, and conducive to holiness of Life* (London: C. Watts, 1786).

⁶⁸Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 237.

most of whom were women who had contracted venereal diseases as a result of prostitution. His *Hints for the Consideration of Patients in Hospitals* (1797) was an evangelistic tract designed to help patients in hospitals “consider” a number of spiritual truths and apply those truths to the needs of their souls.⁶⁹ He was concerned that his patients were typically more concerned about their physical well-being than their spiritual state, and he hoped that the tract would help them consider their spiritual needs as well. He also published a work called *Thoughts on the Fatal Consequences of Female Prostitution* (1787), which raised awareness of prostitution’s horrors and suggested several practical ways its evils could be mitigated.⁷⁰ This publication, along with Scott’s lobbying in London, led to the founding of the Lock Asylum, which was designed to help prostitutes exchange their former lifestyle for one that was morally and socially acceptable. Thus, despite the troubles he had on account of the internal politics at the Lock, he continued ministering faithfully and energetically among the people of the hospital. He eventually became the hospital’s sole chaplain in 1802 and remained there until he relocated to Aston Sandford in 1803.

Scott’s London ministry was not confined to the Lock, and he involved himself in a number of important Evangelical groups and causes. Scott’s preaching ministry, which also included a couple of lectureships at St. Mildred and St. Margaret, brought him into contact with the Evangelical circle of London and provided opportunities to further his influence, as important Evangelical persons such as William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, and Hannah More came to hear him preach. More importantly for the purposes of the present study was Scott’s involvement in the Eclectic Society of London and its daughter society, the CMS. The former was established in 1783 by a few evangelical

⁶⁹Thomas Scott, *Hints for the Consideration of Patients in Hospitals* (London: Jaques and Thomas, 1797).

⁷⁰Thomas Scott, *Thoughts on the Fatal Consequences of Female Prostitution; Together with the Outlines of a Plan Proposed to Check Those Enormous Evils* (London: C. Watts, 1787).

clergymen “for mutual religious intercourse and improvement, and for the investigation of religious truth.”⁷¹ Scott was a member of the Society from 1797 to 1807, and his thoughts feature prominently in the Society’s minutes.⁷² In 1799, members of the Eclectic Society founded the CMS, and Scott was elected to be its first secretary, a position he held until December of 1802.

A discussion of Scott’s London ministry would be incomplete if something was not said about his literary achievements during this time. His literary output was prodigious during the years 1786–1803. Some of the works he produced were occasioned by the fear of a social rebellion in England similar to the one that was going on in France at the time. He was in London when the French Revolution broke out in 1789, and being in the capital city exposed him to the concerns of the English ruling class. That Scott took up his pen in order to promote civil peace is not surprising, given that Evangelicals were already suspected of disrupting the social order. During the years 1792–1796, he published several works designed to counter revolutionary behavior, including *On Civil Government and the Duties of Subjects* (1792), *The Rights of God* (1793), *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion* (1793–94), and *An Answer to Paine’s Age of Reason* (1796).⁷³ His time in London also saw him produce a number of practical works and

⁷¹John H. Pratt, ed., *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders: Notes of the Discussions of the Eclectic Society London during the Years 1798–1814* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978), 1. For the records of the Eclectic society, see John Newton, *John Newton’s Early Eclectic Society Notebooks, 1787–1789*, Special Collections, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ; John Newton, *John Newton’s Early Eclectic Society Notebooks, 1789–1795*, Center for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury, UK; Josiah Pratt, *Records of the Eclectic Society of London*, Special Collections, Main Library, Edgbaston Campus, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

⁷²For a helpful list of the members of the Eclectic Society and their years of participation, see Amy E. Puckett, “The Eclectic Society of London: Unity without Uniformity” (B.A. thesis, Davidson College, 2005), 118–22.

⁷³Thomas Scott, *An Impartial Statement of the Scripture Doctrine, in Respect of Civil Government and the Duties of Subjects* (London: C. Watts, 1792); Thomas Scott, *The Rights of God* (London: D. Jaques, [1793?]); Thomas Scott, *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion* (London: D. Jaques, 1794); Thomas Scott, *A Vindication of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Doctrines Contained in Them, Being an Answer to the Two Parts of Mr. T. Paine’s Age of Reason* (London: D. Jaques, 1796).

sermons, the most important of them being an annotated edition of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1795) and a sermon called *The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ* (1797), the latter being published in response to the Calvinistic debates that were raging at the time.⁷⁴ By far the most important work Scott wrote during his time in London was his massive *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, which was published in segments during the years 1788–1792.⁷⁵ Ranging from four to six volumes, depending on

⁷⁴John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, with Notes and the Life of the Author* by Thomas Scott (London, 1795); Thomas Scott, *The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ Considered, with Some Reference to the Various Controversies on That Subject* (London: Jaques and Thomas, 1797).

⁷⁵Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: With Original Notes, and Practical Observations* (London: Bellamy and Robarts, 1788–1792). Scott's commentary has gone through many editions and has often been combined with the comments of others, most notably, Matthew Henry (1662–1714). E.g. William Jenks, ed., *The Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible; Containing the Text according to the Authorized Version; Scott's Marginal References; Matthew Henry's Commentary, Condensed, but Retaining Every Useful Thought; The Practical Observations of Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D. with Extensive Explanatory, Critical, and Philological Notes, Selected from Scott, Doddridge, Gill, Adam Clarke, Patrick, Pool, Lowth, Burder, Harmer, Calmet, Rosenmueller, Bloomfield, and Many Other Writers on the Scriptures* 5 vols. (Brattleboro: Fessenden and Co., 1834); Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, *Commentary on the Holy Bible with Explanatory Notes from Other Writers* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1979). Naturally, editions containing the works of others do not provide the best sources for a discussion of Scott's thought and consequently will not be considered at all in this dissertation, but there is a legitimate discussion about the best edition of Scott's commentary to cite.

The problem of citation stems from the fact that Scott's commentary went through multiple editions throughout his lifetime, a reality that eventually manifested itself in legal disputes among publishers. The records associated with those disputes provide a helpful history of the commentary's production. One published report on the matter said, "From the affidavits, in support of the bill, it appeared that the Rev. Thomas Scott, in his lifetime, edited and wrote a Commentary on the Bible, the first edition whereof was printed and published in parts between the year 1788 and 1792, the second edition between the years 1802 and 1809, the third edition between the years 1807-1811, and the fourth edition between the years 1812 and 1814. The title to the fourth edition was as follows: 'The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, according to the public Version, with Explanatory Notes, Practical Observations, and copious Marginal References, by Thomas Scott, Rector of Aston Sandford, late Chaplain to the Lock Hospital.' After completion of the fourth edition, Thomas Scott commenced revising the same, and in the course of such revision made corrections, improvements, and additions to the fourth edition. Thomas Scott died in the year 1821, not having completed the revision of the whole of his work; and in the year 1822, the plaintiffs published a fifth edition of the work, which was stated to comprise all the corrections of the author, Thomas Scott, which had been made by him whilst revising the fourth edition of the work. During such revision, Thomas Scott used a printed copy of the fourth edition, and wrote and made, with his own hand, about the margins of the printed copy, the greater part of the corrections, improvements, and additions, and the remainder thereof were written by one William Rutter Dawes, under the direction and supervision and with the sanction of Thomas Scott; and, with the exception of a few sheets of letter-press at the end of the work, the whole was in the fifth edition printed from the printed copy, so used by Thomas Scott" (Montagu Chambers, ed., *The Law Journal Reports for the Year 1841: Comprising Reports of Cases in the Courts of Equity, and Bankruptcy, Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, Exchequer of Pleas, Exchequer Chamber, and the Bail Court, and Notes of Judgments in the House of Lords, From Michaelmas Term, 1840, to Trinity Term, 1841, Both Inclusive*, vol. 19, n.s., vol. 10, pt. 1 [London: E. B. Ince, 1841], 275).

the edition, Scott's *Family Bible*, as the commentary was often called, was both exegetical and practical in nature, and took the reader through the entire Bible by first working through the meaning and theological importance of each passage and then by suggesting the practical import of what was just considered exegetically. More than any of his other works, the commentary made Scott a household name among evangelicals in England and America.⁷⁶ Scott was occupied with editing and revising the commentary for the rest of his life. He completed the first edition while he was in London and began working on the second. However, the publication of editions beyond the first would not take place until he had relocated to Aston Sandford.

Ministry in Aston Sandford

For the entirety of his time in London, Scott maintained a rather precarious relationship with the governors and people at the Lock. Even his appointment as sole chaplain in 1802 had been met with opposition by a number of parties within the

The history given by the *Law Journal's* report indicates that there were a total of four editions of the commentary actually printed during Scott's lifetime. Though he did do some revision work on the commentary toward the end of his life, these revisions were not published with his authorization, and in fact include material he did not personally write (though he evidently sanctioned what was added by William Dawes). Therefore, the fifth edition should not be considered the best version of the commentary due to the mixture of material not written by Scott and the unrefined nature of the material.

As such, an edition must be chosen from among the four editions that were published during his lifetime. The approach taken in this dissertation is to make the first edition the primary source for citation. Using the first edition has several advantages. First, this dissertation will be considering how Scott's theology and belief system impacted his involvement in various missionary endeavors. The CMS, which was founded in 1799, constitutes Scott's most important missionary work. At the time the CMS was founded, the first edition was the only edition of the commentary in existence, and it follows that the first edition most likely contains the theological principles on which Scott based his missionary philosophy. Second, using the first edition allows for the possibility of comparative studies in subsequent editions. As Scott's commentary was constantly under revision throughout his lifetime, it is possible that he may have changed his mind on various things or nuanced his thought in the latter years of his life. While many of the changes in later editions were stylistic, any change in substance can only be detected by comparing later editions with the first. Therefore, the first edition of the commentary will be used as the base text and any noteworthy changes from latter editions will be addressed either in the subsequent discussion itself or in the footnotes.

⁷⁶However, the commentary proved to be a financial disaster for him personally, as he earned little from the sale of the work over the years and incurred a large amount of debt as a result of its publication. Legal disputes over the copyright were also a constant headache to him, and he eventually sold the copyright.

organization. He possessed a growing desire to find a better situation for himself, but he feared that his unpopularity would prevent him from finding suitable employment elsewhere. However, a series of events transpired that would offer him an out. In June of 1801, the rector of Aston Sandford died. Whether or not Scott knew the rector, a Mr. Brodbelt, is not known, but Scott did know someone closely associated with the living's benefactor. Among his boarders in Olney were two sisters of the Gines family. One of those sisters had gone on to marry a man named John Barber, who by this time was in charge of the living at Aston Sandford. Realizing that he had an inside track to an appointment, Scott wrote to Mrs. Barber and expressed his interest in the position. He said of the occasion, "I never before had asked preferment of anyone, and never in my life had any offered to me: but on this occasion I stated my circumstances and views to Mrs. Barber, and received an answer particularly gratifying to me."⁷⁷ After a legal problem associated with Mrs. Barber's mother's will and another potential candidate was resolved, Scott was appointed to the living on July 22, 1801.

The attentive reader will notice that Scott's appointment to Aston Sandford took place prior to 1802, when Scott was appointed sole chaplain of the Lock. It seems that Scott, in his desire to leave the Lock, acted hastily in accepting the position at Aston Sandford. Aston Sandford was a very small country parish and did not have a parsonage at the time of his appointment, though the stipend was £180 a year tax-free. The lack of suitable housing caused Scott to wonder whether or not he could maintain the living. Thus for a time he resided at the Lock despite his appointment in Buckinghamshire. His situation became even more complicated when he was appointed sole chaplain of the Lock, a position he accepted primarily to thwart the designs of one of the other parties struggling for control. Shortly after taking the position, however, he decided that the bishop would not be pleased with his non-residency, so he sought to find a suitable

⁷⁷Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 365.

replacement for himself at the Lock. He also began preparing the way for his departure by constructing a parsonage in Aston Sandford. His successor at the Lock was appointed in February of 1803, and Scott moved to Aston Sandford that spring.

A rural parish seems to have been the ideal setting for Scott's final years. According to Scott, Aston Sandford was one of the smallest villages of the kingdom, consisting of "two farmhouses, a few laborers' cottages, and the newly erected parsonage."⁷⁸ The town had "about twenty inhabitants, young and old" and was "without alehouse, shop, or mechanic of any kind."⁷⁹ Scott relished the "opportunity of pursuing [his] studies to far greater advantage than in town, and of reserving to [himself] time for recreation and exercise."⁸⁰ His ministry in Aston Sandford appears to have been largely peaceful, the only real trouble of note was a controversy over infant baptism that broke out around 1814.⁸¹ Scott took advantage of the reduced ministerial burdens to devote himself to writing. He focused mainly on revising and editing his Bible commentary, a task that consumed him until his death. Charles Hole has observed that "Aston Sandford shares the fame of 'Scott the Commentator,' and it has been through the *Commentary* in particular that Scott is now better known to us as of Aston Sandford than as of the Lock, or of Olney, or of Weston Underwood."⁸² Scott published three editions of the commentary during his time in Aston Sandford, and a fifth edition was nearing completion at the time of his death. In addition to his continued work on his commentary, he published a good number of sermons and three major works—*Remarks on the 'Refutation of Calvinism'* (1811), *An Answer to Rabbi Crooll's 'Restoration of Israel'*

⁷⁸Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 373.

⁷⁹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 373.

⁸⁰Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 373.

⁸¹See Hole, "Memoir of Thomas Scott," 203–214.

⁸²Hole, "Memoir of Thomas Scott," 183–84.

(1814), and *The Synod of Dort* (1818).⁸³ However, Scott should not be perceived as doing nothing in Aston Sandford besides his basic ministerial duties and sitting at a desk writing. In 1806, the CMS decided to enlist him to train their missionary candidates in matters of divinity, practical theology, and language study. For seven years, from 1807 to 1814, Scott's home became the seminary for the CMS, and he was the school's only instructor. Eventually, he was forced to ask leave of these responsibilities on account of declining health.

From 1816 onward, Scott's health started to become a major issue for conducting ministry. He would continue to publish materials in his later years, but his ability to get around was greatly diminished. In May 1816, he wrote to a friend in Northumberland, saying:

I am quite a prisoner in this place; but can reach the church, and preach nearly as usual. I can also write, and read, and study, many hours a day; but always uneasy and weary. My sight, however, and my faculties seem unimpaired; though I hear badly, walk clumsily and with pain, and do not suppose I shall ever try to ride more.—I have, however, numerous and most valuable mercies, and only need a more holy and thankful heart.⁸⁴

Details about Scott's last few years are scarce. From what is available, it seems that he spent most of his free time writing. The tone of his personal correspondence at this time reveals a man who realized that his life was drawing to a close. The letters between his children also reflect the same belief, as the discussion was often about their father's health. Children and grandchildren began making those customary trips to visit an aging loved one in hopes of seeing a relative one last time before an anticipated death. The way Scott's children described him in his final years is quite moving. For example, his son wrote:

⁸³Thomas Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 2 vols. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1811); Joseph Crooll and Thomas Scott, *The Restoration of Israel and an Answer* (London: B. R. Goakman, 1814); Thomas Scott, *The Articles of the Synod of Dort* (London: A. Macintosh, 1818).

⁸⁴Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 451.

It had long been delightful to observe how every thing, which might once have appeared harsh or rugged in his natural temper, had almost entirely melted away: and now, at this late period, it was deeply affecting to observe, how, if he had dropped a word that seem to himself (others perhaps had not perceived it,) impatient, or suited to wound the feelings of anyone, though ever so slightly, he would presently, with tears stealing down his cheeks, give his hand to the party concerned, and ask forgiveness.⁸⁵

To the very end Scott seemed to be concerned with cultivating personal holiness in his own life, the same holiness that he had preached and defended for so many years in the midst of great opposition. In his final letter to his Baptist friend, John Ryland, Jr., dated February 16, 1821, he wrote, “Indeed I do not expect to continue long. O pray for me, that my faith, hope, love, patience, and fortitude may be increased; and that I may finish my course with joy: for I am apt to be impatient, unbelieving, and cowardly.”⁸⁶ A few months later, on April 16, 1821, he finished his course. The man who had grown up a shepherd and spent the better part of his life shepherding souls went to meet the Great Shepherd in glory. Two funeral services followed shortly thereafter on April 23 and April 27 respectively, and Scott was buried in the parish church in Aston Sandford. After his death, a marble tablet was added to the north wall of the parish church which aptly expresses Scott’s legacy. The plaque reads, “Near this spot are deposited the remains of the Reverend Thomas Scott Twenty years Rector of this Parish. He died April 16th, 1821, aged 74 years. But in his writings he will long remain, and widely proclaim to mankind, The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.”⁸⁷

The Legacy of Thomas Scott

John T. McNeill has summarized Thomas Scott’s legacy by saying that “his laborious *Commentary on the Bible* was his greatest contribution to the Evangelical

⁸⁵Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 487.

⁸⁶Thomas Scott to John Ryland, Jr., February 16, 1821, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 493.

⁸⁷George Libscomb, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham* (London: 1847), 1:50. The memorial remains there to this day as confirmed by my 2015 visit to Aston Sandford.

cause. But his other writings were widely effective and his personal influence was also great.”⁸⁸ While one of the goals of this dissertation is to elevate Scott’s work in missions to its rightful place in his legacy, McNeill has accurately stated what has generally been understood to be Scott’s importance in Christian history. Scott has chiefly been remembered for his writings and for the influence he had on his contemporaries.

Thomas Scott’s Writings

There is little doubt that Thomas Scott is best remembered for what he wrote. In the course of this chapter, several of his major works have been mentioned in connection to the periods in which Scott wrote them, but nothing close to an exhaustive list has been given the reader. The most convenient place to find the majority of Scott’s publications is in the ten-volume collection of his writings known as *The Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Scott*, which was edited by his son John.⁸⁹ This set contains nearly all of Scott’s published works, his commentary being the most significant exception. In addition to the commentary, Scott’s corpus includes sermons, theological treatises, evangelistic tracts, Christian apologetics, and formal family prayers. Excerpts from his personal correspondence were also published separately.⁹⁰ Space does not permit a detailed enumeration or summation of each of Scott’s works. However, a few remarks about his two most influential works are appropriate for this description of his legacy.

In 1779, Scott published his first full-length book, *The Force of Truth*, which was well-received by the evangelical community when it was written, and it continues to be one of his most famous books.⁹¹ Written in the first person, *The Force of Truth* tells

⁸⁸John T. McNeill, *Modern Christian Movements* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1954), 88.

⁸⁹Thomas Scott, *The Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Scott*, ed. John Scott, 10 vols. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1823–25).

⁹⁰Thomas Scott, *The Letters and Papers of the Late Rev. Thomas Scott*, ed. John Scott (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824).

⁹¹The work is still published and sold by Banner of Truth. See Thomas Scott, *The Force of*

the remarkable story of his conversion. The heretic-turned-orthodox motif in the story prompted Daniel Wilson to compare *The Force of Truth* to Augustine's *Confessions*:

'The Force of Truth' cannot be equaled with 'The Confessions of St. Augustine;' but it bears a general similarity to that incomparable work, in exemplifying the main features of a truly Christian conversion, in affording a striking illustration of the divine grace, and in setting before us an impressive picture of a laborious and successful investigations of truth.⁹²

In an age when rationalism and theological skepticism were in vogue, the story of a rationalist changing his mind to embrace a Trinitarian, Evangelical, and Calvinistic understanding of the Christian faith would have stood out to Scott's contemporaries. *The Force of Truth* is also significant in the history of evangelicalism because it fostered the development of a literary genre known as the "evangelical conversion narrative."⁹³

The Force of Truth may have thrust Scott into the public eye, but his *magnum opus* was his multi-volume, verse-by-verse commentary of the Bible. He spent over twenty-five years writing and editing the work, and it sold 37,000 copies during his lifetime, bringing in an estimated £200,000 in revenue.⁹⁴ Mary Seeley has noted that within thirty years of his death another 40,000 copies were sold in England, and she has indicated that there was even more demand for the commentary in America than there was in England.⁹⁵ These figures indicate that Scott's commentary was immensely popular for half a century or more. Even though the commentary has not remained in popular use today, modern historians continue to recognize the significance of the work. David Bebbington, for instance, described Scott as "the eighteenth-century Evangelicals'

Truth (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1984).

⁹²Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, 1:493.

⁹³See above, 26n3.

⁹⁴G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911), 81. Despite the high revenue, Scott personally gained virtually nothing from the sale of the commentary. The majority of this money went to publishers and booksellers.

⁹⁵Seeley, *Later Evangelical Fathers*, 185–86.

greatest commentator on the Bible.”⁹⁶

Thomas Scott’s Personal Influence

Scott’s writings did much to establish him as an important figure in evangelical history, and so did the influence he exerted both within and without the Church of England. Scott’s London ministry especially placed him in a circle that allowed him to influence more people than he would have had he remained a parish minister in Buckinghamshire. His close association with John Newton, and subsequently with prominent men like William Wilberforce, provided Scott with the means to disseminate his views to a larger audience. In fact, Scott was Wilberforce’s pastor for a brief time while the two were both residing in London, and his ministry seemed to have a positive effect on the young MP. Wilberforce was impressed enough with Scott’s preaching that he, along with Henry Thornton, another of Scott’s wealthy attendees, pushed Scott to publish a volume of sermons.⁹⁷ Years later, Wilberforce spoke with much fondness regarding his time under Scott’s ministry:

It was in the winter of 1785–6 that the late Mr. Newton informed me that the Rev. Mr. Scott, a clergyman of a very superior understanding and of eminent piety, more peculiarly remarkable for his thorough acquaintance with the holy scriptures, was about to settle in London, having been appointed to the chaplaincy of the Lock Hospital. This was a period of my life when it was peculiarly important to me habitually to attend the ministrations of a sound and faithful pastor; and I willingly assented to Mr. Newton’s earnest recommendations of Mr. Scott. I soon found that he fully equaled the strongest expectations that I had formed of him, and from that time for many years I attended him regularly. . . . All objections arising from an unfavorable manner were at once overruled by the strong sense, the extensive acquaintance with scripture, the accurate knowledge of the human heart, and the vehement 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.⁹⁸

In addition to his preaching connections, Scott’s associations were broadened

⁹⁶Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 30.

⁹⁷Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 313. For the book of sermons, see Thomas Scott, *Sermons on Select Subjects* (London: D. Jaques, 1796).

⁹⁸Wilberforce to John Scott, Marden Park, April 16, 1822, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 616–17.

through his involvement in the Eclectic Society in London, which allied him with other prominent Evangelicals such as Josiah Pratt, William Goode, Richard Cecil, and John Venn. On occasion the Eclectic Society made Scott their mouth-piece on important topics, and his *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion*, which was designed to combat infidelity among young people, was published at their request.⁹⁹ Instances such as this one with the Eclectic Society have prompted historian Ford Brown to say that “Scott had a strength of intellect that took him beyond any other divine of the [Evangelical] Party” and that “on any Christian matter he spoke for Evangelicalism with grave and judicious authority.”¹⁰⁰ If Brown is correct in his assessment, many Evangelicals saw Scott as one of the premier theologians of the day, and the Eclectic Society used Scott’s notoriety for the good of the Evangelical community. The Eclectic Society also provided Scott with opportunities for influence through the CMS. His position as Society Secretary allowed him to correspond with Evangelicals throughout England on the subject of missions, and his letters to Society supporters planted the seeds for the development of a missionary zeal among Evangelical clergymen and laymen.

Scott’s influence, however, was not confined to his own religious party. In fact, some of those he influenced achieved far greater fame than he ever did personally. The most famous example is John Henry Newman (1801–1890), the well-known leader of the Oxford Movement. Though Scott and Newman never met in person, Scott’s *Essays* and *The Force of Truth* cultivated Newman’s belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. Even after his departure into Roman Catholicism, Newman seemed to hold Scott in high esteem and stated that Scott was “the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul.”¹⁰¹ Another

⁹⁹See Pratt, *Thought of the Evangelical Leaders*, 12–16.

¹⁰⁰Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 130.

¹⁰¹John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua and Six Sermons*, ed. Frank M.

example of Scott's influence beyond his own circle is the Baptist missionary pioneer, William Carey, who was led to Christ, at least in part, through Scott's preaching.¹⁰² Carey once told his associate John Ryland, Jr. how much he personally appreciated Scott's ministry, saying, "If there be anything of the work of God in my soul, I owe much of it to his preaching when I first set out in the ways of the Lord."¹⁰³

Newman and Carey represent two prominent men who were influenced directly by Scott, but he had many other relationships and friendships outside of his own denomination. He thought well of the Presbyterians, remarking once to a friend in Scotland that he considered the Presbyterians to be among "the best sort of

Turner (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 134. It should be pointed out that it is highly unlikely that Thomas Scott would have approved of the direction Newman eventually went. It would be incorrect to infer from Newman's comment quoted above that Scott somehow paved the way for the Oxford Movement or Newman's departure into Roman Catholicism. Scott's works apparently played a part in Newman being convinced of Trinitarian doctrine and can be said to have influenced him in the area of practical holiness. Thomas Scott was in no way associated with the Oxford Movement as he had been dead for over ten years by 1833, the year in which Newman says the Oxford Movement began. The members of the Oxford Movement put great weight on the teaching of the early church and the Church Fathers in particular. Thomas Scott would not have shared their sentiment. For example, in the midst of the Calvinistic controversy with George Tomline, the bishop of Winchester, he expressed his concern that the early church had been infected with false teaching. He wrote, "But, as in the apostle's days, 'The mystery of iniquity did already work;' so, in the course of four centuries, and indeed in far less time, it had made great, though silent progress" (Scott, *Remarks on the 'Refutation of Calvinism,'* 1:211). For the history and character of the Oxford Movement, see Owen Chadwick, *The Mind of the Oxford Movement* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960); Owen Chadwick, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years, 1833–1845* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Eugene Rathbone Fairweather, ed., *The Oxford Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760–1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1915).

¹⁰²The Bengal Obituary says, "[William Carey's] father was Preceptor in the Established Church at Pauler's Perry. Though imperfectly brought up in the tenets of the Christian religion, his mind was not directed to the Saviour of the world by his father, who was at that time, unhappily, ignorant of the Savior himself, but at the age of fifteen the subject of our memoir was apprenticed to a Shoe Maker in the village of Paddington, (ten miles from Pauler's Perry,) and there, often held conversations with a fellow apprentice, named John Ward, which first led him to reflect closely on his state as a sinner before God; and his occasional access to the ministrations of the Rev. Thomas Scott, author of the Commentary on the Bible, and Pastor at Ravenstone, (a village a few miles distant,) tended greatly to increase his convictions of his fallen condition" (*The Bengal Obituary; or, A Record to Perpetuate the Memory of Departed Worth: Being a Compilation of Tablets and Monumental Inscriptions from Various of the Bengal and Agra Presidencies, to Which is Added Biographical Sketches and Memoirs of Such as Have Pre-Eminently Distinguished Themselves in the History of British India Since the Formation of the European Settlement to the Present Time* [London: W. Thacker & Co., 1851], 334).

¹⁰³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 173.

Dissenters.”¹⁰⁴ Scott also had good relationships with several well-known Baptist ministers. He maintained a lengthy and friendly correspondence with the aforementioned John Ryland,¹⁰⁵ and he entertained Andrew Fuller in his own home.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, he helped and promoted non-Anglican missionary societies like the BMS and the LMS at different times and ways. Scott’s relationships with non-Anglicans reveal a spirit of ecumenism and cooperation that was fairly common among members of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England. However, such relationships could also create personal anxiety for churchmen like Scott who tried to hold Anglican loyalty in tension with evangelical ecclesiastical cooperation. How Scott dealt with this tension will be the subject of the next two chapters.

¹⁰⁴Scott, *Letters and Papers*, 183.

¹⁰⁵Thomas Scott et al., *The Scott Family Correspondence to John Ryland 1786–1825*, Bristol Baptist College Library Special Collections, Bristol, UK.

¹⁰⁶Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 174.

CHAPTER 3

THOMAS SCOTT'S EVANGELICAL IDENTITY: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The spiritual transformation that Thomas Scott underwent in the 1770s brought him into fellowship with the international, trans-denominational movement known as evangelicalism. At the same time, the Church of England remained an important part of his religious identity and the arena in which he conducted his ministerial duties. However, the preponderance of ministers within the Church of England and a good number of people in the higher echelons of English society did not share his newfound convictions, which created several problems for his clerical career. Persons who became Evangelicals ran the risk of forfeiting ecclesiastical preferment and the lucrative livings that went along with it.

Scott himself experienced this kind of ill treatment to a certain degree as he underwent his conversion. Early on in his ministry, he had found favor with a wealthy land-owner named George Wrighte III (c. 1734–c. 1804) of Gayhurst, who “was a descendant of Sir Nathan Wrighte, Lord Keeper in the reign of Queen Anne.”¹ Scott began conducting services at the Wrighte family chapel, and Wrighte also employed Scott to “put his library in order and to make a catalogue of the books.”² In exchange, Scott received duplicate copies of Wrighte’s books. Additionally, Jane Kell, Scott’s future wife, worked for the Wrightes, and such was the friendly nature of their

¹John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself and Copious Extracts of His Letters*, 6th ed. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 49.

²Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 50.

relationship that George Wright himself gave away the bride at Scott's wedding.³ After the wedding, Wright hired Scott as a tutor for his son, and "took vigorous measures to procure [Scott] a living."⁴ Had Scott's religious sentiments remained the same, he very likely would have been able to obtain preferment and a nice living for himself through Wright's influence. However, his crisis of conscience about subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles and his increasingly Evangelical sentiments eroded their friendship, and Scott later remarked that "in proportion as I became more decidedly attentive to religion, my company was less agreeable."⁵ Eventually, he was fired as Wright's tutor after a disagreement over the "indulged child."⁶ Even still, he was able to live "on terms of civility with the family: but, on my decidedly adopting and avowing my present [i.e., Evangelical] religious sentiments, this connexion was, as nearly as possible, dissolved."⁷

The great irony was that Scott's religious advancement was hindered largely because he became more serious about religion. He also discovered that being Anglican *and* evangelical could come at a cost. Specifically, his conversion had cost him both a friend and his chances of preferment. Thankfully, he was already an ordained minister in the Church of England, and, since the church was normally disinclined to rescind orders or remove a minister from office simply because he became an Evangelical, he was not out of a job completely. Nevertheless, his prospects of rising above the rank of curate were diminished greatly, and he would struggle financially for much of his life as a result. However, if he felt any pressure to leave the Church due to the unlikelihood of obtaining preferment, he did not seriously consider succumbing to it. In speaking of his

³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 70.

⁴Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 71.

⁵Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 100.

⁶Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 100.

⁷Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 100–101.

mindset at the time, he simply said, “I found myself a minister of the establishment; and, as I saw no sufficient reason to relinquish my station, I was satisfied that it was my duty to retain it.”⁸

However, Scott’s settled position in the Church of England was shaken during his time in Olney, when he wrestled with the subject of baptism. In Olney, he came very close to rejecting infant baptism, which would have led him to withdraw from the Church of England on doctrinal grounds. After nine months of concentrated prayer and Scriptural meditation, he concluded that the Church of England’s doctrine on the subject was correct. However, his mind was not completely absolved of internal conflict. Even though he had settled the issue of baptism, “the investigation of this controversy brought a variety of subjects under my consideration, of which I had not before at all thought.”⁹ He did not indicate exactly what these subjects were, but he mentioned that he “met with many objections to the established church, which I was not competent to answer, except by reciprocal objections to many things in use among our opponents, which I thought at least equally unscriptural.”¹⁰ These objections must have posed a considerable challenge to his theological and ecclesiastical convictions, and he later confessed to being in an “unsettled state of mind” at this time.¹¹ Subsequent history proved that his uneasiness on these ecclesiastical questions did not overpower his loyalty to the National Church, but the tensions he felt within himself forced him to seek answers to the objections others raised against the Church of England and to satisfy himself that remaining in the Church was consistent with biblical principles.

Thus, Scott’s Evangelical identity was forged in the fires of a fierce internal

⁸Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 164.

⁹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 167.

¹⁰Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 167.

¹¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 167.

struggle over several issues related to the Evangelical Anglican tension, and the identity that emerged from the kiln is the subject of the next two chapters. Scott's spiritual journey had seen him wrestle through issues of subscription, Christian orthodoxy, church government, and the viewpoints of English Dissenters. He had been pressed to clarify his thinking on both the validity of the Church of England and on how he, as an Anglican minister, related to Christians outside the Established Church. Understanding the manner in which Scott handled these topics, and those related to them, is immensely important for explaining his part in the missionary movement that arose out of English evangelicalism. The discussion of Scott's Evangelicalism will be divided into two parts. In this chapter, the focus will be on the general characteristics of his Evangelicalism. The emphasis will be primarily on matters related to his views on the Bible, conversion, and other matters that are not inherently Anglican. In the next chapter, greater attention will be given to the ecclesiastical aspects of his Evangelicalism, and the material will concentrate on Scott's views on the English establishment, church order, and non-Anglicans.

The Quest for an Evangelical Identity

Any attempt, however, to reconstruct the Evangelical identity of an individual subject will almost inevitably have to interact with the ongoing discussion among historians as to the nature of evangelical identity as a whole. The goal of this dissertation is not to make definitive declarations about the defining characteristics of the movement that goes by the name *evangelical*. Nevertheless, studying what being an Evangelical meant for Thomas Scott can shed greater light on certain aspects of the nature of the movement and conversely show where Scott agreed or disagreed with the overarching principles that defined the larger evangelical community. At the center of nearly all modern conversations about the evangelical movement is David Bebbington's influential

and controversial book, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.¹² Among the book's many contributions to evangelical history is the popularization of a succinct description of the defining tenets of the movement, a description that has come to be known as "Bebbington's quadrilateral."¹³ According to Bebbington, there are "four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross."¹⁴ Though questions have been asked as to whether evangelicalism as a movement is the sole possessor historically of these four qualities, there is little reason to quibble with the fact that all four characteristics are present in the movement.¹⁵ Scott himself, as will become clear in what follows, exemplified them all.

However, Bebbington's quadrilateral is fairly broad, and its vagueness in certain respects can only act as a starting point in the quest to define Scott's Evangelical identity. Scott's evangelicalism cannot ultimately be divorced from his membership in the Church of England, even if his Evangelical convictions had much in common with evangelicals outside of the State Church. As such, the present discussion will be well served by giving more specificity to Scott's Evangelical thought than simply discussing his theology in light of Bebbington's quadrilateral.

¹²David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989).

¹³The characteristics of the quadrilateral are not original to Bebbington, as he readily acknowledges in the course of his discussion. See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 2–4. The quadrilateral is also present, though in slightly different language, in Leonard Elliott-Binns, *The Evangelical Movement in the English Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1928), 91–109. The main elements of the quadrilateral can also be found in J. C. Ryle's book, *Knots Untied*. However, he arranges his "leading features" in five points. See J. C. Ryle, *Knots Untied*, 10th ed. (London: William Hunt, 1885), 3–9.

¹⁴Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 2–3.

¹⁵For some of the challenges to Bebbington's book, see Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart, eds., *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008).

A helpful guide in this respect can be found in Kenneth Hylson-Smith's book *Evangelicals in the Church of England*.¹⁶ Published around the same time as Bebbington's book, this work focused more narrowly, as the title suggests, on Evangelicals who remained in the Church of England. In his introduction, Hylson-Smith drew five distinctions between Evangelicals proper and those who, though members of the Church of England, were associated with the Methodist movement. First, he observed that Evangelicals were more committed to what he calls "clericalism," or the need for an ordained, professional class of preachers.¹⁷ "In contrast, Methodism increasingly became a lay movement with lay preachers as its chief agents."¹⁸ Second, he argued that "Evangelicals were strict churchmen," and commonly "were chary of any co-operation with Dissenters."¹⁹ Conversely, Methodists were effectively Dissenters for much of their early history and formally became such after John Wesley's death in 1791. The third difference between Evangelicals and Methodists was doctrinal in character. The main issues in question were Calvinism, Christian perfection, and excessive emotionalism.²⁰ Fourth, and related to the previous point, "John Wesley had a particular regard for the primitive church, and based many of his innovations on what he considered to be primitive practice, whereas Evangelicals, especially in their more formative years, looked more to the Reformation and the Puritan tradition."²¹ Anthony Armstrong has also recognized that Evangelicals understood their Calvinism and their theology generally in terms "of the Reformation, and [they] referred frequently to the Prayer Book, the Thirty-

¹⁶Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England: 1734–1984* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988).

¹⁷Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 11.

¹⁸Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 11.

¹⁹Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 11.

²⁰Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 11.

²¹Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 11.

nine Articles, and the Book of Homilies, the official sermons produced for the Elizabethan clergy.”²² Thus, Anglican Evangelicalism was doctrinally deeper than what Bebbington describes in his quadrilateral of biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, and activism, due to the movement’s emphasis on the confessional and liturgical documents of the Church of England. Finally, Methodists and Evangelicals differed on the subject of church order.²³ Key issues in this regard were practices such as prayer meetings led by lay people, lay preaching, and itinerant preaching.²⁴ Generally speaking, Methodists welcomed all of these practices while Evangelicals tended to avoid them and even saw them as dangerous.

These five distinctions between Evangelicalism and Methodism, when combined with Bebbington’s quadrilateral, form a helpful framework with which to evaluate Thomas Scott’s Evangelical identity. Bebbington’s quadrilateral will prove valuable in showing what traits Scott held in common with evangelicals of all denominations. Hylson-Smith’s five distinctions will be useful in understanding Scott’s Anglicanism. Determining Scott’s perspective on these key issues will go a long way towards explaining why he remained in the Church of England throughout his life. What follows, then, in this chapter and the next is an examination of Scott’s theology in light of the characteristics described by Bebbington and Hylson-Smith. However, the presentation of material will not rigidly force Scott into these categories but will be sensitive to how Scott’s theological convictions developed organically in the midst of his ministerial struggles. Additionally, several secondary elements of Scott’s theology that played an important role in the development of his philosophy of missions will be treated along the way, for the ultimate goal of these chapters is to discern those Evangelical

²²Anthony Armstrong, *The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700–1850* (London: University of London Press, 1973), 121.

²³Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 12.

²⁴Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals*, 12.

principles that shaped Scott's efforts with respect to missions. The remainder of this chapter, however, will focus on the general characteristics of Scott's Evangelicalism.²⁵

The Importance of the Bible

There is little doubt that evangelicals of all varieties have always stressed the importance of the Bible in their religious formulations. Leonard Elliott-Binns has remarked that "all types of Evangelicals are agreed on the supreme authority of the Bible and its peculiar inspiration."²⁶ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones once began a discussion of "Evangelical Priorities" in a lecture before the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students by saying that "the evangelical is one who is entirely subservient to the Bible."²⁷ A century earlier, J. C. Ryle was so bold as to say that "the first leading feature in Evangelical Religion is the *absolute supremacy it assigns to Holy Scripture*, as the only rule of faith and practice, the only test of truth, the only judge of controversy."²⁸

Thomas Scott would have agreed wholeheartedly with these statements. It is no accident that the first two chapters of his *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion* were on "The Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures" and "The Importance of Revealed Truth," since he believed that the divine origin of the Scriptures was one of the most important subjects in religion and the foundation for all other religious topics.²⁹

²⁵Not every subject in this chapter is explicitly an evangelical characteristic. Baptism, for instance, could have been included in the next chapter since it is certainly an issue in Anglicanism, but a rationale for including it in this section will be explained at that point in this chapter. The issue of Calvinism will be considered in this chapter as well, though it is readily acknowledged that Calvinism is not an essential feature of the evangelical movement. However, one's understanding of Calvinism informs one's understanding of conversion, which is an important element of evangelical identity. The inclusion of a section on eschatology is justifiable on similar grounds, since Scott's eschatology, as will be seen later on, helps explain his missionary activism.

²⁶Elliott-Binns, *The Evangelical Movement*, 95.

²⁷David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *What is an Evangelical?* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2016), 41.

²⁸Ryle, *Knots Untied*, 3 (emphasis in the original).

²⁹Thomas Scott, *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion* (London: D. Jaques, 1794), 1–28.

The Preface to his *Commentary on the Holy Bible* was essentially a prolonged defense of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and his main concern in answering Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* was the defense, or vindication as he put it, of the Bible over against someone who was sincere "in *hating the Bible*."³⁰ What gave Scott the confidence to take on influential rationalists like Paine was a faith in the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, a faith that had been bolstered in the course of his Evangelical conversion. Toward the end of *The Force of Truth*, he reflected on what had brought him to embrace an Evangelical understanding of the Christian faith, and he credited the Scriptures themselves with playing a major role in his spiritual journey:

Thus by degrees I learned to look upon the Bible as my book of instructions, given me along with my ministerial trust by my Lord and Master; that from thence I was to draw all my doctrines, instructions, admonitions, warnings, examples, rules of duty, motives to duty, and encouragements therein; and the whole of that which God sees fit to reveal concerning those unspeakable and inconceivable good things, which he hath of his infinite mercy prepared for them that love him.³¹

As this statement makes plain, Scott held the Bible to be the supreme authority for all things pertaining to faith and practice. He spoke this way because he believed that the Scriptures "were given by inspiration of God, to instruct men in divine things: and every part of them was not only perfect truth, but profitable, to teach them sound doctrine respecting God and themselves, the eternal state, the way of acceptance, and other interesting and difficult subjects."³² Therefore, he "read the Scriptures, not as the word of

³⁰Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: With Original Notes, and Practical Observations* [hereafter cited as *Commentary*] (London: Bellamy and Robarts, 1788–1792), Preface, 1:vii–xviii; Thomas Scott, *A Vindication of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Doctrines Contained in Them, Being an Answer to the Two Parts of Mr. T. Paine's Age of Reason* (London: D. Jaques, 1796), Preface, iii. There are no page numbers in the original for the preface, so Roman numerals have been supplied for convenience.

³¹Thomas Scott, *The Force of Truth: An Authentic Narrative* (London: G. Keith, 1779), 183.

³²Scott, "Notes on 2 Timothy 3:14–17," in *Commentary*, vol. 4. Scott's commentary has two sections for any given portion of Scripture under consideration. The first he describes as "Notes" and the second as "Practical Observations." The former is his formal exposition of the passage and the latter is his attempt to apply the passage to practical life. Since the main body of the original edition of Scott's commentary did not have page numbers, all citations to the commentary will indicate which Scripture passage is being discussed, the appropriate section ("Notes" or "Practical Observations"), and the volume

man, but as the word of God.”³³

The high regard Scott had for the Bible manifested itself in practically everything he did in terms of ministry. The Scriptures were central to his daily living, his writings, his preaching, and in his missionary endeavors. With respect to daily living, he taught that all Christians had a duty to read and study the Bible, both as individuals and as families. In his essay “On the Importance of Revealed Truth,” he wrote, “Divine truth is the food of the soul, which wants its nourishment as often as the body does. That day must have been misspent, in which no part of the Scriptures has been read or meditated on.”³⁴ The need for daily exposure to the Scriptures undergird his insistence on reading the Scriptures systematically as part of a regular family worship. He argued that “singing the praises of God very properly forms a part of family worship. . . , yet reading the Scriptures *in course*, (with few exceptions, at the discretion of the person who officiates,) is a most excellent method of preparing the minds of children and servants for profiting by publick instruction, as well as for giving them a comprehensive view of our holy religion.”³⁵ As a minister of the gospel he saw it as his chief duty to communicate God’s revealed Word to everyday people:

In order therefore faithfully to declare the message which I had in trust to deliver to the souls of men from the Lord Almighty, I found it indispensably needful for me to be well acquainted with every part, and to take the word of God myself, as well as propose it to others, as the lantern of my feet, and the light of my paths.”³⁶

number.

³³Scott, *Force of Truth*, 184. For a more detailed treatment on some of the particulars of Scott’s views related to the nature and scope of inspiration, see Aaron Edward Gast, “Thomas Scott the Commentator (1747–1821): A Study of His Theological Thought” (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1955), 142–69.

³⁴Scott, “On the Importance of Revealed Truth,” in *Essays*, 26.

³⁵Scott, “On the Importance of Revealed Truth,” in *Essays*, 25–26. The 4th ed. of the *Essays* is even more forceful, adding “and should therefore by no means be neglected” to the end of the sentence quoted above (Thomas Scott, “On the Importance of Revealed Truth,” in *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion*, 4th ed. [London: D. Jaques, 1800], 35). Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of the *Essays* will be made to the first edition in keeping with previous methodology.

³⁶Scott, *Force of Truth*, 183.

This desire to have people be “well acquainted with every part” of Scripture was a major impetus for him spending over thirty years writing his commentary, and he contended in the Preface that “no method of conveying truth seems more advantageous, than that of plain expository lectures upon Scripture, with practical inferences, and animated addresses to the heart and conscience: and if this be true preaching, it cannot be far otherwise in respect of writing.”³⁷

Importantly for the subject of missions, Scott held that knowledge of the Bible was vital for bringing people to salvation. He thought that “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.’”³⁸ If the Scriptures were capable of making people “wise unto salvation,” then Christian ministers had a responsibility to preach the gospel from them, and so he could say, “I am persuaded universal experience decides, that true Christianity hath evermore flourished in almost exact proportion to the degree, in which the *word of God unadulterated, and unmutilated*, has been earnestly, diligently, and publickly preached by men, whose disinterested labours, and holy lives have given sanction to their doctrine.”³⁹

These words were written in 1788, over a decade before Scott entered into missions-related labor, yet subsequent history would prove that the value he placed on the Bible and its dissemination was a key component in his attitude toward missions. Over twenty years later, he was still talking about the Bible. At a meeting of the High Wycombe Bible Society, he exclaimed, “The longer I live the more I feel for those who have not the word of God.”⁴⁰ He went on:

³⁷Scott, *Commentary*, Preface, xxii–xxiii.

³⁸Scott, “On the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures,” in *Essays*, 3.

³⁹Scott, *Commentary*, Preface, xxii.

⁴⁰Thomas Scott, “The First Annual Meeting of the High Wycombe Auxiliary Bible Society,” in *The First Report of the Auxiliary Bible Society of High Wycombe* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1812), 23

I am growing old, and feel the infirmities of age; I know I must soon die; I am a sinner against God; I must appear before him in judgement; I must exist for ever in happiness or misery; but I can find no light, no hope, no comfort, except from the Bible. What should I do, without the Bible, and that Saviour whom it reveals to me!⁴¹

Having said these things, he appealed to his audience in a way that connected his evangelical principles to the area of missions: “Let us then, my friends, while 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.”⁴²

The Message of the Gospel

A discussion of a person’s evangelical identity would inevitably be incomplete if nothing was said about the meaning of the *evangel* in their theology.⁴³ As Mark Noll has pointed out, “‘evangelical’ religion has always been ‘gospel’ religion, or religion focusing on the ‘good news’ of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus Christ.”⁴⁴ For most Protestants, the heart of the gospel has been the atoning sacrifice of Christ that made possible the justification of the sinner apart from any human works. John Calvin (1509–1564), for instance, described the doctrine of justification by faith alone as “the main hinge on which religion turns.”⁴⁵ In England, Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556) taught that “justification is the office of God only, and is not a thing which we render unto him, but take of him, by his free mercy, and by the only merits of his dearly beloved Son, our only

[hereafter cited as “Speech at High Wycombe”].

⁴¹Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 23.

⁴²Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 24.

⁴³The word *evangelical* is derived from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον, which means “gospel” or “good news.”

⁴⁴Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, vol. 1 of *A History of Evangelicalism*, ed. David Bebbington and Mark Noll (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 16.

⁴⁵John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.11.1, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20–21 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 726.

Redeemer, Saviour, and Justifier, Jesus Christ.”⁴⁶ Likewise, William Tyndale (1494–1536) insisted that “faith in Christ’s blood, of a repenting heart towards the law, justifies us alone, and not all manner of faiths.”⁴⁷ The doctrine of justification by faith alone was also codified by the Church of England in the Thirty-Nine Articles, which stated that “we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings.”⁴⁸

What is crucial to understanding Scott’s Evangelical identity is that he believed he was teaching the same gospel doctrines—especially the doctrine of justification—that were taught by the English Reformers. Scott’s affection for the Reformers came about initially by reading Richard Hooker, who gave Scott “a more favourable opinion of these old authors, than I formerly conceived.”⁴⁹ In context, the “old authors” were the writers of the Book of Homilies; and though he found “many things therein contained [to be] hard sayings,” he also discovered “many others were made very useful to me, especially concerning justification.”⁵⁰ The homily to which he was referring was that written by Cranmer,⁵¹ and years later, when disputing with George Tomline, Scott equated Cranmer’s teaching on justification in this homily with the doctrine of the Evangelical clergy:

It is the express declaration of our reformers, (who were deeply versed in these studies, especially Cranmer, to whom this homily is generally ascribed,) that they all

⁴⁶Thomas Cranmer, “An Homily of the Salvation of Mankind by Only Christ Our Saviour from Sin and Death Everlasting,” in *The English Reformers*, ed. T. H. L. Parker, Library of Christian Classics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1966), 267.

⁴⁷William Tyndale, “A Lively Description of Our Justification,” in *Writings of Tindal, Frith, and Barnes* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1831), 2:265–66.

⁴⁸“Thirty-Nine Articles,” in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 3:494.

⁴⁹Scott, *Force of Truth*, 87.

⁵⁰Scott, *Force of Truth*, 87.

⁵¹See Cranmer, “Homily of the Salvation of Mankind,” 262–71.

maintain justification by faith, only, freely, and without works; in exactly the same sense, as far as I can perceive, in which the evangelical clergy at present do.⁵²

A similar connection was made at the end of a sermon Scott preached expressly on the gospel. After explaining that salvation consisted in “conversion, forgiveness, newness of heart, and its holy fruits,” he emphasized that his doctrine was nothing new, being “as old as the reformers, who died martyrs for professing it.”⁵³ Not surprisingly, Scott mirrored the English Reformers in making the Protestant teaching on justification a central part of his gospel message. In his essay “On Justification,” he called justification by faith alone a “fundamental doctrine.”⁵⁴ Toward the end of the same essay, he stated that “all our eternal interests depend on the answer” to the question—“How shall man be just with God?”⁵⁵ In underscoring the seriousness of the subject, he once again appealed to the Reformers, stating “that all the reformers from popery, (who were eminent men, however some may affect to despise them,) deemed the prevailing sentiments concerning the way of a sinner’s justification before God, to be the grand distinction between a standing and a falling church.”⁵⁶

Scott’s agreement with the English Reformers that the doctrine of justification is the determining factor “between a standing and falling church” demonstrates that he considered the doctrine vital to the gospel message, and these appeals to the English Reformers also show that he understood his own doctrine and the doctrine of the Church of England to be decidedly Protestant in character. But what exactly did he believe about

⁵²Thomas Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, (London: L. B. Seeley, 1811), 1:322.

⁵³Thomas Scott, “Notes of a Sermon on Romans 15:29,” in *The Works of the Rev. Thomas Scott [Works]*, ed. John Scott (London: L. B. Seeley, 1823–25), 10:510. This sermon was transcribed by Daniel Wilson and was published posthumously. Ultimately, Scott saw his doctrine as going back to the apostles and the Bible itself: “Look into your Bibles, and you find it there. . . . It is as old as the apostles” (“Notes of a Sermon on Romans 15:29,” in *Works*, 10:510).

⁵⁴Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 147.

⁵⁵Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 154.

⁵⁶Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 154.

this all important teaching of justification? In order to answer this question adequately, some discussion of his beliefs concerning the need for justification, the basis of justification, the nature of justification, and the means for obtaining justification is warranted.

The Need for Justification

Before looking at Scott's doctrine of justification, it will be helpful to explore why he thought that justification was necessary in the first place. In short, he maintained that justification is needed because of the effects of sin on the human race. Aaron Gast has observed that "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."⁵⁷ Scott held that Adam was "was the federal head, surety, and representative of all his posterity" in the Garden of Eden, and when Adam fell, "sin entered into the world, to pollute and ruin the whole human species; and so death, spiritual and temporal followed, and passed upon all men."⁵⁸ Tragically, the death Adam passed on to the human race rendered his posterity incapable of proper spiritual living. In his comments on Ephesians 2, Scott stated that

death in trespasses and sins implies an utter incapacity for spiritual employments, and satisfactions; a destitution of all desire after that felicity, which holy creatures enjoy in the favour, and service of God; and a total inability of worshipping and obeying him, with love and delight: even as a dead man is utterly incapable of the business or pleasures of life.⁵⁹

Adam's fall also meant that "that every man lies under a twofold condemnation for his sins: he is sentenced to various temporal sufferings, which are to be terminated by death; and to eternal misery in another world."⁶⁰ Thus, human beings find themselves in a

⁵⁷Gast, "Theology of Thomas Scott," 214.

⁵⁸Scott, "Notes on Romans 5:12-14," in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

⁵⁹Scott, "Notes on Ephesians 2:1-3," in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

⁶⁰Scott, "On Man's Situation, as a Sinner, in This Present World," in *Essays*, 67.

dilemma of catastrophic proportions. On one hand, sinners face the certain prospect of both temporal and eternal death. On the other, they are spiritually incapable of doing anything about the coming judgment. Therefore, the need for sinners to be justified arises out of this impossible situation.

Scott's understanding of the fall of man had a profound impact on how he conducted both his personal ministry and his work in missions. Of considerable importance in this respect was the fact that Scott believed that there was a literal, future judgement of sinners. He made his views plain in his commentary on Revelation 20, where he wrote on the final judgement:

All the dead shall be raised; all distinctions swallowed up, except that between the righteous and the wicked; and all will be cast into the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, except the believing and obedient followers of Christ, whose names are written in the book of life. Let no man, therefore, deceive himself with vain words; for the wrath of God will come on all the children of disobedience, how many soever they be.⁶¹

In his *Essays*, he described the end of impenitent sinners as a “final and eternal misery,”⁶² and this misery included “eternal consciousness and self-reflection.”⁶³ In one of his funeral sermons he stated that God “deems sin deserving of the everlasting punishment of body and soul in hell, hath denounced this sentence against all sinners, and will certainly execute it upon all who do not repent and believe the Gospel.”⁶⁴

This doctrine of an eternal, conscious, and physical torment on all unrepentant sinners in hell ran counter to the teachings of influential British thinkers such as John Locke (1632–1704) and Henry Dodwell (1641–1711), who both taught that man's soul was mortal and held views of the afterlife that were of questionable orthodoxy. Locke, for

⁶¹Scott, “Practical Observations on Revelation 20,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

⁶²Scott, “On Man's Situation,” in *Essays*, 69.

⁶³Scott, “On Man's Situation,” in *Essays*, 66.

⁶⁴Thomas Scott, *Preparation for Death and Judgment: A Sermon at the Lock-Chapel, April 30, 1786, Upon the Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Dr. Conyers of Deptford* (London: J. Johnson, 1786), 14–15.

instance, in speaking about Adam's fall, remarked, "It seems a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by *Death* should be meant Eternal Life in Misery."⁶⁵ He would go on to argue that "when Man was turned out [of Paradise], he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this Mortal Life, which should end in the Dust, out of which he was made, and to which he should return; and then have no more life or sense than the Dust had, out of which he was made."⁶⁶ Man's end did not, however, have to be terminated in this way. After all, if God had left all to die in their sins, "there would not have been one left to sing Praises unto his Name."⁶⁷ Therefore, God, "willing to bestow Eternal Life on Mortal Men, sends Jesus Christ into the World."⁶⁸ According to Locke, those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah "are justified by God for this Faith, which shall be accounted to them for Righteousness,"⁶⁹ and "those who believed him to be [the Messiah] should be raised from the Dead at the last day to Eternal Life."⁷⁰ Thus, Locke affirmed that believers in Jesus Christ would receive eternal life, but what about those who do not believe? On this issue, Locke is not overly clear. He spoke of a "Sentence of Condemnation [that] passes only on the *workers of Iniquity*," and he also stated that Christ "should condemn Men at the last day."⁷¹ However, he also claimed that "Jesus Christ restores all mankind to Life," which seems to contradict both the need for a judgment at the last day and the need to believe in Jesus.⁷² Elwood Worcester has tried to make sense of Locke's views and has explained

⁶⁵John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (London, 1695), 5.

⁶⁶Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 7.

⁶⁷Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 208.

⁶⁸Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 200.

⁶⁹Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 242.

⁷⁰Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 99.

⁷¹Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 9.

⁷²Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 10.

them in this way:

It has been shewn that the soul of its own nature is not immortal, but that at the moment of our death we cease to exist (at least consciously). We are restored to life by our faith in Christ. Hence it would seem that those who either from ignorance or willfulness have no faith in Christ, are not restored, but perish everlastingly. In other words, they are annihilated.⁷³

If Worcester is correct about Locke's views, unbelievers are not in any real danger of eternal judgment.

Dodwell's opinions were similar, though more nuanced. According to Dodwell Adam was created with a "lower Soul" that was mortal, but God granted him the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to be immortal.⁷⁴ However, "upon Adam's Fall, he, and consequently his Posterity, lost the Spirit, which would have actually immortaliz'd him."⁷⁵ As a result, death sends the souls of men "into *Hades* . . . till the Day of Judgment."⁷⁶ Nevertheless, immortality can be regained "by being *united* to Christ . . . by being united with his *mystical Body* the Church."⁷⁷ In Dodwell's understanding "this Union must be by *Baptism*," though faith and repentance also play a role in restoring the lost Spirit to an individual.⁷⁸ Thus, those who are baptized in faith and repentance can have hope of eternal life, but what about everyone else? For Dodwell, the answer depends on a number of factors. He made distinctions among people based on their access to and ability to understand the Christian message. Those who had never heard the gospel had a different level of accountability than those who had never heard. He argued that "such as

⁷³Elwood Ernest Worcester, *The Religious Opinions of John Locke* (Geneva, NY: W. F. Humphrey, 1889), 59.

⁷⁴See Francis Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell's Hypothesis Concerning the Immortality of the Soul* (London: Richard Smith, 1714), in *The Life of Mr. Henry Dodwell* (London: Richard Smith, 1715), 566–70.

⁷⁵Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell's Hypothesis*, 570.

⁷⁶Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell's Hypothesis*, 575.

⁷⁷Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell's Hypothesis*, 581.

⁷⁸Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell's Hypothesis*, 581, 586.

had never Opportunities of being acquainted with the Gospel,” those “who liv’d in Times of Ignorance,” along with “the Souls of Idiots and unbaptiz’d Children” were exempt from future judgment and “shall not be adjudg’d to the final Sentences of the great Tribunal.”⁷⁹ By contrast, those who had heard the gospel and rejected it faced the prospect of “the Fire prepar’d for *Evangelical Criminals* [which] shall be eternal.”⁸⁰ Importantly for contextualizing Scott’s thought, Dodwell also believed that those who never heard the gospel “shall at the great Day of Judgment be annihilated.”⁸¹

Scott rejected outright the notion that life simply ceased to exist at the point of death for those who did not believe in Christ, and he must have had notions similar to those articulated by Locke and Dodwell in mind when he wrote, “Not the most remote hint is given through the whole Scriptures, that mercy or grace will be vouchsafed to any who die in their sins, or that God will ever annihilate his rebellious creatures; but everything warrants the opposite conclusion.”⁸² According to Scott, the reason philosophers and theologians argue against the plain teaching of Scripture on eternal judgement is that

it evidently answers the purpose of the enemies of our souls, and forwards their work of temptation and destruction, to persuade men that they will not be finally miserable, though they continue impenitent, and indulge their lusts till death: and the folly and madness of those, who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God; yet sin on, in hopes of finding all the denunciations false, or unmeaning, which it contains to this effect, and who bolster up their own and other men’s confidence with vain reasonings and sophistical arguments, is great beyond expression.⁸³

Such sophistry was extremely dangerous because “our sentiments will not alter the

⁷⁹Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell’s Hypothesis*, 607.

⁸⁰Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell’s Hypothesis*, 607.

⁸¹Brokesby, *Mr. Dodwell’s Hypothesis*, 608.

⁸²Scott, “On Man’s Situation,” in *Essays*, 66.

⁸³Scott, “On Man’s Situation,” in *Essays*, 66.

purposes of God.”⁸⁴ These firm convictions about the reality of future judgement provided Scott with a strong impetus for Christian missions and also furnished him with a basis for defending evangelical attempts to reach unbelievers. “It is as irrational as uncandid,” he wrote, “to charge those with want of sensibility, compassion, or philanthropy, who explain such Scriptures [about eternal judgment] in their most obvious meaning; and who warn and persuade men by ‘the terror of the Lord,’ to repent and seek the salvation of Christ.”⁸⁵ He illustrated the point by giving an example of a burning house: “If several persons were fast asleep in a house that was on fire; we should best express our compassion for them, by alarming them speedily and even violently, and so forward their escape; not leaving them to sleep on, lest they should be too much terrified.”⁸⁶ The application was clear:

They, who really believe that all impenitent and unbelieving sinners, will be forever miserable, suppose such men to be in a condition infinitely more tremendous, than the person alluded to; and they cannot but endeavour to convince them of their danger, ere it be forever too late; the more they love them, the greater will be their earnestness in warning them to “flee the wrath to come.”⁸⁷

Thus, the sinner’s need for justification was not just a doctrine to be believed, it served as a major motivation for evangelism and missions.

The Basis for Justification

As has been shown in the previous section, Scott considered unbelieving mankind to be living under the wrath and condemnation of God. Sin had separated the human race from God, and men were helpless to save themselves due to their depraved state. If man was to be delivered from this awful condition, God would have to provide a way for the effects of sin to be reversed and a program whereby people could be

⁸⁴Scott, “On Man’s Situation,” in *Essays*, 66.

⁸⁵Scott, “On Man’s Situation,” in *Essays*, 66.

⁸⁶Scott, “On Man’s Situation,” in *Essays*, 66–67.

⁸⁷Scott, “On Man’s Situation,” in *Essays*, 67.

reconciled to their Creator. For Scott, the only solution to this problem was the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. As Scott explained it, “The entrance of sin gave rise to the whole plan of a Mediator: and the malignity or desert of sin alone required such an exalted Mediator, and such a meritorious mediation, as the Scripture reveals and proposes to us.”⁸⁸ Consistent with historic Christian doctrine, Scott held that having a mediator who could represent both God and man was essential to bringing about justification in a way that both upheld God’s righteous character and simultaneously allowed the sinner to be pardoned. Therefore, the doctrine of the incarnation was a vital component to Scott’s theology of justification. In *The Rights of God*, for instance, he made much of the fact that God had “appointed his only begotten Son” to be the mediator.⁸⁹ In speaking of Christ, he wrote:

He is “the second Adam, the Lord from heaven,” even “Jehovah our Righteousness;” who voluntarily assuming our nature into personal union with his Deity, became capable of obedience and suffering, and of infinitely honouring the law and justice of the Father, by fulfilling all righteousness as our Surety, and by offering himself a sacrifice for our sins.⁹⁰

Here, Scott stressed the role that the two natures of Christ played in accomplishing human redemption as well as the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross.

These two ideas—that Jesus was the God-Man and that redemption was based on the work of Christ centered on the cross—constitute the heart of Scott’s gospel. These themes were especially common in his sermons, and the word *Emmanuel* seems to have become a shorthand way for Scott to speak of the two natures of Christ in connection with the work of redemption. In a sermon on Deuteronomy 32:47, for example, he proclaimed, “Emmanuel purchasing the church with his own blood; the love of Christ in

⁸⁸Scott, “On the Nature and Design of the Mediatorial Office, Sustained by the Lord Jesus Christ,” in *Essays*, 106. Later versions of the *Essays* begin this sentence with these words: “The entrance of sin rendered the interposition of a mediator necessary.” See, e.g., Scott, *Essays*, 4th ed., 153.

⁸⁹Thomas Scott, *The Rights of God* (London: D. Jaques, [1793?]), 56.

⁹⁰Scott, *Rights of God*, 56.

his obedience unto the death of the cross for us; his glorious resurrection, ascension, and mediatorial exaltation: these constitute the central and most essential part of the message of God to us.”⁹¹ In preaching on Isaiah 6:5–8, he remarked that “the glory of God is especially made known, not only to the church on earth, but also to the hosts in heaven, by the person and redemption of Emmanuel.”⁹² In a sermon on 1 John 4:8, he reminded his hearers “that the centre of these adorable wonders of divine mercy is not fixed in the circumstance of Christ, as *incarnate*, dying on the cross for sinners; but in the *incarnation* of the only begotten Son of God, that he *might* thus suffer and die for them!”⁹³ He then added, “We now therefore consider the Saviour as come into the world; his name ‘EMMANUEL, God with us;’ his humiliation, obedience, and sufferings accomplished.”⁹⁴ In speaking on God’s purpose in creating the world, he explained that God “formed the earth to be a theatre, on which he might display his essential glory: and the person, salvation, and kingdom of Emmanuel, constitute the grandest exhibition of all the mysteries and perfections of the divine nature that hath ever been made.”⁹⁵ A little later on in the same sermon, Scott once again brought together the two natures of Christ and His sacrificial death as being the solution to man’s sin problem:

As soon as sin entered into the world, the Lord made known his purpose of dealing with men, through the intervention of a peace-maker; in whose person, as Emmanuel, and through whose “obedience unto the death of the cross,” he might honourably show mercy to the transgressors of his holy law.⁹⁶

As these statements plainly indicate, “the doctrine of atonement by the vicarious sufferings of Emmanuel” formed for Scott “the most prominent and central part of

⁹¹Thomas Scott, “Sermon on Deuteronomy 32:47,” in *Theological Works*, 1:146.

⁹²Scott, “Sermon on Isaiah 6:5–8,” in *Theological Works*, 1:188.

⁹³Scott, “Sermon on 1 John 4:8,” in *Theological Works*, 1:229.

⁹⁴Scott, “Sermon on 1 John 4:8,” in *Theological Works*, 1:229.

⁹⁵Scott, “Sermon on Psalm 2:12,” in *Theological Works*, 1:307.

⁹⁶Scott, “Sermon on Psalm 2:12,” in *Theological Works*, 1:311.

revelation.”⁹⁷

The cross-work of Emmanuel also provides the basis of human justification. In a sermon on Acts 11:18, Scott declared that “the righteousness and atonement of Christ are the sole ground of our justification.”⁹⁸ In *The Rights of God*, he argued that God’s creatures needed to consider their “reception of two doctrines, which are of principal importance in Christianity, namely, that of a real atonement for sin, being made by the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ, who is ‘God manifest in the flesh,’ and that of justification before God by faith in Christ alone, and not by any of our own good works.”⁹⁹ His passion for the necessity of preaching Christ as the sole basis of justification comes out quite nicely in his funeral sermon for Lady Mary Fitzgerald:

We must “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” both for justification and sanctification. We must be “washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” As sinful creatures we need deliverance from guilt, by a free forgiveness, and “the gift of righteousness, unto justification of life.”¹⁰⁰

Recognizing Christ’s death as the exclusive foundation of justification was so important to Scott that he expressed marked skepticism that there could exist a Christian “who trusts, either in whole, or in part, *allowedly*, to any thing for pardon and justification, except the blood and righteousness of a crucified Saviour, God manifested in the flesh.”¹⁰¹

The Nature and Means of Justification

It is abundantly clear in all of Scott’s writings that the death of Christ was at the center of his doctrine of justification, but what exactly had Jesus’s death

⁹⁷Scott, “Sermon on John 1:29,” in *Theological Works*, 2:77.

⁹⁸Scott, “Sermon on Acts 11:18,” in *Theological Works*, 2:154–55.

⁹⁹Scott, *Rights of God*, 67.

¹⁰⁰Thomas Scott, *A Sermon on the Lamented and Affecting Death of the Late Right Honourable Lady Mary Fitzgerald* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1815), 25.

¹⁰¹Scott, *Force of Truth*, 134–35.

accomplished in behalf of the sinner and how were these benefits to be obtained? Scott answered both of these questions in a traditional Protestant way.

For Scott, justification involved both a legal declaration of the sinner's right standing before God and a pardon for sin. The legal aspects of Scott's doctrine can be seen in how he explained the terms for justification in the New Testament:

The terms *justify* and *justification* are taken from the common concerns of life, and applied, with some necessary variation of meaning, to the state of sinners, who have found acceptance with God: and they imply, that the sinner is now dealt with, as if he were a righteous person; and, therefore, he is wholly exempted from those sufferings, which are strictly speaking, *penal*, and is entitled to the reward of perfect obedience; though in himself he hath merited no such a reward, but on the contrary, hath deserved the punishment denounced in the law against transgressors.¹⁰²

Though he agreed that the terminology related to justification was forensic in character, "referring to the practice of human judicatories," he was concerned that thinking of words like *justify* and *justification* strictly in human justice parlance would give "us a very inadequate idea of their import."¹⁰³ He explained that in a human court, someone is either convicted or acquitted of a crime based on evidence. When the verdict comes back, the person accused may "be *pardoned*, but he cannot be *justified*; if he be acquitted, he may be *justified*, but he cannot stand in need of a *pardon*."¹⁰⁴ In this arrangement, justification "is not only distinct from pardon, but is absolutely incompatible with it."¹⁰⁵ However, the Christian notion of "justification before God always connects with pardon, and implies that we are guilty: and we are justified, as ungodly; 'righteousness being *imputed* to us without works.'"¹⁰⁶

Therefore, Scott insisted that justification was not *merely* a pardon, because

¹⁰²Scott, "On Justification," in *Essays*, 141.

¹⁰³Scott, "On Justification," in *Essays*, 141.

¹⁰⁴Scott, "On Justification," in *Essays*, 142.

¹⁰⁵Scott, "On Justification," in *Essays*, 142.

¹⁰⁶Scott, "On Justification," in *Essays*, 142.

sinful man had “forfeited our title to the reward of righteousness, according to the law, and have incurred the penalty of eternal misery.”¹⁰⁷ The loss of this title meant that justification “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.”¹⁰⁸ Justification, then, has two aspects, and both are accomplished by means of imputation. The sinner’s sin is imputed to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to the sinner, allowing the sinner to go free and inherit eternal life. In his essay on the atonement of Christ, Scott made it clear that “the believer is pardoned because his sin was imputed to Christ, and expiated by his sacrifice, and that he is justified, and made an heir of heaven, because Christ ‘brought in an everlasting righteousness,’ ‘which is unto, and upon, all them that believe, without any difference.’”¹⁰⁹ In later editions of his *Essays*, he added a similar statement in his essay on justification, “As our sins were imputed to Christ, and he endured the curse we deserved; so his righteousness is imputed to us, if believers, and becomes our title to the heavenly inheritance.”¹¹⁰ Thus, “justification signifies in Scripture, that God hath given a sinner a right and title to eternal life, accounting him righteous by an act of sovereign grace: so that, thenceforth, there is no condemnation for him; but being thus justified, ‘he is made an heir, according to the hope of eternal life.’”¹¹¹

How then, does the sinner receive these benefits? Scott would reply, “The

¹⁰⁷Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 143.

¹⁰⁸Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 143.

¹⁰⁹Scott, “On the Merits and Atonement of Christ,” in *Essays*, 123.

¹¹⁰Thomas Scott, *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion*, 3rd ed. (London: Jaques and Thomas, 1798), 186. Unless otherwise indicated, subsequent references to the *Essays* will resort back to the 1st ed., in keeping with previous practice.

¹¹¹Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 144.

sinner, by faith alone, lays hold of Christ.”¹¹² In another place he said, “By faith alone, and by no other operation of the mind or action of the life, can the sinner be made partaker of the righteousness and redemption of Christ.”¹¹³ Naturally, if justification was to be obtained by faith, it followed that “by no works of any law whatsoever, can any transgressor of *that law* be justified in the sight of God.”¹¹⁴ Scott defined saving faith as “a disposition readily to believe the testimony, and to rely on the promises, of God.”¹¹⁵ The “testimony” in question was “the record which God hath given us of his Son, and of eternal life in him,” a record he described as “the centre of revelation.”¹¹⁶ He was also careful to ensure that faith itself, or the act of believing was not somehow considered a good work by which a person could gain salvation: “We must not then 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.”¹¹⁷ Since neither good works nor the merit of faith enable sinners to gain salvation, “it appears, that grace (that is, the gratuitous favour, sovereign love, or everlasting mercy, of God,) is the source of our justification; the righteousness and atonement of Emmanuel are the meritorious cause of it; and faith is the only recipient of the blessing.”¹¹⁸

This final quotation nicely summarizes Scott’s entire position on justification. In keeping with the English and other Protestant Reformers, he held that justification was

¹¹²Scott, “Sermon on Acts 11:18,” in *Theological Works*, 2:155.

¹¹³Scott, “Sermon on James 1:22–25,” in *Theological Works*, 1:471–72.

¹¹⁴Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 145.

¹¹⁵Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 149.

¹¹⁶Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 149.

¹¹⁷Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 151.

¹¹⁸Scott, “On Justification,” in *Essays*, 151.

by grace alone, through faith alone, and based on the work of Christ alone. These truths were at the core of what Scott understood to be the gospel message, and he taught them and defended them from the time of his Evangelical conversion to his death. However, as vehemently as he insisted that salvation was obtained by faith alone, he contended with equal vigor that saving faith is never alone. In fact, his defense of the idea that saving faith *always* results in a change in external behavior was to bring him a great deal of criticism throughout his ministry. In a period when evangelicals of various denominations were insisting on the need for conversion, and at a time when revivals were known to produce hysteria of various sorts, Scott was calling for evidence of a genuine conversion.

An Emphasis on a Genuine Conversion

David Bebbington identified the idea of conversionism as a trademark of the evangelical movement. Closely related to conversionism is the doctrine of assurance, which Bebbington made a great deal of in his development of the evangelical identity. Bebbington argued that evangelicals, by and large, were more confident that they were genuine Christians than were their Puritan predecessors, and he came to the corresponding conclusion that “the dynamism of the Evangelical movement was possible only because its adherents were assured in their faith.”¹¹⁹ The main difference was that “the Puritans had held that assurance is rare, late and the fruit of struggle in the experience of believers [whereas] the Evangelicals believed it to be general, normally given at conversion and the result of simple acceptance of the gift of God.”¹²⁰ Sweeping statements like this one are notorious for having exceptions, and Garry Williams has even questioned whether the statement has much substance at all. After examining the subject of assurance in the thought of John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and John Newton, and

¹¹⁹Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 42.

¹²⁰Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 43.

showing that significant variations existed, not only between each other, but also with Bebbington's argument, Williams wondered if "there comes a point where the whole idea of a marked distinction between Puritanism and evangelicalism must be re-examined."¹²¹ D. Bruce Hindmarsh has also cast doubts on Bebbington's conclusion, pointing out that "it would perhaps be well to add that there was a spectrum of opinion on assurance among evangelicals as surely as there was among Puritans."¹²²

The example of Thomas Scott, as will be shown in what follows, is largely in agreement with what Hindmarsh has suggested. On a personal level, Scott never seemed to have the kind of personal assurance that is commonly attributed to the "essence of faith." Even as he struggled with the illness that eventually took his life, he was reported to pray repeatedly "the sentence in the Burial Service, 'Suffer me not, at my last hour, for any pains of death to fall from thee!'"¹²³ Additionally, he spent the better part of his life fighting abuses associated with the gospel of free grace, namely, emotionalism and antinomianism. People in these two camps, at least in Scott's view, probably had too much assurance, and so he warned them repeatedly to examine themselves with respect to salvation.

The Problem of Emotionalism

The problem of emotionalism in the eighteenth century primarily came about as a result of the evangelical revivals, which, at times, were responsible for orchestrating emotionally charged religious meetings that elicited some rather expressive and hysterical responses from those in attendance. Samuel Phillips Savage, for instance, described "a Confus'd but very Affecting Noise" which came "from different Ages & Sexes

¹²¹Garry J. Williams, "Enlightenment Epistemology and Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Doctrines of Assurance," in *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 372.

¹²²D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 66.

¹²³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 574.

proceeding wholly from distress, but of different degrees” in the aftermath of a house service conducted by Jonathan Edwards in Suffield, Massachusetts (now Connecticut) on July 7, 1741.¹²⁴ Savage detailed the sounds he heard: “The lowest kind Seem’d like Sobs of bereaved Friends, higher then these were Groans & Screaches as of Women in the Pains of Childbirth; but above these were Houlings and Yellings, which to Even a Carnal Man might point out Hell, & Convince him that Conscience let loose.”¹²⁵ Physical contortions corresponding to the audible outcries were also present: “Faintings in the lowest, & enervation in the Higher, and the highest were so intirely unbraced that you would have thought there bones all broken, or rather that they had no bones; so much as to this Extraordinary thing as it offer’d to the Sences.”¹²⁶ In England, John Wesley described a similar scene after one of his sermons:

Immediately one, and another, and another sunk to the earth: They dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf, and he turned her heaviness into joy. A second being in the same agony, we called upon God for her also: and he spoke peace unto her soul.¹²⁷

One of the problems with these kinds of outbursts was that a person could confuse an effusive display of emotion with genuine conversion and thus have a false assurance of salvation. As Scott warned, “Lively affections, without knowledge and judgment, betray men into enthusiasm, delusion, absurdity, and inexcusable practices, which injure themselves, mislead others, and disgrace the gospel.”¹²⁸

¹²⁴Samuel Phillips Savage, “The Savage Manuscript,” in Douglas L. Winiarski, “Jonathan Edwards, Enthusiast? Radical Revivalism and the Great Awakening in the Connecticut Valley,” *CH* 74, no. 4 (December 2005): 738.

¹²⁵Savage, “The Savage Manuscript,” 738.

¹²⁶Savage, “The Savage Manuscript,” 738–39.

¹²⁷John Wesley, *Journal and Diaries II (1738–43)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 19 of *The Works of John Wesley [Works]* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 51 [journal entry for April 26, 1739].

¹²⁸Thomas Scott, *A Treatise on Growth in Grace* (London: D. Jaques, 1795), 28.

The Problem of Antinomianism

Another major abuse of the gospel of free grace and the doctrine of justification by faith alone was antinomianism. Scott first encountered this problem while he was ministering in Olney, but he also had trouble when he was in London. Significantly, he recognized antinomianism as a problem *within* the evangelical community, and he put a lot of blame for its prevalence on evangelical ministers. In writing to his friend in Scotland in 1797, he said, “Suffice it that I give my opinion; and, in my opinion, it has been the chief error of modern evangelical preaching; in which we have adopted, as pure gospel, the very sentiments which eminent divines of the last age opposed as a most refined and dangerous sort of antinomianism.”¹²⁹ Over a decade later, Scott told John Ryland, Jr. that “the tendency of the religion in London and its vicinity among the evangelical clergy, is strongly towards antinomianism.”¹³⁰ The main problem with the antinomians was that they presumed on God’s grace, twisting the doctrine of salvation by grace alone into an excuse to live however they wanted or to pay little attention to their spiritual growth. Those holding these views thought little of personal holiness, which in Scott’s estimation, was extremely dangerous. Again writing to his friend in Scotland about the antinomians, he complained that “many good men hold these sentiments; but they are (even to them) of a *relaxing* nature, and I do not think their attainments in sanctification are the greater for them; but they are the *pillow* and the *opiate* of false professors.”¹³¹

Concerned with the possibility that emotionalism and antinomianism might

¹²⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to a Friend in Scotland, October 20, 1797, in Thomas Scott, *The Letters and Papers of the Late Rev. Thomas Scott*, ed. John Scott (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 202–3.

¹³⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 23, 1815, The Scott Family Correspondence to John Ryland 1786–1825, Bristol Baptist College Library Special Collections, Bristol, UK [hereafter, all letters from this collection will be cited as “Scott Family Correspondence”]. Intriguingly, John Scott removed some of the sting of this statement when he published his father’s letters, changing the word *clergy* to *body* (Scott, *Letters and Papers*, 256).

¹³¹Thomas Scott, Letter to a Friend in Scotland, October 20, 1797, in *Letters and Papers*, 203.

lead to false assurance, Scott turned combating both of these errors into a personal mission. In speaking about antinomianism, he claimed that “my whole ministry and writings have uniformly been directed to counteract these principles.”¹³² He told Ryland in 1815 that “my 30, and more than 30 years, have been spent in opposing Antinomianism, and self-righteous religion.”¹³³ In his quest to counteract the ill effects of revivalism and careless teaching on grace, he consistently reiterated two main concepts. First, he stressed the need for sincere repentance, that is, a repentance that would inevitably produce spiritual fruit and good works. Second, he challenged the idea that assurance of salvation comes to a believer immediately at the point of conversion, arguing instead that assurance comes subsequent to conversion and is based on the evidence of spiritual life. These two ideas are interrelated and will now be considered in more detail.

Repentance, Conversion, and Assurance

At the heart of Scott’s attempts to combat the extremes of emotionalism and antinomianism was an emphasis on the doctrine of repentance. Certainly, few revivalists would have completely ignored repentance in their preaching for conversions. The very idea of a conversion implies a turn from one state of existence to another. However, the quest for a definitive moment of conversion, a specific time when a person formally repented and believed, sometimes resulted in a practical de-emphasis on what life would look like from that point forward. Consequently, Scott feared that some persons were self-deceived into thinking they possessed a repentance that really was “counterfeit” and a faith that really was “dead.”¹³⁴ If these people had counterfeit repentance and dead

¹³²Thomas Scott, Letter to a Friend in Scotland, October 20, 1797, in *Letters and Papers*, 201.

¹³³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 23, 1815, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹³⁴Thomas Scott, *A Discourse upon Repentance*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1786), 75.

faith, any assurance they possessed would also be worthless.

In 1785, Scott wrote an essay, *A Discourse upon Repentance*, which was designed to help people understand the proper relationship between repentance, conversion, and assurance.¹³⁵ It should be noted again that this tract was his first full-length publication after the *The Force of Truth*, which seems to indicate that these subjects were among his top pastoral concerns.¹³⁶ The seriousness of repentance was articulated in the opening part of the document, and he argued that “all have cause of, and need for repentance; because God will most certainly inflict this punishment [of being cast into outer darkness] upon all the impenitent with unabating severity.”¹³⁷ In other words, Scott believed that true repentance was vital because souls were at stake, and he argued that “every species of religion, in which repentance formeth not an eminent part from first to last, is justly to be suspected, yea, certainly to be condemned, as unscriptural and destructive.”¹³⁸

His essay consisted of five major sections that dealt with the necessity of repentance, the nature of repentance, encouragements to repentance, proper seasons for repentance, and the means of repentance. The present discussion need not cover in detail

¹³⁵I have been unable to find the original publication details of the essay. The second edition cited in the previous note is the oldest edition I could locate.

¹³⁶The essay was published repeatedly throughout his lifetime, and his sentiments on the subject do not seem to have ever changed. In the preface to the 6th ed., he reaffirmed his teaching on the subject by saying, “More than eighteen years having now elapsed, since this discourse was first published, and the Author having in that time had much opportunity of comparing what he had written, both with the Scriptures, and with the state of religion at present; after carefully revising the work, he thinks it incumbent on him to annex to this sixth edition a declaration, that he is more than ever convinced, that the real nature of true repentance is here described; that there can be no saving faith where this repentance is wanting; that many false views of Christianity may be detected by this touchstone; and that the necessity and nature of true repentance are generally too little insisted on, in evangelical instructions” (Thomas Scott, *A Discourse upon Repentance*, 7th ed., in *Theological Works* [London: L. B. Seeley, 1808], Preface to the Sixth Edition, B3). Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent citations of this essay will be from the earlier edition cited above.

¹³⁷Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 33.

¹³⁸Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 112.

every section, but some attention does need to be paid to the third section on the nature of repentance, where Scott defined *repentance* as

a genuine sorrow for sin; —attended with a real inclination to undo, if it were possible, all we have sinfully done; and consequently an endeavour, as far as we have it in our power, to counteract the consequences of our former evil conduct; with a determination of mind, through divine grace, to walk for the future in newness of life, evidenced to be sincere by fruits meet for repentance; that is, by all holy dispositions, words, and actions.¹³⁹

Scott's expanded discussion of repentance showed that the definition consisted of three main parts: (1) a genuine sorrow over sin, (2) an inclination to undo past faults, and (3) a determination to walk in newness of life.

The crucial element of this definition is the third part, wherein Scott explained that the sincerity of repentance is *evidenced* by spiritual fruit, such as “holy dispositions, words, and actions.” For Scott, genuine conversion always entailed repentance, and true repentance *always* resulted in a changed life. “All true Christians,” he wrote, “though they depend not upon, are zealous of, good works, ‘deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.’”¹⁴⁰ Thus, the litmus test for an individual's conversion was his or her subsequent conduct rather than whatever emotional displays may or may not have accompanied the time of their supposed conversion. In this vein, he wrote:

Tho' men be abundant in shedding tears, make the most humiliating confessions, or most ample restitution; tho' they openly retract their false principles, and are zealous in promoting true religion; tho' they relate the most plausible story of experiences, and profess to be favoured with the most glorious manifestations; tho' they have strong confidence, and high affections, and orthodox sentiments, and exact judgment, and extensive knowledge: yet, except they do works meet for repentance, all the rest is nothing, they are yet in their sins.¹⁴¹

He went on to give concrete examples, “Unless the drunkard become habitually sober,

¹³⁹Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 45.

¹⁴⁰Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 40.

¹⁴¹Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 62–63.

and the churl learn to be liberal; unless the contentious man learn meekness, and the proud humility: unless every man break off, and set himself to oppose and mortify his constitutional and customary iniquity; there is no real repentance.”¹⁴²

Scott’s insistence on a conversion that manifested itself in a changed life consequently governed his understanding of Christian assurance. In *A Treatise on Growth in Grace*, Scott argued that “growth in grace is necessary in order to the believer’s abiding consolation, and assurance of hope.”¹⁴³ He explained that “without a measure of holiness there can be no warranted comfort, or *assurance of hope*.”¹⁴⁴ Again, he cautioned, “In like manner many professors of the gospel are so eager to obtain assurance, that they seek it in the *first* place, instead of first seeking to grow in grace and to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, leaving it to the Lord to give them comfort, and to cause them to ‘abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost’”¹⁴⁵ For Scott, assurance of salvation was normally granted in proportion to the amount of change a believer could recognize in his attitudes and conduct post-conversion. In discussing the importance of a genuine sorrow for sin, he wrote that

many true Christians have very little of these views and affections; because that is only to say, in other words, that they have but little true repentance; or which amounts to the same thing, have but little true grace. And the less they have of these things, *the less evident is their conversion*; the more need have “they to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith;” and the more need to give diligence to make their calling and election sure.¹⁴⁶

In this instance, Scott saw a correlation between a lack of sorrow for sin and a lack of evidence for genuine conversion. Conversely, “the fuller assurance [a person] possesses that Jesus ‘was wounded for *his* transgressions, and was bruised for *his* iniquities,’ the

¹⁴²Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 63.

¹⁴³ Scott, *Growth in Grace*, 60.

¹⁴⁴Scott, *Growth in Grace*, 60.

¹⁴⁵Scott, *Growth in Grace*, 61–62.

¹⁴⁶Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 55 (emphasis added).

more he abhors his sins and loathes himself.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, the degree of sorrow for sin relates proportionately to a person’s measure of assurance.

In like manner, the close correspondence between post-conversion change and assurance can be seen sharply in his remarks about the danger of hoping for deathbed conversions. In warning people against waiting to the point of death to repent, he asked rhetorically, “Can you then be sure that your repentance is real and genuine, when you have no opportunity of bring it to the trial by the fruits it produces?”¹⁴⁸ The implied answer to this question was obviously, “No,” and it follows that Scott could not see how a person who had an end-of-life conversion experience could have the assurance of salvation.

Scott’s understanding of assurance, then, can be compared to a balance scale, which holds evidence of conversion on one arm and assurance on the other. The more the arm of evidence is weighed down with good works, the higher the arm of assurance rises, and vice versa. Yet, this conception of assurance hardly fits with Bebbington’s assertion that evangelicals engaged in missionary and other benevolent works because they already had the assurance of salvation. At the very least, Scott is a major exception to the general rule.¹⁴⁹ Scott was clearly one of the more missions-minded evangelicals of his day; but he did not seem to possess full assurance himself, nor did he believe that any Christian should expect to have any assurance apart from good works. Thus, Scott’s missionary engagements simply cannot be attributed to the fact that he was at ease about his standing before God. If there was any connection between assurance of salvation and missionary activity for Scott, he would probably have argued that his obedience in the cause of

¹⁴⁷Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 53.

¹⁴⁸Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 88.

¹⁴⁹It may be said in defense of Bebbington’s position that Scott’s complaints about the widespread presence of antinomianism in evangelical circles could be an indication that a majority of evangelicals did not worry too much about assurance.

missions provided him with more evidence by which he could increase his confidence in being truly converted, and not the other way around. As he put it, “By his sincere obedience, his unreserved and universal observation¹⁵⁰ to Christ’s commands, he gives evidence¹⁵¹ that he is a true believer and no hypocrite, he glorifies God, adorns the gospel, and promotes the real good of mankind.”¹⁵² Therefore, Scott’s work in missions was more likely motivated by obedience rather than assurance, obedience that gave evidence that he was a true believer.

The Nature and Meaning of Baptism

Closely connected to the subject of a manifest conversion in Scott’s Evangelical theology was the doctrine of baptism. Admittedly, the topic of baptism could be treated under the subsequent discussion of the ecclesiastical elements of Scott’s Evangelicalism. However, a decision has been made to include the matter immediately after the subject of conversion since the two subjects are interrelated. The chief difficulty for an Evangelical Anglican was the fact that the baptismal liturgy for infants in the *Book of Common Prayer* concluded, in part, with these words:

Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that *this Child* is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that *this Child* may lead the rest of *his life* according to this beginning.¹⁵³

This portion of the liturgy declared that a child who was baptized in the Church of England was “regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church.” If this was true, why did Evangelical ministers call on “regenerate” people to have a manifest conversion?

¹⁵⁰Later editions soften “unreserved and universal observation” to “unreserved attention.”

¹⁵¹Later editions change “Gives evidence” to “proves.”

¹⁵²Scott, *Discourse upon Repentance*, 40.

¹⁵³“The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants,” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford: T. Wright and W. Gill, 1777), 4. The page number is a reference to page 4 of the “Publick Baptism of Infants,” as the original source has no page numbers. All subsequent references to *The Book of Common Prayer* will follow the same method of citation.

Why would someone like Scott be skeptical about the genuine nature of a baptized person's faith? Why would he have placed so much emphasis on spiritual fruit for the assurance of salvation instead of emphasizing a person's regeneration at baptism? In order to answer these sorts of questions, Scott's doctrine of baptism will be examined in greater detail.

The Basics of Scott's Baptismal Theology

Before looking at how Scott handled the apparent problem of conversion and baptismal regeneration, his basic doctrine of baptism will need to be explained. A general sense of how Scott understood baptism can be seen in his overall definition. Scott defined baptism as "the initiatory ordinance of Christianity, as circumcision was under the old dispensation, from Abraham to the ascension of Christ; and it consists in the application of water to the baptized person, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"¹⁵⁴ Water is used because it 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, fructifying, and consolatory influences of the Holy Ghost."¹⁵⁵ According to Scott, baptism primarily symbolizes "the purifying of the judgment and affections from the pollution of sin, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit."¹⁵⁶ Additionally, "the appointment of this emblem, in the initiatory ordinance of Christianity, emphatically testifies the doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of regeneration: for it declares every man, as 'born of the flesh,' to be so polluted, that unless he be washed with purifying water, he cannot be received even into the outward church of God; and unless he be inwardly cleansed by the Holy Spirit, he cannot be a member of the *true*

¹⁵⁴Scott, "On Baptism and the Lord's Supper," in *Essays*, 303–4.

¹⁵⁵Scott, "On Baptism and the Lord's Supper," in *Essays*, 304.

¹⁵⁶Scott, "On Baptism and the Lord's Supper," in *Essays*, 304.

church.”¹⁵⁷

As to the mode of baptism, Scott never seemed to be all that troubled over the matter. Throughout history, Christians have quibbled over whether immersion, pouring, or sprinkling was the proper mode of baptism, and all forms have been practiced at one point or another.¹⁵⁸ Scott recognized them all: “To the question of immersion, or sprinkling, or pouring, I never attached any great importance. Immersion is doubtless baptism: and so is sprinkling, or pouring, according to my unvaried judgment.”¹⁵⁹ His reason for accepting them all was that each mode corresponded to some aspect of baptism’s symbolism, and he asked rhetorically, “If a few texts seem to allude to baptism by figures taken from immersion, how many speak of *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*, under the idea of *pouring out upon us*?”¹⁶⁰

The issue that gave Scott the most consternation was the subjects of baptism. He agreed with Christians from all ages that adults who professed faith in Christ were proper subjects of baptism, but it was the question of infant baptism that had caused him to endure a crisis of conscience while he pastored in Olney. At that time, he admitted that he “was almost ready to conclude, that the anti-paedobaptists were right.”¹⁶¹ What prevented him from changing position? According to his own testimony, his acceptance of infant-baptism came “especially from the identity of the covenant made with

¹⁵⁷Scott, “On Baptism and the Lord’s Supper,” in *Essays*, 304–5.

¹⁵⁸For historical treatments of these and related issues, see Henry S. Burrage, *The Act of Baptism in the History of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1879); James Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1861); Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); Gordon Heath, ed., *Baptism: Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives*, McMaster Theological Series, vol. 4 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011); Albert Henry Newman, *A History of Anti-Pedobaptism: From the Rise of Pedobaptism to A.D. 1609* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1902).

¹⁵⁹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 166–67.

¹⁶⁰Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 167 (italics in the original).

¹⁶¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 165.

Abraham, and that still made with believers; and from circumcision being the sacrament of regeneration under the old dispensation, as baptism is under the new, and *the seal of the righteousness of faith*.¹⁶² Scott elaborated on the close connection between circumcision and baptism in a manuscript that was published posthumously, wherein he described circumcision as

a confession of depravity as derived by natural generation from Adam, a brand of guilt on our fallen nature, and acknowledgement that the old nature must be put off by *the circumcision of the heart to love God*; and that such sinners could not be justified but by *the righteousness of faith*, of which circumcision was *the seal*.¹⁶³

He then made the connection to baptism generally and infant baptism specifically:

Baptism under the New Testament professes all the same truths, together with the doctrine of the Trinity. And this appears to me a strong recommendation of infant-baptism, which powerfully tends to keep up the knowledge and belief of these great truths in the world.¹⁶⁴

For Scott, the symbolism of circumcision in the Old Testament and baptism in the New Testament is exactly the same, only “instead of the outward sign of circumcision, baptism had been substituted.”¹⁶⁵ Thus, his observation that “Abraham received this seal [of circumcision] long after he believed; Isaac, when an infant; Ishmael, when thirteen years of age” led him to conclude that people of all ages could also receive the seal of baptism.¹⁶⁶ To those who might object that only men received circumcision under the Old Covenant, Scott responded—“In Christ, there is *neither male nor female*.”¹⁶⁷

The identity of circumcision and baptism as signs of regeneration in the Old and New Testaments respectively was Scott’s main argument for infant baptism, but it

¹⁶²Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 165.

¹⁶³Scott, “Extracts from an Unpublished Work,” in *Letters and Papers*, 490.

¹⁶⁴Scott, “Extracts from an Unpublished Work,” in *Letters and Papers*, 490.

¹⁶⁵Scott, “Notes on Colossians 2:10–15,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

¹⁶⁶Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 165–66.

¹⁶⁷Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 166.

was not his only argument. As is customary among paedobaptists, Scott saw a case for infant baptism in passages like Acts 16, where an entire household was baptized. In his commentary on that passage, he said the following:

When a Gentile householder was converted to the Jewish religion, all the males in his family, including infants were circumcised with him. . . . It is therefore obvious to suppose, that the same rule was observed, in the baptism of those households, of which we read in the New Testament: for it hath already been shewn, that the covenant, and the meaning of these two ordinances were substantially the same. Such passages alone, will not indeed prove this: but the language, concerning the baptism of believers, and their households, so much accords to that concerning the circumcision of Abraham and his household; that in connexion with other Scriptures..., with the general and early use of infant baptism in the primitive church, and with the consideration that we do not read of one single instance, in which the children of Christian parents were baptized adult; it must be allowed to countenance strongly the sentiments and practice of paedo-baptists. . . .¹⁶⁸

The example of the Philippian jailer's household provided Scott with a connection to the circumcision of Abraham's family as well as a precedent for subsequent practice in church history. A close reading of this paragraph also shows that he considered the fact that there is no Scriptural account of a child of Christian parents being baptized as an adult to be a separate argument for infant baptism. This argument was similar to a statement in his memoir where he said, "Had only adults been designed to be the subjects of Christian baptism, some prohibition of admitting infants would have been requisite; and we should never have read, as we do, of *households* being baptized, without any limitation or exception of this kind being intimated."¹⁶⁹

Thus, Scott's overall case for infant baptism consisted of roughly five arguments: (1) the identity in meaning of circumcision and baptism, (2) the close connection between the circumcision of Abraham's household with the Philippian jailer's household, (3) the example of primitive church practice, (4) the lack of an example of a child of Christian parents being baptized as an adult, and (5) the lack of a prohibition

¹⁶⁸Scott, "Notes on Acts 16:29–34," in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

¹⁶⁹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 166.

against baptizing infants. Though Scott did not openly admit it, he must have recognized that the last two arguments were weakened by virtue of being arguments from silence, and therefore he only included them in conjunction with his other points. Even still, the first argument seems to have been the reason that gave him the most confidence in his position, as is made plain by the conclusion of his argument for infant baptism:

In short, unless it can be proved that circumcision was not the sign, or sacrament, of regeneration, even as baptism now is, I cannot see how the argument can be answered: and all the common objections against infant baptism, as administered to subjects incapable of the professions required and the benefits intended, bear with equal force against infant circumcision.¹⁷⁰

Scott's Views on Baptismal Regeneration

Scott clearly believed baptism to be the “sign of regeneration” and that infants were properly subjects of that sign. The central question that must be answered then is this: “Did Scott believe that infants are regenerated when they are baptized?” If the answer to this question is “Yes,” why was Scott so animate about preaching about conversion to regenerate, baptized Anglicans? If the answer to this question is “No,” how could Scott in good conscience ascribe to the language of the liturgy?

Probably the best place to find answers to these questions in Scott's *corpus* is in his two-volume book, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, which was written in response to George Tomline's attack on the doctrinal and pastoral theology of Evangelical clergymen. In the second chapter of *A Refutation of Calvinism*, Tomline challenged Evangelicals on their understanding of regeneration, and baptism was at the heart of his assault.¹⁷¹ In making his case, he argued that

those who are baptized are immediately translated from the curse of Adam to the grace of Christ; the original guilt which they brought into the world is mystically washed away; and they receive forgiveness of sins which they may themselves have committed; they become reconciled to God, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs

¹⁷⁰Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 166.

¹⁷¹George Tomline, *A Refutation of Calvinism* (London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1811), 83–96.

of eternal happiness; they acquire a new name, a new hope, a new faith, a new rule of life.¹⁷²

He went on to say that “this great and wonderful change in the condition of man is as it were a new nature, a new state of existence; and the holy rite by which these invaluable treasures are communicated is by St. Paul figuratively called ‘Regeneration,’ or New-birth.”¹⁷³ As such, Tomline believed that the rite of baptism itself conveyed the benefits of salvation and could properly be called regeneration. Later on, Tomline supported his understanding of baptism and regeneration by appealing to the “Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies” of the Church of England,¹⁷⁴ and he concluded his chapter by contending that “the words Regeneration and New-birth are never used in the New Testament, or in the writings of our Church, as equivalent to conversion or repentance, independent of baptism.”¹⁷⁵ Having said these things, he then took a swipe at the Evangelicals by saying that “the instantaneous conversion of persons already baptized, by the resistless and perceptible power of the Holy Ghost, and their being placed in a state of salvation from which it is impossible for them to fall, are unfounded and mischievous tenets, utterly irreconcilable with Scripture and the doctrines of the Church of England.”¹⁷⁶ Naturally, Scott recognized the seriousness of Tomline’s charges; and as a result, Scott felt compelled to explain his own position, not simply with respect to Scripture, but in light of the language of the Church of England’s foundational documents.

In response, Scott focused on whether or not baptism and regeneration were as indispensably connected as Tomline supposed. Scott recognized that Tomline was articulating a viewpoint that was precariously close to the *opus operatum* conception of

¹⁷²Tomline, *Refutation of Calvinism*, 83–84.

¹⁷³Tomline, *Refutation of Calvinism*, 84.

¹⁷⁴Tomline, *Refutation of Calvinism*, 87–92.

¹⁷⁵Tomline, *Refutation of Calvinism*, 95.

¹⁷⁶Tomline, *Refutation of Calvinism*, 95.

the sacraments as advocated by Roman Catholics, and he wondered with respect to Tomline’s position, “If this be the doctrine of Protestants; in what, as to this particular, do they differ from the papists?”¹⁷⁷ As Scott saw it, the consequences of holding to an *opus operatum* view of baptism and to the idea that baptism and regeneration were virtually synonymous would be disastrous.

In the first place, he thought it was absurd that someone who neither repented nor believed in Christ could be converted merely by the administration of baptism:

If this entire change take place in baptism; not only regeneration, but the most important consequences of it, are *instantaneous*: and a hypocrite, receiving baptism from one authorized to administer it, according to a due form, is *suddenly* converted into a true Christian!¹⁷⁸

On the other hand, Tomline’s theology implied that all who did not receive baptism would be excluded from the kingdom of God, whether they were infants, believers in other denominations, or believers who had no opportunity to obtain baptism. In speaking about Jesus’s words to Nicodemus in John 3—“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,”—Scott asked Tomline to consider if he really meant to exclude all unbaptized person from the kingdom of God, which seemed to be the logical consequence of such a close connection between regeneration and baptism:

Will he exclude from the possibility of salvation the whole body of the Quakers, and all those children of Antipaedobaptists, who die without receiving adult baptism; and all those, who are Antipaedobaptists in principle: yet never receive either infant or adult baptism? Do all these perish without hope? Will he maintain, that no misapprehension, and no outward situation, in which baptism could not be procured, will make any exception? Are all the children of Christians, who die unbaptized, excluded from the kingdom of God? Not to speak of the children of Jews, and heathens, and Mohammedans, who die before the commission of actual sin; but die unbaptized? I am far from believing, that his Lordship, and others, who hold that baptism is regeneration, are prepared to admit these consequences.¹⁷⁹

What starts to emerge from these questions is Scott’s underlying belief that baptism and

¹⁷⁷Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:172.

¹⁷⁸Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:172.

¹⁷⁹Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:173–74.

regeneration were not inherently connected, but how did he deal with the quotations Tomline was able to produce from the liturgies that seemed to equate regeneration and baptism?

Scott's approach to this delicate topic was to read the Articles, Liturgies, and Homilies of the Church of England against one another and in light of the writings of the English Reformers who crafted those documents. This methodology showed Scott to be committed to an interpretation of the Church of England's documents based on authorial intent, and it reinforces the notion that he understood his Evangelical theology to be tantamount to that of the Reformers. In dealing with the church's documents, he tried to maintain as much of the direct sense of the Liturgy as he could, while allowing the Articles and Homilies to interpret the difficult portions in ways that did not equate regeneration and baptism nor imply an *ex opere operato* functioning of the sacrament. The writings of the Reformers were called upon to reinforce and clarify his harmonization of the other documents. However, he recognized this process was not without its difficulties. He sincerely believed that

a deep acquaintance with the Scriptures, and an abundance of heavenly wisdom and grace, preserved the venerable compilers of our liturgy and articles, so free from the different deviations found in the ancient writings, whose authority they still in some respects allowed: that ever few *expressions* seems to have been taken, or retained from them, which do not accord with those of the sacred writers.¹⁸⁰

Yet, in what is a rather stark admission, he also conceded that

in the case of baptism there are a few exceptions to this general rule; and the custom of the church, during very many centuries, in which baptism and regeneration were generally confounded; and indeed the *opus operatum* considered as the grand if not the only concern; seems to have induced a language not entirely scriptural.¹⁸¹

Nevertheless, he insisted that "their words taken together, by no means imply that baptism and regeneration are synonymous, or that baptism in all cases, even when rightly

¹⁸⁰Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:212.

¹⁸¹Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:212.

administered, is accompanied with regeneration.”¹⁸²

The clearest example of this tactic of “taking their words together” can be seen in how he handled the pesky regeneration language in the baptismal formula. In trying to take the phraseology at face value, he acknowledged that “a large proportion, however, of the evangelical clergy do suppose that some special gracious effect attends the due administration of infant-baptism, which they think to be meant in our baptismal forms, by the word ‘regenerated,’ and ‘regenerated by the Holy Ghost.’”¹⁸³ Evidently, Scott included himself in this greater portion of clergymen. In a letter to the editor of the *Christian Observer*, he wrote, “Far be it from me to deny, that regeneration may accompany baptism, and that it frequently does when properly administered.”¹⁸⁴ However, his allowances were offered rather cautiously. In contrast to Tomline, Scott placed more weight on the full obedience and the fervency of the prayers of those who brought the child for baptism, than he did on the baptism itself. He also maintained that a lot of assumptions had to be realized for regeneration to accompany baptism, which comes out in his description of the ceremony:

The parents and those who bring infants to be baptized, as members of the church, are supposed, in our offices, to be themselves true Christians: it is assumed, that they *really* desire and pray for the “inward and spiritual grace of baptism,” both at other times, and when the child is about to be baptized: that they come, as those did, who “brought their young children to Christ, that he should lay hand on them and pray over,” or bless them. It is assumed also, that when baptism is publickly administered, the congregation unites in fervent prayer to the same effect: and they take it for granted, that God hears and answers these earnest prayers; and return him thanks for so doing.¹⁸⁵

As can be seen from this statement, the spiritual condition of the parent and the sincerity of the prayers offered by parents and the congregation had to be taken for granted before

¹⁸²Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:212.

¹⁸³Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:212.

¹⁸⁴Scott, “To the Editor of the Christian Observer,” in *Theological Works*, 4:504.

¹⁸⁵Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:212–13.

regeneration in baptism could be assumed, and Scott was not too keen on making these assumptions, stating that “probably too much is assumed; or more, at least than accords to the present circumstances.”¹⁸⁶

The emphasis Scott placed on the prayers of the parishioners is a key component of his handling of the baptismal regeneration issue. He recognized that the language of regeneration in the liturgies was expressed largely in the form of prayers, and if regeneration came as an answer to prayer, regeneration could not *inherently* come from the administration of baptism itself. After all, the verbs in the prayers were largely in the subjunctive mood, not the indicative—“We call upon thee for this infant, that he, coming to thy holy baptism, *may receive* remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.”¹⁸⁷ Likewise, “give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he *may be born* again.”¹⁸⁸ Scott strung these and a few other similar quotations from *The Book of Common Prayer* together and asked, “If *baptism* be itself *regeneration*, or inseparable from it; why do we pray thus?”¹⁸⁹ He then said, “The prayers themselves evidently distinguish between *baptizing with water*, and *spiritual regeneration, and heavenly washing*: between what man can do; and what only God can do: and this implies that one may be done without the other.”¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, he argued:

If then, “the prayer of faith” be entirely wanting, the inward and the spiritual grace may not attend the outward baptism. I do not mean that the baptism is not valid, or that the infant is not baptized; but that regeneration does not, even according to the charitable hope expressed in the baptismal service, in this case, necessarily accompany baptism.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:213.

¹⁸⁷“Baptism of Infants,” in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 2 (emphasis added).

¹⁸⁸“Baptism of Infants,” in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 3 (emphasis added).

¹⁸⁹Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:213.

¹⁹⁰Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:214.

¹⁹¹Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:214.

Thus, Scott held that the genre of prayer in the liturgy hinted at a distinction between the sign (baptism) and the thing signified (regeneration).

Scott believed this conclusion was warranted by the wording of the article on baptism in the Thirty-Nine Articles, which stated:

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace is increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.¹⁹²

In commenting on the article, Scott wrote, “Baptism is said to be the *sign* of regeneration; but the *sign*, and the *thing signified*, are not the same, no nor even inseparably connected. ‘The promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoptions, are *visibly signed and sealed*’ not efficaciously bestowed.”¹⁹³ He also stressed that the article connected regeneration to those who received baptism *rightly*, and this expression “refers not to the *right administration of baptism by the priest*, but *the right reception of it by the baptized persons*.”¹⁹⁴ Obviously, the portion of the article Scott was quoting referred to the baptism of believers, but he believed that if it could be shown that baptized adults were only regenerated if they received the sacrament rightly, then it followed that baptism and regeneration were not connected out of necessity. If baptism and regeneration were separate in the case of adults, he reasoned, the same would be true in the case of infants. Applied to the baptism liturgy, one could conclude that baptism and regeneration were separate there as well, otherwise the Liturgy and the Articles would contradict one another. Scott had harmonized the Liturgy and the Articles in a way that separated

¹⁹²“Thirty-Nine Articles,” in *Creeeds of Christendom*, 3:504–5.

¹⁹³Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:219.

¹⁹⁴Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:219.

regeneration from baptism, but was he consistent with Anglican theology or had he forced the issue?

In order to avoid this charge, Scott sought to demonstrate that baptism and regeneration had been kept distinct by the English Reformers. For the better part of fourteen pages, Scott produced quote after quote from sources such as Thomas Cranmer's *Forty-Two Articles*, John Clement's *Confession of Faith*, John Hooper's *A Godly Confession and Protestation of the Christian Faith*, John Bradford's *Epistles*, the Church Catechism and Collects, and *The Book of Homilies*.¹⁹⁵ He then compared those quotations with his own interpretation of the baptismal liturgy and explained them in light of Tomline's criticisms. The length and number of the quotations renders the reconstruction of Scott's arguments in a point-by-point manner ill-advised, and so just one example will be produced as representative of the whole.

Probably the clearest example of Scott's appeals to the Reformers is his citation of the *Forty-Two Articles*, and he prefaced this quotation with these words:

No doubt in Cranmer's writings, particularly those of his former years, there are many expressions, which shew, that he supposed the inward and spiritual grace generally attendant on the outward sign, in baptism; especially in the case of infants: but the quotations here adduced, manifestly prove, that he did not think that the outward baptism was regeneration; or in all cases inseparably connected with it.¹⁹⁶

In order to prove this statement, Scott quoted a portion of the twenty-sixth article, which was on the sacraments:

In such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect and operation, and yet not that of the work wrought, as some men speak; which word, as it is strange and unknown to holy Scripture, so it engendereth no godly, but a very superstitious sense; but they that receive the sacraments unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:221–36. See also, *The Fathers of the English Church*, 8 vols. (London: John Hatchard, 1807–1812), which was the original source of Scott's quotations of these Reformers.

¹⁹⁶Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:224.

¹⁹⁷"Articles of King Edward the Sixth," in *Fathers of the English Church*, 2:334–35.

In Scott's quotation of Cranmer, Scott inserted the Latin phrase *opus operatum* in parenthesis after the phrase "of the work wrought," which directed attention to the point Scott was trying to prove.¹⁹⁸ Cranmer's mature Protestant view of the sacraments, as articulated in the *Forty-Two Articles*, clearly included a rejection of the Roman Catholic doctrine of *ex opere operato* with respect to baptism, and Scott was claiming agreement with Cranmer on this point. Thus, Scott was saying that he was not imposing his own, novel interpretation on the sacraments, rather, he simply represented the position of men like Cranmer and the other Reformers. How then, could someone like Tomline claim that Evangelical clergymen had abandoned the Church of England's doctrine when they were in agreement with the founders of the Church of England itself?

Almost certainly, the language of the baptismal liturgy provided Scott with some theological difficulties, and he admitted as much to one of his correspondents who had questions about the Church of England: "I am not prepared to say so much of the objections in the Baptismal Service or in the Office of Confirmation: but *ubi plurima nitent, &c.*"¹⁹⁹ The abbreviated Latin expression means, "Where so many things are excellent, I am not disposed to take offence at a few imperfections."²⁰⁰ In his *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion*, he complained that

the *fathers*, (as they are called,) soon began to speak on this subject [of baptism] in unscriptural language: and our pious reformers, from an undue regard to them, and the circumstances of the times, have retained some expressions in the liturgy, which are not only inconsistent with their other doctrine; but also tend to confuse men's minds, and mislead their judgment on this important subject.²⁰¹

These words show that he would probably have revised some of the regeneration language in the liturgy if he had been afforded the chance. Nevertheless, he harmonized

¹⁹⁸See Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:224.

¹⁹⁹Scott, "Letter to J. B., Esq. Uxbridge," in *Letters and Papers*, 278.

²⁰⁰Scott, "Letter to J. B., Esq. Uxbridge," in *Letters and Papers*, 278n1.

²⁰¹Scott, "On Regeneration," in *Essays*, 157.

the Liturgy, Articles, and the Reformers in a way that divorced (at least in some cases) baptism from regeneration and allowed him to subscribe to the Church of England's position on baptism.

Making this distinction also allowed him to preach the gospel and call for repentance among those who had been baptized. Since baptism did not guarantee regeneration, the possibility remained that those who had been baptized had never experienced the new birth. How was one to know if they were regenerated? For Scott, the answer would have been that described in the previous section—there must be evidence of a genuine conversion and true repentance. Towards the end of his response to Tomline's second chapter, Scott appealed to the example of the early church in defense of evangelistic preaching among baptized Anglicans. He wrote:

The church, to which the apostolic epistles were written, were select companies, each adult of which had been admitted into the church, on an intelligent profession of faith; such as approved itself to the apostles and their coadjutors; and, when any individual acted inconsistently with this profession, he was excluded from the company, till he gave satisfactory evidence of true repentance.²⁰²

In other words, the New Testament was filled with baptized believers, but the early church did not assume that their professions were real apart from a changed life. Yet, Scott warned that the Church of England had departed from this practice:

How different this from the modern Christian church, even in our land! All, who do not openly renounce Christianity, or join the Dissenters, belong to the established church; whatever be their creed, or their conduct: and their children, being baptized, are so far regenerated, as well as others. Are then the whole body of such baptized persons, however educated, and whatever their character or outward sentiments are, to be addressed as saints. . . ?²⁰³

For Scott, the answer to this question was “No,” and he illustrated his approach with an example from his own life:

The author of these remarks was, for many years, chaplain to the Lock Hospital, and twice every week, spoke to a number of patients, in the wards, who were in general,

²⁰²Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:236.

²⁰³Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:236–37.

either prostitutes, or companions of prostitutes: yet they were, most of them baptized persons. Now ought he to have addressed them as “saints in Christ Jesus,” as “born of God, and the children of God;” or in the language, the strongest language of Scripture, used to the most profligate heathens, or most wicked Jews?²⁰⁴

Scott’s answer? “He adopted the latter method: and he has no doubt, but a considerable number of his apparently hopeless company, will bless God to all eternity, that he did so.”²⁰⁵

The Modern Question

The issue of baptism was not the only obstacle confronting evangelical preaching in the eighteenth century. While the baptism difficulty was primarily confined to Anglicans, the controversy over the so-called “modern question” circulated in the Calvinistic segments of several denominations.²⁰⁶ The phrase “modern question” is really shorthand for a series of inter-related questions pertaining to the practical implications of the doctrines of predestination, total depravity, and particular redemption. Should the gospel be offered to everyone indiscriminately when only the elect would respond? Could the gospel be offered to people for whom Christ had not died? Do all people have any sort of moral obligation or inherent ability to respond to the preaching of the gospel? Naturally, the answers one gave to questions like these would have a great deal of impact on how an individual thought about missions, and so determining Scott’s position with respect to them is rather important.

²⁰⁴Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:240.

²⁰⁵Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 1:240.

²⁰⁶The controversy apparently gets its name from a tract by Matthias Maurice called *A Modern Question Modestly Answer’d* (London: James Buckland, 1737). Abraham Taylor also published a tract with a similar title a few years later (*The modern question concerning repentance and faith.... In which the arguments on both sides are fairly stated and discussed: and repentance unto life, and faith unto salvation, are proved at large to be the duty of sinners* [London: James Brackstone, 1742]). See Geoffrey F. Nuttall, “Northamptonshire and the ‘Modern Question’: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent,” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 16 (April 1965): 101–2, 109–10.

The Modern Question in Context

The eighteenth century debates over the modern question raged rather fiercely among English Dissenters, especially the Particular Baptists,²⁰⁷ “for whom,” wrote Hindmarsh, “high Calvinism represented theological orthodoxy for a much longer period than for independents.”²⁰⁸ The central point of debate concerned the indiscriminate offer of the gospel to all sinners. Early in the eighteenth century, treatises started appearing in which it was argued that the gospel should not be offered to sinners nor should invitations to trust in Christ be extended. For example, the Congregationalist minister, Joseph Hussey (1660–1726), issued a lengthy book called *God’s Operations of Grace: But No Offers of His Grace* in 1707. In this book, Hussey argued that “we must Preach the *Doctrine* of Salvation to [all] Sinners openly within the hearing: And must Preach *Salvation* included in the *Doctrine* to the [Elect] alone, included among them, But as to a *Propounding* of the *Offer* either of [*Doctrine*] or [*Salvation*], it’s a Form of *Man’s Device*.”²⁰⁹ Hussey’s teachings came over into Baptist circles by way of men like Richard Davis (1658–1714), John Skepp (d. 1721), John Gill (1697–1771), and John Brine (1703–1765), all of whom were high Calvinists and suspicious of offering the gospel to

²⁰⁷Historically, Baptists who have held to the doctrine of particular redemption (commonly called “limited atonement”), the doctrine that Christ died only for the sins of the elect, are designated “Particular Baptists.” Baptists who believed that Christ died for the sins of the whole world (commonly called general or universal atonement) are designated “General Baptists.”

²⁰⁸Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, 145. Gerald L. Priest has helpfully summarized what it means to be a high Calvinist: “The term was directed against those who normally advocated the follow positions or variations of them: (1) a supralapsarian decree of election which would include (2) reprobation of what John Gill called ‘pre-damnation’; (3) eternal justification, the doctrine that God decreed the elect *for* justification before the fall, a corollary of this logically being (4) passive faith (i.e., God grants his elect faith apart from active human volition); (5) a divine warrant or indication (usually conviction of sin) that an individual was elect prior to conversion; and (6) a distinction between preaching the gospel indiscriminately and *offering* it to those *sensible* to it, i.e., those who have a warrant that they are elect” (Gerald L. Priest, “Andrew Fuller’s Response to the ‘Modern Question’—A Reappraisal of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 6 [Fall 2001]: 45–46n3).

²⁰⁹Joseph Hussey, *God’s Operations of Grace: But No Offers of His Grace* (London: D. Bridge, 1707), 91 (the italics and brackets are in the original).

the unregenerate.²¹⁰

On the other side of the question were men like Matthias Maurice (1684–1738), Abraham Taylor, and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751). Though these men were not all Baptists, their writings in favor of the “duty-faith” position drew attacks by Gill and Brine.²¹¹ The duty-faith position maintained, as articulated by Maurice, “that it is the Duty of unconverted Sinners, who hear the Gospel preached, to believe *in Christ* . . . , and seeing it is so, it’s to be hoped that all the faithful Ministers of *Christ* will in their Labours for their Lord tell the People so.”²¹² Those holding this position appealed to the exhortations given by Jesus and the apostles for unconverted sinners to come to Christ and believe in Him as the model for gospel preaching in all ages.

The modern question was still an ongoing matter of debate when John Newton began his ministry in Olney in 1764. Though Newton was an Anglican, he possessed a catholic spirit that induced him to build friendships with the various Dissenting groups in and around Olney.²¹³ His interactions with his Dissenting brethren inevitably brought him into the discussion about the modern question. Newton had read the works of Hussey but found them rather repulsive, and so he sided with those who believed that the gospel could be offered to everyone. Newton also used what influence he had to prod his friends away from high Calvinism. In 1776, Newton loaned John Ryland, Jr. a book by John

²¹⁰For the connection between these men and Hussey, see Nuttall, “Northamptonshire and “The Modern Question,” 113–18; and H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), 172–78. Richard Davis, it should be noted, was once an advocate of offering gospel invitations to sinners, but he changed his mind in later years.

²¹¹E.g., John Gill, *The Doctrines of God’s Everlasting Love to His Elect, and Their Eternal Union with Christ: Together with Some Other Truths, Stated and Defended in a Letter to Mr. Abraham Taylor* (London: A. Ward, 1732); John Brine, *A Refutation of Arminian Principles Delivered in a Pamphlet, intituled, the Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith, examined with Candour, &c.* (London: A. Ward, 1743).

²¹²Maurice, *A Modern Question Modestly Answer’d*, 25.

²¹³See Geoffrey Nuttall, “Baptists and Independents in Olney to the Time of John Newton,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 30 (January 1983): 31–36.

Smalley (1734–1820) that explained the distinction between a man’s natural ability to understand the gospel and his moral inability to comply with the same, a view made popular by Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) in New England.²¹⁴ The book played an important role in Ryland deciding against high Calvinism, and Ryland passed the book to other Baptist ministers, including John Sutcliff (1752–1814), who became the Baptist minister in Olney in 1776. Sutcliff followed Newton and Ryland in embracing the notion of extending gospel invitations to everyone, and other Baptist ministers, such as Andrew Fuller, were also on a similar spiritual journey around the same time.²¹⁵ Thus, when Thomas Scott began his ministry in Olney in 1781, he came into a theological environment which was trending away from high Calvinism.

Thomas Scott and the Modern Question

Not surprisingly, then, Scott’s answer to the modern question was similar to those proffered by his spiritual mentors and friends. However, his journey to the duty-faith position would not likely have been as arduous as it had been for some of his friends, who had been raised in high Calvinist traditions. Unlike Ryland and Fuller, Scott’s theological development had never been from a rigid form of Calvinism to a milder variety. Rather, he had progressed from rejecting Calvinism altogether to embracing its evangelical version. Therefore, Scott’s contributions to the debate were less concerned with preserving the logical rigor of a Calvinistic system as they were about addressing the practical, pastoral concerns of gospel ministry. Hence, he complained in his treatise, *The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ*, that “most deviations from

²¹⁴See Hindmarsh, *John Newton*, 152–54. See also, John Smalley, *The Consistency of the Sinner’s Inability to Comply with the Gospel; with His Inexcusable Guilt in Not Complying with It, Illustrated and Confirmed in Two Discourses on John VIth, 44th* (Hartford, CT: Green & Watson, 1769).

²¹⁵See E. F. Clipsham, “Andrew Fuller and Fullerism: A Study of Evangelical Calvinism,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 20 (July 1963): 99–114; Michael A. G. Haykin, “Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Free Offer of the Gospel,” *Reformation Today* 182 (July–August 2001): 19–26; Thomas J. Nettles, “The Passion and Doctrine of Andrew Fuller in *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 17, no. 2 (2013): 20–42.

Scriptural simplicity may be traced back to this *abstract* way of discussing doctrines: and the subjects, which chiefly perplex speculating men, and furnish the most materials for controversy, appear very easy and plain, when applied to practical purposes, according to the state of mind they were intended to meet.”²¹⁶ Scott’s solution to discussing doctrine in the abstract was “simply to adhere to the word of God” in order to avoid going into “extremes.”²¹⁷

Taking this approach, Scott presented his answer to the modern question primarily in two places. The first was a sermon he preached at the Lock Hospital in 1786, entitled *The Doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance*.²¹⁸ The second was the aforementioned treatise, *The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ*, which was published in 1797 and is comparable in many ways to Andrew Fuller’s work *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which appeared twelve years earlier.²¹⁹ Since both of Scott’s works appeared after the publication of Fuller’s book, one might be tempted to conclude that Scott came to his own position by reading Fuller. However, at least by 1784, a year before Fuller published, Scott was already disparaging about several former Baptist ministers in Olney, who “by dry supralapsarian discourses, accompanied by little alarming, inviting, searching, or practical matter, have done much to bring things to this pass [a state of spiritual lethargy].”²²⁰ He also described his preaching method in such a way that made it certain that he had already embraced the notion of duty-faith in 1784, “I

²¹⁶Thomas Scott, *The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ* (London: Jaques and Thomas, 1797), 30.

²¹⁷Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 36.

²¹⁸Thomas Scott, *The Doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance stated from Scripture, and shewn consistent with exhortatory and practical preaching, and conducive to holiness of Life* (London: C. Watts, 1786).

²¹⁹Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation: or the Obligations of Men Fully to Credit, and Cordially Approve, Whatever God Makes Known. Wherein is Considered the Nature of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of Those Where the Gospel Comes in That Matter* (Northampton: T. Dicey, [1785?]).

²²⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to G. More, April 14, 1784, quoted in *Life of Thomas Scott*, 207.

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, all are without excuse."²²¹ This was Scott's answer to the modern question in seed form, but for sake of clarity, a little more may be said on the subject by giving his views on the warrant for gospel invitations, man's moral inability to respond to those invitations, and the relationship between gospel invitations and the extent of the atonement.

With respect to gospel invitations, Scott attempted to build a case for their propriety. His thesis was "that the sinner wants no warrant of any kind for believing in Christ, except the word of God," and his defense of his thesis proceeded along three lines.²²² First, he appealed to the example of the apostles, where he saw precedent for making gospel offers:

The conduct of the apostles and evangelists shew how they understood their instructions. 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.²²³

Second, he stated that "the invitations of Scripture evidently prove the point in question," and he gave several instances in Scripture where people are called on to believe.²²⁴ As Scott saw it, the Scriptures presented the reader with open invitations to partake in the benefits of the gospel. For example, he related Christ's parable of the marriage-supper in Matthew 22, when "many, by *the king's express command*, were urgently and repeatedly invited, who in the event never tasted of the feast. These were excluded merely because they *would* not come, but *made light* of the invitation, and went to their farms and

²²¹Thomas Scott, Letter to G. More, April 14, 1784, quoted in *Life of Thomas Scott*, 209.

²²²Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 13.

²²³Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 14.

²²⁴Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 15.

merchandise.”²²⁵ Christ, in giving this illustration, did not seem to have a problem with inviting those who did not come to the banquet. Scott’s final line of argumentation was based on a connection between the commands of Scripture and the sinner’s obligation to obey them. Scott contended that “believing in Christ is an act of obedience to a divine command,”²²⁶ and since faith constituted obedience to the Scriptural commandments, “it must certainly be the duty of all, who hear or may hear the gospel, to believe in Christ.”²²⁷ Scripture, then, provided the legal warrant for extending offers of salvation.

If, however, all men were responsible and obligated to believe the gospel based on the commandments of Scripture, how was it possible for totally depraved men to be found liable for not obeying these commands? Scott answered this question, like many of his contemporaries, by appealing to the Edwardsian distinction between natural and moral ability, which had been articulated by Jonathan Edwards in his book *The Freedom of Will*.²²⁸ Whether Scott learned this distinction from Edwards himself, Edwards’s disciples in New England, or from one of Scott’s English friends is difficult to determine. Scott had read some of Edwards’s writings for sure. He commended Edwards’s books *On Religious Affections* and *The Life of David Brainerd* in a number of places in his writings, and he was acquainted with Joseph Bellamy (1719–1790) and Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803) as well.²²⁹ However, he does not reference Edwards’s book *The Freedom of Will* in any of his writings on the subject of the modern question, which may indicate that he

²²⁵Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 16.

²²⁶Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 19.

²²⁷Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 22.

²²⁸Jonathan Edwards, *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, Which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1754). See especially, pt. 1, s. 4, “Of the Distinction of Natural and Moral Necessity and Inability,” 20–26.

²²⁹E.g., Scott, *Life and Papers*, 130–32, 134–38, 302.

acquired the distinction from Newton or Fuller.²³⁰

Whatever the source, Scott made use of the natural and moral categories to explain why a sinner could not answer the call of the gospel, when he said, “’Tis a *moral*, not a *natural*, inability.”²³¹ For Scott, the problem with fallen man was not a natural inability, since “man is capable of understanding, remembering, reflecting, hoping, fearing, and all other exercise of intelligent mind.”²³² Rather, the problem was that man lacked “a disposition of heart to comply with the invitations of everlasting mercy, and to submit to the authority and commandment of God our Saviour.”²³³ Put more bluntly, “we have naturally no more a *moral* or *spiritual* ability to believe in Christ, than we have to fulfill the whole law.”²³⁴ Instead of hearing the gospel with gladness, “the *unholy* heart irreconcilably hates the holy perfections of the Lord, and whatever bears the stamp of his holiness; and cannot possibly be pleased with a holy gospel.”²³⁵ Thus, the real issue with man is not that he cannot believe the gospel; it is that he will not believe it—“the want of this *willingness* is the sole reason of the sinner’s unbelief and destruction.”²³⁶ Therefore,

²³⁰I have been unable to locate a reference to *The Freedom of Will* in any of Scott’s writings. It should also be noted that Scott became less enamored with certain aspects of New England theology as he matured, and he increasingly grew weary with the philosophical character of their writings. In a letter to John Ryland, Jr., Scott wrote, “I can only say, I have given their system a full share of investigation along with many others that have made as high pretensions: and certainly I once was pretty thoroughly a disciple of Edwards & Bellamy, whom I yet consider as very great men, though I cannot see exactly with their eyes” (Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., June 27, 1797, The Scott Family Correspondence to John Ryland 1786–1825, Bristol Baptist College Library Special Collections, Bristol, UK [hereafter, all letters from this collection will be cited as “Scott Family Correspondence”]). The use of the word *once*, here, suggested that Scott no longer thought himself a thorough disciple of Edwards and Bellamy. In the same letter, Scott went on to criticize Jonathan Edwards, Jr., by saying, “I cannot but have an idea that he is rather fond of abstruse speculation. His sentiments may also be philosophically true: yet I feel a suspicion, lest they should arise from, or tend to, a desire to be wise above what is written.”

²³¹Scott, *Sermon on Election*, 26.

²³²Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 60–61.

²³³Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 25.

²³⁴Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 60.

²³⁵Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 62.

²³⁶Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 25–26.

unbelief is “the direct cause of his condemnation; the most provoking disobedience to God’s express command, connected with a contemptuous refusal of his unspeakable mercy, resulting from reigning pride, rooted enmity, and determined love of sin in one form or other.”²³⁷ In this arrangement, God’s justice in punishing mankind was preserved because man could receive a pardon; he simply refused to do so.

This understanding of the human condition also maintained the Calvinistic doctrine of efficacious grace, that is, the notion that God sovereignly draws the elect to Himself by the Holy Spirit. If “unbelief and rejection of Christ spring from the corrupt state of the *heart*,” as Scott readily believed, the heart must be changed in order for man to have the willingness to receive the blessings of the gospel.²³⁸ Scott attributed this change to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration in conjunction with gospel invitations:

While the gospel is preached men *become willing*, who were not so before: and even a desire to be made willing may very properly be formed into a prayer; and then it falls under the general assurance, “ask, and it shall be given you;” for “everyone that asketh receiveth.”²³⁹

This transformation of the heart is brought about by the Holy Spirit, who gives sinners a true picture of their sinful condition and enables them to see the glory of the gospel:

Under the illumination and convincing influences of the holy Spirit, sinners become acquainted with their own true character and real situation: and thus the discovery of their guilt, pollution, danger, and helpless misery in themselves, prepares them for perceiving the nature and value of the salvation of Christ. Then he becomes glorious in their eyes, and precious in their hearts: they consider him as the Pearl of great price, yea of inestimable value; they entertain the most honourable thoughts of him, though they had formerly despised and neglected him.²⁴⁰

Therefore, since the Spirit’s work was necessary for a man to believe, Scott concluded

²³⁷Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 22.

²³⁸Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 21.

²³⁹Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 16.

²⁴⁰Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 44–45.

that “faith is the *effect* and evidence of his regeneration, and not the *cause* of it.”²⁴¹

In what has been discussed so far, Scott’s answer to the modern question has been explained with respect to gospel invitations and human depravity, but one of the other difficulties involved in the modern question was the relationship of the atonement to the free offer of the gospel. For Calvinists who held to the doctrine of particular redemption, offering the gospel to the masses seemed inconsistent with the idea that Christ had died only for the elect. How could a minister offer the atonement of Christ to everyone when the atonement was not really for everyone?

Before offering Scott’s solution to this problem, it will be helpful to say a few things about the doctrine of particular redemption itself. Tom Nettles, in dealing with Andrew Fuller’s views on the extent of the atonement, has pointed out that there are actually two Calvinistic views on particular redemption. On one hand, some Calvinists contend “that the suffering of Christ, as a matter of actual measurable justice set forth by the Father, must be commensurate with the degree of susceptibility to punishment for all those that the Father gave him and for whom he sanctified himself in his obedience to death.”²⁴² In this view, Christ “is the victim of all that particular wrath that should be measured to [the elect], and he does not suffer as a propitiation for others.”²⁴³ On the other hand, some Calvinists believe “that the intrinsic value of Christ’s suffering, given the infinite dignity of his person, is sufficient for the sins of all people in the world.”²⁴⁴ In this understanding the “particularity [of the atonement] comes from the covenantal arrangement between Christ and the Father, that the Father would grant all the gifts and blessings gained by the Son in his suffering to those, and those exclusively, for whom

²⁴¹Scott, *Warrant and Nature*, 51.

²⁴²Nettles, “The Passion and Doctrine of Andrew Fuller,” 37.

²⁴³Nettles, “The Passion and Doctrine of Andrew Fuller,” 37.

²⁴⁴Nettles, “The Passion and Doctrine of Andrew Fuller,” 37.

Christ came to suffer.”²⁴⁵ What limits the atonement is not its provision, but its application as defined by God’s decree of election.

Scott’s writings on the subject leave little doubt that he fell into this second group of Calvinists, though he seems to have become more outspoken about his position over time. In the first edition of his sermon, *The Doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance*, Scott made it clear that Christ came to “make propitiation for iniquity as preparatory to his mediatory office in heaven and his intercession for sinners.”²⁴⁶ He made it equally clear that the atonement also included “infinite satisfaction made to divine justice.”²⁴⁷ Later on, he remarked that Christ’s “death was a *sufficient* atonement for *all*.”²⁴⁸ These statements point toward a more general understanding of the atonement. Apparently concerned that his teaching in this respect would be construed as Arminianism, Scott included a footnote in the sermon that pointed out his consistency with the teachings of John Calvin:

Even Calvin himself writes thus, “He (the apostle) maketh it the common grace of all men, because it is proposed to all, not because it is actually extended to all. For although Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world; and is *offered* indiscriminately to all men by the goodness of God, yet all do not apprehend him.” (Rom. v. 18.) And again, “Christ suffered *sufficiently* for the whole world; but *efficaciously* only for the elect” (1 John, ii. 2).²⁴⁹

This appeal to Calvin certainly served several purposes. It showed that Scott’s views on the atonement and offering the gospel had historical precedent in Calvin himself. However, the “sufficient for all but efficient for the elect” language can still be left open for interpretation; and since the phraseology is often little more than a consensus statement for differing viewpoints, what did Scott mean when he employed it?

²⁴⁵Nettles, “The Passion and Doctrine of Andrew Fuller,” 37.

²⁴⁶Scott, *Sermon on Election*, 13–14.

²⁴⁷Scott, *Sermon on Election*, 14.

²⁴⁸Scott, *Sermon on Election*, 23.

²⁴⁹Scott, *Sermon on Election*, 14.

The first edition of the sermon did not make Scott's answer overly clear. However, in later editions, Scott expanded this footnote to include three additional paragraphs of explanation. In the third paragraph, Scott rejected Nettles' first view of the atonement and embraced the second:

The idea of Christ paying *exactly so much for one*, and *so much for another*, and so much for each, and then adding the sums together, and forming a large *limited* sum, just sufficient to ransom the elect, appears unscriptural, and gives a degrading view of the glorious subject. An *all-sufficient* atonement was made at once, and an immeasurable fullness of mercy and grace is treasured up in Christ, to be communicated, according to the eternal purpose and counsel of God. Every believer receives from this fullness: others remain under condemnation, not through defect of merit in Christ, but through their own impenitency and unbelief.²⁵⁰

This paragraph is the clearest statement in Scott's writings on the extent of the atonement, and its wording shows that he thought the atonement only limited by God's sovereign plan. Therefore, he saw no problem in offering the gospel to everyone because the atonement was sufficient for everyone. As he asserted elsewhere, "There is a sense, in which Christ may properly be said to have died for all: and the infinite sufficiency of his merits and atonement, with the general proposals made in the Scripture, authorize and require the ministers of Christ, to call on all that hear them without exception, to repent and believe the gospel."²⁵¹

Scott answered the modern question in the affirmative. He believed that the gospel could be offered to all people indiscriminately. He based his position on the exhortations of Scripture and the infinite nature of the atonement. He believed that man had a duty to believe Christ based on the commands of Scripture and his natural ability to understand them. Yet, apart from the work of regeneration, man would never willingly respond positively to the gospel due to moral and spiritual inability. Nevertheless, ministers of the gospel were obligated to preach Christ to everyone, which would prove

²⁵⁰Scott, "Sermon on Election," in *Theological Works*, 2:585n1.

²⁵¹Scott, *Nature and Warrant*, 95.

important to Scott's missionary impetus.

An Eschatological Hope

Before turning attention to the ecclesiastical characteristics of Scott's evangelical identity, this chapter will conclude with a short treatment of his eschatology. In some ways, the subject of eschatology might seem out of place here, but eschatology often played an important role in the activism of the evangelical movement, especially in the area of foreign missions.²⁵² The evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century created a renewed interest in eschatology, and the multiplication of Christian conversions seemed to indicate that the Holy Spirit was being poured out in fulfillment of biblical prophecy.²⁵³ Jonathan Edwards, for instance, read current events in light of the book of Revelation, and he had "great reason to hope that the Beginning of that glorious Work of God's Spirit, which in the Progress and Issue of it, will overthrow Antichrist, and introduce the Glory of the latter Days, is not very far off."²⁵⁴ In 1784, Edwards's prognostications about the coming kingdom of God found their way into the same English circles that had imbibed much of his theology in answering the modern question, throwing additional fuel in their growing sense of mission.²⁵⁵ Before long, a young William Carey would be appealing to prophecy as a motivating factor in using means to

²⁵²See Andrew F. Walls, "Eschatology and the Western Missionary Movement," *Studies in World Christianity* 22, no. 3 (2016): 182–200; Roland S. Ward, "A Passion for God and a Passion for Jews: The Basis and Practice of Jewish Mission 1550–1850," *Reformed Theological Review* 70 (April 2011): 1–25.

²⁵³See John Howard Smith, "The Promised Day of the Lord": American Millennialism and Apocalypticism, 1735–1783," in *Anglo-American Millennialism, from Milton to the Millerites*, ed. Richard Connors and Andrew Colin Gow (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 116–20.

²⁵⁴Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies Concerning the Last Time* (Boston: D. Henchman, 1747), 166–67.

²⁵⁵Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792–1992* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 4–5.

reach the lost on foreign mission fields.²⁵⁶ Scott was not immune to this mounting optimism about the realization of the kingdom of God in the not-too-distant future. Like most evangelicals of his day, Scott’s “optimism was expressed in doctrinal form through belief in a millennium,”²⁵⁷ but how did he conceive of this doctrine?

Scott was never overly dogmatic on eschatological subjects, and he never wrote a formal treatise on the millennium. However, his commentary on the book of Revelation lays out the basics of his eschatological schema, and his practical remarks throughout his commentary often show how his views on prophecy related to his passion for missions. Scott believed that the book of Revelation was “a series of prophecies, some, more emblematic, others more plain, relating to events, that were to take place in the church and the nations of the earth, through all the subsequent generations of mankind, to the end of the world, the day of judgment, and the eternal state.”²⁵⁸ Put more succinctly, “the Apocalypse is a prophetic history of the Church.”²⁵⁹ Thus, Scott’s commentary sought to explain the symbols of Revelation in relationship to real events in history.

For example, he understood the seven seals of chapters 6 and 7 as relating to the struggles of the church “which took place from the time of the vision, to the establishment of Constantine the Great upon the Imperial throne, as the first Christian emperor.”²⁶⁰ The first four trumpets of chapter 8 “principally related to the gradual and

²⁵⁶William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), 77–79. Carey’s remarks in the cited section are heavily influenced by Edwards’s *An Humble Attempt*.

²⁵⁷Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 62.

²⁵⁸Scott, “Introduction to Revelation,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁵⁹John H. Pratt, ed., *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders: Notes of the Discussions of the Eclectic Society, London During the years 1798–1814* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978), 257.

²⁶⁰Scott, “Notes on Revelation 6:1–2,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

complete subversion of the Roman empire, in the western part of the world.”²⁶¹ Chapter 9 predicted “the successes of the eastern Antichrist, Mahomet, and his successors, as ruling over the Arabians or Saracens.”²⁶² The image of the dragon giving power to the beast in chapter 13 accorded to “the history of the Roman Empire, Pagan and Papal.”²⁶³ Those described as being killed in Revelation 13:10 were understood to be persecuted people groups like the Waldenses and those killed in the Papal inquisitions, among others.²⁶⁴ The angel of Revelation 14:6, who had “the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth” was understood as a reference to “the herald of the dawning of the reformation in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries.”²⁶⁵ Likewise, the angel of Revelation 14:8 referred to “the Bohemians and others in the fifteenth [century], who were their genuine offspring and successors.”²⁶⁶ The angel of Revelation 14:9 “may be explained of Luther, and his loud, rough, and vehement protestation against the idolatries, &c., of the church and bishop of Rome.”²⁶⁷

Scott’s explanations of all of these symbols and events were more involved and nuanced than can be related in this brief overview, but his general approach to prophecy can be seen in these examples. This sketch also shows that he was able to correlate these prophetic events to within a few centuries of his own time. What, then, remained unfulfilled in the prophetic history of the church, and how did Scott see himself in that history?

²⁶¹Scott, “Notes on Revelation 8:7,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁶²Scott, “Notes on Revelation 9:1–12,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁶³Scott, “Notes on Revelation 13:1–10,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁶⁴Scott, “Notes on Revelation 13:1–10,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁶⁵Scott, “Notes on Revelation 14:8,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁶⁶Scott, “Notes on Revelation 14:8,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4. Scott was referring here to John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

²⁶⁷Scott, “Notes on Revelation 14:9–11,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

Though he was somewhat reluctant to get too specific about the details, Scott believed that the fall of Papal Rome, which he identified with the Great Babylon of Revelation 17, together with “the destruction of all Christ’s implacable enemies, the conversion of the nations, and the binding of Satan” would take place prior to the inauguration of the millennial kingdom of Christ.²⁶⁸ Obviously, the Roman Catholic Church was still in existence during Scott’s lifetime, and so he was forced to consign its fall to the future. Apparently, some eighteenth century interpreters thought that the political revolutions that had taken place across Europe would likely lead to Rome’s downfall.²⁶⁹ Scott was more cautious, saying, “How far some late revolutions may lead to this crisis, we cannot tell.”²⁷⁰ What was clear to him was that after Rome fell, the gospel would spread triumphantly throughout the world. Revelation 19:11–16 depicts a rider on a white horse leading his army against the nations in battle. According to 19:15, the rider “will smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (KJV). According to Scott, “these verses and the context seem to predict the progress of the gospel subsequent to the fall of Rome, in the destruction of the remains of the antichristian empire, the purifying of the visible church, the conversion of the Jews, the termination of Mahometism, and the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles.”²⁷¹ Shortly after these accomplishments, God

²⁶⁸Scott, “Notes on Revelation 18:9—10,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁶⁹E.g., Jonathan Edwards, “Notes on the Apocalypse,” in *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, ed. John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 52. Edwards, speaking of the sixth vial of Rev 16, wrote, “The chief powers of Europe, that have for many ages been the main fountains of the supply and supports of the Church of Rome, are France, Spain, and the emperor. This vial, therefore, may probably include the destroying or remarkably weakening and diminishing or taking away from the Church of Rome some or all of these. What has lately befallen the imperial power is well known. And whether this mayn’t probably be an effect of this vial beginning to be poured out on the rivers and fountains of the waters of the Church of Rome, I leave to be considered. And who knows what may yet further be in the issue of the present war, with respect to the other two popish powers of France and Spain, as the vial goes on to be poured out.”

²⁷⁰Scott, “Notes on Revelation 17:15–18,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁷¹Scott, “Notes on Revelation 19:11–16,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

would bind Satan and usher in the long-awaited kingdom.

The millennium itself would be a glorious time when “the Christian religion in all its purity and glory, shall become universal.”²⁷² Though he believed in an earthly kingdom, he did not think that there would be a “visible appearance of Christ, but a peculiar outpouring of the Spirit.”²⁷³ The effect of the Spirit on the world would be to produce a time “during which pure Christianity, in doctrine, worship, and universal holiness, will be diffused all over the earth.”²⁷⁴ Additionally, diseases and inter-personal strife will be reduced, and “industry in useful things, with frugality and temperance, would prevent that pinching poverty and distress, which now make multitudes wretched: and a greater fertility of the earth, may reasonably be expected.”²⁷⁵ In other words, the human condition will be completely transformed so as to render it consistent with Christian ideals.

Importantly, Scott believed that these events would take place relatively soon and that global missions would play an important role in bringing them about. In fact, Scott saw an impetus in Revelation’s prophetic history for engaging in the work of missions and other efforts to improve human society:

The ministers of the gospel ought to call men’s attention to the prophecies of Scripture, and the providential works of God as accomplishing them. The victories of our exalted Redeemer, by the preaching of the gospel, in bringing the nations to the obedience of the faith, have been and will be progressive, till his cause be universally triumphant: we should, therefore, rejoice to be in any way instrumental, in promoting these beneficent conquests; and our prayers, that “he may still go forth conquering and to conquer,” should continually be presented before the throne of grace.²⁷⁶

The urgency for being involved in the progressive work of gospel ministry was that the

²⁷²Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁷³Pratt, *Thought of the Evangelical Leaders*, 256.

²⁷⁴Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁷⁵Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁷⁶Scott, “Practical Observations on Revelation 6,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

final triumph of Christ was imminent. In his discussion of Revelation 20:1–6, he spoke of working for the coming kingdom by stating that “our duty is to pray for the promised glorious days, and to do every thing, in our private, and public situations, that can be instrumental in preparing the way for them; even as David made abundant provision for the temple, which Solomon was to build.”²⁷⁷ He then said, “It is evident, that the dawn of this glorious day cannot be very distant.”²⁷⁸

Scott’s confidence in the millennium’s nearness seems to have grown over the years. In subsequent editions of his *Commentary* on Revelation 20:1–6, he added a much longer section on the millennium, in which he spoke of a renewed interest in the millennium after the Protestant Reformation. He was impressed with the fact that, though there were some differences of opinion about some of the details, “the doctrine itself gains more and more general credence.”²⁷⁹ He also added “that [the millennium] is at hand, even at the door; and that we ought to advert to it, and to those things which may prepare the way for it, in all our studies and writings, and in the improvement of our several talents.”²⁸⁰ What may well have increased his confidence was the multiplication of missionary activity through agencies such as the BMS, LMS, and the CMS, organizations he would personally assist in various ways. In fact, some of his missionary sermons preached for these societies contained segments on eschatology.

Summary

Thus far, it has been demonstrated that Scott’s evangelical theology very

²⁷⁷Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁷⁸Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

²⁷⁹Thomas Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6,” in *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Translated from the Original Greek, with Original Notes and Practical Observations*, 6th American ed. (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1817), vol. 2.

²⁸⁰Thomas Scott, “Notes on Revelation 20:1–6” in *New Testament* (6th American ed., 1817, vol. 2). Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of Scott’s *Commentary* will be to the first edition in accordance with previous practice.

closely fits with Bebbington's quadrilateral. Scott was strongly committed to a life and ministry based on the Bible. He saw the Bible to be God's authoritative Word, and he devoted himself to teaching it in home, church, and around the world. Additionally, his gospel, like that of the English Reformers before him, was based squarely on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This justification was necessary because Adam's fall had separated the human race from God and left him incapable of repairing this relationship. Jesus Christ, as the God-Man, provided the means whereby mankind can be reconciled to God and declared righteous before God. Scott also placed a great deal of emphasis on the need for a genuine conversion. In his thinking, such a conversion would manifest itself in demonstrable changes in a person's thoughts, words, and actions; and only those who produced spiritual fruit could lay just claim to the assurance of salvation. Likewise, Scott did not believe that baptism was a guarantee of regeneration and spiritual conversion, and consequently, preachers should not assume that all baptized Christians are necessarily born again. These aspects of Scott's Evangelicalism are all consistent with the biblicism, cruciocentrism, and conversionism of Bebbington's quadrilateral.

Much of what has been determined so far is also commensurate with Hylson-Smith's description of Evangelicals vis-à-vis the Methodists. Scott's appeal to the English Reformers matches Hylson-Smith's assertion that Evangelicals generally favored the Reformation leaders over the Church Fathers. Scott's views on the doctrine of assurance hardly fit with Methodist ideas of Christian perfection or emotionalism, and his strong doctrine of total depravity and his belief in man's moral inability to believe the gospel placed him solidly in the Calvinist tradition. Thus, this examination of the general characteristics of Scott's evangelicalism indicates that he fell decidedly into the Evangelical camp with respect to Hylson-Smith's third and fourth Evangelical descriptors.²⁸¹

²⁸¹That is, a historical appeal to the English Reformers and a doctrinal commitment to

Scott's answer to the modern question and his eschatology have also been explored in connection to his evangelicalism, and it has been shown that Scott fell in with those who believed it was proper to offer the gospel to everyone. He held that every person had an obligation to believe the gospel, and therefore ministers had a duty to proclaim indiscriminately. This duty, coupled with his post-millennial views on eschatology, provided Scott with a powerful, ethical motivation for engaging in gospel missions. He believed the ends times were fast approaching, and he believed it his duty to advance the inauguration of the kingdom in whatever ways he could. Scott's beliefs and actions in this regard easily fit into the activism category of Bebbington's quadrilateral.

Therefore, this chapter has demonstrated that Scott manifested every major characteristic that Bebbington has identified in the evangelical movement and has also determined that Scott's theology was consistent with two of Hylson-Smith's five Evangelical descriptors. In order to evaluate Scott with respect to Hylson-Smith's other three descriptors—clericalism, churchmanship, and church order—a closer look at his ecclesiology must take place. After all, Scott's Evangelical identity was heavily governed by his attachment to the Church of England, and his membership in the established church is what forced him to wrestle with the Evangelical Anglican tension in the first place. Therefore, Scott's solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension cannot adequately be understood without ascertaining how Scott reconciled his evangelical principles with his position in the Church of England.

Calvinism and a rejection of Christian perfection and excessive emotionalism.

CHAPTER 4

THOMAS SCOTT'S EVANGELICAL IDENTITY: ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Up to this point, the quest for Scott's Evangelical identity has focused primarily on doctrinal matters, but the total picture of this identity would be incomplete without an understanding of how Scott viewed the Church of England itself and how he related to other Christian denominations, particularly those of English Dissent. His views on church order are also an important component of his Evangelical identity and will be treated here as well. As will be shown in what follows, his ecclesiology played a considerable role in guiding his participation in the missionary enterprise. Thus, this chapter will examine the ecclesiastical aspects of Scott's Evangelical identity by looking at his views on the nature of the English establishment, ecclesiastical irregularity, episcopal ordination, and Christendom.

The Nature of the English Establishment

Few issues have vexed the religious landscape in England more than the nature of the English establishment. When the negotiations with the Pope Clement VII over King Henry VIII's desired divorce with Catherine of Aragon broke down, a series of events was set in motion that culminated not simply in a divorce between Henry and Catherine, but also in a divorce between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. In 1534, Parliament declared "that the King our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England."¹ Thus, Parliament *established* the Church of

¹"The Act of Supremacy, 1534," in *Documents of the English Reformation*, ed. Gerald Bray

England under the authority of the English monarch, creating a scenario in which loyalty to the church and loyalty to the reigning king or queen were intimately connected. The close connection between church and state was further cemented during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries “by the presence of twenty-six bishops and two archbishops in the House of Lords.”² This arrangement had the effect of turning the secular monarch into a religious leader and the religious leaders, particularly the bishops, into secular rulers.

The practical implications for this kind of establishment were profound. A religious pronouncement, whether issued by king, Parliament, or bishop, came down with the full force of state law. Therefore, conformity to the religious establishment was expected and even mandated, as the Acts of Uniformity issued by Edward VI in 1548 and 1551, by Elizabeth I in 1558, and by Charles II in 1662 clearly demonstrated. Those who objected to the church’s polity, theology, or practice had several options at their disposal, but none of them was ideal. Some objectors chose to stay within the Church of England and attempt to reform it from within. These people are generally classed as Puritans.³ Most of them were eventually ejected from the Church of England in 1662 when they would not comply with the Act of Uniformity issued by Charles II. Others thought the errors in the State Church so egregious, or the process of reform so difficult, that leaving the church altogether was deemed to be the most prudent course of action. Those choosing the second option are commonly assigned labels such as Separatists, Dissenters,

(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 113–14.

²Richard Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain 1700–1850* (London: Routledge, 1991), 97.

³The term *puritan* is notoriously difficult to define and is often applied to persons who do not have a formal relationship with the Church of England. In the present discussion, the term is being used in the way thought convenient by John F. H. New, who applied it only “to those who rejected the Separatists’ departure from the State Church” (John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558–1640* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964], 3). For a helpful overview of the complexities in Puritanism, see Jerald C. Brauer, “The Nature of English Puritanism: Three Interpretations,” *CH* 23 (1954): 99–108. For helpful treatments of English Puritanism, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) and John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603–1689* (New York: St. Martin’s Press 1998).

or Non-Conformists.⁴ Until the issuance of the Act of Toleration in 1689, deciding to become a Dissenter could come at considerable personal cost since non-conformity was effectively civil disobedience. The danger was especially acute in the years after the Restoration, when, as J. C. D. Clark has observed, “law and religion were inescapably linked, as they had to be if the horrors of the 1640s and 50s were not to recur.”⁵ However, the Act of Toleration greatly reduced the persecution of Dissenters and brought about a peaceful, though uneasy, period of coexistence.

That period of peace was interrupted, however, with the outbreak of the evangelical revivals in the 1730s, and the turmoil was not simply along the old fault line between the Establishment and Dissent. The revivals touched the Church of England itself, and a number of Anglican ministers became proponents of the revival’s “enthusiasm.” In turn, “the bishops and most parish priests were suspicious and resentful” of their Evangelical counterparts, creating an environment in which ecclesiastical loyalties would once again be challenged.⁶ By the eighteenth century, the relationship between church and state was not as intertwined as it had been in earlier centuries, and the religious establishment was in a weaker position to deal with the irregularities that characterized certain segments of the Evangelical movement. Nevertheless, the establishment often used the mechanisms of the church hierarchy to prevent Evangelicals from obtaining preferment, ordination, or other forms of advancement within the church.⁷ This resistance to Evangelicals by the establishment evoked similar responses to the

⁴See B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) and Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁵J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660–1832*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 44.

⁶John B. Owen, *The Eighteenth Century 1714–1815*, The Norton Library History of England (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 158.

⁷For examples see above, 4–18.

Established Church as had arisen in the years following the English Reformation. Some Evangelicals embraced the spirit of the Separatists and thought the reformation of the Church of England along Evangelical lines an impossible goal. The Methodists are the main example of this tendency, and this group left the church. Others, however, embodied something of a Puritan spirit and sought to influence the Church of England toward Evangelical principles from the inside. Thomas Scott fell into this latter camp,⁸ and his reasons for remaining in the church will be the subject of this subsection.

Unscriptural and Anti-Scriptural Practice

In order to understand how Scott was able to remain in the Church of England when the church did things of which he may not have approved, one must first recognize that he often made a distinction between unscriptural and anti-Scriptural practices. For Scott, unscriptural practices were things neither expressly prescribed by Scripture nor forbidden. Anti-Scriptural practices were those matters expressly forbidden by Scripture. To give one of Scott's own examples, "It may be *unscriptural* to wear a surplice; for that is not prescribed in scripture: but it is *anti-scriptural* to worship images, or the host."⁹ Scott used this distinction a great deal both to defend the Church of England against Dissenters and to urge Anglicans to remain in the church. The questions he pressed with those who had objections to the church were these—"Do they mean to insinuate, that the Church of England is *altogether unscriptural*? Or, only, that some things in that church are *unscriptural*? For these are widely different questions."¹⁰

⁸Scott even suggested the possibility that he would have been a Puritan had he lived in earlier times when he wrote, "I am far from a disposition to join the modern outcry against the puritans—the progenitors of many of our present dissenters. Had my lot been cast in those *persecuting* days, I can only doubt, whether I should have been found among them or not; by questioning, whether I should have had sufficient courage of faith and hope to join the persecuted party" (Thomas Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *The Evil of Separation from the Church of England*, 2nd ed. [London: L. B. Seeley, 1817], 2).

⁹Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 4.

¹⁰Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 4.

In Scott's view, every church had unscriptural practices in it. Speaking of Dissenting denominations, he explained that he "could go through them all, one by one, and undeniably prove that there are some things *right* in all, and some things *wrong* in all; at least, if that is *wrong* which has no express warrant in scripture."¹¹ If this is the case, he asked:

What then is to be done? Must we renounce Christianity? Or, decline all public worship, and exercise of the ministry till these disputes be settled? Or, must we form, each a new sect, perfectly *scriptural*, at least in our own judgment or fancy? To say nothing of the immense mischief, beyond all calculation, of thus multiplying sects and rending the church; where is that man, possessed of even the least degree of humility, who will dare to think, that his new modelled church is not in some points assailable; as all others hitherto have been?¹²

Shortly after making this statement, he reminded the reader that "things *unscriptural* are not always, nor generally *anti-scriptural*."¹³ In this way, he dismissed many of the common objections to liturgies, forms of church government, methods for policing the Lord's Supper table, and related charges that were leveled at the Church of England, classifying them as things unscriptural rather than things anti-Scriptural.¹⁴ Therefore, in Scott's mind, the mere presence of unscriptural ceremonies or religious forms did not constitute a sufficient warrant for leaving the National Church. That said, his distinction did allow for withdrawing from an existing ecclesiastical body, including the Established Church, in certain instances.

The first allowance came into play when it could be demonstrated that a religious body was so committed to anti-Scriptural doctrine or practice that it was impossible to avoid directly participating in that organization's errors. To this end he wrote, "We ought, by no means, to join in worship, which after careful examination,

¹¹Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 4.

¹²Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 5.

¹³Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 5.

¹⁴Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 7–16.

made with modesty and fervent prayer, and with deference to the judgment of wise and good men, we yet are convinced requires of us, things *anti-scriptural*.”¹⁵ Such was the case with the Roman Catholic Church, wherein “it is *impossible* to worship or exercise the ministry in the church of Rome, without partaking of her idolatries.”¹⁶

A second allowance was made for times when an ecclesiastical body forced unscriptural practices onto its constituency with the threat of punishment if the people refused to comply. As Scott put it, “When indeed even indifferent things are *imposed* on the mass of inhabitants in any country and enforced by penal statutes; and when considered as paramount to God’s commandments, they become *anti-scriptural*.”¹⁷ Thus, the Christian had the “right to separate from any church, which imposed even *unscriptural* observances, or *any* observances by the *anti-scriptural* weapon of persecution.”¹⁸ Such had been the case in earlier centuries in the Church of England, when the Acts of Uniformity drove scores of ministers into English Dissent; but in Scott’s day, the threat of similar action was fairly remote, which predisposed him to remain in the church. However, his comments on earlier events indicate not only what it probably would have taken for him to leave the Church of England but also provide a window into his sympathies for English Dissent:

I do not indeed think that any, in our favoured days, have so strong reasons for dissenting, as the puritans had, even in the preceding times; much less, as *they* had, who were ejected on the restoration of Charles the second. I am not disposed to vindicate, much less panegyryze the whole body, or all their measures: but surely the guilt of the *schism*, whatever it was, did not, *wholly* nor *principally*, belong to them.¹⁹

This is quite a statement! Scott, as an Anglican minister, placed the bulk of the blame for

¹⁵Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 6.

¹⁶Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 9.

¹⁷Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 6.

¹⁸Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 6–7.

¹⁹Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 3.

the expulsion of the Puritans on the Church of England because the church had used the threat of persecution to ensure conformity. Nevertheless, since he did not believe the church would repeat this error again, he did not feel compelled to leave its fold.

The Legitimacy of an Establishment

Scott's distinction between unscriptural and anti-Scriptural practices provided the basis for his treatment of a major issue that divided establishment ministers from many Dissenting ministers—the legitimacy of an established church. Dissenters, for a variety of reasons, questioned whether it was right or prudent to have an established church at all. Among Dissenters, the Baptists would have raised the strongest protests against the idea of an establishment since Baptists historically have advanced a strong position on the separation of church and state.²⁰ As many of Scott's friends were Baptists, he certainly would have been sensitive to this particular objection.

Scott's defense of an establishment was partially an appeal to the notion that establishments were not forbidden in the Scriptures—placing them in his unscriptural category—and partially an appeal to the Old Testament, where he found an example of an establishment in the Israelite theocracy. “The religion of Israel was an establishment,” he wrote, “not indeed of human, but of divine appointment: yet this clearly shows, that the thing is not evil in itself, but may, in certain cases, be made conducive to the general good of a nation, or people.”²¹ This establishment was made up, so-to-speak, of both church and state. As Scott observed, “Under the establishment, which God himself instituted, and in supporting which he employed not only priests and prophets, but kings also.”²² He also believed that the Old Testament kings, especially the reforming kings

²⁰See G. Hugh Wamble, “Baptist Contributions to Separation of Church and State,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 20, no. 3 (July 1985): 3–13.

²¹Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 18.

²²Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 19.

like Hezekiah and Josiah, provided all monarchs with a precedent for using their position to bring about Christian reforms while allowing room for minor disagreements, which he explained in the following way:

Nor can I think it altogether impracticable, for the broad ground of the New Testament to be proceeded on, in nearly the same manner, as pious kings of Judah proceeded upon the broad ground of the Old Testament; nothing required, as term of communion, but what wise and pious men in general allowed to be scriptural; things indifferent left so; and much latitude allowed in respect of expressions, forms, postures, and all such things, as evidently conscientious pious persons may be supposed to view differently.²³

In order to accomplish this goal, Scott thought it appropriate for state funds to be “devoted to the cause of religion” with “the design of thus giving all parts of a nation ‘the means of grace.’”²⁴ Yet, even on this point, his underlying evangelical principles came through. When speaking on the possibility of using general taxation for the advancement of the church, he conceded that even a broadly established church would still have some Dissenters. In their case, he argued that the Dissenters “should have full toleration” and that “the funds raised by general taxation, at least, should be applied to support in part the quietly dissenting, as well as the established worship.”²⁵

Scott’s case for the validity of a religious establishment should not be construed, however, as an assertion of the *necessity* of an establishment. While he thought that establishments had precedent in the Old Testament, he also acknowledged that the New Testament did not require them and that they were not always practicable. The reality was that the early church did not exist as an established church, and Scott recognized that “this indeed proves, that Christianity can subsist and flourish without an establishment.”²⁶ He also noted that “Christianity is not so *poor*, or so *feeble*, as to be

²³Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 24.

²⁴Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 25.

²⁵Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 25.

²⁶Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 22.

dependent for existence or success, either on the *wealthy* or the *potent*.”²⁷ In other words, “the design of Providence, [was] to leave Christianity so unencumbered, that it might be capable of accommodating itself to outward circumstances, whatever they might be, in every land in which it was propagated.”²⁸ Christianity may make use of an establishment, and can in fact benefit greatly from them in certain circumstances, but it cannot be insisted that the New Testament requires them.

Scott’s insistence on the validity of an establishment and his admission that an establishment is not required by Scripture form an important component of his solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension. Since an establishment is not unscriptural, and even could be shown to be consistent with the Old Testament Scriptures, his presence and participation in the established church in England was not contrary to Scripture, so long as the monarch did not use persecution as a means to make him affirm or do unscriptural things. On the other hand, Dissenting churches were not illegitimate simply because they were not attached to the established church. Establishments were one way, but not the only way, of advancing the gospel.

The Definition of the Establishment

As Scott’s understanding of the English establishment begins to emerge, the question of how he handled the establishment’s hostility toward Evangelicals still needs to be answered, and determining how he defined the establishment itself is essential to offering a response. This definition, as will be shown here, was a vital component of his overall mentality with respect to the Church of England, and the way he defined the establishment allowed him to remain loyal to the establishment even when many of its members opposed the Evangelical party. Opposition to Evangelicalism in the Church of

²⁷Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 23.

²⁸Scott, Letter to Peter Roe, February 10, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 23.

England was indeed a problem. Scott himself recognized that Dissenters were attempting “to draw off pious and conscientious ministers from the establishment” on the basis that those Anglicans were simply “those, of whom the *establishment* is ashamed, and of whom it labours to get rid.”²⁹ In resisting this pull toward Dissent, it should be pointed out that he did not dispute the fact that there were attempts being made by members of his own church to exclude the Evangelical clergy. Rather he asserted that these Dissenters did not understand what the establishment really was.

In Scott’s view, the establishment was the authorized *books* of the Church of England, not the *leaders* of the Church of England. “The *books of the Church of England*,” he wrote, “as authorized by Act of Parliament, and administered by the executive power, so to speak, are the *establishment*.”³⁰ Consequently, “were all the archbishops, bishops, and clergy unanimous, they are not the *establishment*: even if they were all sound in doctrine and holy in life, and exemplary in labour, they would not be the *establishment*; but merely the officers and *administrators* of the establishment.”³¹ Furthermore, “even the king, lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, assembled in parliament; though possessed of authority, to make alterations which all the bishops and clergy combined have not; are nevertheless not the *establishment*: any more than they are the British constitution or *Magna Charta*.”³² In Scott’s thinking, the Evangelicals were in perfect accord with the establishment because they were “the very persons, whose preaching and labours most accord to the liturgy and articles of the Church!”³³ As he understood his situation, “so long as these [documents] are for us, the establishment is for

²⁹Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 28.

³⁰Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 29.

³¹Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 28–29.

³²Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 29.

³³Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 28.

us, how many soever of the officers or administrators are against us.”³⁴ Were this state of affairs to change, just cause may then be found for leaving the church, for

should the parliament interfere materially to alter these books, and make them to be against that half dozen [who remained faithful to the books], it would, in fact, make a *new establishment*; quite different from that under which they entered and continued, as members or ministers in the Church of England; and they would then be warranted and required to withdraw from it.³⁵

However, since Scott did not believe that Parliament had any intention of changing the books, he saw no pressing need to leave the church with which he was in confessional agreement. In fact, the departure of those who “live, labour, and preach according to the liturgy, articles, and homilies of the Church . . . would be the ruin of the establishment, beyond all else that could possibly be done.”³⁶

Defining the establishment in this way had obvious implications for how Scott handled the Evangelical Anglican tension. Making a distinction between the establishment and the administrators of the establishment helped him resist the urge to give up the establishment when he met opposition from bishops or fellow clergymen. When Evangelicals faced opposition from Anglican clergymen, the problem was with those clergymen, not the establishment. As long as the books of the church were not materially changed and as long as Evangelicals were not forced by means of persecution to do things which violated the establishment, Scott was content to remain in the church.

Toleration in the Establishment

Of course, for Scott’s plan to remain loyal to the written establishment to work, a certain measure of religious toleration had to be afforded the clergy by the administrators of the establishment. Therefore, the existence of toleration in the Church

³⁴Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 29.

³⁵Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 29.

³⁶Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 30.

of England constituted a key aspect of Scott's answer to the Evangelical Anglican tension. "*Toleration*," he wrote, "is now a part of our establishment, and so essential a part, that it is on that ground alone, that I could fully plead for continuance in it."³⁷ What exactly he meant by this statement is a little unclear, seeing as he had defined the establishment as the books of the church. Though he does not explicitly say so, he probably understood the Act of Toleration of 1689 as forming part of the establishment's books. However his statement is to be understood, his words made it clear that he could not argue for remaining in the Church of England if the church did not practice toleration.

Scott was himself committed to the general idea of toleration among religious parties. He possessed "heart-felt satisfaction that persecution of the church of Christ is no part of our national guilt," and he rejoiced over "the system of complete toleration, which hath been introduced among us."³⁸ He had hope for divine blessing on a nation "when the Lord has a number of believing servants and faithful ministers in a land, and they enjoy toleration and protection."³⁹ He was thankful that, in England, "our Sabbaths, our churches, our religious establishments, our toleration, are continued,"⁴⁰ and he affirmed that "the friends of full toleration [are] the best friends of the church."⁴¹

However, this spirit of toleration needed to be carefully nuanced or else Scott might have been accused of advocating an established church that allowed virtually anything in the name of toleration. He did not believe that an established church "*must* substitute *comprehension* instead of *selection*, and *secularity* instead of *spirituality*."⁴² In

³⁷Scott, "Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815," in *Evil of Separation*, 31.

³⁸Thomas Scott, "Sermon on Isaiah 5:4," in *Theological Works: Published at Different Times, and Now Collected into Volumes [Theological Works]* (Buckingham: J. Seeley, 1805–1808), 2:318.

³⁹Scott, "Sermon on Isaiah 9:13," in *Theological Works*, 2:393.

⁴⁰Scott, "Sermon on Psalm 116:2," in *Theological Works*, 2:488.

⁴¹Scott, "Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815," in *Evil of Separation*, 31.

⁴²Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 31.

fact he grieved over the notion of allowing people to become a part of the Church of England, “who ought not to belong to any Christian church, but to the visible kingdom of Satan.”⁴³ To allow such a scenario would be to create an anti-Scriptural church. He did, however, believe that an establishment could be created by the state that was governed by “certain general rules and principles, to which [the minister’s] *voluntary* consent is required.”⁴⁴ The administrators of the establishment could see to it that “all the population were invited and exhorted to attend publick service and instruction; but none *compelled or hired*.”⁴⁵ Furthermore, “none were admitted as members of this established church, but such as had been baptized on a credible profession of Christianity; with those of their children who were too young to choose for themselves,” and these people, of course, join voluntarily.⁴⁶ Importantly, Christians who had objections to the doctrines or practices of the established church should not be compelled to join. Instead, “a full toleration should be granted them; and under certain limitations, an allowance made to them for their places of worship, and maintenance of ministers.”⁴⁷

It should be observed that much of what Scott was articulating about a tolerant establishment was more his own ideal than the reality of the English establishment. The Church of England, on account of the Act of Toleration, did have enough of a commitment to toleration to appease Scott and make him hopeful of better days for Evangelicals. Nevertheless, his musings about the ideal establishment do reveal his own spirit when it came to evangelical ministers outside the church. He believed they should not only be tolerated, but in certain instances, supported, and that by the establishment

⁴³Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 31.

⁴⁴Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 32.

⁴⁵Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 32.

⁴⁶Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 32.

⁴⁷Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 34.

itself. When this facet of his thinking is considered, it is not surprising to find Scott supporting missionary causes outside of his own denomination.

Ecclesiastical Irregularity

A few related topics will now be discussed in order to prepare the way for later chapters that deal with his missionary involvement. One of these topics is the issue of church order. The CMS would have a considerable amount of trouble raising support for their initial missionary plan because of disagreements in this area. Around the time of the Society's founding, Scott himself did not appear to be all that concerned with some of the stricter points of ecclesiastical regularity and Anglican churchmanship. However, pressure from other Evangelical ministers during his years as Secretary molded him into a more resolute and orderly churchman, and this evolution can clearly be seen in how he changed over the years with respect to irregular preaching.

Scott himself engaged in some itinerant, irregular preaching when he became the minister at Olney in the 1780s. In his biographical account, which was written after he changed his views on the subject, he explained that what began as small excursions into irregularity later became a major undertaking. He said, "I was drawn on further and further, till I was led to preach frequently (always on weekdays,) in houses and other private buildings; commonly to numerous congregations."⁴⁸ Apparently, his travels had a negative effect on him both financially as well as physically, as his asthma was exacerbated by riding seventy or eighty miles and preaching four or five times a week.⁴⁹ His motive, then, was a "zeal for the honour of Christ, and love to souls."⁵⁰ He claimed to feel "no consciousness of blame in what I did; nor perceived, that, in order to

⁴⁸John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself and Copious Extracts of His Letters*, 6th ed. (London, L. B. Seeley, 1824), 167.

⁴⁹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 167–68.

⁵⁰Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 168.

consistency, it was needful for me to choose one ground or the other, and to act either as a clergyman of the establishment, or as one who had receded from it.”⁵¹ Yet, when he moved to London, he apparently reduced his irregularity, stating that “gradually, however, I became more sensible of the inconsistency and impropriety of attempting to unite things in themselves discordant, and more attached to the established church.”⁵² He went on to say that he “refused to preach irregularly” after he came to London, “except as once in a year I consented to exchange pulpits with Mr. Hill of Surrey Chapel.”⁵³ After leaving London for Aston Sandford, he completely gave up irregular preaching “and determined no more to deviate from regularity.”⁵⁴ What had produced this change?

A precise answer to this question may not be entirely possible, as gradual changes typically come about through a variety of influences. However, an 1802 letter from Thomas Robinson to Scott may contain some clues as to his change of heart, especially since the letter mentions the practice Scott related about Surrey Chapel. The tone of the letter was nothing short of scathing and amounted to a full blown rebuke. “Your letter perfectly astonished me, as containing a confession of your *irregularity*,” Robinson wrote.⁵⁵ Disappointment dripped from practically every one of Robinson’s words: “I had for some years past boasted of you as belonging to *our* company and now I am sorry to find myself mistaken.”⁵⁶ He went on to explain that his objections were

⁵¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 168–69.

⁵²Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 169.

⁵³Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 169.

⁵⁴Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 169.

⁵⁵Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 26, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/90, Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK (hereafter all citations of letters in the CMS Archive will be reduced to the letter’s main details and the CMS Archive finding number).

⁵⁶Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 26, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/90.

motivated by a concern that irregularity would threaten the already strained relationship between Evangelical and non-Evangelical ministers in the church:

You know that I was always churchy, but I am become more decidedly so from seeing the mischief of the opposite plan. The times are critical, with respect to the state of religion in the Church. Evangelical Ministers are increasing around us; but they are watched with a malignant eye. They are evidently more and more hated by the Clergy of an opposite description, and I doubt not but plans are in agitation to check them or to drive them out of the establishment. I trust those plans will not be carried into effect. But I say to all my brethren so aimed at; Be more than ever circumspect, maintain a perfect consistency of character, shew yourselves true friends of the Church.⁵⁷

Just how strongly Robinson felt about irregularity came out later in the letter, when he bemoaned the rise of insubordination among the laity in the wake of the itinerate ministries of Whitefield and Wesley:

I would have let *Whitefield* and *Wesley* sleep quietly in their graves. They did good,—immense good. But the plan they pursued has been too much followed by others, and produced unspeakable mischief. You may not be so much aware of it, as we *parish priests*. But it has introduced sad confusion and insubordination;—so that a country clergyman has no hold of his people. All are masters, and think themselves at perfect liberty to run where they please, to desert him, and to set up a church for themselves. This is a serious evil. Surely it becomes *us* to set ourselves firmly to resist it; and therefore I am decided, to observe the line of strict regularity.⁵⁸

Robinson's appeals to Scott apparently had their effect, as an earlier letter from Scott to Robinson apparently contained a promise that he would no longer engage in the activity.⁵⁹

This letter has been quoted at some length because it effectively captures the tension Evangelical Anglicans felt about their position in the church. The letter is also instructive with respect to the effect the Evangelical Anglican tension had on individual

⁵⁷Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 26, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/90.

⁵⁸Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 26, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/90.

⁵⁹Robinson's letter states that he "was glad that you promise and are firmly resolved to amend your conduct in future." Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 26, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/90.

clergymen. Robinson clearly believed that Evangelicals were hated by non-Evangelical clergymen, and Evangelicals were being watched with great suspicion and were in danger of being driven out of the church. In order to avoid this undesirable outcome, Robinson urged his fellow Evangelicals to be strict churchmen wherever possible. As will become evident later on, Scott also felt this kind of pressure throughout his years as CMS Secretary. Robinson was not the only one who raised objections to CMS practices based on church order, and the desire to be an effective representative of the CMS drove Scott toward stricter conformity to the Church of England. However, Scott probably never became quite as “churchy” as Robinson was, a fact that can be seen in Scott’s rather ambivalent views on episcopal ordination.

Scott’s View of Episcopal Ordination

The subject of ordination was one of the most difficult and controversial issues Evangelicals had to wrestle with as they dealt with the Evangelical Anglican tension. Obtaining ordination from anti-Evangelical bishops was a challenge for Evangelicals who wished to serve within the Anglican community in England, and the CMS also found it difficult to obtain ordination for their missionaries. So acute was the problem that the CMS eventually considered options such as sending non-ordained catechists and ordained ministers from other denominations.

One of the key sticking points related to ordination was the common belief among Anglicans that the bishops in the established church effectively controlled ordination and the sending out of ministers. The twenty-third article of the Thirty-Nine Articles stated that “it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or minister the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same.”⁶⁰ In the Church of England, only the bishops were

⁶⁰“The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England,” in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007),

authorized to perform the task of ordination, and stricter churchmen were suspicious of any ordination that did not proceed from bishops whose succession could be demonstrated back to the apostles themselves. Most Evangelical ministers would have agreed that episcopal ordination was the proper means for Anglicans to enter the ministry, but they likely would have bristled at the idea that ordination must be conducted by a bishop who had a claim on apostolic succession. Furthermore, what should be done in the event that ordination could not be obtained through normal channels, and what about ministers who were ordained in other denominations? Were their ministries valid and could they possibly become ministry partners? In Scott's case, he never dealt with these subjects in any formal way. Most of his comments on ordination occur in the story of his own struggle to obtain it and in his CMS correspondence pertaining to missionary ordination attempts. Yet, he does make a few passing remarks in his *Commentary* and in his contribution to Peter Roe's book, *The Evil of Separation from the Church of England*, that at least provide a glimpse into his thoughts on the topic. However, Scott's mind seems to have evolved somewhat over the years, at least if his changing comments on Acts 8:4 indicate a change in sentiment.

Acts 8 is a chapter that describes how the early Christians in Jerusalem were scattered into other parts of Judea and Samaria in response to Jewish persecution. In telling the story of the Christian dispersion, Luke recorded in Acts 8:4 that the Christians who "were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (KJV). In the first edition of the *Commentary*, Scott's comments on this verse show him defending the general necessity of ordination as a prerequisite to public ministry, but doing so in a way that seemed to allow for exceptions to the rule in certain circumstances. In defense of ordination, he wrote, "It seems neither reasonable nor scriptural, that men should become stated public preachers, without being in some way sanctioned by those, who have been

3:501).

ministers before them; or that they should be the sole judges of their own abilities, or call to that most important work.”⁶¹ However, he also cautiously admitted that some of the “preachers” in Acts 8:4 were not ordained: “In some sense indeed every Christian may be said to preach the word; and in such circumstances many might preach, who had never received a regular ordination.”⁶² Now, he quickly qualified this statement by saying that “this passage does not give so much countenance to that irregular practice [of preaching without ordination], as some have inadvertently supposed.”⁶³ Nevertheless, the fact of the matter was, that in the year 1792, he allowed for lay preaching in some extenuating circumstances. Noting this fact is of some importance to later parts of the present treatise, particularly the controversy of the CMS’s proposal to send catechists as missionaries. If his first comments on Acts 8:4 are anything to go by, Scott would not have started his work as CMS Secretary with an overly exalted view of episcopal ordination, and he would not likely have had any major objection to using catechists on the mission field, the circumstances, being what they were, providing justification for the practice.

However, as in the case of irregular preaching, Scott seemed to have become more guarded in his statements on ordination as the pressures of the Evangelical Anglican tension pressed in on him while he was CMS Secretary. A good indication that a change took place can be seen in the extent to which Scott changed his comments on Acts 8:4 in later editions of his *Commentary*. When the first edition is compared with subsequent editions, what immediately arrests one’s attention is that the sentences on ordination quoted above were removed entirely in the later editions. Though he still mentioned the fact that some of those who “went every where preaching the word” were

⁶¹Thomas Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:1–4,” in *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: With Original Notes, and Practical Observations* [hereafter *Commentary*] (London: Bellamy and Robarts, 1788–1792), vol. 4.

⁶²Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:1–4,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

⁶³Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:1–4,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

not ministers, he focused his remarks less on ordination and more on what “preaching the word” entailed in this context. In place of his previous explanation, he inserted a long quotation from Henry Hammond’s (1605–1660) *Paraphrase and Annotations on the New Testament*, where Hammond made a distinction between the Greek words εὐαγγελίζω (“to preach the gospel”) and κηρύσσω (“to preach”). According to Hammond, “the latter signifies a public solemn proclaiming of Christ, as when a herald or crier, doth *by way of office* proclaim any thing.”⁶⁴ The former, which is the word used in Acts 8:4, “imports no more, than the telling it, making it known, as good news is published, without the voice of a herald or crier, by all that have heard it, to all they meet with.”⁶⁵

Scott built on this distinction to minimize the notion of lay preaching and to bolster the importance of ordination. In agreement with Hammond, his updated comments stated that

the difference between stately and authoritatively, as a herald, and by office and authority, preaching to regularly convened congregations; or, simply declaring what a man knows of Christ and salvation, among relations, juniors, ignorant neighbours, or ignorant persons of any sort, without assuming any authority, seems of great importance.⁶⁶

As his more nuanced explanation continued, it became evident that Scott was trying to walk a fine line between ecclesiastical regularity and evangelical piety. He affirmed the idea that all Christians were able to preach Christ in their personal sphere of influence. If, however, that proclamation of the gospel began to appear “something like an authoritative preacher,” he asked whether “it [would] not then be proper, that pastors and

⁶⁴Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations upon All the Books of the New Testament*, quoted in Thomas Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:1–4,” in *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, with Original Notes, Practical Observations, and Copious References*, vol. 5 [hereafter *Commentary*, 1810–1812 ed.] (New York: Whiting and Watson, 1810–1812). For sake of the reader, Scott left out some of the Greek and Latin verbage in Hammond’s original. See Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations upon All the Books of the New Testament* (London, 1653), 395.

⁶⁵Hammond, *Paraphrase and Annotations*, quoted in Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:1–4,” in *Commentary*, 1810–1812 ed., vol. 5.

⁶⁶Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:4,” in *Commentary*, 1810–1812 ed., vol. 5.

rulers should send some Barnabas, to confirm what has been done, and to confer the due authority?”⁶⁷ Furthermore, “would it not be right, in this case, for the person himself to seek from the pastors and teachers of the Church, their regular sanction to his labours, now become more public, than he at first either expected or intended?”⁶⁸ Clearly, these sentences were arguing in favor of ordination, and he probably used the word “regular” to show his commitment to being a “regular” clergyman. He had also taken out the language of the first edition that seemed to be a warrant for preaching without ordination, and he appeared more committed to the idea that ordination was required for ministering to congregations. He even made sure to use stronger language against irregularity, claiming that authorizing “all, who choose, without any human appointment, and even in ordinary cases, to become authoritative preachers, seems a dangerous extreme.”⁶⁹

Yet, his choice of wording was still rather intriguing. He used two parallel expressions—“pastors and rulers” and “pastors and teachers”—to describe those to whom a person should go for ordination. Why did he not use the word *bishop*? Perhaps he was using the word *rulers* as an equivalent to the word *bishops*, or perhaps his word choice was intentionally ambiguous so as to make his *Commentary* more appealing to non-Anglicans. Either way, his wording hardly sounded like someone who was staunchly committed to the idea of episcopal ordination, especially those versions of episcopacy that favored apostolic succession.

This inference is evidently confirmed when these statements from his *Commentary* are compared to those he made in his letters to Peter Roe. In Scott’s second letter to Roe, he spoke to the subject of ordination, and he specifically addressed the complication related to the twenty-third article in the Thirty-Nine Articles. The issue was

⁶⁷Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:4,” in *Commentary*, 1810–1812 ed., vol. 5.

⁶⁸Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:4,” in *Commentary*, 1810–1812 ed., vol. 5.

⁶⁹Scott, “Notes on Acts 8:4,” in *Commentary*, 1810–1812 ed., vol. 5.

clear for Scott—“It has been said, that the twenty-third article of our church sets aside all preaching, and ministration, not sanctioned by *ecclesiastical officers appointed by the crown*.”⁷⁰ In response, he acknowledged that “those who framed this article intended to condemn all publick preaching and ministering of sacraments by *unordained* persons; the propriety of which practice, or the contrary, consistutes a question of itself, which has divided the opinions of the wisest and best men, in different ages of the church.”⁷¹ Nevertheless, he exhorted the reader to “mark the cautious language of the article—‘We ought to judge lawfully called and sent them, which be chosen and called to this work by men, who have publick authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.’”⁷² He then proceeded to relate several remarks by Bishop Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715) on the twenty-third article, who explained what “lawful authority” meant in the article:

[What] we believe to be *lawful authority*, is that rule which the body of the pastors, or bishops and clergy of a church shall settle; being met in a body under the due respect to the powers whom God shall set over them. They who drew the article had the state of the several churches before their eyes, that had been differently reformed.”⁷³

In Burnet’s understanding, “lawful authority” had been extended by the Thirty-Nine Articles to “several churches” or denominations and not restricted to the Church of England. Scott built on this understanding of authority to allow for the validity of ordination of ministers in other denominations:

I am persuaded, that Bp. Burnet gives the meaning of those who drew the article correctly; and that, though episcopal themselves, they never meant to deny the validity of Lutheran, or even Presbyterian, ordination: and let it not be forgotten,

⁷⁰Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 41.

⁷¹Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 41–42.

⁷²Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 42.

⁷³Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 42. For the original source of these quotations, see Gilbert Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* (London, 1699), 257–58. It should be noted that Scott took separate quotations from Burnett and rearranged them into a new paragraph to suit his purposes.

that *Independency*, however modified, had not then appeared, in modern churches at least; yet with a little allowance on this ground, the article may take in all regularly ordained ministers, even among the independents.⁷⁴

Several matters stand out in what Scott said here. First, his interpretation, via Burnet, was an attempt to understand the article in its historical context. Once again, Scott is seen appealing to the English Reformers for his understanding of the English establishment. Second, Scott's take on the article allowed him to recognize the ordination of ministers from denominations other than his own. Significantly, he recognized the ordaining rights of both continental Protestants and English Dissenters. For this to be the case, he would have had to connect ordination to something other than apostolic succession, and in doing so, he would have had to reject the position of many high churchmen in his day. Apparently, he saw the right of ordination as resting with the recognized leaders of any particular denomination, whether those leaders be pastors, rulers, teachers, or, as in his own context, the bishops. The implications of this viewpoint for Scott's Evangelicalism are obvious. Non-Anglican ministers, if duly ordained in their own churches, were to be acknowledged as legitimate ministers of the gospel just like clergymen in the Church of England. Certainly, denominational distinctions might preclude Scott from working directly with other ministers, but his view of ordination made it possible for him to have spiritual and ministerial friends who were members of the Universal Church and not necessarily members of the Church of England.

Evangelicalism and Christendom

The last facet of Scott's Evangelical identity that will be considered in this chapter is his relationship with Christians outside of the Church of England. How did he conceptualize Christendom, and how did he relate to it? What was the nature of his relationship with English Dissenters and Christians outside of the Church of England? Answering these questions will be vital for understanding Scott's contributions to

⁷⁴Scott, Second Letter to Peter Roe, November 23, 1815, in *Evil of Separation*, 42–43.

evangelical missions.

Scott's Favorite Analogy for the Church

A good way to start exploring Scott's views on Christendom is by mentioning an analogy of the church that pervades his writings, namely, that the Church Universal can be compared to an army. As will come out in subsequent discussion, Scott often employed military analogies in his missionary discourses to counter objections about the multiplication of missionary agencies, but the word picture originally arose out of the unscriptural and anti-Scriptural distinction he employed concerning denominational differences. In a 1795 letter to his friend in Scotland, he stated his belief that "there are many things unscriptural among us all," and he went on to say that he had "not met with any society or denomination of Christians, with whom I should agree in every thing."⁷⁵ Though Scott was certainly not desirous of more division within Christendom, he recognized that differences were inevitable and could in some ways be beneficial. How could division be helpful? It could be helpful in the same way divisions in an army are helpful:

If the different sects of Christians, among whom the truths of the gospel are maintained, would but consider themselves as different regiments in the same army; and stand up, as it were, for the honour of their particular regiment, (only) by endeavouring to outdo others in promoting the spread of true religion; and thus fighting against the common enemy: the divisions might be overruled for good.⁷⁶

The beauty of the analogy was that it represented all denominations as being on the same side in a battle. Each group was responsible for various aspects of the conflict, but in the end, the object was the same. The significance of the analogy is that Scott saw ministers in other denominations as fellow soldiers in the gospel cause.

⁷⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to a Friend in Scotland, September 18, 1795, in *Letters and Papers*, 176–77.

⁷⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to a Friend in Scotland, September 18, 1795, in *Letters and Papers*, 177–78.

Scott's Letters to John Ryland, Jr.

Perhaps the best window into Scott's mindset concerning Christians outside of the Church of England is the friendship Scott maintained for nearly thirty-five years with Baptist minister John Ryland, Jr. Scott and Ryland became friends sometime in the 1780s, and the two men maintained a correspondence that extended from at least 1786 to just before Scott's death in 1821. Many of Scott's letters to Ryland have been preserved, and these letters provide a unique glimpse into Scott's friendliness with an English Dissenter.⁷⁷ What appears to be the oldest of Scott's extant letters to Ryland set a rather pleasant tone for all subsequent exchanges. At the outset, he expressed his great affection for Ryland, "I trust I can truly say that I also have the welfare of all the friends of truth and holiness near my heart; and I know but few in my own line, that I feel more cordially united to, than yourself, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Symmonds."⁷⁸ Scott signed off the same letter by saying, "We are all tolerably well, and send as much love to you as can be crammed in."⁷⁹ As the years went by, the two ministers wrote back and forth to discuss a variety of topics ranging from their personal and familial struggles to the finer points of theology and politics, and their letters often dealt with the prickly relationship between Anglicans and Dissenters.

Two Letters on Politics Written in 1792. Of considerable importance in this regard are two letters Scott wrote to Ryland in late 1792. At the time the letters were written, France was in the throes of its infamous Revolution, and the English establishment, both political and religious, was extremely sensitive to anything that

⁷⁷Scott's letters to Ryland have been preserved chiefly in three places. John Scott preserved portions of seven independently dated letters to Ryland (Scott, *Letters and Papers*, 121–42). Parts of several other letters are scattered throughout *The Life of Thomas Scott*. The greatest portion are maintained in the holdings of Bristol Baptist College in Bristol, UK.

⁷⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., May 24, 1786, The Scott Family Correspondence to John Ryland, 1786–1825 [Scott Family Correspondence], Bristol Baptist College Special Collections, Bristol, UK.

⁷⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., May 24, 1786, Scott Family Correspondence.

appeared revolutionary. During these years, religious Dissent came under increased scrutiny, especially since many within Dissenting ranks had become outspoken voices for political liberty. Particularly troubling to the establishment was the fact that, “from 1760, Dissenting aims subtly shifted from a defense of the toleration they enjoyed under the Revolution settlement to a destruction of the Church-State alliance.”⁸⁰ As the English populace watched the disintegration of French society on the Continent, fear over a similar occurrence happening in England began to grow, and those who articulated any ideas resembling the principles driving the French Revolution were suspected of potential treason. In 1791, anxiety over a possible revolution reached such heights in Birmingham that an angry mob set out to burn the churches and homes of several Dissenting groups, groups who were believed to be calling for the “destruction of the present Government, and the King’s Head in a Charger.”⁸¹ In all, four Dissenting churches were burned along with the homes of several ministers. The most famous victim was Joseph Priestly (1733–1804), whose house and church were burned, and one Baptist church was among the churches destroyed. Naturally, Ryland was concerned about the growing antipathy towards his Baptist brethren, and these topics were the subject of two of Scott’s letters, written in December of 1792.

These letters show Scott to be one who wanted to maintain both the social order of the establishment and the toleration that Dissenters had enjoyed for a number of years. In his December 5th letter, Scott told Ryland that he was “no great stickler either for Monarchy, or any of its appendages; and I trust I am a steady friend to real Liberty in all cases, and places: yet as human nature is constituted, I am apt to think, a limited monarchy, or a mixed government, where one Branch oversees, and checks the others, is

⁸⁰Clark, *English Society*, 376.

⁸¹*An Authentic Account of the Late Riots in the Town of Birmingham and Its Vicinity* (Birmingham: T. P. Trimer, 1791), 5.

best.”⁸² He believed that a republican form of government “must either verge to anarchy or an oligarchical Tyranny.”⁸³ In terms of the political aims, he believed that many Dissenters were overly preoccupied with political favor:

I must also think that many religious and respectable Dissenters have expected too much in this Devil’s World; where protection and toleration seem the utmost that God’s children can hope for. Many also both of the Dissenters and others have meddled too much with such matters; and I grieve to see that the prejudice this has infused into the minds of religious people in the church is likely to widen our unhappy divisions.⁸⁴

Here Scott was holding the establishment line. However, he was also appalled by what had happened in Birmingham, and he condemned the use of violence against Dissenters by members of the establishment:

I am so far from wishing that Dr. P[riestley] had been burnt at B[irmingham] that I am grieved that such weapons should have been at all touched by those, who pretended to be friends either to the Doctrines of C[hrist], or the constitution. I am sorry also that the persons you mention are so vehement: an enemy hath done it. As far as I have influence I would be a peacemaker: we have enemies enough, and should not quarrel with each other.⁸⁵

Here was Scott advocating peaceful toleration of Dissent. Nevertheless, Scott probably sensed that he and Ryland did not necessarily see the political landscape in quite the same way, and he urged Ryland to focus more on ministry than politics: “If your political creed be not identically the same, I hope that will make no difference. I always thought you so engaged in the work of the ministry, and in promoting the kingdom of Christ, as to bestow little time about other governments; and I trust you will do so still.”⁸⁶

Scott’s next letter to Ryland confirms that Ryland did not see eye-to-eye with Scott on several political matters. When he had sent his December 5th letter, Scott had

⁸²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 5, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁸³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 5, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁸⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 5, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁸⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 5, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁸⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 5, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

also sent Ryland a copy of his recently published pamphlet, *On Civil Government and the Duties of Subjects*.⁸⁷ Ryland must have objected to several parts of the treatise because Scott's answer, written December 24, 1792, contained a number of lengthy clarifications as to what he meant. One of the issues on which Ryland had challenged Scott was the Test Act, which had for the last century prevented Dissenters from holding public office if they refused to take communion in the Church of England and take the oaths of supremacy.⁸⁸ Scott's comments on the Test Act are rather intriguing. On one hand, he was against it, "In respect to the Test Act, I would certainly abolish it, let what would be the consequence because I deem it the scandal of that church, to which in a Sense I belong."⁸⁹ On the other, he thought that "if [he] were a Dissenter, I think I could care less about it; for as a *religious* body the Dissenters will be less led into Temptation, when abridged of their right in this particular, than if freely admitted to places of Trust and profit."⁹⁰

These statements would not likely have been pleasing to anyone, had they been read outside of private correspondence. Scott was certainly not defending the establishment when he called for the abolition of the Test Act, and what did he mean when he said he belonged to the Church of England *in a Sense*? That latter phrase is especially curious. How could he say that he was only a member of the church in a sense? Was he not an ordained minister in the Established Church? Surely a strict Anglican would have been shocked to read those words. In fact, the phrase was troubling enough that John Scott edited it out of the letter entirely when it was reproduced in his

⁸⁷Thomas Scott, *An Impartial Statement on the Scripture Doctrine, in Respect of Civil Government, and the Duties of Subjects* (London: C. Watts, 1792).

⁸⁸See "First Test Act, 1673," in *English Historical Documents 1660–1714*, ed. Andrew Browning (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 389–91.

⁸⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 24, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁹⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 24, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

biography.⁹¹ Thomas Scott did not explain the phrase, but he almost certainly used it as a signal to Ryland that he (Scott) saw himself primarily as a member of the Universal Church to which they both belonged. One wonders, though, if whatever good that small gesture might have done was not immediately mitigated by the rest of what Scott said. Ryland would probably not have been thrilled to hear Scott say that Dissenters should just accept that some of their civil rights were being violated by the establishment on the grounds that the Test Act was keeping them from secular temptations.

Nevertheless, Scott tried to soften the impact of what he was saying by reassuring Ryland that having the full privileges of the establishment did not necessarily improve one's standing in the religious community. Evidently, Ryland was under the impression that Evangelicals in the Church of England were typically treated better and earned more money than Dissenters, but Scott's response contradicted this thinking:

As to the supposed preference of the Episcopalian ministers, who preach the gospel, I see little of it. Here, at least, we most of us have less salaries and more work than our Dissenting brethren. Some few in the church indeed, by family connections &c., get large livings; but probably they would be better without them: and except for family connexions or bought livings, we are almost as much out of the way of preferment as our brethren among the Dissenters.⁹²

This paragraph is instructive in terms of how Scott viewed the ecclesiastical landscape. He hinted that there were two camps in the Church of England, those who preached the gospel (Evangelicals) and those who did not. His experience was that Evangelicals were typically excluded from preferment, and his description very nearly equates the situation of Evangelicals and Dissenters. The way he arranged his thoughts suggested that the administrators of the Church of England viewed Evangelicals and Dissenters in much the same way, and it is not hard to image that an Evangelical might look enviously at the Dissenting minister, who according to Scott, was better paid and had less work. Here was

⁹¹See Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 308.

⁹²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 24, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

the Evangelical Anglican tension in a nutshell. For Scott, however, this close alignment between Evangelicals and orthodox Dissenters was more than just a reality arising out of the pressures of religious politics, but was a spiritual reality brought about by the gospel itself. This truth was made plain at the end of the letter, where he exhorted Ryland:

Let us, my brother, leave wordly people to their disputes about such wordly subjects; let us avoid all attachment to parties, and the extremes of all parties: let us endeavour to act as peacemakers, especially in the church, and deem ourselves nearer united in the Bond of faith to all who love Christ, than we can be to those of our party, either religious or political, who do not.⁹³

The “church” here, can be none other than the Universal Church, and this statement undeniably indicates that Scott saw himself as “nearer united” to this church than to the visible Church of England.

A letter on the *Evangelical Magazine*, May 6, 1793. Being spiritually united to Dissenters through the Universal Church did not preclude Scott from taking denominational affiliations into account in how he conducted ministry. Helpful in this regard is a letter Scott wrote to Ryland on May 6, 1793, in response to several questions Ryland had asked about evangelical cooperation. Specifically, Ryland had asked Scott as to why the latter was not willing to concur with the editors of the *Evangelical Magazine*, which was scheduled to begin publication later that year. Scott’s refusal must have come as a surprise to Ryland, especially considering that the editors of the *Evangelical Magazine* were “composed of Churchmen and Dissenters of different denominations, uniting their efforts in one common cause, who will endeavour to diffuse liberal sentiments, wheresoever the Providence of God may direct this little confluence of Christian doctrine and catholicism to wind its peaceful course.”⁹⁴ Both Ryland and Andrew Fuller had a hand in the magazine, and Ryland must have thought that Scott

⁹³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 24, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁹⁴*The Evangelical Magazine*, vol. 1 (London: T. Chapman, 1793), 3.

would have welcomed the opportunity to join hands with his friends in advancing evangelical principles throughout the country. Why had Scott refused?

In his reply, Scott effectively confessed that his actions were being governed by the pressure of the Evangelical Anglican tension. His evangelicalism was pulling him toward involvement with the publication: “I should deem it an honour to concur with many Dissenters in their useful designs.”⁹⁵ However, his Anglicanism was causing him to hesitate:

If this Work had been undertaken by an equal number of respectable Dissenters, & church-men, I should have *so far* have been ready to concur; nor c[ould] I think of a *degradation* in joining any one of the company whose Names I saw; for I have had too many causes for abasement to look down on any godly man: But as all were Dissenters, or irregulars, except one, with whom I am not much united; and as my other Brethren stood aloof, so I thought it would appear singular & might increase prejudice, if I step'd forth, and took a decided part in it.⁹⁶

In other words, he was afraid of a backlash from other churchmen if he aligned himself with Dissenters without considerable support from other Evangelical clergymen. In order to alleviate the prospect of prejudice, he imposed a requirement on himself that an equal distribution of Anglicans and Dissenters in the leadership of an organization must be present in order for him to participate in it.⁹⁷ Thus, Scott's evangelicalism, at times, was limited by his Anglicanism. He could speak highly of Christians outside of the Church of England, but he definitely took his position in the Anglican community seriously. As he told Ryland, “I sincerely wish & pray for the usefulness of every man in his place; but I have my place, and must endeavour to the best of my judgment to do good in it.”⁹⁸ This conviction was the driving force in Scott's commitment to the CMS over other missionary societies.

⁹⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., May 6, 1793, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁹⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., May 6, 1793, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁹⁷This principle explains his willingness to be involved with the BFBS and the LSPCJ, as will be explained in chap. 8.

⁹⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., May 6, 1793, Scott Family Correspondence.

A letter on the spirit of Conformists to Dissenters, 1795. If Scott's delicate refusal to collaborate with the *Evangelical Magazine* is any indication, maintaining evangelical friendships could be a complicated balancing act. In Scott's case, he had friends in the Church of England and in Dissent. Being cordial to both had its challenges, and Scott's goodwill would be tested in late 1795 by another letter from Ryland on the religious component of British politics. Apparently, the political situation in the 1790s was a constant source of aggravation for Ryland, and he felt that both the British government and the established church had unfairly treated peaceful Dissenters. Around the first of November in 1795, Ryland wrote a letter to Scott in which Ryland accused the Evangelical clergymen of being "partizans of a corrupt government, & enemies to the liberties of mankind."⁹⁹ When Scott received the letter, he was clearly upset by what he read, and he told Ryland that the letter had "given [him] so much uneasiness, that [he] must write in order to be relieved."¹⁰⁰ He went on:

The part of your letter that concerns me, is that which relates to the conduct and spirit of conformists to their brethren; and this confirms my lamentable forebodings, that the common enemy would make effectual use of political matters, to sow the seeds of bitter dissention among evangelical persons of different denominations.¹⁰¹

In this case, Scott found himself in the tricky place of trying to appease his Dissenting brother without betraying his friends within the establishment. In the charged atmosphere of the French Revolution, Evangelical clergymen often went out of their way to show that they were loyal citizens. Scott's treatise *On Government and the Duties of Subjects* was a written example of this phenomenon. To Ryland, some of these displays of loyalty came across as outright opposition to English Dissent. Judging from Scott's letter, Ryland had come to the conclusion that Scott's Evangelical brothers did not really care for

⁹⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

evangelical Dissenters, and some of them were even willing to concur in the use of violence or other means to suppress Dissenters and their meeting houses.

Scott's answer demonstrates just how complex the political and religious environment in the late eighteenth century could be. Scott reassured Ryland that Evangelicals possessed a great affection for Dissenters. For Scott's part, "if the [Evangelical clergy] do not love the brethren, as such, tho Dissenters, and show that love, in such ways as circumstances admit, I shall question the sincerity of their love for Christ."¹⁰² However, he admitted that some Evangelicals did at times "omit some of the ways of expressing their love from conscience . . . lest they should hinder their own usefulness."¹⁰³ He also conceded that Evangelicals "are apt to run into extremes and often fail in candour," but he also wondered "whether they too have not some ground of complaint on their side."¹⁰⁴ These two statements indicate that he was trying to see the matter from both sides. From an Evangelical point of view, some Dissenters were fairly radical, and not all of them were cut from the same cloth as Ryland and Fuller. Scott himself had complained to Ryland about the radical element within Dissent in one of his previous letters:

Many Dissenters, chiefly (would I could say wholly) of the Arians and Socinians, have made themselves obnoxious to those who are attached to the present constitution: others have not acted discreetly; and parties always are violent against whole bodies of men: they who run into one extreme drive others into the opposite: moderate men please not party, and their voice cannot be heard.¹⁰⁵

The unhappy reality seems to have been that some Evangelicals had lumped all Dissenters together as radicals in some of their statements and managed to offend those who were more conservative or moderate.

¹⁰²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 24, 1792, Scott Family Correspondence.

Though Scott acknowledged that Evangelicals had made “a single expression incautiously dropped” from time-to-time, he was adamant that the better part of the Evangelical clergy was not guilty of the malice toward Dissenters of which Ryland spoke.¹⁰⁶ He reiterated the point he had made in his previous letters about Evangelicals being treated almost like Dissenters by the establishment, saying, “We are not only frowned upon by our superiors, but almost wholly excluded from valuable preferments.”¹⁰⁷ Given their exclusion from the government, how could they be “the partizans of a corrupt government” as Ryland was suggesting? Scott was also appalled at the insinuation that the Evangelical clergy would resort to violence or other persecuting acts in order to side with the government against Dissent. He wrote, “If any E[vangelical] Clergymen wish to oppose erroneous Dissenters ‘by violence and slander, by Mobs and Magistrates;’ I will not vindicate or consort with them if I know it.”¹⁰⁸ Later on in the letter, he demanded “to be informed what *overt* acts, or *publications* give your brethren so horrid an idea of the savage ferocity of the E[vangelical] C[lergy].”¹⁰⁹ He acknowledged that Edward Burn (1762–1837) had written some disparaging remarks about Dissenters in response to the Birmingham incident, and his co-minister at the Lock had thrown “out crude high Church and government principles;” but both of these men did not represent the prevailing views of the Evangelicals.¹¹⁰

Scott’s exacerbation continued, and his tone indicates that he truly was offended by Ryland’s accusations: “But really I believe, the most *baseless fabric of a vision* that ever vanished, was not more groundless, than that any ministers in the

¹⁰⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹¹⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

establishment, generally approved among serious Christians would be the most pitiless foes of Dissenters amid Mobs and Massacres.”¹¹¹ In fact, there was proof to the contrary. So far were Evangelicals from wanting Dissenting churches closed or forbidden to be built that “many thousands of pounds have been raised from the Members of the Establishment for this purpose; Ministers have sanctioned it; they have been censured and vilified as enemies of the Church for doing it.”¹¹² He added, “We have two Dissenting Ministers in our Eclectic Society: this does not look like the spirit you mention.”¹¹³ He then brought the letter to a conclusion with some force: “Upon the whole I think your brethren do not judge candidly of my brethren: that there are faults on both sides; and that blessed are the peace-makers.”¹¹⁴

The significance of this letter for apprehending Scott’s views on Christendom is not so much in *what* he said about Evangelicals and Dissenters, but *how* he said it. Both the length and the tone of the letter are indicative of passion. He could not believe that Ryland would even suggest that he and his Evangelical friends did not love their Dissenting brethren. Yes, the pressure of the times had produced some declarations that had probably been better left unsaid or better qualified, but these instances should not have been “wrested to the worst sense imaginable.”¹¹⁵ Furthermore, this passionate defense of the Evangelical clergy’s love for their brethren outside the Church of England demonstrated rather conclusively that Scott himself possessed a deep affection for all Christians irrespective of their denominational affiliation.

¹¹¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹¹²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹¹³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹¹⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹¹⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 9, 1795, Scott Family Correspondence.

Letters pertaining to the *Christian Observer*. Ryland apparently remained unconvinced about many things Scott had written. As new examples of perceived Evangelical attacks on Dissenters arose over the years, Ryland would complain to Scott about them, and Scott would try to give Ryland reassurances about the Evangelical clergy. As the exchanges are often similar in nature to the letters already detailed above, every instance need not be related here. However, one of the recurring issues Ryland raised with Scott is worth examining. In 1802, Evangelical Anglicans began publishing a monthly periodical called the *Christian Observer*. Many of Scott's Evangelical friends were heavily involved in editing or writing for the magazine, and he himself made at least thirty contributions of various sorts to the publication.¹¹⁶ On occasion, articles were published in the *Christian Observer* that raised the ire of Ryland, who took them as personal attacks, and Scott's responses reveal some differences between Scott and other Evangelicals on how they should relate to Dissenters.

The first of Scott's letters to appear on the subject of the *Christian Observer* was written sometime in 1802.¹¹⁷ Ryland had written to Scott to ascertain his role with the magazine and to get his perspective on a troubling letter that had appeared there. The letter in question, signed by a clergymen with the initials "W. R.," called for absolute regularity among the Evangelical clergy.¹¹⁸ W. R. wrote in a rather scolding tone and left the impression that Evangelical clergymen should have little to do with Dissenters.

¹¹⁶For a convenient collection of Scott's contributions to the *Christian Observer*, see John Scott, ed., *The Works of the Rev. Thomas Scott [Works]* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1823–25), 10:271–474.

¹¹⁷The letter is a part of the Scott Family Correspondence at Bristol but is undated. Internal evidence suggests that the letter had to be written after March of 1802 since Scott makes mention of a letter to the editor of the *Christian Observer* that was signed by someone with the initials "W. R." That letter was published in March of 1802. Scott also mentioned that he had written an article for the magazine that was yet to be published. Scott's first publication in the *Christian Observer* came out in November of 1802. Thus, the letter had to have been written sometime between March and November, 1802. In this section, the letter will be cited as "Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence."

¹¹⁸W. R., "Letter from a Clergyman to the Editor," in *Christian Observer*, vol. 1 (London: C. Whittingham, 1802), 161–63.

Naturally, Ryland was upset when he read W. R.'s letter, but he was perhaps more disturbed by the prospect that Scott condoned this sentiment since it had been published in the *Christian Observer*. Evidently, Ryland was under the impression that Scott was one of the magazine's editors, and Ryland could not believe that his friend would allow such a harsh treatment of Dissenters to be published in an Evangelical magazine without comment or refutation.

Intriguingly, Scott distanced himself from the people who were the primary instigators of the publication in his response to Ryland, "In respect to the *Christian Observer*, you will perhaps be surprised when I say, that I have not the smallest concern in it. I wrote one paper, a critique, but it has not yet appeared: but as to the conducting of I have all along decidedly declined having any share in it."¹¹⁹ He had been "pressed by many respectable persons to be the Editor of a magazine, in some particulars appropriate to the established church, or rather the evangelical part of it; but I have always resisted their utmost importunity: nor would so much as be upon the committee, which superintends the *Christian Observer*."¹²⁰ Scott had cited his busyness to these lobbyists as the reason for his refusal, but he told Ryland that he "also foresaw, & foretold in my private circle, that the leading persons, or rather some clergymen of eminence at a distance from town, with a few individuals here, would carry certain points further than I should approve."¹²¹ He continued, "I knew I had not influence enough to prevent: and I must either have given great umbrage on this quarter: or have given my sanction to what I decidedly disapproved."¹²² W. R.'s letter was an example of what he was talking about:

I knew of it beforehand, & protested strongly, with an individual or two against it, who could have kept it out, if they had had courage to venture the offense. And

¹¹⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence.

since it has been published, I have openly, (that is in company & among my brethren & before persons concerned) protested against it in as strong language as you have used: and further, I have more than once declared that the persuasion such papers would be inserted was the grand reason, for which I would not be concerned in editing the work.¹²³

Scott's explanation on this point is significant because it shows that Evangelical clergymen were divided on how best to handle the difficulties of the Evangelical Anglican tension. As Scott explained it:

I am truly sorry to see such a spirit getting ground among us: but many seem to think they can never establish their claim to be loyal subjects & true churchmen, but by censuring whole bodies of men together in a very uncandid manner. And at the last, I cannot but smile, that those, who thus *from fear*, or out of a *mistaken prudence*, pay a kind of homage to those who hate Dissenters & Methodists, in hopes they will not hate evangelical members & ministers of the church: get more outraged & reviled, than the rest of us.¹²⁴

Thus, some Evangelicals believed that the best way to handle the Evangelical Anglican tension was to attack Dissenters and thereby eschew even the appearance of associating with Dissent.

Scott did not belong to this camp, as is made plain by another letter he wrote to Ryland on the subject of the *Christian Observer* that same year. Here again, his words show him at odds with other Evangelicals, "I am exceedingly grieved at the increasing bitterness which I observe in many of my brethren (Dear Mr. Newton is a decided exception), against Dissenters and Methodists, which must produce reciprocal bitterness in some at least."¹²⁵ Importantly, Scott did not simply grieve in silence. He hit back at those who were mean-spirited toward Christians outside the Church:

I protest against it [the bitter spirit] by conversation, and by letters continually: I bring the subject forward whenever I can, and lose no small degree of favour by this means. I wrote a very long letter to one of the Editors of the Ch[ristian] Observer, a great part of which was a very strong protest against some of the things in that work, which I observed were more severe against, what is called *schism*, than against

¹²³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., Undated [1802?], Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., September 4, 1802, Scott Family Correspondence.

heresy.¹²⁶

Here Scott can be observed fighting *in behalf of* Dissenters, and his actions take on an even greater meaning when it is observed that this letter was written *after* Scott had promised Thomas Robinson that he was ridding himself of irregularity.¹²⁷ Thus, however much Scott was sensitive to the practical benefits of ecclesiastical conformity within the social and political realm of the Church of England, he did not let those concerns outweigh his unwavering belief that Christians outside the church were his friends and brethren, and he would not betray them simply to win political points among his peers. The conclusion of the letter makes all this clear, “I fear my feeble voice will not be heard. . . , but I am determined, by the help of God, to live and die, avowing my cordial reception as a brother, of every man, whom I consider as loving my blessed Lord and Saviour.”¹²⁸

Scott’s irritation over the *Christian Observer’s* bent toward divisiveness continued beyond the publication’s first year. In 1806, Scott complained to Ryland:

I am by no means satisfied with the *Christian Observer* in that respect, which you mention, They are too fond of throwing out severe things against bodies of men, without due discrimination. I wrote to one of the principal persons a private letter, strongly remonstrating against some sweeping clauses, censuring the great body of evangelical authors, in their review of Foster’s Essays.¹²⁹

In 1808, he lamented over the effect the *Christian Observer* had had on Anglican ministers, apparently encouraging them to be more concerned with regularity than spirituality:

I am not much better satisfied with the *Christian Ob[server]* than you. I think they and their coadjutors, want to manufacture a new set of dry, cold, stiff, prudent, passibly evangelical, clergymen; and in order to bring them forward, to gun down

¹²⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., September 4, 1802, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²⁷The Robinson letter was written on April 26, 1802.

¹²⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., September 4, 1802, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., September 26, 1806, Scott Family Correspondence. Scott was referring to the writings of Baptist minister John Foster (1770–1843). See John Foster, *Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend* (London: Longman, 1805).

all those, whom God has hitherto made use of among us.¹³⁰

These letters written in 1808 continued the same themes Scott had articulated in his 1802 letters on the *Christian Observer* and confirm that he fundamentally disagreed with the magazine's editors with respect to their treatment of Dissenters. These letters also consistently portray Scott as a friend and defender of English Dissenters even when it was not popular within his own circle.

A letter concerning the Baptist meeting at Haddenham. In December of 1809, Scott wrote to Ryland to discuss a variety of subjects, including the revival of a Baptist meeting house in Haddenham. In 1809, Scott was ministering in Aston Sandford, which is located approximately a mile from the larger village of Haddenham. The close proximity between the two places naturally fostered considerable interaction between the residents, a reality that continues to the present day. Sometime during Scott's first few years at Aston Sandford, Andrew Fuller, along with several others, restarted a Baptist meeting that had "long been neglected."¹³¹ As it turned out, Scott had a considerable influence on the new congregation because "the person, who has the meeting rebuilt . . . and will probably in due time be pastor, has been and is one of my most constant hearers, and most attached disciples, saving that he is a Dissenter and a Baptist *sui generis*."¹³²

Scott thought highly of his Baptist disciple, and he described him as "a truly pious young man."¹³³ Yet, Scott also recognized that the formation of a new church in the sparsely populated area of Aston Sandford and Haddenham could spell trouble for his own church. "I foresee," he told Ryland, "that, when God shall remove me; unless

¹³⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., November 7, 1808, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹³¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 18, 1809, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹³²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 18, 1809, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹³³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 18, 1809, Scott Family Correspondence.

someone succeeds me, of considerable influence, the church at Aston will be deserted for the Meeting at Haddenham.”¹³⁴ What is remarkable is Scott’s attitude in response to this possibility. Instead of being upset by the prospect, he very graciously stated, “What shall I say? Why, if God puts the poor sinners in this neighbourhood, by my ministry, among his children, (as I trust he does a considerable number); he has full right to train up his own children, in his own way, for their heavenly inheritance.”¹³⁵ Then, he wryly concluded, “Do not tell the high churchmen that I say so.”¹³⁶

This whimsical little paragraph actually says a great deal about Scott’s outlook on Christendom. His final words cleverly indicate that he did not consider himself a high churchman. From Scott’s perspective God had the sovereign right to dispense with His children however He saw fit, and those children could be found in the Baptist church just as well as the Church of England. By extention, God’s people could be found among the Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and other denominations where the true gospel was proclaimed. Therefore, Scott thought it terribly narrow-minded to withhold friendship and fellowship from God’s children simply because they were of a different order, and it was this cordial disposition that rendered Scott favorable toward supporting evangelical missions in all of its denominational manifestations.

¹³⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 18, 1809, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹³⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 18, 1809, Scott Family Correspondence. When I visited the Haddenham Baptist Church in 2015, the church members related an oral tradition that Thomas Scott wanted his parishioners to attend the Baptist church after he died if a suitable minister could not be found for Aston Sandford. Though this letter to Ryland does not state that Scott *wanted* his people to attend the Baptist church, the attitude he expressed here is certainly consistent with the general character of the oral tradition in Haddenham.

¹³⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 18, 1809, Scott Family Correspondence.

A Summary of Scott's Evangelical Ecclesiology and His Solution to the Evangelical Anglican Tension

Over the course of the last two chapters, Scott's Evangelical identity has been examined with respect to both its general and ecclesiastical characteristics. In the previous chapter, it was shown that Scott manifested all four characteristics of Bebbington's quadrilateral and two of Hylson-Smith's marks of Anglican Evangelicals. Having surveyed Scott's ecclesiology in this chapter, it is now possible to evaluate Scott in light of Hylson-Smith's other three descriptors for Evangelical Anglicans (clericalism, churchmanship, and church order) and to determine how Scott's Evangelical identity shaped his approach to the Evangelical Anglican tension.

A Summary of Scott's Ecclesiology

It is rather difficult to separate entirely the three descriptors of clericalism, churchmanship, and church order into neat categories since they are all interrelated. In Scott's case, the difficulty is compounded by the fact that he evolved in some of these areas during the course of his life, but to varying degrees. There is little doubt that Scott was a committed Anglican churchman. Even though flaws might be found here and there in the documents and practices of the Church of England, Scott saw nothing that fundamentally precluded his participation in its ministries. After all, he was a proponent of religious establishments, like that represented by the Church of England, even if he did not consider establishments to be essential components of biblical Christianity. He also believed that it was possible, and even advisable, for a particular nation to have a state-supported religious establishment, so long as due toleration was afforded religious Dissenters. Consequently, he genuinely believed that the Church of England was worth promoting and maintaining.

On several points of church order, Scott's personal position evolved over the years. Early on in his ministry, he was rather flexible on the issues of ordination and irregularity. At first, he seemed fairly open to the idea that lay preaching and itinerant

preaching could be beneficial in certain circumstances, and he personally engaged in irregular preaching until around 1802, just before his departure from London. However, pressure from other Evangelical ministers like Thomas Robinson compelled Scott to reevaluate his clerical practices, and he became totally committed to regularity. Likewise, his views on ordination became stricter over time, as indicated by his changing remarks on Acts 8:4 in his *Commentary*. He believed that ordination should be conferred on anyone who engaged in public ministry unless extreme circumstances dictated otherwise. However, he never went so far as to embrace notions of apostolic succession, and he believed that ordination could be performed by the spiritual leaders of any Christian denomination. Nevertheless, Scott possessed, for the most part, a commitment to clericalism, churchmanship, and church order in keeping with Hylson-Smith's description of Evangelical Anglicans.

Despite his churchmanship, however, Scott showed himself to be cordial in his dealings with other Christian denominations. This friendliness grew out of his conception of the Universal Church, wherein he viewed the different denominations that made up Christendom as different divisions in the same army. He was a consistent advocate of toleration for Dissenters in England, and he even defended them from attacks advanced by certain Evangelical ministers who spoke derisively against Non-Conformists in magazines like the *Christian Observer*. This fact demonstrates that Scott was not always as strict a churchman as were some of his Evangelical friends. Furthermore, he believed that Evangelicals should possess a love for all of their Christian brothers and sisters, regardless of their denomination affiliation, and the affection he expressed in his letters to Ryland show that he lived this principle out himself.

The Evangelical Anglican Tension

What has emerged in the course of this study is that Scott was a man who was committed above all else to proclaiming faithfully and zealously the biblical message of

salvation through Jesus Christ to all of mankind. The ecclesiastical context in which he sought to fulfill this mission was that of the Church of England. However, a good portion of his own denomination objected to the evangelical message, evangelical methods, or both. In many cases, non-Evangelical churchmen placed pressure on Evangelicals to leave the church, and evangelical Dissenters called for the same, albeit for different reasons. How was it feasible for an Evangelical to remain true to evangelical principles while remaining in the Church of England?

In Scott's case, his reasons for remaining in the Church of England were threefold. First, Scott defined the establishment as the church's books rather than the church's leadership. As long as the Church of England left the homilies, liturgy, and the Thirty-Nine Articles alone, he was pleased to dwell in the Established Church. Scott was an Anglican *confessionally* first and foremost, which is why he was constantly appealing to the Reformers who wrote the founding documents of the Church of England. So long as he could confess what the Reformers confessed, he could assure himself that he was a proper churchman, the objections made by his non-Evangelical counterparts notwithstanding. Second, he maintained that no denomination was completely free from unscriptural practices. The distinction he made between unscriptural and anti-scriptural practices was key in his standing up to Dissenting appeals to join them in non-conformity. In Scott's view, leaving the Church of England for a Dissenting congregation would simply be a move from one imperfect church to another. Major doctrinal or practical differences would need to be present for Scott to consider seriously abandoning the church in which he was ordained. Since he found none, he chose to stay where he was. Finally, Scott believed that the Church of England was sufficiently committed to the idea of religious toleration for him to remain in her fold. This general toleration was extended both to Evangelicals in the church and Dissenters on the outside. The dual directionality of this toleration protected Scott and his Evangelical brethren from direct

persecution, and afforded Scott the opportunity to deal kindly with his non-Anglican friends.

These three principles also formed the basis for Scott's involvement in the modern missions movement. His confessional commitments to the Church of England made Anglican missions the most sensible and attractive option for Scott. The main task would be figuring out how to conduct Anglican missions in an Evangelical way. However, his belief that churches with unscriptural practices could be tolerated and even promoted allowed him to assist non-Anglican, evangelical missionary efforts to varying degrees. As in the case with the *Evangelical Magazine*, the level of aid Scott gave to non-Anglican missionary societies normally coincided with the number of other Evangelicals who participated in that effort. The remainder of this dissertation will focus on how Scott's solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension guided his involvement in evangelical missions.

CHAPTER 5

THOMAS SCOTT AND THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY: FORMATION AND PRINCIPLES

As Thomas Scott evaluated his options for missionary involvement in the late eighteenth century, he did so with a love for all genuine Christians who embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ and a strong commitment to the theology, liturgy, and practices of the Church of England. By 1795, several mission options existed for Evangelicals, both inside and outside of the Church of England. It might have seemed natural for Evangelicals to commit themselves to Anglican missionary organizations such as the SPCK and the SPG. These societies were already officially recognized by the bishops in the Church of England and would have provided opportunities for both domestic and foreign missionary work. The trouble with these societies, however, was that they were opposed to Evangelical perspectives, as Josiah Pratt later explained in an 1813 letter to the Rev. J. A. Rhodes of Leeds. Writing about why the founders of the CMS had not conducted mission work through the SPCK, Pratt said, “So exclusive a spirit then prevailed that any offer of co-operation for the purpose of sending missionaries would have been rejected instantly by the junto who then controlled its proceedings.”¹ On the other hand, those societies that were evangelical were operated either entirely or mostly by Dissenters (BMS, LMS). Consequently, a tension existed for Evangelicals like Scott as to what part they would play in missions. This tension was expressed in a formal question raised at a London Eclectic Society meeting on March 18, 1799: “By what

¹Josiah Pratt, Letter to J. A. Rhodes, December 29, 1813, quoted in Charles Hole, *The Early History of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East to the End of A.D. 1814* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1896), 407.

methods can we use most effectually to promote the *gospel among* the heathen?”² The Eclectic Society answered this question by starting a missionary society of their own that was both Anglican and evangelical—the Church Missionary Society.

This chapter will examine the events that led to the establishment of the CMS and Thomas Scott’s role in them. Attention will also be given to the philosophical and theological principles upon which the CMS was founded, principles which will be found consistent with Scott’s personal approach to the Evangelical Anglican tension. The similarity between Scott’s own ecclesiastical principles and those of the CMS led Scott to devote more of his time, money, and energy to the organization he co-founded than to any other missionary work.

Early Evangelical Anglican Missionary Conversations

The “Society for Missions to Africa and the East,” or the Church Missionary Society as it was later known, was formally founded on April 12, 1799 in the Castle and Falcon hotel on Aldersgate Street, London.³ The Society’s formation was the culmination of missionary conversations that had been taking place among Evangelicals going back to the year 1786, when the Eclectic Society had “discussed Foreign Missions for the first time.”⁴ On November 13, 1786, the Eclectic Society discussed the question: “What is the

²Josiah Pratt, Records of the Eclectic Society of London, March 18, 1799, CMS Unofficial Papers, CMS/ACC11 F1, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK (all references to the Eclectic Society Minutes will hereafter be cited as “Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society”). Throughout this chapter, words which are underlined for emphasis in the original will be rendered in italics.

³It should be noted that the new missionary society did not have a name for the first six weeks of its existence, and Eugene Stock has noted that the original name of “The Society for Missions to Africa and the East” was cumbersome and “never came into practical use.” He further explained that “for some years the words ‘The Missions Society,’ or ‘The Society for Missions,’ were colloquially used. Gradually people began to add the word ‘Church,’ to distinguish the Society from others; but not until 1812 was the present full title formally adopted, ‘The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East’” (Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* [London: Church Missionary Society, 1899], 1:71). In this chapter the practice of referring to the society’s entire history under the name CMS will continue.

⁴Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:58.

best method of planting and propagating the Gospel in Botany Bay?”⁵ When England decided to turn Australia into an official British penal colony, Botany Bay was the location where the first prisoners were sent. The Eclectic Society was concerned about the well-being of the prisoners and hoped that a chaplain could be sent to minister among them. The Eclectic Society apparently endorsed the idea of sending Richard Johnson to Australia to be the prison chaplain, and their desire was realized when William Wilberforce convinced the Prime Minister, William Pitt, to go along with the plan.⁶ Over the next few years, the Eclectic Society had several more conversations about missions. In 1789, the Society talked about “the best method of propagating the Gospel in the East Indies,” and consideration was given to “the best method of propagating the Gospel in Africa” in 1791.⁷

Initially, nothing concrete came out of these Eclectic Society meetings, but at least Evangelicals were starting to pay attention to the need for international gospel ministry, and a desire to do something about unreached people groups was developing. In 1795, for instance, a clerical meeting took place in Lincolnshire on September 30 and October 1.⁸ The clergymen who were present considered using a £4000 donation to start a fund for training and sending out missionaries, and they tossed about the idea of starting a school for this purpose. Arguments for and against the idea were presented, and the nature of their contention shows that the participants were struggling with various aspects of the Evangelical Anglican tension. Those who favored starting the school believed that the English government, the SPCK, and the Bishop of London would all support the

⁵See Henry Venn, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of St. Mary, Islington, on Sunday, October 20, 1844, on the Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Josiah Pratt, B.D.* (London: Seeleys, Hatchards, Nisbet, 1844), 30–31. Appendix 2 of this sermon gives a history of the origination of the CMS based on the shorthand notes of William Goode.

⁶Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 31–32.

⁷Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 32.

⁸Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 32.

proposed institution.⁹ That receiving approval from the English establishment was a major consideration in the meeting shows the Anglican side of the tension. The Evangelical side of the tension can be seen in the counterarguments. Opponents of the school insisted that there would be great difficulty in finding “proper men” to educate and send.¹⁰ No doubt the term *proper* here at the very least meant “evangelical,” and concern was also expressed that even if “proper men” could be found, there was a “danger of their losing their Missionary zeal under scholastic training.”¹¹ Furthermore, “It was also doubted whether a foreign Mission ought to be confined to the Established Church.”¹² The presence of such doubt in a group of Anglican clergymen is rather striking. The evangelical beliefs of some of the clergymen were strong enough that they were questioning the wisdom of establishing an exclusively *Anglican* missionary institution! Ultimately, the debate ended in a stalemate, but the subject was not totally abandoned and would again be discussed at the next meeting after input from the Elland Society, the Hotham Society, and the London Eclectic Societies could be obtained.

In consequence of the meeting in Lincolnshire, the Eclectic Society again considered the subject of missions on February 8, 1796. Charles Simeon led the meeting and asked, “With what propriety, and in what mode, can a Mission be attempted to the Heathen from the Established Church?”¹³ The true importance of Simeon’s question does not ultimately rest with whether or not the Church of England should have a missionary organization. After all, the Church of England already had missionary organizations. Simeon’s real question was whether or not an Anglican missionary society that was also

⁹Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 33.

¹⁰Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 33.

¹¹Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 33.

¹²Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 33.

¹³Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 34.

Evangelical could and should be formed. The way the members of the Society answered demonstrated that there was uneasiness about giving an affirmative answer. According to Eugene Stock, “Only ‘two or three’ out of the seventeen members present—presumably Simeon, Scott, and Basil Woodd—were favourable to any definite attempt being made.”¹⁴ Why? Stock offered an answer, “The majority were afraid of the bishops, or shrank from seeming to interfere with the SPG and SPCK, or doubted the possibility of obtaining men, or urged the claims of the Church at home.”¹⁵ Therefore, the outcome of this meeting was the same as those before it—nothing was done.

Thomas Scott as an Advocate for Evangelical Missions

Nevertheless, Stock mentioned, almost in passing, that Thomas Scott was one of the men who had the courage to support outright the establishment of an Evangelical Anglican missionary institution. Henry Venn’s account gives credence to Stock’s assessment in that Venn quoted Scott’s argument against those who believed that foreign missionary action would be detrimental to gospel ministry in England. Commenting on the same 1796 meeting, Venn wrote:

By some, it was proposed that a Memorial on the subject should be presented to the Bishops, and to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge: not more than two or three of those present on this occasion seem to have thought that something more might be attempted; and that the sending of Missionaries abroad, instead of lessening the work at home, would (as the Rev. T. Scott expressed himself) “set things stirring—set up a spirit of prayer.”¹⁶

Venn’s quote from Scott appears to come from the Eclectic Society meeting itself and suggests that Scott was in the minority of Evangelical clergymen in 1796 who had already decided that a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” solution to the Evangelical

¹⁴Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:62.

¹⁵Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:62.

¹⁶Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 34.

Anglican tension was feasible.¹⁷ Several passages in the sermon Scott preached at the 1804 annual meeting of the LMS lend further support to the idea that he was an early proponent of Evangelical missions. In his sermon, Scott again made the case that there was a direct relationship between missionary action and prayer:

It is my decided opinion, that nothing could so effectually promote the cause, not only of missions, but of Christianity in all respects, as a general concern among all Christians; not only on some special days or hours, but constantly, whenever they prayed, to remember, either more generally, or fully, the case of unconverted sinners, of the heathen and the poor Jews, with that of missions and missionaries, and the sending forth of labourers; in particular, the raising up of missionaries and ministers among the natives of those countries which we attempt to evangelize; as this alone can give a prospect of enlarged and permanent success.¹⁸

Importantly, Scott followed up this statement with how and when he came to hold the belief that prayer for missions could promote the cause of both missions and Christianity generally. He told his hearers that “an early acquaintance with the writings of president Edwards, Brainerd, and the New England divines, gave my mind a peculiar turn to this subject.”¹⁹ He also said that “this was the case several years before the societies for missions, (that is, new societies in England,) were established: but I could do no more than offer my feeble prayers.”²⁰ Scott’s initial acquaintance with the New England divines had to have taken place sometime prior to 1793, when he compared a pamphlet by Samuel Hopkins with the works of Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Bellamy in a letter to John Ryland, Jr.²¹ However, if Scott had been praying for missions “several years before societies for missions were established,” he must have been persuaded that

¹⁷A digital search on the phrase “set up a spirit of prayer” yielded no results in the ten volume set of Scott’s published works available online at www.hathitrust.org. A search on the phrase “set things stirring” also returned no results. Venn’s quote does not seem to hail from any of Scott’s published works.

¹⁸Thomas Scott, *A Call to Prayer for the Sending Forth of Labourers* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1804), 31–32.

¹⁹Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 32.

²⁰Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 32.

²¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 24, 1793, in *The Letters and Papers of the Late Rev. Thomas Scott*, ed. John Scott (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 131.

missionary work was a necessary and important task sometime prior to 1792, when the BMS was founded. These observations about Scott's mindset toward missions prior to both the Eclectic Society meeting in 1796 and the eventual founding of the CMS in 1799 are important in that Scott appears to be one of the driving forces in the movement for Evangelical missionary action, as few others appeared willing to commit themselves to the cause in the mid-1790s.

Furthermore, being in the minority among his fellow-Evangelicals put Scott in a position of needing to make the case for Evangelical missions. Both the Lincolnshire clerical meeting in 1795 and the Eclectic Society meeting in 1796 had raised concerns about interfering with existing missionary societies and about the effect foreign missions would have on English Christianity. The fact that Scott addressed both of these objections in his 1801 sermon preached for the CMS cannot be a coincidence. In the third main point of his sermon, he presented several responses to the objection that starting a new society would interfere with existing societies. First, he attempted to correct the notion that missionary societies were in competition with one another. He argued "that it is of vast importance, that the several Societies, formed for this great purpose, should consider one another as coadjutors, and not as competitors, and cultivate an amicable intercourse."²² Scott recognized that all missionary agencies shared one "great purpose" and were really partners in accomplishing the singular goal of spreading the gospel around the world. Second, he observed that having multiple societies was in fact advantageous:

One [society] may embrace this special object, and another that; one may find the readiest access to this country, and the other to that country: external circumstances may give one an advantage for a particular kind of service, from which the other may be precluded: each may, as it were, bring into circulation the treasure and piety, as well as influence, which is found in its particular circle: and they may all profit

²²Thomas Scott, *A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe and St. Anne, Blackfriars, on Tuesday in Whitsun Week, May 26, 1801, before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East* (London: Jaques, 1801), 65.

by the counsels, plans, observation, success, or failures of every one; and help one another in various ways, when that assistance becomes especially seasonable.²³

These statements from Scott's sermon demand careful attention. His basic argument was that an increase in the number of missionary organizations would result in the multiplication of missionary resources, strategies, and mission stations. Significantly, he argued that an abundance of missionary societies would "bring into circulation the treasure and piety, as well as influence, which is found in its particular circle."

Embedded in these words is Scott's rationale for carrying out mission work as he did. He recognized the reality that Christianity is made up of different parties or circles that emphasize different aspects of Christian doctrine and practice. In some cases, the differences manifest themselves in the formation of different denominations, but the possibility also exists for a given denomination to encompass churches and persons whose religious perspectives differ from others within the same ecclesiastical body. The simple reality is that Baptists tend to support Baptist missions, and Congregationalists and Independents tend to support Congregational and Independent missions. The same could be said for the various subsets of the Church of England. Non-Evangelicals would naturally be more inclined to lend support to non-Evangelical mission organizations, and Evangelicals would support Evangelical missions. A recognition of the natural human tendency for individuals to promote what they personally embrace underlies Scott's argument in favor of the establishment of many societies, including the CMS. The existence of an Evangelical missionary society would provide the means for Evangelical Anglicans to contribute enthusiastically to the cause of missions. Also not lost on Scott was the obvious fact that if there were more missionary societies there would consequently be more people preaching the gospel, and the Universal Church of Jesus Christ would ultimately prosper as a result.

²³Scott, *Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions*, 65–66.

The Eclectic Society and the Founding of the CMS

Precious little seems to have taken place after the 1796 Eclectic Society meeting ended with the majority being content to maintain the *status quo*. Henry Venn put the best spin possible on the aftermath:

Though the hopes of those who were most zealous in the cause could not but have been, in some degree, deferred by the result of this discussion, yet the subject was not dropped: it was made the matter of frequent discussion amongst the individual Members, and of prayer; and consultations were held with those who were likely to promote the scheme.²⁴

Venn mentioned a meeting about missions involving William Wilberforce, Charles Grant, Charles Simeon, and John Venn at Battersea Rise in Clapham on November 9, 1797, as an example of such a conversation, but little is known about the specifics of the meeting.²⁵ In writing of their father's part in it, Robert and Samuel Wilberforce said, "This was the first commencement of a plan for promoting enlarged missionary exertion, to which he had recourse upon the failure of his efforts to obtain by vote of parliament some national provision for Christianizing India."²⁶ The Wilberforce brothers also said that the plan formulated in the meeting, whatever it was, "occupied his attention for the two following years, and issued, in the year 1800, in the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East."²⁷ Though there is probably some connection between this meeting and the founding of the CMS, the Wilberforce brothers seemingly overstated their father's role in the Society's creation. Certainly William Wilberforce was an important

²⁴Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 35.

²⁵Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 35. Venn's account is based on the biography on William Wilberforce written by his sons. For the original source, see Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce* (London: John Murray, 1838), 2:251.

²⁶Wilberforce and Wilberforce, *Life of William Wilberforce*, 2:251.

²⁷Wilberforce and Wilberforce, *Life of William Wilberforce*, 2:251. It should be noted that the Wilberforce brothers were wrong about the date for the establishment of the CMS. The correct year is 1799 not 1800. This error was commonly made for approximately fifty years after the society's founding and was perpetuated by the documents of the CMS itself. The error seemingly began as a result of the first anniversary meeting of the CMS taking place in 1801, which was actually on the society's second anniversary. For a good account of the problem, see Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary*, 97–98.

friend to the Society and its founders, but he was not present at any of the meetings in which the Society was actually formed nor did he accept the offer to be the Society's first president.

The true founders of the CMS were the members of the Eclectic Society, and several Eclectic Society meetings in the early months of 1799 resulted in its birth. The first meeting took place on February 18, and "a general conversation on the subject of a mission connected with the Evangelical part of the Church of England" transpired.²⁸ No details of this conversation are extant, but the subject of discussion is important in its own right because the topic suggests that the members of the Eclectic Society were already predisposed to create their own mission society rather than join existing evangelical or Anglican agencies. However, questions evidently remained as to their possible involvement in the LMS.

The Eclectic Society and the LMS

Those questions were addressed and answered in a meeting that took place exactly one month later, on March 18, 1799, when fifteen members of the Eclectic Society were present in the vestry of St. John's Chapel in London to discuss missionary options.²⁹ John Venn presided over the meeting and raised the question, "What methods can we use most effectively to promote the knowledge of the gospel among the heathen?"³⁰ In framing the discussion Venn emphasized both the "utility" and "duty" of

²⁸Pratt's Notes, Eclectic Society, February 18, 1799. According to the notes, the following men were present: Basil Woodd (presiding), Thomas Scott, Josiah Pratt, John Clayton, John Newton, John Goode, William Goode, W. J. Abdy, George Patrick, Henry Foster, John Venn, and John Bacon.

²⁹See Pratt's Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. According to the notes, the following men were present at the meeting: John Newton, Henry Foster, George Patrick, Thomas Scott, John Goode, John Clayton, W. J. Abdy, John Venn, Basil Woodd, William Goode, John Davies, Josiah Pratt, John Bacon, Charles Simeon, and Charles Grant.

³⁰Pratt's Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799.

the gospel task, maintaining that pagans are “all miserable without it.”³¹ He asked his friends, “Should we not pity, feel for those *without any means of grace*?”³² The heathen must be reached for Christ, and Venn wanted the members of the Eclectic Society to “set ourselves apart for it, to commit ourselves to it, and be happy to lay down our lives for it.”³³

Having made the case for being involved in missions, Venn then addressed the lingering question of possible participation with the LMS.³⁴ Indeed, there were some advantages to joint cooperation with evangelicals outside of the Church of England. First, collaboration with the LMS would have created a formidable evangelical organization with considerable strength in resources and manpower.³⁵ Second, the LMS offered an opportunity for Christians to join in the advancement of “Christianity beyond party.”³⁶ Of course these ideals were attractive, and Venn even stated that he “agree[d] with them on the principle.”³⁷ However, he considered the notion of a “Christianity beyond party” to be an unrealistic and unobtainable goal. He said, “Consider the different men, and classes of

³¹Eclectic Society: Notes Relating to Subject of a Meeting Held 18 March 1799, CMS Unofficial Papers, CMS/ACC11 F2, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK [hereafter cited as “Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society”]. The author of these notes is not certain. The document itself provides no author, and the Cadbury Research Library catalogue does not identify one either. The notes are written in shorthand and often nothing more than a phrase is given to convey the general idea of the speaker. Therefore, quotations from this manuscript have been modified throughout this chapter to make them more readable. These modifications are not explicitly noted in the text, but the original wording of the manuscript has been provided in the footnotes for purposes of comparison.

³²Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2. The shorthand reads, “Should not pity, feel for those *without any means of grace*?”

³³Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2. The shorthand reads, “Set apart for it, commit ourselves, happy, lay down lives &c.”

³⁴He made no mention of throwing in with the existing Anglican societies, which suggests that such an approach had already been discounted.

³⁵Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2. Venn summarized the LMS case in this way: “by joining us, concentrate your strength, add to ours.”

³⁶Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2.

³⁷Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2.

this kingdom, there can be no such union to desire unless all were true Christians.”³⁸ Yet, Venn was not suggesting with the phrase “true Christians” that the members of the LMS or any other mission agency were unbelievers. Rather, he realized that Christian men would never fully agree on all matters of Christian theology and practice until they were made Christians in the *truest* sense, that is, completely sanctified. According to Venn, missionary enterprises must take this evident fact into account. He argued that it was actually better for Christians of a particular party to engage in missions in “their own way” than to unite themselves organizationally to those with whom they disagreed. Ignoring theological differences might give the appearance of unity, but those united would “not be heartily joined together.”³⁹

The other members of the Eclectic Society evidently agreed with Venn’s conclusion that participation with the LMS was not a wise course of action, but there were some disagreements as to the reason. Charles Simeon, for example, stated that his objection was “not the difficulty stated by brother Venn” but that “many at their head show a disposition to policies I cannot [support].”⁴⁰ Indeed, Simeon was thankful that the leaders of the LMS had “stood forth” in the cause of missions, but he sensed an attitude among its leaders that he did not appreciate.⁴¹ He said, “Their zeal proceeded from a

³⁸Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2. The shorthand reads, “Consider the different men, classes this kingdom, can be no such union to desire unless all true Christians.”

³⁹Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2. Venn’s full statement reads, “Therefore must be done their own way each, else not heartily join together.” Sadly, the history of the LMS itself demonstrated the wisdom of Venn’s approach to missions. Just two decades after the CMS was founded, the LMS was plagued by internal strife among the Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists who promoted its causes. The main sources of division were stealing members from other denominations, the mode and subjects of baptism, the scope of participation in the Lord’s Supper, and fund-raising. On these matters, see Roger H. Martin, *Evangelicals: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1794–1830*, Studies in Evangelicalism, no. 4 (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1983), 61–74.

⁴⁰Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Not the difficulty stated by brother Venn, the only difficulty is many at their head show a disposition to policies I cannot incur danger imitating those.”

⁴¹Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2.

disposition to stand foremost and to be somebody.”⁴² Thomas Scott agreed and stated that there was “a great deal wrong in the plan, which is in the imagination of the present society. There must be some notoriety, but their’s too great. The great cause of many drawing back proved to be their own harshness.”⁴³

What Simeon and Scott both seem to be referring to in these comments was the LMS plan to send a sizeable group of men, largely without any academic or ministerial training, to the South Seas on a ship owned and operated by the LMS itself.⁴⁴ The LMS had acquired the *Duff*, and in late 1796, the *Duff* set sail for Tahiti with the Society’s first group of missionaries. The combination of a lack of theological training among the missionaries and the absence of an official LMS doctrinal statement caused problems before the ship even arrived in Tahiti. A theological argument broke out among the missionaries over Calvinism and Arminianism, which resulted in two missionaries with Arminian sympathies being excommunicated by the others.⁴⁵ A few days later the outcasts were restored to fellowship, but the problems in the mission model were there for all to see. Scott probably had these events in mind when he spoke of the “harshness” of some LMS members, and he seems to have disliked their entire plan from the beginning. Writing to his friend in Scotland on July 2, 1796, prior to the first sailing of the *Duff*, Scott complained about the lack of wisdom and humility in LMS strategy:

I have no doubt that the Lord will eventually bring good out of the design: but probably he may seem first to frown upon it; for it appears to me that many are too sanguine, do not sufficiently count their cost, have not wisdom equal to their zeal, and lean more to favorable providential appearances, and second causes, than to the

⁴²Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2.

⁴³Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, CMS/ACC11 F2. The shorthand reads, “A great deal wrong in plan, imagination present society. Must be some notoriety, but their’s too great the great cause of many drawing back proved to be their own harshness.”

⁴⁴See Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895* (London: Henry Frowde, 1899), 1:46–50.

⁴⁵Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, 1:49. The extent of the atonement and the final perseverance of the saints were the subjects of contention.

omnipotent operation of the Holy Spirit. . . . In short, I have my doubts about many of their measures; and have an idea that disappointments and delays will be employed to teach the parties concerned, patience, meekness, humility, prudence, and simplicity; and that, when some begin to think the cause is about to miscarry, a greater, and more entire, and more explicit reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a more *self-annihilating* reference of the matter to God, will make way for the desired success.⁴⁶

Scott's words about "disappointments and delays" proved all too prophetic. Shortly after the CMS was formed in 1799, the *Duff* was attacked, captured, and looted by a French privateer on its second voyage to Tahiti, resulting in tremendous financial losses for the LMS.⁴⁷ After the *Duff* catastrophe, Scott once again expressed his disapproval over the grandiose nature of the LMS plan in a letter to his son, dated September 23, 1799:

I do not think any of the things which have happened to the London Missionary Society will eventually injure the cause of missions. I really foretold, at least foreboded, and privately uttered my forebodings, that such would be the event of their over-sanguine and hasty, though well-meant proceedings. The apostles had no missionary ship, worth so many thousands as to tempt depredators. . . . I said they were too rich to be safe, or to have any prospect of safety; and their fire-arms and military exercise were like a declaration of war. The seven that are left behind are exactly in the condition I should have wished them to have been in at first landing; nothing to trust to for protection and provision but the Lord, and under him the favor he may give them with the people.⁴⁸

These strong words from Scott, especially when coupled with Simeon's objections to the LMS quoted above, show that there was more behind the Eclectic Society's decision to form a new missionary society than a simple desire for an Evangelical mission within the confines of the Church of England in that several of the Society's members vigorously opposed several aspects of the LMS missions model.

⁴⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to a Friend in Scotland, July 2, 1796, in *Letters and Papers*, 185–86.

⁴⁷See Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, 1:60–62. The story of the missionaries who were captured is quite heart-wrenching. Many of them were captured again by the Portuguese when they tried to continue their mission. Eventually, the majority of the party returned to England, discouraged and believing that God had providentially informed them of his desire that they not go to Tahiti. For a firsthand account of the affair, see William Gregory, *A Visible Display of Divine Providence; or, the Journal of a Captured Missionary* (London: T. Gillet, [1800?]).

⁴⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, September 23, 1799, in *Letters and Papers*, 164–65. Lest these rather harsh words mislead the reader about Scott's general character, it should be noted that Scott raised money from among his CMS friends to help the LMS recuperate their losses. This act of kindness will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Eclectic Society and the CMS

If the members of the Eclectic Society could not join the LMS for reasons of ecclesiology and mission philosophy, what were they going to do? Simeon asked the same question, “What can we do? When? How?”⁴⁹ In reality, the answer had already been given in the February 18 meeting a month prior—form “a mission connected with the Evangelical part of the Church of England.”⁵⁰ All that was lacking was action, and Simeon urged it, saying, “Many draw back because we do not stand forward. It is incumbent upon us to come forward when there is not a moment to be lost.”⁵¹ Unlike the Eclectic Society meeting on February 8, 1796, when only two or three supported Simeon’s quest to start an Evangelical mission, the Society’s members were ready for action this time, and they determined to create a missionary organization all their own.

John Venn’s three principles. Having decided that their only suitable course of action was to institute a new missionary society, the Eclectic Society set out to define with greater precision what their mission would look like. John Venn led the discussion by proposing three ministerial principles that would govern the CMS. First, “All success in missionary undertakings must be expected from *the Spirit of God*.”⁵² Included in this principle were the ideas that “the foundation must be laid in prayer” and that “God’s providence must be *followed*, not *anticipated*.”⁵³ Second, “Success will depend under God on the *persons sent on the mission*.”⁵⁴ A CMS missionary “should be taught of

⁴⁹Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799.

⁵⁰Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, February 18, 1799.

⁵¹Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Many draw back because we do not stand forward, incumbent upon us come forward when not a moment to be lost.”

⁵²Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “All success in miss: undertakings must be expected from y^e *Sp. of God*.”

⁵³Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, The foundation must be laid in pr. God’s prov. must be *followed*, not *anticipated*.

⁵⁴Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Success will depend

heaven, should have heaven in his heart, and should tread the world under his foot.”⁵⁵

Third, “It is better that a mission should proceed from *small beginnings*, and advance according to circumstances, rather than enter upon a large scale at first.”⁵⁶

What cannot be ignored in reading Venn’s three principles is the fact that they all address the objections Simeon and Scott had raised against the LMS in one way or another. Therefore, Venn’s principles do not seem to be purely of his own making but are more likely the formalized outcome of the group’s discussion. Scott in particular would not likely have supported the CMS as he did if it was simply the Anglican version of the LMS. He would have opposed raising huge sums in order to purchase a ship and outfit a large landing party of untrained and poorly vetted missionaries. He favored a more cautious approach and therefore shared Venn’s emphasis on “small beginnings.” He had, after all, been saying as much for several years. Venn’s statements, then, almost certainly took Scott’s beliefs into account. Thus, it is not an overstatement to assert that Venn’s principles were also Scott’s principles, and vice-versa, though it should not be inferred from this assertion that Scott was somehow the true author of the principles. Both men were committed to them, as were the CMS founders as a whole, and Venn’s principles defined the first few years of the Society’s history. Indeed, the Society’s progress proved to be slow, but at least Evangelicals had finally come forward in the cause of missions.

John Venn’s five resolutions. For men like Charles Simeon and Thomas Scott, years of hoping, urging, planning, and praying had finally paid off. Their efforts, combined with those of John Venn, Charles Grant, and others, had turned earlier Eclectic Society reluctance into missionary action. However, much still needed to be done if the

under God on the *persons sent on y^e m.*”

⁵⁵Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Sh^d be taught of heaven, sh^d have heaven in his heart, sh^d tread th^e w^d under his foot.”

⁵⁶Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Better f^r a m. sh^d proceed from *small beg^s*, and advance according to circ^s, rather thⁿ enter upon a large scale at first.”

proposal to start a mission was to become a reality. No new missionary society was formally created on that evening in March, but five resolutions proposed by Venn, and evidently passed before the meeting adjourned, assured that within a month's time the CMS would exist.⁵⁷ First, the Society resolved that it was "the duty of every member of this Society to use his individual and social capacity to admonish his people to promote the knowledge of the gospel amongst the heathen."⁵⁸ Second, it was decided that the formal prayers of the Eclectic society and the private prayers of its members should include a specific request that God might "implant in our minds a deep concern from the nations lying in heathen darkness, and make us instrumental in conveying the knowledge of the gospel to some of them."⁵⁹ Third, it was resolved that "each member do seriously direct his meditation, study, inquiry to the best method of beginning, carrying on the mission, the discovery of a place, and the qualifications of persons."⁶⁰ Fourth, "each member of the Society should write or speak to three at least of his Christian friends, visitors addressed, endeavoring to excite the same spirit in them, directing their thoughts

⁵⁷Though it seems certain that the Eclectic Society approved John Venn's resolutions, their passing was not without opposition. Henry Venn records that "several of the subsequent speakers objected to the adoption of Resolutions by the Society, as not according with its character" (Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 38). The objections appeared to be more procedural in nature rather than objections of substance. The Eclectic Society was not designed or intended to be the ruling board of a missionary society. Rather the Society was designed to be a religious discussion group. In all likelihood, the objectors to passing Venn's resolutions were concerned that the design and character of the Eclectic Society itself would be altered if the resolutions were passed. Thus, as Charles Hole observed, "The conclusion was, not to encumber the Eclectic Society with the management of a Mission, but to institute a distinct organization for the purpose" (*Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 31).

⁵⁸Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, "The duty every member this Society, individual, social capacity to admonish his people to promote the knowledge of the gospel amongst the heathen."

⁵⁹Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, "A constant petition in the prayer issued at this meeting and recommend daily devotion, implant our minds a deep concern for the nations lying in heathen darkness,—make us instrumental conveying the knowledge of the gospel to some of them."

⁶⁰Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, "For this purpose bear much in our minds that each member do seriously direct his meditation, study, inquiry to the best method of beginning, carrying on mission, the discovery of a place, the qualifications of persons."

to the same object, and to look out for men endued with a missionary spirit.”⁶¹ The hope was that “God might point out 2 or 3 persons of such a spirit and what steps might be taken to employ them.”⁶² These four resolutions are significant because they indicate that the members of the Eclectic Society were actively preparing themselves spiritually for running a missionary society and were also taking steps to find and send missionaries to the mission field. Venn’s fifth resolution was that they “should look to God to point out 2 or more such men, and this Society take into consideration what method is proper to be pursued to employ them among the heathen as missionaries.”⁶³ This resolution is very similar to the wording of the fourth, but the emphasis appears to have been on what type of person could be a missionary and what work those missionaries would do rather than on how those missionaries would be found. The conversation that followed the fifth resolution is rather important and deserves special attention.

The church principle and the high church principle. Immediately after making the fifth resolution, John Venn uttered perhaps his most famous statement about the proposed society’s philosophy of ministry—“One important point to be considered, respects the general character of the mission. I think in ought to be founded upon the *Church principle*, not the *high-Church principle*.”⁶⁴ Historians have typically understood Venn’s sweeping statement about “the general character of the mission” to be vital in

⁶¹Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Each member Society write or speak to three at least of his Christian friends, visitors addressed, endeavoring to excite the same spirit in them, directing thoughts same object, and to look out for men endued Missy spirit.”

⁶²Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Please God point out 2 or 3 persons of such a Spirit, What step taken to employ them.”

⁶³Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Should look to God to point out 2 or more such this Society take into consideration what method proper to be pursued to employ them among the heathen as Missionaries.”

⁶⁴Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 37. The Cadbury Manuscript reads, “One point important now, the general character of the Mission *upon the Church principle, not high church principle*” (Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799).

defining the fundamental nature of the CMS. However, Venn's words are somewhat cryptic, and there is some difficulty in knowing what he meant. Nowhere in the discussion does Venn actually define the two principles he mentioned, and so they must be figured out from the context. Charles Hole, for example, has taken the entire statement as another way of contrasting the Evangelical and non-Evangelical parties in the Church of England:

We notice lastly the determination of this meeting to conduct operations on Evangelical lines. At three different times was that adverted to. On February 18, 'a mission connected with the Evangelical part of the Church of England.' On March 18 Venn thought the Mission ought to be 'founded upon the *Church-principle*, not the *High Church principle*'; Pratt said now, 'Must be kept in Evangelical hands.'⁶⁵

Hole did not really elaborate on Venn's principles beyond what is quoted here, and he said virtually nothing about how Venn's church principle fit into the context of his fifth resolution about employing missionaries.

Eugene Stock has made a more valiant effort to understand Venn, and his explanation is a bit more complicated. Strangely, Stock actually took Venn's statement about the "church principle" to be the fifth resolution itself.⁶⁶ In so doing he departed from the wording of the Cadbury Manuscript and Henry Venn's version of the meeting in his *Sermon on the Death of Josiah Pratt*, both of which clearly have the numeral "5" before Venn's statement about employing missionaries.⁶⁷ This curiosity aside, Stock reasoned that the phrase "church principle" should not be understood as a label for an ecclesiastical party in the Church of England but as a technical expression for the shared opinion of the CMS founders that denominational distinctions should purposely be

⁶⁵Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 31.

⁶⁶Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:63–64. Stock's said, "Rather, let each member (1) admonish his people to promote Missions, (2) pray constantly for guidance, (3) study and inquire as to possible future plans, (4) speak to Christian friends on the subject. Finally, the Mission must be founded upon "the *Church-principle*, not the *high-Church principle*."

⁶⁷Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799; Venn, *Sermon on the Death of Josiah Pratt*, 37.

maintained when establishing churches on the mission field. In his explanation, Stock set the “church principle” over against what he calls the “Congregational principle”:

A Native Christian community must either be linked with an existing body or become a new independent body itself. In the former case it cannot help following some denominational lead; in the latter case it adds one to the number of distinct bodies that already divide Christendom. On the Congregational principle, the latter result is unobjectionable; but neither Presbyterian nor Methodism accepts that principle, and still less does the Church of England do so.⁶⁸

Apparently, Stock equated the “Congregational principle” with what the LMS called their “fundamental principle,” which stated that missionaries would not be sent out with specific denominational labels and that the denominational identity of the churches planted on the mission field would be decided by the converts themselves rather than the mission agency.⁶⁹ If Stock is correct in pitting the “church principle” against the “fundamental principle,” Venn was essentially arguing that, in contrast to the LMS approach to missions, the new Anglican society should be committed to planting Anglican churches.

Stock’s conclusion certainly seems reasonable, especially given Venn’s comments earlier in the meeting about the importance of carrying out a mission “in their own way.” However, his interpretation requires an entirely different explanation for what Venn meant by the phrase “high church principle.” In Hole’s explanation, the phrases “church principle” and “high church principle” seem to define one another by way of contrast, with the two parties being distinguishable by their disagreements on specific

⁶⁸Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:64.

⁶⁹The formal statement of the LMS “fundamental principle” reads, “As the union of God’s People of various denominations, in carrying on this great Work, is a most desirable Object, so, to prevent, if possible, any cause of future dissention, it is declared to be a fundamental principle of the Missionary Society, that our design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order and Government (about which there may be differences of opinion among serious Persons), but the Glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the Heathen: and that it shall be left (as it ever ought to be left) to the minds of the Persons whom God may call into the fellowship of His Son from among them to assume for themselves such form of Church Government, as to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God” (LMS Minutes, May 9, 1796, quoted in Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, 1:49–50).

matters of theology or practice. On the other hand, Stock's explanation hints at the existence of three parties—adherents to the “congregational principle” (LMS), the “church principle” (CMS), and the “high church principle.” What then is the “high church principle” and who would have advocated it? Stock argued that “the expression ‘High-Church principle’ would, in the present day [i.e., the end of the nineteenth century], mean that missionary work could only be effectively done by the Church in her corporate capacity, or by missionaries of a Church holding the apostolic succession. But it is doubtful whether Venn meant that.”⁷⁰ Stock contended that “real High Churchmen were but few then,” and he cited the SPCK and SPG as examples of organizations lacking the ecclesiastical credentials to be considered “the Church in her corporate capacity” but nevertheless eliciting the approval of the Church of England at large.⁷¹ He also pointed out that both of these societies used Lutherans as missionaries, suggesting that the idea of strict apostolic succession was not in view.⁷² Rather than referring to mission work carried out by the “Church in her corporate capacity, or by missionaries of a Church holding the apostolic succession,” Stock suggested that “more probably Venn meant two other things, viz, (1) that no Church enterprise ought to be undertaken by individual clergymen, without the bishops at their head, and (2) that every man ordained by a bishop was *ipso facto* fit to be a missionary.”⁷³

Stock has given more specificity to Venn's two principles, and he did more than Hole to connect the “church principle” to the issue of missionary employment. Stock is certainly correct that Venn, through his “church principle,” would have rejected the idea that individual clergymen were necessarily excluded from engaging, as Stock put it,

⁷⁰Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:65.

⁷¹Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:65.

⁷²Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:65.

⁷³Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:65.

in a “Church enterprise.” As such, Stock has succeeded in understanding part of what Venn was saying. However, several aspects of Stock’s interpretation are difficult to accept. First, his entire explanation seems unnecessarily complicated. Venn nowhere mentioned the “congregational principle” that Stock brings into the conversation. While it is true that Venn had rejected the LMS attempt at “Christianity beyond party” earlier in the meeting, he was not talking about that here. His statement about the “church principle” and “high church principle” was made in the context of employing missionaries on the mission field. Therefore, limiting the interpretive options exclusively to the two principles Venn actually mentioned appears to be the more prudent and natural approach to understanding his meaning.

Second, Stock maintained that Venn was criticizing high churchmen for believing “that every man ordained by a bishop was *ipso facto* fit to be a missionary.”⁷⁴ However, it is questionable whether or not that was really the high church position. Stock cited no example of anyone who was saying anything of this kind, and he seems to have derived this idea simply from the fact that Venn had earlier spoken about sending missionaries of proper character.⁷⁵ High churchmen would certainly have argued that all missionaries should be ordained, but is it proper to conclude that high churchmen necessarily believed that ordination alone turns everyone who receives it into a suitable missionary candidate? Stock seems to have ignored the difference between affirming that all missionaries must be ordained and believing that all ordained clergymen are inherently qualified to be missionaries.

A third difficulty facing Stock’s interpretation is the minimization of the idea

⁷⁴Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:65.

⁷⁵Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:65. In reference to the idea “that every man ordained by a bishop was *ipso facto* fit to be a missionary,” Stock reminded the reader that “the leading principle [Venn] laid down was that all would depend, under God, on the type of men sent out, and that God only could provide the right ones.”

of apostolic succession among Venn's contemporaries. In all likelihood, Stock was the victim of Tractarian propaganda on this issue. Peter Nockles has observed that "it suited the purposes of Tractarian rhetoric to portray their advocacy of apostolical succession as the recovery of an ancient truth lost sight of in the 'deadness' of eighteenth-century Anglicanism."⁷⁶ Thus, Stock's perception of high churchmanship in the late eighteenth century appears to have been skewed. In reality, Venn could very easily have included the idea of apostolic succession in his "high church principle." Just a year prior to this meeting of the Eclectic Society, Charles Daubeny published a book called *A Guide to the Church in Several Discourses*.⁷⁷ Daubeny was a staunch high churchman who not only maintained the idea of apostolic succession but went so far as to compare any form of religious schism to the sin of Korah.⁷⁸ As Hylson-Smith put it, in the *Guide to the Church* Daubeny "was dogmatic in his insistence that the true Church must have a duly commissioned ministry deriving its authority in direct line from the apostles."⁷⁹ Significantly, Daubeny had addressed his book to the Evangelically-minded William Wilberforce, and he did so on the book's title page. Also important for the present discussion is the fact that John Venn was then the rector of the parish church in Clapham, where Wilberforce often attended services.⁸⁰ Therefore, at least one Evangelical in Venn's own parish had come under direct attack from a high churchman over the issue of

⁷⁶Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760–1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 146. For a helpful discussion of key figures in the high church tradition in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in The Church of England: From the Sixteenth to the Late Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 83–120.

⁷⁷Charles Daubeny, *A Guide to the Church in Several Discourses* (London: T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1798).

⁷⁸Daubeny, *Guide to the Church*, 13–60.

⁷⁹Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship*, 106.

⁸⁰See Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England: 1734–1984* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 83–85.

apostolic succession, and it is difficult to believe that Venn knew nothing about this assault on his close friend.

Another example of apostolic succession from around the same time can be found in the writings of George Pretyman-Tomline, who was the Lord Bishop of Lincoln and the eventual theological sparring partner of Thomas Scott. In his *Elements of Christian Theology*, published the same year the CMS was founded, Tomline argued for an apostolic succession through a historical line of bishops:

It seems therefore as clear as written testimony can make it, that bishops were appointed by the apostles; that there were three distinct orders of ministers, namely, bishops, priests, and deacons, in the primitive church; and that there has been a regular succession of bishops from the apostolic age to the present time; and we may safely challenge the enemies of episcopacy to produce evidence of the existence of a single antient [sic] independent church, which was not governed by a bishop.⁸¹

Later on in the same work, Tomline cited Article Twenty-Three of the Thirty-Nine Articles as proof that the bishops, by virtue of their succession from the apostles, possessed the right to ordain ministers:

From the apostles episcopal ordination has been regularly conveyed to us; and as the legislature of this kingdom has recognized and confirmed this power to bishops, they are the persons among us “who have public authority given them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard; and those who are called and sent by them, we judge lawfully called and sent.” In every church, in which episcopacy prevails, the uninterrupted succession of bishops is considered as essential to the power of consecrating and ordaining.⁸²

These aspects of Tomline’s thought should be kept in mind when ascertaining what Venn meant by his two principles. After all, Venn had made his remark about the mission being conducted on the “church principle” rather than the “high church principle” in the context

⁸¹George Pretyman-Tomline, *Elements of Christian Theology* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1799), 2:383.

⁸²Tomline, *Elements of Christian Theology*, 2:399. Article Twenty-Three reads, “It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard” (“The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England,” in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff, 6th ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 3:501).

of employing ministers for missions work.

If Stock was mistaken about the possibility of Venn including the idea of apostolic succession in what he meant by the “high church principle” as has been argued, making sense of Venn’s “church principle” becomes much easier. The greater context of the Eclectic Society’s discussion and the very terminology Venn employed suggest that he was using the “church principle” phraseology as an alternate expression for ideals that are commonly associated with the so-called “low church.” Not only is it linguistically natural for the word *high* to be contrasted with the word *low*, the ecclesiological perspectives conveyed by the labels “high church” and “low church” are quite appropriate in Venn’s context. The phrases “low church” or “low churchmen” refer to “the group in the Church of England which gives a relatively ‘low’ place to the claims of the episcopate, priesthood, and sacraments, and generally approximates in its beliefs to those of Protestant Non-Conformists.”⁸³ Historically, Evangelicalism has been closely associated with low church ecclesiology, which explains why Charles Hole approximated Venn’s “church principle” to Evangelicalism itself. The trouble with using labels like “low church” and “high church” is that there can be varying beliefs or emphases among the very people those tags are intended to describe. Nevertheless, the “low church” label accurately depicts what Venn meant by the “church principle.” As stated above, low churchmen tended to downplay episcopacy in one way or another, and that is exactly what Venn did. Specifically, he was prepared to disregard episcopal ordination as a necessary prerequisite to missionary service by suggesting that the new missionary society “allow a layman to perform many functions usually performed by ministers.”⁸⁴ He continued:

⁸³*DCC*, s.v. “Low Churchmen.”

⁸⁴Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. The shorthand reads, “Allow a layman to perform many functions usually by Ministers.”

A layman might be employed properly, do a great deal to keep up the establishment, not sacrifice the good of souls, go out as catechists, not administer the sacraments, baptizing only in cases of necessity, instruct the people and gather a church, find a minister, if not get him ordained if a minister have other laymen assistants.⁸⁵

Venn's statements about laymen are rather shocking in an Anglican context, especially when pitted against Tomline's above. Remarkably, the mission proposed by Venn was not simply a program wherein missionary candidates were restricted to ordained, Evangelical clergymen; rather, the plan was to give catechists a significant ministerial role in the planting of churches on the mission field. This scheme struck directly at the high church ideals of both Daubeny and Tomline, who no doubt would have been shocked by the notion of a layman carrying out any ministerial function whatsoever, much less having a layman be the chief agent in a church plant. How could a church planted in this manner lay claim to apostolic succession or episcopacy? Venn was effectively bypassing, or more appropriately undermining, the right of bishops to choose who could go out as ministers. However, Venn's understanding of the "church principle" would become a problematic issue for the CMS in its early years, as Evangelicals themselves were divided over the principle's propriety.

Thomas Scott's Commitment to the CMS

Despite the long discussions about the nature of the proposed society, the CMS was not officially founded in the March 18, 1799 the Eclectic Society meeting. Rather the Society began on April 12, 1799, when the founders of the CMS drew up their purpose, laid out their rules, elected officers and committee members, and made plans to notify the

⁸⁵Cadbury Manuscript, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799. Henry Venn's version of this quotation has a few noticeable differences, though the basic point being argued here is not affected. His account reads, "Regarding the great difficulty of finding Ministers, I would rather send out Laymen, than none at all; and allow Laymen to perform many functions usually confined to Ministers at home. This practice is justified by the conduct of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. If it be objected that this is contrary to strict rule of the Establishment, I reply, that I would do a great deal to keep up the Establishment, but not sacrifice the good of souls. Laymen may go out as Catechists: not to administer the Sacrament; to baptize only in cases of necessity; but to instruct the people and gather a Church. Afterward we must find a Minister: if not, get the Catechist ordained" (*Sermon on the Death of Pratt*, 37).

Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Durham.⁸⁶ Thomas Scott was elected to the General Committee during this inaugural meeting. When the first General Committee meeting took place on April 15, 1799, two resolutions were passed that had direct reference to Scott. The Minutes record that it was “resolved, that the Rev. Thomas Scott be requested to act as temporary Secretary; with which request Mr. Scott, being present, readily complied.”⁸⁷ Scott’s role as “temporary Secretary” would last until his resignation was accepted by the General Committee on December 6, 1802.⁸⁸ The Minutes also record that it was “resolved, that the Rev. John Venn and the Rev. Thomas Scott be requested to draw up a Form of Prayer to be used by the Committees at their Meetings.”⁸⁹ The significance of this resolution appears to be that the first members of the CMS seemed to view Venn and Scott as something of the spiritual leaders of the Society. The “Form of Prayer” was to be read at the start of every Committee meeting, and thus Scott played a role in forming and maintaining a spiritual focus throughout the early days of the CMS.

Several statements in the published *Account* and *Rules* of the CMS help explain why Scott was willing to participate in and promote the CMS. The *Account* made it clear that the CMS was theologically committed to the Church of England by saying

⁸⁶For the minutes related to this meeting, see Minutes of Annual, and Special, General Meetings 12 April 1799–6 May 1823, April 12, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 2/1, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK. For a concise overview of the first proceedings and the people involved, see Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 36–38. The rules of the CMS were slightly modified in subsequent meetings and were later published. For the rules in their published form, see “Rules,” in vol. 1 of *The Proceedings of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East* (London: Jaques and Co., 1801–1805), 15–20. The choice to notify the Archbishop, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Durham was significant. Obviously, the Archbishop of Canterbury was and still is the head of the Church of England. The Bishop of London was both the head of the diocese in which the CMS started and the bishop who normally oversaw matters related to the SPG, especially matters of ordination. The Bishop of Durham was an important figure in the SPCK.

⁸⁷Committee Minutes, April 15, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK (hereafter cited as Committee Minutes, CMS).

⁸⁸Committee Minutes, CMS, December 6, 1802, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁸⁹Committee Minutes, CMS, April 15, 1799, CMS/G/C 1/1.

that “it is scarcely necessary to add, that, as members of the Church of England, [the members of the Committee] consider its doctrinal articles as exhibiting the standard of the faith, which it should be their endeavour to propagate.”⁹⁰ This statement would have reflected Scott’s own view of the Church of England and his own commitment to the Thirty-Nine Articles. On the other hand, both the *CMS Account* and *Rules* contained statements that showed the founders to be desirous of maintaining good relationships with other Christians. For example, the *Account* said:

Let not this Society be considered, as opposing any that are engaged in the same excellent purpose. The world is an extensive field, and in the Church of Christ there is no competition of interests. From the very constitution of the human mind, slighter differences of opinion will prevail, and diversities of external forms; but, in the grand design of promoting Christianity, all these should disappear. Let there be cordial union amongst all Christians, in promoting the common salvation of their Lord and Saviour.⁹¹

This spirit was also codified in the *CMS Rules*, which stated, “A friendly intercourse shall be maintained with other Protestant Societies, engaged in the same benevolent design of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁹² Thus, the founding documents of the CMS reveal a mission that prized the doctrine and practice of the Church of England but also counted all gospel preaching Christians among their friends, no matter their ecclesiastical affiliation. This position was effectively Scott’s own solution to the Evangelical Anglican Tension, and as a result, Scott committed himself fully to the CMS.

⁹⁰“An Account of a Society for Missions,” in *Proceedings*, 12.

⁹¹“An Account of a Society for Missions,” in *Proceedings*, 13.

⁹²“Rules,” in *Proceedings*, 19.

CHAPTER 6

THOMAS SCOTT AND THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY: THE SECRETARY YEARS

On April 30, 1821, the members of the CMS General Committee were confronted with the sad news that several of the Society's former members had died. Certainly, many of the Society's supporters had passed away over the years, but in this case, among the dead was the Society's first Secretary. Thomas Scott, the Rector of Aston Sandford, had died on April 16, 1821. The General Committee knew that they had lost a dear friend, supporter, and a founding member. The Committee also realized that they had lost one of the men upon whose shoulders they then stood. Moved by the momentous occasion, the General Committee passed a resolution acknowledging their indebtedness to a man who had promoted the CMS for over twenty years:

Resolved, that, while the Committee deplore the death of these Friends, they record, with gratitude to God, the advantages which the Society has, from its very commencement, derived from the labours of Mr. Scott, who, as the first Preacher before the Society, and, for the first two years, its Secretary, laid down those principles of action and suggested those practical measures, the truth and wisdom of which are receiving fresh evidence every returning year in the extended operations and augmented usefulness of the Society.¹

These glowing words from the General Committee are significant both for what they said as well as what they did not say. The resolution focuses on Scott's time as CMS Secretary, during which he had set the spiritual and philosophical tone for the Society and had preached the first anniversary sermon. Conspicuously absent from the resolution is the fact that Scott had spent seven years of his life training CMS missionaries, a task he

¹Committee Minutes, April 30, 1821, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/5, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK [hereafter cited as Committee Minutes, CMS Archive].

took on years after he had resigned as Secretary in 1802. There is no reason to believe that the Committee did not appreciate his work as a missionary instructor, but their failure to mention that particular contribution suggests that they viewed his most important and lasting societal work to have taken place while he was Secretary. This assessment, if correct, would suggest an inverse relationship of time to significance, with just two years having greater weight than seven. Why would the Committee have thought in this way?

What the General Committee in 1821 knew well, was that the Society's continued existence could in many ways be attributed to the work and steadfastness of Thomas Scott. Starting a missionary society in the late eighteenth century was no easy task, especially a society that sought to navigate the perils of the Evangelical Anglican tension. Trials and hardships were inevitable. There would be setbacks, mishaps, opposition, criticism, and failures. Strong leadership was therefore required for a missions society to succeed in these conditions. Such a society needed leaders who were characterized by determination, courage, and above all, faith in God. Though these attributes were present in some measure in all the founding members of the CMS, Scott seemed to be blessed with a proper mixture of them all, so as to render him an excellent candidate for the task of being the first Secretary.

Small Beginnings: Efforts at Making Friends

When Thomas Scott accepted the position of Secretary in April of 1799, he was at that time already a rather busy man. He was simultaneously the chaplain of the Lock Hospital, the Sunday afternoon lecturer at St. Mildred, Bread Street, and a biweekly preacher at St. Margaret, Lothbury.² Therefore, his taking on the role of Secretary was a major commitment. For a new society with few supporters, little money, no missionaries,

²See Charles Hole, "A Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Scott," unpublished manuscript, CMS/ACC87 D17, Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 139–41.

and a precarious relationship with the English bishops, the work of the Secretary came with the additional pressure of making organizational headway without any assurance of realized success. Administrative tedium could only be expected, and the process of raising awareness and support rested largely on Scott, who made mention of his new burden in a letter to his friend in Scotland, written just over a month after the Society formed, “We have set on foot a new society for missions to Africa and the East by members of the established church: and, as I am a party greatly concerned, and have accepted the office of secretary, it occupies a great deal of my time.”³ Initially, Scott and his coworkers occupied themselves with two distinct, yet related tasks, and the outcome of the first task was to have a considerable impact on the second. Both tasks can be classified as efforts at making friends, though the nature of the friendships would differ considerably.

Seeking Episcopal Approval

The first task was to gain the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Durham. The CMS founders had decided in their very first meeting that notice would be sent to the bishops informing them of their newly established mission agency. On July 1, 1799, the General Committee resolved to send William Wilberforce and Charles Grant to the Archbishop with a copy of the CMS *Account*, the *Rules*, and letter of introduction to be written by John Venn.⁴ Some

³Thomas Scott, Letter to A Friend in Scotland, May 25, 1799, in *The Letters and Papers of the Late Rev. Thomas Scott*, ed. John Scott (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 224.

⁴Committee Minutes, July 1, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. The full text of the letter is as follows: “May it please your Grace, The committee of a society now forming for Mission to Africa and the East have sent a deputation of their Members to present in the most respectful manner to your Grace as Metropolitan a copy of the Rules which they have framed, together with the account of the nature of their Institution, which is designed for publication. They humbly trust, that your Grace will be pleased favourably to regard this attempt to extend the benefits of Christianity, an attempt peculiarly necessary at a period in which the most zealous and systematic efforts have been made to eradicate the Christian Faith. With the utmost submission and reverence they beg leave to subscribe themselves. Your Grace’s most obedient, humble servants, Signed on behalf of the committee, John Venn, Chairman” (John Venn, Letter to John Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, July 1, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/2, Cadbury

historians, such as Eugene Stock, have believed the letter to be purely informative rather than a request for approval:

The letter did not ask for patronage, nor even for permission to go forward. It only stated that the Committee “humbly trusted that his Grace would be pleased favourably to regard their attempt to extend the benefits of Christianity, an attempt peculiarly necessary at a period in which the most zealous and systematic efforts had been made to eradicate the Christian faith.”⁵

His remark that the letter “did not ask for patronage, nor even for permission to go forward” is quite perplexing and again appears to be based on his misunderstanding of Venn’s “high church principle.” Venn’s opposition to the “high church principle” focused on the matter of episcopal ordination and apostolic succession rather than having the bishops at the head of their missionary organization. Contrary to what Stock observed about the letter, the very existence of the Society seemed to depend on a favorable response from the bishops. In fact, the CMS leaders spent over a year waiting for a reply. Why would they wait if they did not desire episcopal approval? The CMS took no substantial action, while it waited, beyond communicating to supporters; and evidently, most of the Society’s Evangelical sympathizers were waiting anxiously as well. In September of 1799, Scott wrote to his son in an attempt to reassure him that all was well with the Society, “You may depend upon it that our new society is not needlessly losing time. We cast anchor for a while, to avoid running on rocks; but we mean soon to go on: and we would wish not to make more haste than good speed.”⁶ However, when an answer from the bishops was not soon forthcoming, frustration mounted. The growing desperation is hard to miss in another letter Scott wrote to his son on July 12, 1800, “The Missionary Society lies off ‘the Bishop and his Clerks,’ where, if not wrecked, it may rot,

Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK) (hereafter all letters in the CMS Archive will be reduced to the letter’s main details and the CMS Archive finding number).

⁵Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 1:72.

⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, September 28, 1799, in *Letters and Papers*, 165.

for what I can see. They return no answer, and, as I foresaw, we are all nonplused.”⁷

Again, why would Scott care about the bishops’ reply if he and the other members of the Society were not seeking some kind of permission from the bishops to carry on with their work? The only explanation for his distress is that he saw the letter to the bishops as a request for approval to begin their mission work.

The Committee of Correspondence

While the Society waited for an answer from the bishops, Scott and the other members pressed on, as best as they could, in the second major task of spreading the message about their new Society. The work of initiating and maintaining correspondence with potential supporters would certainly have occupied the majority of Scott’s time at first, though other secretarial duties such as attending committee meetings and maintaining the Society’s books would also have required his attention. On May 20, 1799, he was elected to the Committee of Correspondence and consequently would have been involved in virtually all CMS correspondence, both incoming and outgoing.⁸ In the same meeting, the General Committee made several decisions that would have direct impact on the Committee of Correspondence and on Scott. First, fourteen men were elected to be Country Members of the Society.⁹ The Society hoped that its Country Members, so designated because none of them lived in London, would help raise support for the CMS throughout England. Ironically, these members were all elected without their knowledge, and the Committee of Correspondence was tasked with informing them of their election. Second, it was resolved “that it be left to the Committee of Correspondence, to draw up an account of the Society, to be presented to the General

⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, July 12, 1800, quoted in Henry Venn, *The Founders of the Church Missionary Society and the Five First Years*, Church Missionary Society Jubilee, no. 5 (London: Church Missionary House, 1848), 13–14.

⁸Committee Minutes, May 20, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁹Committee Minutes, May 20, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

Committee, in order to be printed.”¹⁰ John Venn was chosen to complete this task, and the *Account* was included with all outgoing letters to the Country Members and other potential supporters.¹¹

Reading the mail that first year must have been fairly discouraging for Thomas Scott. The very first letter to the CMS, written politely by William Cardale, ended with the words, “I must add that my present engagements, public and private; render it absolutely impossible for me to engage to render any personal service.”¹² The first letter from one of the newly elected Country Members, Isaac Crouch of Oxford, was written to inform the Society that he had declined the office of Country Member.¹³ Edward Edwards was a little more positive and accepted his Country Member office, but he informed Scott that of the people in his area, “very few will be found able to contribute more than their fervent prayers for the success of the institution.”¹⁴ Thomas Biddulph first accepted, then declined his nomination as Country Member.¹⁵ Thomas Jones of Creaton brought a potential missionary candidate to Scott’s attention, a Welshman named Robert Humphreys, but Jones wrote back just a month later to say that Humphreys was no longer willing to “preach, neither at home nor abroad till he [was] *Episcopally*

¹⁰Committee Minutes, May 20, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹¹That John Venn wrote the *Account* was disclosed by Henry Venn. See Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 9. At the next meeting, the General Committee approved the *Account* and authorized two thousand copies to be printed. See Committee Minutes, June 17, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. However, the Committee changed its mind and authorized one thousand copies of the *Account* and one thousand copies of the *Rules* to be printed instead. See Committee Minutes, July 1, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. Two hundred and fifty copies of a letter approved for distribution to Country Members were also ordered. See Committee Minutes, July 1, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹²William Cardale, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 24, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/1.

¹³Isaac Crouch, Letter to Thomas Scott, October 26, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/8.

¹⁴Edward Edwards, Letter to Thomas Scott, November 12, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/10.

¹⁵Thomas Biddulph, Letter to Thomas Scott, November 23, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/11. In this letter Biddulph referred to a previous conversation he had with William Goode in which Biddulph agreed to be a Country Member. His letter to Scott was a retraction of that original agreement.

Ordained—neither is he willing to go to *very hot* climates.”¹⁶ This letter from Jones is of some significance for the Evangelical Anglican tension, in that it shows that ordination clearly mattered for many Evangelical clergymen and potential missionary candidates. The CMS could not guarantee ordination, and its published *Account* and *Rules* seemed to downplay it.

Charitable Contributions to the LMS

Despite these discouragements a few notable positives took place while the CMS waited to hear from the bishops, and Scott appears to be the major driving force behind what may be the most significant one—a collection made in behalf of the LMS on account of the capture of the *Duff*. The news of the *Duff* catastrophe was brought to the attention of the CMS General Committee on August 5, 1799. The subject was the main issue discussed in the meeting as the only two resolutions passed that day were related to the *Duff*.¹⁷ First, it was “resolved that an immediate subscription be set on foot, among the individual members of the Committee to be sent as a testimony of regard and condolence to the Committee of the ‘Missionary Society.’”¹⁸ Second, it was “resolved that as promptitude is judged very important on such an emergency, one hundred guineas be immediately remitted to the Treasurer of the ‘Missionary Society’ with a letter from the secretary in the name of the Committee.”¹⁹ According to the Minutes, the proposed “subscription was immediately opened for that purpose and upwards of fifty pounds were

¹⁶Thomas Jones, Letter to Thomas Scott, December 2, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/12; Thomas Jones, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 1, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/16. Throughout this chapter, words which are underlined for emphasis in the original will be rendered in italics. The quoted portion is from the second letter.

¹⁷Committee Minutes, August 5, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁸Committee Minutes, August 5, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁹Committee Minutes, August 5, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

subscribed by the Members of the Committee there present.”²⁰ The remittance of the collected and proposed monies was carried out by John Brasier, and Scott was selected to write to the absent members of the Committee to have them contribute as well.²¹ The words “immediate,” “promptitude,” “emergency,” “important,” and “immediately” in the Minutes reveal an urgency on the part of the Committee to act kindly toward the LMS.

What is only hinted at in the Minutes is Scott’s role in the whole affair. The Minutes simply record that Scott was selected to write a letter to the treasurer of the LMS to accompany the gift, and that he would also write to the other Members of the Committee asking them for further assistance. However, a memorandum written shortly after this conversation took place reveals that this particular meeting of the General Committee had been called by Scott himself and that he had even cancelled his travel plans to ensure the meeting took place:

When the London Missionary Society lost the ship *Duff*, though he had never approved of their having such a vessel, yet, filled with Christian sympathy, and struck with the opportunity of testifying good will to a society with which he and his brethren declined to act, he put off an intended journey to Margate, and, calling together the committee of the Church Missionary Society, (of which he was secretary,) he proposed a subscription from the private purses towards alleviating the loss which the other society sustained.²²

Significantly, the memorandum concluded by stating that “the effect was striking in promoting conciliation and good will, and convincing all concerned that they were brethren engaged in the same great object, though pursuing it each in his own line.”²³ Thus, the CMS’s first and most famous act of benevolence came about at Scott’s instigation. His decisive leadership and demonstration of Christian love in the *Duff* affair went to great lengths to ensure that the LMS and CMS would have a friendly relationship

²⁰Committee Minutes, August 5, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²¹Committee Minutes, August 5, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²Scott, *Letters and Papers*, 166.

²³Scott, *Letters and Papers*, 166.

despite their differences. His actions also indicate his overall commitment to broader evangelical causes and his determination to keep the CMS true to its own *Account*, which hoped for a “cordial union amongst all Christians, in promoting the common salvation of their Lord and Saviour.”²⁴

The Struggle for Existence: Ecclesiastical Tension and the Search for Missionary Candidates

The Society’s founders did not expect great things to happen right away. Their own principles stipulated that business would be done slowly and carefully. The Society had taken steps to make friends of the bishops, the Evangelical clergy, and the LMS. The only existing hindrance to their progress, so far as they knew, was an answer from the bishops. However, they could not have anticipated that they would be waiting a year for the answer, nor could they have foreseen that they would receive a considerable amount of backlash from Evangelicals on whom the Society depended for support. The Society was in for a long struggle for its existence, especially during the first two years. Very little went right during this time, and weaker men may have been tempted to give up. Scott, for the most part, found himself immersed in a sea of frustrations and failures. However, smatterings of encouragement provided just enough hope that God was working and that enduring the hardships would ultimately be worthwhile.

Early Signs of Hope

Scott and the CMS began to get some more encouraging news in the mail at the end of 1799 and the beginning of 1800. Edward Burn, James Stillingfleet, James Vaughn, John Fawcett, John Mayor, Matthew Powley, and Melville Horne all wrote to Scott to inform him that they had accepted the position of Country Members.²⁵

²⁴“An Account of a Society for Missions to Africa and the East,” in vol. 1 of *The Proceedings of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East* (London: Jaques and Co., 1801–1805), 12.

²⁵E. Burn, Letter to Thomas Scott, December 10, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/13;

Multiplying supporters is important for any missionary agency, and the CMS leaders would have been encouraged to know that other men outside of their immediate circle stood with them. A few Country Members even suggested potential missionary candidates for the Society's consideration. Ultimately, none of these suggestions amounted to anything, but at least an effort was being made by the Evangelical clergy to identify potential missionaries. Early on, an abundance of missionaries could hardly have been expected, and the Society really only needed one candidate to get the mission going. Scott would have received these letters favorably, and he probably expected that it would not be very long before a missionary would be found. At any rate, bringing new members into the Society's fold was an exciting development.

Ecclesiastical Tension: Powley's Letter

The good news, however, was in many ways overshadowed by matters related to the Evangelical Anglican tension, and several clergymen were hesitant to support the CMS unreservedly on account of the bishop's delayed reply and the CMS plan itself. Matthew Powley's letter to Scott illustrates the tension fairly well. Powley was glad to accept the position of Country Member, "I shall be extremely happy, if I can in any way promote so godlike an undertaking."²⁶ However, he conveyed some of the pushback he had received from other local ministers about the Society's plan to use catechists on the mission field. He wrote, "I have communicated your Plan to several Clergymen and others. It has been much approved, and I have every reason to think it will be heartily encouraged, provided the Bishops will countenance it; at least so far, as to engage to

James Stillingfleet, Letter to Thomas Scott, December 18, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/14; James Vaughn, Letter to Thomas Scott, December 31, 1799, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/15; John Fawcett, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 21, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/17; John Mayor, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 22, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/18; Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 5, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/19; Melville Horne, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 22, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/20.

²⁶Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 5, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/19.

ordain the catechists, when presented to them for that purpose.”²⁷ Powley’s reason for insisting on the eventual ordination of the catechists was the widespread concern that unordained catechists would eventually become Dissenters:

If the Catechists in distant Climates are subjected to a pious experienced minister upon the spot, to whom they may apply on every Emergency for Advice and Direction, and if at a proper Time, the Bishops will ordain them, when properly recommended, no reasonable objection can be made against your Scheme. But if the Bishops will not ordain them, it is generally thought, that the Catechists will in the End become Lay-Preachers or Dissenting Ministers; and thus the End of the Institution be so far defeated.²⁸

Powley concluded by saying, “You will have the goodness to inform me, whether the Bishops approve of the Plan, as the Knowledge of this Circumstance will weigh much with Regard to a Subscription in these Parts.”²⁹

The issues Powley raised are important for understanding the difficulties the General Committee faced in trying to raise support for the new Society. Considerable uneasiness existed among Evangelical clergymen over Venn’s catechist plan. Episcopal ordination mattered to many Evangelicals, and the approval of the bishops was seen to be an important prerequisite to their supporting the Society. These ministers also recognized that the Evangelical Anglican tension would have an effect on missionary candidates themselves. Powley and his friends feared that the lack of Episcopal ordination would ultimately lead to the CMS inadvertently promoting English Dissent. Powley’s concerns about missionaries turning towards Dissent were not unfounded. Even earlier that year another one of Scott’s other correspondents, John Mayor, had written to propose a missionary candidate from his area. Mayor described the young man as one who had “been called in a remarkable manner to seek salvation and to be zealous in propagating

²⁷Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 5, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/19.

²⁸Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 5, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/19.

²⁹Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 5, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/19.

it.”³⁰ However, Mayor pointed out that the man “has been also persuaded to shelter himself from a prosecution threatened by a clergyman by taking the Oaths and being licensed as a Dissenting minister.”³¹ The CMS does not appear to have ever considered this young man as a serious missionary candidate, but the story shows that Evangelical clergyman were watching the backlash against those with Evangelical sentiments in their own parishes and were consequently afraid of supporting any organization that could be associated with English Dissent.

The Answer from the Bishops

In the summer of 1800, the outlook for success seemed rather bleak. The first anniversaries of those important Eclectic Society meetings from February and March in 1799 came and went with no fanfare. The anniversaries of the Society’s founding meeting and first committee meeting in April of the same year passed by quietly. The CMS could only claim to have written its founding documents, to have written to the bishops for approval, to have helped the LMS in the *Duff* affair, and to have obtained the support of a few friends, many of whom were hesitant to throw their full weight in with the Society. Little is known about Scott’s reaction to the letters he was receiving as Secretary. His outgoing letters for the most part have been lost. He had labored to raise support for the Society, but the matter with the bishops hindered his efforts severely. The only clear indication of his mindset at the time comes from his words, already quoted above, in which he exclaimed his frustration with the bishops, saying, “They return no answer, and, as I foresaw, we are all nonplused.”³²

However, the fortunes of the Society began to take a turn for the better in late

³⁰John Mayor, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 22, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/18.

³¹John Mayor, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 22, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/18.

³²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, July 12, 1800, quoted in Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 14.

July and early August, 1800. On July 24, William Wilberforce wrote a letter to John Venn in which Wilberforce revealed that he had had a positive conversation with the John Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, about the CMS. Moore told Wilberforce that “he acquiesced in the hope expressed that the Society might go forward being assured that he would look on their proceedings with candour and that it would give him pleasure to find them such as he could approve.”³³ The letter was read in the General Committee meeting on August 4, 1800, and Moore’s response eventually proved to be the starting point for a new era in the Society’s history. However, the result of reading Wilberforce’s letter might have been entirely different had it not been for the determined leadership of Scott and a few others, for any close reader of the Archbishop’s statements will no doubt recognize that his approval was anything but enthusiastic and unreserved. Charles Hole noted that the Archbishop was essentially saying that he would “not commit himself to the Society, and certainly will not fraternize with it; but he will not be responsible for stopping it.”³⁴ Moore had taken a neutral position on the Society, and his guarded approach was not lost on the General Committee. Henry Venn has observed that “the encouragement thus given by the Archbishop was deemed by many of the Committee too slight to proceed upon.”³⁵ Several members were hesitant to go forward with the Society’s plans, and consequently, the Committee found itself at an important crossroads. Would they go forward or not? Once again the Evangelical Anglican tension potentially stood in the way of missionary progress.

Ultimately, those members in favor of carrying on the work prevailed, and Scott’s appeal for action was one of the main reasons why the Society made its decision to proceed. The Minutes for the August 4th General Committee meeting disclose almost

³³William Wilberforce, Letter to John Venn, July 24, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/22.

³⁴Charles Hole, *The Early History of the Church Missionary Society For Africa and the East to the End of 1814* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1896), 58.

³⁵Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 15.

nothing about the conversation over the Archbishop's letter. What little is known comes from Henry Venn. Venn gave his father some credit for the direction the CMS eventually went, citing his father's "sound judgment."³⁶ He also credited some of the lay-members of the Committee for supporting the advancement of the cause. Significantly, though, Scott's argument is the only one Venn explicitly mentioned. According to Venn, "Mr. Scott contended 'that it was their duty to go forward, expecting that their difficulties would be removed in proportion as it was necessary that they should.'"³⁷ Venn also quoted from a memorandum Scott sent to his family about the decision to carry on, in which Scott said, "What will be the final issue—what the success of these Missions—we know not. I shall know hereafter. It is glorious, and shall prevail. God hath said it, and cannot lie."³⁸ These statements reveal Scott's commitment to duty, his determined leadership, and his faith in God to use the CMS for the advancement of the gospel. When others hesitated and considered quitting, Scott encouraged them to press on, and his resolute leadership won the day. Persuaded by Scott, Venn, and the lay-members who favored continuing the Society's work, the Committee resolved "that, in consequence of this answer from the Metropolitan, the Committee do now proceed in their great design with all the activity possible."³⁹ The Committee also resolved to expand its efforts to find supporters by distributing pamphlets, writing the Country Members about the Archbishop's approval, and soliciting financial contributions.⁴⁰ A decision was also made to begin the Society's mission work in Sierra Leone.⁴¹

³⁶Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 15.

³⁷Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 15.

³⁸Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 15.

³⁹Committee Minutes, August 4, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁴⁰Committee Minutes, August 4, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁴¹Committee Minutes, August 4, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

Ecclesiastical Tension: Hawker's Letter

Whatever euphoria Scott might have felt over the Archbishop's reply could not have lasted long, as a letter from one of the men elected to be a Country Member, Robert Hawker, arrived just a few days later. Written in a rather indignant tone, Hawker blasted the CMS plan to send out catechists as missionaries, and he refused to promote the Society's cause. He wrote, "I cannot prevail upon myself to recommend to others what I would not in similar situation engage in myself."⁴² He continued, "To send out Catechists to baptize in case of emergency appears to me to be founded neither in God's word nor in reason."⁴³ He further stated that he would only be willing to cooperate with the Society if the missionaries were ordained "according to the usage of the Church of England."⁴⁴

Hawker's stern letter touched a tender nerve with the Society's leadership, and coming as it was from an elected Country Member, Scott needed to answer very carefully. Furthermore, Hawker was a well-respected author and preacher, and he certainly had enough influence in Evangelical circles to cause real problems for the Society had he openly campaigned against their mission.⁴⁵ Scott was cognizant of the danger Hawker's opposition presented, and his reply was very patient, reserved, and diplomatic.

Scott's letter opened cautiously with a statement about the usefulness of Country Members providing counsel to the General Committee:

⁴²Robert Hawker, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 8, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/24.

⁴³Robert Hawker, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 8, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/24.

⁴⁴Robert Hawker, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 8, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/24.

⁴⁵Hawker had achieved a measure of literary prominence as early as 1790, when he published a book of sermons wherein he defended the divinity of Christ. The book was so well received that the University of Edinburgh conferred a Doctor of Divinity degree upon him in 1792. Hawker also published a book of sermons on the divinity of the Holy Spirit, a Bible commentary, and a number of devotional books that were widely read in Evangelical circles. See John Williams, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D., Late Vicar of Charles, Plymouth* (London: Ebenezer Palmer, 1831); Robert Hawker, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, ed. John Williams, 10 vols. (London: Ebenezer Palmer, 1831).

As one object of our Society in choosing Country Members of the General Committee is, that we may have *the benefit of their Counsel*. I shall deem it a favour if you will be so obliging as to state explicitly what you would advise in respect of the Persons to be sent as Missionaries in order that I may state it to our next meeting, where I trust it will meet with a candid and serious discussion.⁴⁶

Scott then proceeded to ask Hawker to clarify the exact nature of his objection. Was Hawker objecting to sending non-ordained missionaries outright or was he concerned that tension might arise if an ordained minister was later placed over the original missionaries?⁴⁷ By opening with a welcoming stance toward receiving counsel and by seeking a more specific explanation of Hawker's objections, Scott was trying to diffuse some of Hawker's vitriol and simultaneously show him that the Society took the matter seriously.

However, Scott did not excessively pander to Hawker and went on to defend the CMS's missionary plan and to challenge Hawker's understanding of baptism. A key aspect to Scott's defense was an appeal to the fact that the Evangelical Anglican tension prevented, or at least greatly hindered, the Society from conducting its business in close keeping with ecclesiastical ideals:

We know that we cannot procure ordination for *every* person whom we might consider as capable of doing good service as a missionary: and we have assigned a reason in the Pamphlet why we cannot expect the Bishops to ordain them in present circumstances. If then none but ordained persons must be sent, we must either wholly, or in great measure give up the design. We do not hear that the Bishops object to this part of our plan.⁴⁸

Scott also challenged Hawker's strict view of lay-baptism, a practice Hawker claimed was inconsistent with Scripture and reason, by pointing out that the Scriptures do not forbid it and English church tradition had allowed it:

It has long been considered in the Church that Lay-Baptism in certain cases is valid: whether this opinion be well grounded or not, I will not determine; but I do not recollect any bit of Scripture that confines the administration of baptism to the

⁴⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

⁴⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

⁴⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

ordained Pastors: tho in general I think the common practice most expedient—but as we propose waving the subject, it is the less necessary to insist on it.⁴⁹

These comments, however, indicate that the CMS leadership was not so entrenched in their views on lay-baptism that they were willing to ignore outside criticism and risk losing support over what was a matter of secondary importance. Scott had held the CMS line, but he admitted that the line was bending and the Society's leaders were reconsidering their initial proposal.

In the final paragraph, Scott returned to a more diplomatic posture. He pointed out the fact “that in large bodies of men there will be different opinions, and thus we find that the very things we carefully stated to obviate prejudices on one hand have given rise to objections on the other.”⁵⁰ He added that the leaders of the CMS “shall be very glad to make any alterations in our plan consistent with its grand essential principles, in order to procure the concurrence of the great body of pious persons and evangelical ministers in this kingdom.”⁵¹ He concluded with a personal appeal to Hawker:

I trust Sir, you will view our designs more favourably and on a review of the subject, its magnitude, and its difficulties on every side, you will give us your counsel: and even if we cannot in every particular meet your wishes that you will not withhold your concurrence in our work and labour of love, especially as we are aware your decision will influence that of many others.⁵²

Scott's final comments reveal his diplomatic approach, an approach that parallels closely his evangelical principles. He recognized the inevitability of human disagreement but hoped that men could put aside disputes over secondary matters and unite for the advancement of evangelical causes. He also exhibited a willingness to compromise with others over such disagreements. He hoped that Hawker would be willing to do the same and lend his support to the Society.

⁴⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

⁵⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

⁵¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

⁵²Thomas Scott, Letter to Robert Hawker, August 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/34.

Scott's hopes were only partially realized. Hawker responded to Scott's letter almost immediately.⁵³ Despite Scott's best diplomatic efforts, he was unable to persuade Hawker to support the Society's catechist plan. Hawker insisted that "no one ought to be requested to go as a missionary from the Church of England without ordination."⁵⁴ Scott was successful in a few other ways though. He was able to ensure that Hawker did not openly oppose the Society's plans, and he was able to change Hawker's hostile attitude toward the Society (if the more gracious tone of his second letter represents such a change). Hawker also provided Scott with some ideas on how the CMS might send ordained missionaries, which is an indication that Hawker was willing to maintain at least something of an advisory role if he could not support the Society in any other way. Though Scott was not completely successful in bringing Hawker into the Society's fold, his diplomatic skills helped obviate a potential public relations disaster. However, the issue of ordination for missionaries continued to create problems for the fledgling society.

The Search for Missionaries

The positive response from the Archbishop, meagre as it was, breathed new life into the CMS, and the identification of suitable missionary candidates became the Society's central aim. However, Scott and the other leaders of the Society soon learned that proper missionary candidates were almost impossible to find in England. The Country Members had been asked to look for potential missionaries from among the men in their parishes, and their search proved largely fruitless. Thomas Dikes wrote to Scott on the problem:

⁵³Hawker's first letter to Scott was dated August 8, 1800. Scott's letter to Hawker is dated simply as August 1800. Hawker's second letter to Scott is dated August 21, 1800. Thus, Scott's letter had to be written between August 8 and August 21. Hawker must have answered Scott fairly quickly as not even two weeks passed between Hawker's letters.

⁵⁴Robert Hawker, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 21, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/32.

I wish I knew of any Persons who were qualified for the office of Missionaries but I fear there are no Characters in this place, that are willing and capable of undertaking so great a work. I am persuaded you are fully aware, that to find such will be one of the chief difficulties with which you will have to encounter.⁵⁵

Letters from other CMS correspondents soon showed that Dikes was right. For example, John Vaughn wrote with a similar message, “With respect to men qualified for your purposes at present, I know not of any.”⁵⁶ Thomas Jones said the same thing, “We have no fit men for your purpose in this neighbourhood, that I know of.”⁵⁷ Even Olney, which had been blessed with famous Evangelical ministers in John Newton and Thomas Scott, could not produce a candidate. Christopher Stephenson, who was the minister there in 1800, could only say, “I do not at present know any person proper for a missionary.”⁵⁸ Likewise, Charles Simeon reported, “I have endeavoured (in a prudent way) to sound the dispositions of the serious young men respecting missions: and I am sorry to say that not one of them says, ‘Here am I; send me.’”⁵⁹ There was a young man from Hull, who applied to Zachary Macaulay with an interest in going out as a missionary, but ultimately the boy was in love with a young woman whose family would not consent to their marriage if he went overseas.⁶⁰ The young man chose to stay in England and marry his intended wife.⁶¹

An obvious pattern was developing in the correspondence. Missionaries were

⁵⁵Thomas Dikes, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 9, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/25.

⁵⁶John Vaughn, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 11, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/26.

⁵⁷Thomas Jones, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 13, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/27.

⁵⁸Christopher Stephenson, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 14, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/28.

⁵⁹Charles Simeon, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 22, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/33.

⁶⁰G. Smith, Letter to Zachary Macaulay, November 26, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/40.

⁶¹G. Smith, Letter to Zachary Macaulay, November 29, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/41.

not forthcoming, and the prospect of failure was looming large. Scott himself began to worry that the object of the Society may not be realized. On October 29, he wrote to his son about the Society's trials, "I had a considerable share in setting this business in motion, and I should wish to try what can be done: but I am apt to fear, that, like most of my plans, it will come to little."⁶² Under the circumstances, Scott had good reason to be concerned. After all, the last General Committee meeting of 1800 concluded with a single sentence that aptly summarized the Society's progress for the entire year—"No Missionaries were mentioned."⁶³

The beginning of 1801 did not begin with any more promise. On January 5, 1801, the CMS General Committee resolved that Scott should send out a circular letter to Evangelical ministers throughout England, which would include a request for missionary candidate recommendations.⁶⁴ The responses to the circular were more or less depressing. Thomas Jones reported to Scott that "it is not probable I shall find any proper persons in this country for so important an undertaking, we have but few pious young men amongst us, and they are in no respect qualified for Missions."⁶⁵ Thomas Robinson could find no men "who appear to be of the right cast" for missionary work, and he exhorted Scott, "Let us be encouraged to wait."⁶⁶ Matthew Powley stated bluntly what many may have been thinking, "It always struck me, that you would find it difficult to get proper Persons

⁶²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, October 29, 1800, quoted in John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself and Copious Extracts of His Letters*, 6th ed. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 316.

⁶³Committee Minutes, December 1, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁶⁴Committee Minutes, January 5, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. The content of the letter had been determined back in November. See Committee Minutes, November 3, 1800, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. The copy of the circular Thomas Scott sent to his son has been preserved. See Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, March 10, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/Z 76.

⁶⁵Thomas Jones, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 4, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/46.

⁶⁶Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, February 11, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/50.

to send out as Missionaries.”⁶⁷ He also mentioned that “an Enquiry was made at the last Elland Society, if anyone knew of any whom they could recommend. But only one was mentioned, and very little said in recommendation of him by the Person who knew him best.”⁶⁸ Edward Edwards’s reply to Scott revealed the wretched state of missionary zeal among the better part of churches at the time. Edwards had distributed the circular letters Scott had sent him to nine different ministers in hopes of finding a potential missionary. Speaking about the results of his quest, he wrote, “I have not yet heard from any of them, that there is the least appearance of the Missionary Spirit, in their respective spheres: nor is there, I am sorry to say, in my own.”⁶⁹

Not every incoming letter was as negative as these. In March, Isaac Crouch submitted a promising missionary candidate for Scott’s consideration, a university student named John Bull. Crouch described Bull as “a young man of piety and good sense” who had “turned his thoughts for some time past . . . to the work of a Missionary.”⁷⁰ Shortly after Crouch had sent in his recommendation, Bull himself wrote to Scott on the subject. Given the avalanche of negative letters that had been pouring into the CMS, Bull’s letter must have been read with unprecedented excitement. He wrote encouragingly, “I have advised with my friends here and find all parties agreeable to my going abroad. And I feel a growing persuasion that it is my duty, if a prospect present itself in most respects suitable to my present circumstances.”⁷¹ Bull’s letter was read at the CMS General Committee meeting on April 1, 1801, and “the Secretary was directed

⁶⁷Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, February 18, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/52.

⁶⁸Matthew Powley, Letter to Thomas Scott, February 18, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/52.

⁶⁹Edward Edwards, Letter to Thomas Scott, March 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/54.

⁷⁰Isaac Crouch, Letter to Thomas Scott, March 14, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/55.

⁷¹John Bull, Letter to Thomas Scott, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/60.

to answer his enquiries.”⁷² Scott duly carried out the Committee’s instructions, and his letter to Bull represents a rare example of Scott corresponding with a potential missionary candidate. Bull wanted to know if the CMS would be able to support him as a married man (he was soon to be married), whether or not he could go out as a chaplain to Sierra Leone, and if he would be able to be ordained as a deacon and then a priest if his purpose was to go out as a missionary.⁷³ He also wanted to know if the General Committee needed to meet with him about his studies and when he might expect to leave England for Africa.⁷⁴

Scott answered Bull’s questions with measured caution. He recognized that he was in no position to make unfulfillable promises to Bull and thereby lead the young man into a rash, life-altering decision. The CMS was in uncharted waters really. The Society had never sent a missionary before and had limited resources. Careful planning, thought, and training would necessarily take place before Bull could actually leave England. The tone of Scott’s letter reflected the Society’s situation, and his answers were most reasonable given the circumstances. He opened by stating that “the Committee does not consider the circumstances of your being married, as any insuperable objection to your being employed in the work of a Missionary by the Society.”⁷⁵ He even lauded the idea and explained that “in some cases a suitable Partner may be found very useful.”⁷⁶ Scott

⁷²Committee Minutes, April 1, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. There appears to be a discrepancy in the chronology between the CMS letters and the CMS minutes. The minutes read April 1, but Scott’s answer to Bull, dated April 7, says that he read Bull’s letter to the General Committee “last night,” which would have been April 6. See Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63. The problem may well have come about due to a copying error. The minutes held by the CMS Archive are not the original minutes but copies of the original that began in 1814 (see Hole, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 36n1).

⁷³John Bull, Letter to Thomas Scott, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/60.

⁷⁴John Bull, Letter to Thomas Scott, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/60.

⁷⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁷⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

assured Bull that the Committee “by no means intend[ed] to engage Missionaries, and then to leave them to want what is needful, or to struggle with difficulties about a Maintenance.”⁷⁷ He added, “If [the Committee] employ married men, certainly they will think themselves bound to make a suitable Provision for their families also.”⁷⁸ However, Bull should not expect a luxurious living because “the very work of a Missionary implies *frugality*.”⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the Society would endeavor to provide for his basic needs, and the costs associated in travelling abroad would “of course be defrayed.”⁸⁰ Scott could promise support, but he could not say how much. Neither could he answer affirmatively respecting Bull’s hope of becoming a chaplain in Sierra Leone. He pointed out that the Society was “upon the most intimate terms with many leading Gentlemen of the [Sierra Leone] Company,” and “it is not impossible that some arrangement might be made by *us with them*, for your officiating *pro tempore* as the Chaplain.”⁸¹ He cautioned that “this must not be depended on, or thought of, as a *permanent thing*; as that would be incompatible with the engagements of a Missionary.”⁸²

Scott was noncommittal about most of Bull’s other questions. As to ordination, Scott confessed, “It is impossible the Committee can answer the question concerning your ordination; as that must greatly depend on the [Bishop] or some of the Bishops.”⁸³ He tried to sound optimistic and reassuring and insisted that he believed the matter of ordination would be removed “by one means or other.”⁸⁴ Again, the CMS was in a

⁷⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁷⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁷⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

position of weakness on the matter of ordination. The Society simply could not guarantee it, and this fact was a major deterrent to loyal Anglicans. In a similar way, the Society could not provide prospective missionaries with any sort of timeframe for their departure. Scott wrote to Bull in this vein, “We can by no means determine at what time it will be proper that you should leave England.”⁸⁵ Scott explained the reason for his uncertainty, “Various circumstances may perhaps render your continuance here for some time both more advantageous to you, and subservient to future permanent service, than a very speedy entrance on the work: but this must be left to more mature consideration.”⁸⁶ This part of Scott’s answer is recognizably consistent with John Venn’s third society principle that “it is better that a mission should proceed from *small beginnings*, and advance according to circumstances, rather than enter upon a large scale at first.”⁸⁷

Other portions of Scott’s letter were also consistent with the principles Venn had laid out for the CMS. Venn had argued that “success will depend under God on the *persons sent on the mission*.”⁸⁸ Bull had asked Scott about needing to discuss his academic training with the Committee. Scott’s answer to this question is instructive for how he and his colleagues viewed the importance of piety and character in missions:

You would not be required to give an account [of your past studies]: as your qualifications for the work would principally be judged of in another manner. Simplicity, zeal, tender compassion for souls, fortitude, Patience &c. being the grand things especially to be looked for in a [Missionary] together with a competent acquaintance with the Scriptures, and an aptness to teach and the capacity of learning languages.⁸⁹

Scott’s words were completely consistent with Venn’s second CMS governing principle.

⁸⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

⁸⁷Josiah Pratt, Records of the Eclectic Society of London, March 18, 1799, CMS Unofficial Papers, CMS/ACC11 F1, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK [references to the Eclectic Society Minutes will hereafter be cited as “Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society”].

⁸⁸Pratt’s Notes, Eclectic Society, March 18, 1799.

⁸⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Bull, April 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/63.

In the last chapter, it was observed in those early Evangelical missionary discussions prior to the founding of the CMS that some Evangelicals were more concerned with zeal and passion for ministry than they were of academic training. Such was the case here. What mattered most to Scott and the CMS leadership was Christian character, a knowledge of the Scriptures, and an ability to endure the inevitable hardships of missionary work. The question that was left unanswered in Scott's letter was whether or not Bull met the spiritual qualifications and also possessed the proper mentality to embrace the adversities of the mission field.

Scott had not "sugar-coated" what potentially awaited Bull should he decide to pursue missions but rather had laid out the blatant realities. Bull was left to decide for himself if he was willing to continue in a missionary trajectory. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the young man nor the goodness of his intentions, but Scott's letter gave him much to think about. In all probability, Bull gave considerable thought to his future ministry and what part, if any, he would play in the CMS cause. Bull's final decision about missions came approximately two months later, in a letter dated June 18, 1801. Scott did not have to read very far to get the verdict as the first sentence contained Bull's decision:

I must beg leave to decline the offer I made of going to Sierra Leone as I fear my constitution would not long bear the heat and fatigue which a missionary must necessarily undergo, and as I conceive there is a great prospect of being useful in England. The delicate constitution of my intended companion would be still less suitable. I have experienced a good deal of ill health since I was in London lately so much as to be laid by. I hope the Committee will not think themselves injured by what has taken place.⁹⁰

Whether or not the Committee felt themselves injured by Bull's decision to forego missions is difficult to ascertain. The CMS Minutes are eerily silent on the matter, and it does not appear that Scott mentioned it in his personal correspondence. What is known is that later in the year the CMS started taking steps to look for missionaries outside of

⁹⁰John Bull, Letter to Thomas Scott, June 18, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/75.

England. The Bull affair may well have been an inciting cause for the CMS leadership to give up on English missionary candidates for the foreseeable future.

Ecclesiastical Tension: Newton's Letter

Probably the most shocking disappointment the CMS experienced in 1801 came from John Newton. At that time, Newton was the most famous Evangelical minister alive in England. He was well-respected by virtually everyone in the Evangelical world and was personal friends with many of the CMS's leaders. He was so well respected that on January 5, 1801, the CMS General Committee resolved to ask him to be the keynote speaker at the first anniversary of the Society.⁹¹ Surprisingly, Newton refused to preach for the Society, not because of scheduling conflicts or health reasons, but because he was diametrically opposed to the CMS plan in principle. Newton objected to the use of catechists going out as missionaries, and he "was always afraid it would involve us in difficulties, not answer our wishes, and perhaps render our simplicity disputed."⁹² Newton argued that catechists in the early church "seem to have been constantly under the eye and notice of the Bishops or Elders" and they "were not sent abroad as missionaries into unknown and very distant parts of the Globe."⁹³ Theologically speaking, Newton found "*teaching* and *baptizing* so closely connected in our Lord's Commission that [he knew] not how to separate them, either in point of a conscientious regard to his express command, or indeed in the nature, and reason of the thing."⁹⁴ Newton admitted that strict adherence to a policy of sending exclusively ordained ministers to the field was a difficulty, but he insisted on it nonetheless, telling the Committee that the only solution he could see was for the Lord "to impress the heart of

⁹¹Committee Minutes, January 5, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁹²John Newton, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 29, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/47.

⁹³John Newton, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 29, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/47.

⁹⁴John Newton, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 29, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/47.

one or more clergymen of years and experience to undertake [mission work].”⁹⁵ For these reasons, Newton would not preach.

Newton’s letter was read in the General Committee meeting of February 2, 1801. Newton’s objections were reminiscent of those of Robert Hawker mentioned earlier, but the public relations disaster of losing Newton’s support was arguably much greater than losing the blessing of Hawker. As Charles Hole put it, “Surely this disapproval by one so revered, the father, the Nestor of the whole Evangelical body, must have poured the last drop into the cup of their discouragement.”⁹⁶ As in the Hawker case, the CMS General Committee scrambled to appease Newton, this time by writing “a letter to be sent to him to obviate his objections,” a letter which was to be delivered personally by John Venn, Josiah Pratt, and Thomas Scott.⁹⁷ The contents of the letter are unknown, but the visit to Newton had the desired effect. At the next Committee meeting, “The Rev. Josiah Pratt and the Secretary reported that they had visited on the Rev. J. Newton according to the resolution of the last meeting and that he had agreed to preach the annual Sermon.”⁹⁸ Once again, Scott was instrumental in diffusing a potentially disastrous fallout with a prominent Evangelical leader.

Ecclesiastical Tension: Hurn’s Letter

The issue of sending catechists to the mission field was clearly a major point of contention for the CMS. The Society’s leadership had put their desire to reach the lost ahead of strict adherence to ecclesiastical protocol in the Church of England, and they were paying the price for doing so. The Society was struggling to find missionary candidates, and some potential supporters refused to render assistance because of their

⁹⁵John Newton, Letter to Thomas Scott, January 29, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/47.

⁹⁶Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 65.

⁹⁷Committee Minutes, February 2, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁹⁸Committee Minutes, March 2, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

convictions about ordination. The issue simply would not go away. Even on the eve of the Society's first annual meeting, Scott found himself reading yet another letter on the subject. This time the letter came from William Hurn of Debenham. Hurn's letter was very polite and was addressed to Scott as a "private letter."⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Hurn expressed his disapproval of the catechist plan, saying, "Surely it is to be regretted, that the missionaries sent out by the established church cannot have episcopal ordination."¹⁰⁰ His objections were based on the novelty of the plan and the likelihood of the bishops' scorn:

For a *mere* catechist to be sent to preach the Gospel to the Heathen, appears to be a novelty. It is plain, they cannot act on the apostolic plan, which I think was to baptize converts immediately on their profession of faith, and as soon as a sufficient number was collected, to administer the Supper of the Lord; and should they do this, without authority from our church, and against its constitution, what will the Bishops say to it?¹⁰¹

Hurn's complaints were similar to Hawker's and Newton's, and he also reflected the firm belief that what the bishops thought of the mission mattered. Like Newton, Hurn's solution was for "God to stir up the minds of some, who are already ordained, to engage in this service, in which case catechists will be very desirable *helps*."¹⁰²

Hurn's letter was not so much significant for what it said, but for the fact that it represented just another example of an ongoing issue that had to be addressed satisfactorily for the CMS to gain supporters. The increasing number of letters to this effect could no longer be ignored. Scott had defended the catechist plan until now, but the time had come for the CMS leadership to compromise. The compromise would be officially codified at the first annual anniversary meeting that was held on May 26, 1801.

⁹⁹William Hurn, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 12, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/70.

¹⁰⁰William Hurn, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 12, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/70.

¹⁰¹William Hurn, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 12, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/70.

¹⁰²William Hurn, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 12, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/70.

Thomas Scott's Anniversary Sermon

The history of the CMS up to the first anniversary meeting on May 26, 1801 can only be described as a struggle. The Society had struggled to get approval from the bishops, struggled to find missionaries, and struggled with matters related to the Evangelical Anglican tension. It is not surprising, then, that the CMS also struggled to find a preacher for its anniversary sermon. As has been observed already, John Newton had been chosen to preach the sermon in January. He had initially refused the invitation but was later convinced by a posse of Venn, Pratt, and Scott to accept. However, as the day for the anniversary approached, Newton informed the General Committee that he was likely to be out of town for the occasion.¹⁰³ Therefore, the Committee resolved “that in case the Rev. Mr. Newton should not be able, to preach before the Society, as at present seems probable, The Rev. Thomas Scott be desired to undertake to preach in his stead.”¹⁰⁴ It is ironic that the man who had replaced Newton in Olney many years ago would now preach before the CMS in Newton's stead, but choosing Scott was apropos. Newton had been chosen to speak because of his seniority and the respect the CMS leadership had for him, but Scott had been chosen on account of his steadfast commitment and perseverance in behalf of the Society since its inception. As Eugene Stock has observed, “Scott's deeply interesting narrative of his own gradual enlightenment and conversion to God is entitled *The Force of Truth*. Truth indeed has force; and so has character, and the force of character in Scott was a distinct factor in the development of the newly-born Society.”¹⁰⁵ Consistent with his close, personal attachment to the Society, Scott took his appointment very seriously. Writing to his son about being chosen to speak, he said, “I feel it one of the most important services I was

¹⁰³Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 70.

¹⁰⁴Committee Minutes, May 4, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁰⁵Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:79.

ever called to, and I mean to write the whole as ready for printing (for which it is expressly intended) and to do my best.”¹⁰⁶

The pre-CMS discussions about missions in Eclectic Society meetings wherein various objections were raised about engaging in Evangelical missions, the discussions about other missionary societies, the quest for episcopal approval, the lack of missionaries, and the Evangelical Anglican tension all together informed the content of Scott’s sermon. The Society was two years along and had done precious little in terms of tangible mission work. Little missionary zeal was evident in Evangelical circles, and many ministers opposed the Society’s plan. Trouble and misfortune appeared to be on every side, and Scott carried the weight of all this adversity into the pulpit with him on Whit Tuesday, 1801. Nature itself seemed despondent on the occasion as there was a “very heavy rain” that day.¹⁰⁷ The turnout for the anniversary was less than expected, which compounded his discouragement. His wife wrote to her son just two days later and expressed her husband’s dejection:

We did expect a crowded Church on this most important occasion; but, alas! Our hopes were much damped—not above 500 or 600 attended! Perhaps this may be ascribed in measure to a very heavy rain, and its not being sufficiently made public; but your father thinks that many frown on the Society.¹⁰⁸

Thus, with the disappointment of standing before a small crowd and with a belief that the CMS was looked down on by many, Scott stood in the pulpit at St. Andrew by the Wardrobe and began, “Of all the times, in which during many years I have been called to exercise my ministry, the present appears to me by far the most arduous and important.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Scott, March 10, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/Z 76.

¹⁰⁷Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 20.

¹⁰⁸Venn, *Founders of the Church Missionary Society*, 20. Scott corrected his wife’s attendance estimate in the margin to “not more than 400.”

¹⁰⁹Thomas Scott, “A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe and St. Anne, Blackfriars, on Tuesday in Whitsun Week, May 26, 1801, before the Society for Missions to

Scott's sermon is wonderful in many respects. Several portions are very moving and retain the power to excite even the modern reader's heart and mind concerning missions. However, the sermon stands as evidence that the cause of Evangelical missions was at that time in a precarious situation. Sceptics needed convincing. Sympathizers needed motivation, and supporters needed inspiration. The sermon, which was based on Ephesians 2:12, addressed every one of these groups and deserves close attention, as it reveals much about Scott's personal theology and philosophy of missions.

In the course of his message, Scott dealt with four main missional issues. The first major point focused on the need for mission work itself. Specifically, Scott made the case that Christian charity must take into account the fact that the heathen will perish and face the judgment of God without the gospel. The state of the heathen has been a common enough theme for missionary sermons over the years, as discourses on the subject tend to stir up sympathy for the lost. However, in Scott's day, the subject was an important issue in theological debate, even among Evangelicals.¹¹⁰ Not everyone was convinced that the heathen actually needed saving. Some Evangelicals believed, or at least entertained the belief, that it was possible for the heathen to be saved by living in accordance with whatever degree of truth they had received in natural revelation.¹¹¹ Scott was appalled by this line of reasoning. In the introduction of his sermon, he lashed out at

Africa and the East," in vol. 1 of *Proceedings*, 25.

¹¹⁰Admittedly, evangelicals still debate the issue today. See Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, eds., *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

¹¹¹E.g., Josiah Pratt said the following on the heathen in an 1802 meeting of the Eclectic Society at which Thomas Scott was present: "Faith in Christ is universally required to salvation—say some. But it is answered, that this regards such only as hear the Gospel. The truth seems to be, that none of the heathen will be condemned for not believing the Gospel; but they are liable to condemnation for the breach of that law which they have. Yet if in any there be a prevailing love to God, and a care in the practice of virtue, they may be accepted through Christ. Particularly if we consider that many of the ancient Jews, and even the Apostles of Christ, before the Ascension, knew but little of those truths generally thought fundamental" (John H. Pratt, ed., *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders: Notes of the Discussions of the Eclectic Society London during the Years 1798–1814* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978], 260–61).

this idea, “Infidelity has diffused its contagion even among Christians: and the anti-scriptural sentiment, that heathens, and Mahometans, and Jews, may be saved by their religions, if sincere in them, as well as Christians by theirs, has cut the very sinews of exertion, and led men to undervalue the Gospel itself.”¹¹² To those who held such views, Scott asked them to consider why the apostles were so willing to suffer for the spread of the gospel among lost sinners:

But if this sentiment be true why were apostles and evangelists sent forth to preach to all nations? To what purpose their labours, sufferings and martyrdom? For what were they so zealous and earnest? Did they, or did they not, consider all men, of every nation, exposed to the wrath of God, under condemnation, and in danger of everlasting misery, from which they could not possibly be delivered, except by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?¹¹³

Scott’s text, Ephesians 2:12, was apparently chosen to combat the idea that there was hope for the heathen apart from Christ, in that Paul described the Gentiles as “having no hope and without God in the world.” For several minutes Scott laid out passage after passage in the Bible that showed the heathen to be condemned and hopeless. He argued that pagan religions amounted to nothing more than idolatry:

Thus the religion of the Gentiles, so far from honouring God, was in his sight the most detestable of all their abominations: and it should be carefully observed, that the word *abomination* is used in Scripture for *idolatry*, more frequently than for any other crime, or indeed all other crimes taken together; and therefore the apostle declared idolaters to be without *excuse*, however it be at present fashionable to *excuse* them.¹¹⁴

He also hit back at the tendency “to admire the virtues of the ancient heathens” by demonstrating that the Scriptures always condemned the Gentiles for their behavior.¹¹⁵

He said, “And every mention [in Scripture] of the character, born by Gentile converts in

¹¹²Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 26.

¹¹³Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 26.

¹¹⁴Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 37.

¹¹⁵Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 43.

their heathen state, implies an excess of immorality as well as impiety.”¹¹⁶ He then quoted Paul’s list of various types of sinners that do not inherit the kingdom of God from 1 Corinthians 6:9–11.¹¹⁷ He proceeded to give examples of the horrible practices of pagans, such as the Roman gladiatorial games, human massacres, slavery, and exposing infants,¹¹⁸ and he brought the combined testimony of Scripture and history together to ask his audience a very important missiological question:

On what ground then, can a Christian conclude, that men, thus universally sunk in idolatry or the basest superstition, and in all kinds of vice and immorality, till they have almost obliterated the very sense of right and wrong, can be entitled to the reward of everlasting happiness, or meet for the enjoyment of its holy delights, without “repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ”?¹¹⁹

Of course, the assumed answer to Scott’s rhetorical question was that there was no ground. The heathen were perishing and faced the eternal wrath of God, but why did this matter? Scott had explained the significance of the issue for missions at the outset of the sermon by reminding his hearers that their personal beliefs did not alter reality:

Our opinions, concerning the eternal condition of our fellow men, will not alter that condition, whether we groundlessly presume that they are safe, or needlessly tremble lest they should perish everlastingly: but our judgment in many cases, will influence our conduct; and groundless confidence may induce a ruinous inactivity, while needless fears can only prompt us to self-denying exertions, which in that case might have been spared.¹²⁰

For Scott, one’s belief in the future state of the lost would directly impact the person’s treatment of unbelievers in the present. A failure to realize that the peoples outside of

¹¹⁶Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 40.

¹¹⁷Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 40. First Corinthians 6:9–11 says, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (KJV).

¹¹⁸Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 42.

¹¹⁹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 45.

¹²⁰Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 28.

Christian England did in fact stand under God's judgment would result in a complete neglect of gospel preaching around the world.¹²¹

Scott's first main point set the stage for the rest of the sermon. In the next point, he endeavored to show the duties Christians have for reaching the lost and to examine the degree to which those duties have been neglected. He stated the duties of Christians in the following way:

And so long as any part of any nation remains unconverted to Christianity, the church militant ought, no doubt, to persist in this holy warfare, without indulging sloth, or fearing man, or regarding any secular interest, compared with the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, "of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."¹²²

In other words, the church, and the individual Christians that constitute the church, should be engaged somehow in reaching the unconverted around the world. Scott was careful to say that "it was not the duty of every Christian to become a minister; nor that of pastors in general to leave their stated charges to preach the gospel in distant lands."¹²³ Nevertheless, "some individuals however were so evidently called forth, qualified, and marked by their brethren, and the pastors of the church, for these [missionary] services, that if they declined or forsook them, they were highly criminal."¹²⁴ Furthermore, every Christian has some obligation to be involved in the missionary enterprise. Scott proclaimed, "It behooves every one of us to enquire what we can do in this respect, *consistently with other duties?*"¹²⁵ Examples of action included developing evangelistic strategies, supporting missionaries financially, cultivating language study for missional

¹²¹A fair amount of space has been given to Scott's first point because the standard histories of the CMS both mention the fact that there were differences of opinion concerning the eternal state of the heathen but do little to explain what Scott himself thought about the issue. See Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:76–77; Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 70–71.

¹²²Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 51.

¹²³Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 52.

¹²⁴Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 53.

¹²⁵Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 54.

use, and prayer.¹²⁶

Scott's third point flows out of his second and is perhaps the most intriguing part of the sermon. In point two, he had considered the duties Christians have in the cause of missions. In point three, he gave "hints" about fulfilling Christian duty in this respect.¹²⁷ In this section, Scott dealt in one way or another with the majority of the trials the CMS has faced up to that point. He pleaded for action in the missionary cause. He addressed the Society's slow progress. He countered objections to the CMS. He called for a spirit of cooperation among different missionary agencies, and he articulated a vision of future blessing that he then could only have imagined. In all this, Scott was expressing his underlying convictions regarding missions, convictions that had compelled him to keep at his work in the midst of disappointments, failures, and opposition.

The opening portion of Scott's third point is stirring. He entreated his hearers to consider the world's vast need for the gospel, noting that those "who by providence and grace have been made to differ, whom God hath 'reconciled to himself by Jesus Christ,' and who now rejoice in the hope of eternal glory, would be all alive to the feelings of compassion towards their poor fellow-sinners."¹²⁸ He put forward that it was only natural for those who have "experienced the blessings of [Christ's] gospel themselves [to be] eager to communicate them to those who are perishing in pagan darkness."¹²⁹ After all, "thus the primitive Christians and ministers evidently felt and acted; hence all their zealous labours, and constant self-denial, and patient sufferings."¹³⁰ The need for mission work was great, and on this point he spoke contemplatively:

¹²⁶Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 55.

¹²⁷Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 57.

¹²⁸Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 57.

¹²⁹Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 57.

¹³⁰Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 57.

When we think of nearly a thousand millions of our species at once inhabiting the globe; all sinners, all having immortal souls, all to stand before God in judgment, all soon to die, yet to live for ever in another world, either in happiness or misery; and few, (alas, how very few in comparison,) having any ground to hope for happiness in that eternal state!¹³¹

He then proceeded to combine his thoughts on Christian compassion and his remarks on the world's great need into a call for action:

That in infinite mercy [God] has sent us the gospel, and led us to embrace it; that we possess a good hope through grace; and that the same gospel is suitable, free, and sufficient, for all throughout the world, if all heard and believed it: surely the mind that was in Christ, love to him and his cause, a desire to imitate his example, and genuine philanthropy, will combine to excite us, to use all our influence in every way, which may tend, either directly or more remotely, to promote the great ends of Emmanuel's incarnation, and death upon the cross!¹³²

As he progressed, he pleaded with his hearers, "Let us then not merely enquire what we are *bound* to do? But what we can do? And how any of our labours, efforts, or contributions according to our several talents, may produce some effect in spreading our holy religion."¹³³ He stressed urgency, "Our life is short—a large proportion of it is already spent; we have lived too much and too long unto ourselves; and 'there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither we are going.'"¹³⁴ Scott's point was clear. England had been blessed with ready access to the Bible and gospel ministry. Christians in such a land had a special responsibility to take that message abroad, to spend their lives and what fortune they may have for the furtherance of the gospel. These stirring statements reveal Scott's heart for missions and his passion to reach the heathen. He recognized that he was truly blessed to be a Christian, and he had a

¹³¹Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 58.

¹³²Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 59.

¹³³Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 59. Scott was not alone in calling on lay people to be engaged actively in gospel promotion. E.g., Andrew Fuller exhorted the Christian "hearers" in the Northamptonshire Association to offer their "assistance in promoting the interest of Christ" in his circular letters. See Andrew Fuller, "The Pastor's Address to His Christian Hearers, Entreating Their Assistance in Promoting the Interest of Christ," in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (Boston: Lincoln, Edmands, & Co., 1833), 2:472–77.

¹³⁴Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 59.

vision to see the world come to know his beloved Savior. These convictions put the recent hardships of the Society in perspective. Yes, there had been trials. It was true that there were presently no missionaries in the Society's care, but these matters should not make them falter in the cause. As Scott put it, "Surely [spreading Christianity] is the grand end for which we ought to value life, after we 'have known the grace of God in truth;' and all that respects our temporal interests, should be entirely subordinated to the desire of glorifying God, and doing good to mankind, above all in their eternal concerns!"¹³⁵

Not everyone in English churches shared Scott's convictions, nor were there scores of Evangelicals willing to make the exertions necessary to carry out the Society's daunting goal of reaching Africa with the gospel. Charles Hole inferred from the meagre number of annual subscribers in 1801 "that the project [of the CMS] was regarded by the bulk of its friends as at this stage mainly experimental, with few certain signs of permanence in it."¹³⁶ Therefore, Scott needed to help his hearers formulate a more robust perspective on missions. "If we would conduct undertakings of this kind in that manner most useful," he argued, "we should endeavour to acquire enlarged views of the subject."¹³⁷ In order to bring about these "enlarged views," he spent a few minutes challenging potential objections, prejudices, and short-sightedness.

The first potential objection Scott dealt with pertained to the value of every human soul, no matter their national origin. Twenty-first-century evangelicals may find it strange that an evangelical preacher would have to make this point to a Christian congregation assembled for the purpose of promoting missions, but near universal agreement on the value of all human beings could not be assumed in 1801, particularly as

¹³⁵Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 59–60.

¹³⁶Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 73.

¹³⁷Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 60.

it pertained to Africans. At this point in English history, the slave trade was very much alive and would not be outlawed in Parliament until 1807. The Church of England herself owned slaves in Barbados at the infamous Codrington Plantation, and the church's relationship to slavery was no small problem for missionary societies.¹³⁸ Indeed, England had come a long way since Morgan Godwyn had reported a century earlier that a woman in Barbados told him "that I might as well Baptize a Puppy, as a certain young *Negro*."¹³⁹ However, the change in thinking had been slow and gradual. Jonathan Aitken has stated that "it may be argued that not one single Christian leader in mid-eighteenth century England had realized, let alone contemplated, that slave trading was a spiritual and humanitarian abomination."¹⁴⁰

Even John Newton had captained slave ships in the 1750s *after* his spiritual awakening, and his treatment of the slaves he was transporting was deplorable and reflected the low view in which Africans were held by his contemporaries. Sometimes his own language betrayed certain prejudices against the Africans. For example, Adam Hochschild has detected subtle differences in how Newton treated the death of slaves and the death of white men in his captain's log. Hochschild observed, "In Newton's logbook, slaves, lesser creatures without Christian souls and thus not destined for the next world, 'die' or are simply 'buried.' But when he speaks of whites, they 'depart this life.'"¹⁴¹ Whether or not Newton's word choice in his captain's log truly reflected Newton's belief

¹³⁸For a treatment of some of the problems slavery caused for SPG mission work, see Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141–70.

¹³⁹Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro's & Indians Advocate, Suing for their Admission into the Church: or A Persuasive to the Instructing and Baptizing of the Negro's and Indians in our Plantations* (London, 1680), 38.

¹⁴⁰Jonathan Aitken, *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 112.

¹⁴¹Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 22.

concerning the absence of a soul in the African is perhaps debatable. What is not debatable is that as late as the 1750s Newton, subconsciously at least, had viewed white men differently than he did black slaves.

Thankfully, Newton's thinking eventually changed, but many of his contemporaries still held aberrant views on the subject. As recently as 1781, Luke Collingwood, the captain of the slave ship *Zong*, had thrown one hundred and thirty-three slaves overboard, drowning all but one, in hopes of filing an insurance claim for property lost at sea when he returned to England.¹⁴² The resulting court case ended up being strictly about the legalities of the insurance claim and not, as it should have been, about murder. Lord Mansfield, the presiding judge in the case, declared, "The matter left to the jury, was, *whether it was from necessity*; for they had no doubt (*though it shocks one very much*) that the case of slaves was the same as if horses had been thrown overboard."¹⁴³ This statement by Lord Mansfield had only been uttered twenty years prior to Scott's sermon, and it shows that Africans were viewed by English law as being on par with horses in terms of intrinsic value.

Such deplorable thinking had to be addressed by a mission society that, as its name clearly indicated, had purposed to reach "Africa and the East." Scott dealt with the subject, although briefly:

A soul in China, or Africa, is of as much value, as one in our own families or congregations; and its salvation is important: and in like manner a soul that shall exist in the next century, or ages after we are dead, will be of as much value, as the soul of any man now living. We should therefore make up our minds, to lay ourselves out with persevering diligence, amidst delays and discouragements, as well as in the face of dangers and difficulties.¹⁴⁴

As can easily be seen, Scott did not directly address the slave trade, but it was not far

¹⁴²Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 79–82.

¹⁴³Quoted in Prince Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp* (London: Henry Colburn, 1820), 241.

¹⁴⁴Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 60.

from his mind and certainly the theological statement he made would have undercut notions that had been commonplace within pro-slavery circles concerning African souls.¹⁴⁵ The idea that a Chinese soul or an African soul was just as valuable as an English soul had implications for mission work. If every soul was of equal value, it followed that every effort should be made to reach those souls for Christ, even if those efforts involved trouble and delay.

The mention of delay brings us to the next issue Scott's sermon aimed to tackle. He knew that CMS supporters were few, and their commitment to the Society was tenuous at best. The Society had been in existence for two years, and no mission work had been done. Where were the results? Why should the people support a Society that had done so little? Was the Society worth their time and effort? Scott encouraged those who might have been asking shortsighted questions like these to step back and have a long-term view of missionary progress. His reasoning at this point was completely consistent with the "small beginnings" approach that the CMS founders had laid out in those early Eclectic Society meetings.¹⁴⁶ He compared the work of missions to a farmer who does tasks with both immediate and future harvests in mind. Such a farmer "not only makes inclosures, plants vineyards, or sows corn, in order to obtain a speedy increase: but he plants acorns, and raises timber-trees, for the use of future generations; being satisfied

¹⁴⁵It should be remembered that the main subject of this sermon was missions, not the slave trade or any of its debated components. As a result, Scott should not be criticized for keeping his comments brief or for not mentioning the slave trade itself here (he had mentioned it earlier, see Scott, "Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions," 47). Scott was clearly for the abolition of the slave trade as his other writings bear out. For example, in his *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion*, he declared that slavery was akin to murder: "Whatever, by force or stratagem, deprives another of his life is prohibited. All the slaughter committed by oppressions, persecutions, or attempts to deprive of liberty, or confine in slavery, our unoffending fellow-creatures on any pretence whatever, is willful cruel murder. What then shall we think of the accursed slave-trade, which will surely bring vengeance on this nation, if much longer tolerated?—Even laws, needlessly sanguinary, (as I fear many are in this land,) involve all concerned, in this enormous guilt: and they, who ought to punish the murderer, and who yet suffer him to escape, will be numbered among the abettors of his crime at God's tribunal" (Thomas Scott, *Essays on the Most Important Subjects of Religion* [London: D. Jaques, 1794], 53).

¹⁴⁶For the Eclectic Society discussion on this matter, see above, 194–98.

with the reflection, that others will in due time be profited by his labours.”¹⁴⁷ Scott viewed the present work of the Society as analogous to the planting of acorns that would someday result in a great tree. He admitted that “we may never see or hear of the fruit of our exertions.”¹⁴⁸ However, the lack of visible fruit at present should not be a deterrent because “it may perhaps hereafter be said concerning them, to those who shall succeed us, ‘Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labours.’”¹⁴⁹ He realized that waiting was often the hardest part, and delays often are accompanied by criticism, as he well knew from his time as CMS Secretary. However, the wait was worth it. Referring to the farmer who plants a tree, he said, “In this part of his plan, which requires most patience and disinterestedness, he may be censured by the inconsiderate, as if he effected nothing: but in the event he will be proved, to have wisely consulted the permanent good of his family and the publick.”¹⁵⁰

He then drew several principles from the analogy that should be applied to the work of the Society:

Let it not then be thought that nothing is done, while the ground is preparing, or seed is provided, or it is cast to the earth, but does not yet appear. Feeble beginnings may at length produce great effects: the most successful efforts, in almost every thing, have been slighted at first, and they who planned or set them on foot have seldom lived to witness their success. Let none then “despise the day of small things:” let none undervalue any of the different methods by which the same grand object may be pursued.¹⁵¹

He pointed out that it would take time to train missionaries in foreign languages so that gospel preaching would be possible.¹⁵² He reminded the audience that conversions may

¹⁴⁷Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 61.

¹⁴⁸Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 60.

¹⁴⁹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 60.

¹⁵⁰Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 61.

¹⁵¹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 61–62.

¹⁵²Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 63.

not be immediately forthcoming even when the message is preached and that Satan would “use all his influence, both as a deceiving serpent and as a roaring lion, to support his tottering kingdom, which is directly attacked by every effort to evangelize the heathen.”¹⁵³ Despite all of these obstacles, he urged, “Let us not be discouraged.”¹⁵⁴ In order to illustrate his point, he once again returned to his farming analogy to show that God’s power can overcome whatever problems might stand in the way:

In the depth of a severe winter, the impediments to cultivation from snow and frost, are insuperable by all the power of man: but when the almighty Ruler of the seasons sends the warm south wind, with the beams of the vernal sun, the ice and snow dissolve, the earth softens, vegetation proceeds rapidly, and the husbandman finds the obstructions effectually removed. And thus it is and thus it will be, whenever, or wherever “the Spirit of God is poured from on high.”¹⁵⁵

Scott was convinced that the work of missions was ultimately in God’s hands, and God can do the impossible. Therefore, “we ought not then to be discouraged by difficulties or shrink from steadily contemplating them: but we should look well to our motives and to our means; and above all be careful to place our whole confidence in the Lord, knowing that the gospel, when faithfully preached, has always been made ‘the power of God unto salvation.’”¹⁵⁶

The final portion of Scott’s third point addressed two other major objections to the Society’s work. Both of these objections had come up earlier in the Eclectic Society meetings prior to the formation of the CMS.¹⁵⁷ The first objection was that the proliferation of missionary agencies would result in conflict among those agencies. Scott’s answer to this argument was that a multiplicity of societies was in fact beneficial to missions, as it brought more ideas to the table and multiplied the number of fields that

¹⁵³Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 62–63.

¹⁵⁴Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 64.

¹⁵⁵Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 64.

¹⁵⁶Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 64.

¹⁵⁷See above, 184–88.

could be reached.¹⁵⁸ The second objection was that there were “multitudes of very wicked people at home, whose reformation we should attempt in preference.”¹⁵⁹ Scott initially turned the objection back on those who raised it and questioned “whether they who start the objection, are the most zealous, in using every proper means of bringing sinners to repentance and faith in Christ, in their own neighbourhood.”¹⁶⁰ However, he did not avoid the question itself. He pointed out that “none in this land are entirely destitute of all means of becoming wise unto salvation, as hundreds of millions in other countries are known to be.”¹⁶¹ At least some attention ought to have been given to areas that had no gospel witness rather than focus exclusively on places that are filled with gospel preaching churches.

Another aspect of the objection that foreign missions would hinder domestic Christian work was the notion that engaging in missions would result in diminished instruction at home. This thought must have been almost comical to Scott, who had just spent the last two years reading letter after letter which communicated to him the complete lack of missionary zeal in the country and had not conveyed even one credible missionary candidate. On contemporary evidence, it was not as if hundreds of ministers were suddenly about to leave their congregations void of instruction in order to go the mission field. One can sense a bit of irony in his response when he quipped that “a far more zealous and courageous spirit must prevail among Christians than we have hitherto witnessed, before there be any danger on that side.”¹⁶² Nevertheless, he gave the argument a fair response by stating that zeal for missions would have a reciprocal effect

¹⁵⁸Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 65–66.

¹⁵⁹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 68.

¹⁶⁰Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 68.

¹⁶¹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 68.

¹⁶²Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 68.

on zeal for evangelism at home. He compared this phenomenon to what happens when a nation goes to war:

It is well known, that in times of war, the military spirit, which before lay dormant, almost always rekindles and becomes general. It spreads from breast to breast; and acquires new vigour continually: insomuch, that no losses, which do not materially affect population, can properly be said to lessen the number of soldiers; for others press forward to fill up their places, the ardour increases, and at length there is some danger lest all other employment should be deserted for military life.¹⁶³

Scott argued that the same thing would happen in spiritual warfare, “If once the servants of God should become, generally and thoroughly, engaged in scriptural efforts for the conversion of the heathen, and should declare offensive war against the kingdom of the devil; depend upon it, zeal for pure Christianity in our own country, and in our own hearts, will revive in proportion.”¹⁶⁴

Thus having answered multiple objections to the cause of missions, Scott concluded his sermon by speaking generally about the CMS itself. Scott’s peroration was mostly informative and possessed little in the way of rhetorical fanfare. The subdued ending can largely be attributed to the fact that he had “gone through [his] subject, perhaps rather too largely” and felt the need to conclude hastily.¹⁶⁵ His final point contained three main sections. First, he gave a very brief explanation for why the Society had come into existence in the first place. He noted that “we would consider ourselves as fellow-helpers with all, who attempt to propagate vital Christianity among the heathen: but we found impediments in our way, which prevented us from employing all our influence, or extending our labours so far as we desired, by concurring with any of the Societies already formed.”¹⁶⁶ These words are informed by the Evangelical Anglican

¹⁶³Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 69–70.

¹⁶⁴Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 70.

¹⁶⁵Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 71. He noted parenthetically that “my heart is earnestly engaged by the great object, which must plead my excuse.”

¹⁶⁶Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 71.

tension. The CMS founders were evangelicals and Anglicans, but joining the existing missionaries societies would put certain limits on them being both simultaneously. Thus, “on this ground it was deemed more conducive to the general end, to form a separate Society, in which we hope more effectually to exert ourselves in promoting the common cause.”¹⁶⁷

Second, Scott assured the public that the Society had not been sitting around doing nothing, even if progress had been slow. The CMS had made “attempts to open a correspondence with pious clergymen all over the united kingdoms; and to obtain the assistance of their counsel and prayers; and especially by their means to bring forth proper persons for Missionaries, and to stir up a *missionary spirit* through the land.”¹⁶⁸ This present chapter has related some details of those efforts, so the reader should readily recognize that to which Scott was referring. He admitted that “the Society has not hitherto engaged any Missionaries,” but he remained upbeat and insisted that “they are not without hopes of being able shortly to do it.”¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, concrete work in missions had been taking place. The Society was involved in translation work, and “it was also purposed to educate native Africans, and to instruct them carefully in our holy religion; in order at length to employ them as Schoolmasters, among their countrymen.”¹⁷⁰ The hope was “that African Schoolmasters may concur with British Missionaries, and become perhaps Missionaries themselves in process of time.”¹⁷¹ Most of these activities would not have been known to the general public, and Scott wanted those present to realize that good work was taking place.

¹⁶⁷Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 71.

¹⁶⁸Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 71–72.

¹⁶⁹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 72–73.

¹⁷⁰Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 73.

¹⁷¹Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 73.

The final paragraph of the sermon contained a reassuring statement about perseverance and a mild call to render aid to their ongoing efforts. Scott said reassuringly, “But so far from giving up the design, as some have supposed, they [i.e., the CMS leaders] are more and more deeply impressed with the sense of its vast importance, and are fully determined, by the help of God, to persevere in it to the uttermost.”¹⁷² As for the audience, Scott asked for their assistance:

I shall only add, my brethren, that whether you can, or cannot, afford us any pecuniary assistance; we earnestly intreat you, to aid us with your daily prayers and supplications, to that God, who alone can give wisdom, inspire zeal and love, and keep us cordially united in humility and simplicity; who alone can raise us up helpers and instruments, open doors, remove mountains, and give success: as it is our decided opinion, that they who most pray for us, are the best benefactors to the institution, and take the most effectual means of rendering it successful.¹⁷³

This call for help, while certainly sincere, almost sounds timid. Scott came short of directly asking for financial assistance. The entreaty was for prayer only. He made no calls for missionary volunteers or volunteers of any other type. Thus, Charles Hole made a good assessment of the CMS in mid-1801 by saying, “In short, up to this time they could present themselves to the public only as a Bible and Tract Society that was hoping to develop into a Missionary Society.”¹⁷⁴

Despite its rather anti-climactic ending, Scott’s sermon, discloses his thoughts on the issues that had been raised in his correspondence with supporters. He had heard the criticisms, the candidate withdrawals, and the reports of minimal missionary zeal, and the anniversary sermon gave him an opportunity to express himself publically on these issues and to explain his vision for the Society. The sermon reveals Scott to be a man who was driven by an anxiousness about the perilous situation of the lost and a corresponding duty to reach with the gospel those who were dying without Christ. The

¹⁷²Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 74.

¹⁷³Scott, “Sermon Preached before the Society for Missions,” 74.

¹⁷⁴Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 72.

numerous occurrences of words such as “duty,” “zeal,” “incumbent,” “ought,” “should,” “perseverance,” “exertion,” “effort,” and “obligation” throughout the sermon reveal an attitude of commitment to the missionary cause on his part. He knew that starting a missionary society would not be easy. Yet, he was convinced that God was using the struggles he and his fellow-laborers faced to give them “deeper views of our own unworthiness and insufficiency; and brings us to despair of success, except from his powerful interposition.”¹⁷⁵ He believed that God used the trials of life to change his people, so that “having thus formed us to a more proper disposition of mind, and the use of hallowed means exclusively, he begins to prosper his design, and to work for the glory of his own name.”¹⁷⁶ Scott realized that apart from the power of God, the entire missions enterprise could only fail. However, nothing could stand in its way once God chose to pour out his blessing upon it. Hence the urgent need for prayer. What kept Thomas Scott going in the cause of the gospel and missions? He was persuaded that God was in sovereign control of the whole endeavor, and he had faith that God would bless the cause, even if he was not around to see it.

A New Quest for Missionaries

Scott’s anniversary sermon appears to have been well received. The Society published it as part of its annual report which was sent to subscribers throughout England.¹⁷⁷ John Ryland, Jr., Scott’s Baptist friend, gave it particular praise, “I have just read, and studied your Sermon, and the Design, and Report of the Missionary Society. I have the pleasure to say, the whole has enlightened my Mind, engaged my attention, and

¹⁷⁵Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 67.

¹⁷⁶Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 67.

¹⁷⁷Copies were sent to all of the Bishops, the SPCK, the SPG, and the LMS among others. In total, 2500 copies were printed and distributed. See Committee Minutes, July 6, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

moved my affections.”¹⁷⁸ Thomas Hitchins borrowed a copy of the sermon from Dr. Hawker, later purchased one, and subsequently distributed it to his friends “in the hope the perusal of it may produce the same effect on their minds as it has on my own, viz. that of the warmest approbation and sincere desire to do everything in my power to be instrumental in promoting the success of the object proposed.”¹⁷⁹ Scott’s sermon appears to have been influential in stirring up additional support for the CMS, as these letters indicate, but his sermon may not have been the most important happening at the annual meeting. In the course of the previous two years the fledgling Society had received considerable criticism for its policy of allowing catechists to baptize converts. The practice had raised the ire of Dr. Hawker as well as John Newton, among others. The CMS leadership realized that the Society would struggle to gain much needed support if a change to the original plan was not made. Therefore, alterations were made at the annual meeting with regard to catechists. The Society did not drop the plan altogether, but the Society’s *Account* was changed so that “three pages and a half of it, relating to catechists, were omitted, and in the Rules, which were included in this publication, two or three lines referring to catechists baptizing were struck out of No. XVIII. together with the supporting note from Hooker.”¹⁸⁰

The change was significant, and when coupled with the events surrounding the missionary candidate John Bull, it signaled a major modification to the Society’s missionary strategy. Officially, the Society’s *Rules* still said that a catechist could be involved “in founding a Christian Church,” yet as it turned out, no catechist would ever be sent to the mission field.¹⁸¹ The published *Report* of the Society explained what was

¹⁷⁸John Ryland Jr., Letter to Thomas Scott, July 29, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/79.

¹⁷⁹Thomas Hitchens, Letter to Thomas Scott, December 29, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/83.

¹⁸⁰Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 72.

¹⁸¹“Rules,” in *Proceedings*, 19.

then the policy for discovering missionaries, “From the number of ministers, however, who now co-operate with them, they entertain little doubt, through the blessing of the great Head of the church, of having, ere long, proper persons brought to their notice.”¹⁸² This statement was followed-up by a rather coy revelation—“Indeed at this time, the proposals of one person, highly recommended, are under consideration.”¹⁸³ This unnamed person must have been John Bull, with whom Scott had been corresponding at the time of the annual meeting. When the *Report* was published, the CMS did not know that Bull would withdraw his candidacy, as the news of Bull’s decision to remain in England did not come until late June. Of course the outcome was anything but the desired one, but what is rather amazing is that the event went completely unmentioned in the Society’s Minutes. Perhaps the General Committee was embarrassed by the fact that the Society had published a reference to Bull’s candidacy only to have nothing come of it. Perhaps the more immediate concerns about Bible translations shifted their focus.¹⁸⁴ What is clear is the simple fact that virtually no further attention is given to finding English missionaries for the rest of the year. When missionaries were eventually sought after, the Society would neither look to England nor the Church of England for candidates.

For all intents and purposes the CMS had given up on finding a missionary by mid-1801. Business seemed to slow down after the annual meeting. Even the inbound correspondence slowed in the latter half of the year, with the Society receiving only nine letters from June to December, as opposed to the twenty-seven it had received through May. The principal business seems to have revolved around Bible translations and other

¹⁸²“Report,” in *Proceedings*, 86.

¹⁸³“Report,” in *Proceedings*, 86.

¹⁸⁴E.g., Scott was part of a sub-committee that was formed for the purpose of potentially publishing a Chinese translation of portions of the Scriptures. See Committee Minutes, August 3, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

potential publications. The decrease in Society business may in part be explained by the fact that Scott's situation at the Lock had deteriorated, and he may have turned his attention more to his personal affairs than to those of the Society. Supporting this theory is the fact that he was looking to leave London that summer on account of his troubles at the Lock. He wrote, "It would be of little use or interest to detail my trials and difficulties at the Lock. At length, however, the time arrived, when I was satisfied in my conscience that it was my duty to recede."¹⁸⁵ Events were seemingly coming together for his imminent departure. In fact, just four days before John Bull wrote his letter to Scott to withdraw his offer to become a missionary, the Rector of Aston Sandford, Mr. Brodbelt, died on June 14, 1801. The end result was that Scott was appointed to the living on July 22, but he was unable to relocate from London due to the fact that there was no parsonage in Aston Sandford at the time he accepted the position. Scott's intention to leave would explain why the correspondence dropped during the second half of 1801 (as he was probably not sending out as many letters to correspondents) and evidently prompted the CMS to appoint Thomas Smith as Deputy Secretary on September 7, a position Smith was subsequently awarded on October 5.¹⁸⁶ Scott's desire to leave would also explain why the General Committee voted in the monthly meeting in December to give Scott forty guineas "in consideration of the great trouble he has been put to in discharging this office before the appointment of a Deputy Secretary."¹⁸⁷ However, the fact that Scott did not have a house to move to in Aston Sandford meant that he was not yet ready to relinquish his duties as Secretary. As it turned out, he would remain in his post for another full year, and some of the other business discussed in that December meeting would have lasting implications for both the CMS and Scott personally.

¹⁸⁵Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 364.

¹⁸⁶Committee Minutes, September 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1 and Committee Minutes, October 5, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁸⁷Committee Minutes, December 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

The General Committee meeting that took place on December 7, 1801, represented a renewed quest on the part of the CMS to find suitable missionary candidates, but in a way totally different from previous attempts. The Committee passed a resolution that stated,

Resolved, That Mr. William Cardale, Mr. William Wilson, and the Rev. Edward Cuthbert, be requested to confer with Mr. Latrobe or any other proper person concerning the possibility of obtaining foreign Missionaries, of a proper spirit, to be employed by this Society, and that they make a report on this subject if convenient, to the next Meeting.¹⁸⁸

By “foreign Missionaries,” the Committee meant non-English missionaries, and Christian Latrobe was an ordained Moravian minister who lived in England and was familiar with the missionary landscape on the European continent, particularly in Germany.¹⁸⁹ Over the next several months, the sub-committee of Cardale, Wilson, and Cuthbert exchanged letters and made personal visits to Latrobe and a Lutheran minister named Charles Steinkopff about the possibility of recruiting German seminary students to go out as missionaries in behalf of the CMS. In one of these meetings, Steinkopff, who spoke no English, made a written statement concerning the state of missions in Germany, which revealed that “the great Zeal displayed in England has spread also in Germany, and a seminary for the education of young missionaries has been instituted at Berlin.”¹⁹⁰ He mentioned that there were seven men “preparing themselves in it, who are all single Men. They are Mechanics by profession, but out of love to Christ, have devoted themselves to his service.”¹⁹¹ Steinkopff also suggested that the CMS consider supporting the Berlin Society, a German missionary society whose funding was “very low” and was therefore “limited in its usefulness, and cannot educate so many persons, as willingly offer

¹⁸⁸Committee Minutes, December 7, 1801, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁸⁹Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 75.

¹⁹⁰Committee Minutes, March 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁹¹Committee Minutes, March 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

themselves for Missionary labours.”¹⁹² The General Committee duly resolved for the sub-committee handling the German angle to “continue their enquiries, and particularly with the nature of the Berlin Society, and the Gentlemen who superintend it.”¹⁹³

A plan was beginning to come together. English interest in missions had evidently encouraged missionary zeal in Germany. Ironically, zealous English Evangelicals could find no missionaries to send. The Germans, on the other hand, had missionaries to go along with their zeal but inadequate financial resources available to train and send them to the mission field. The obvious solution to their problems was cooperation. The Germans would provide the missionaries, and the English would fund them. As events played out, the CMS also found that collaboration with the Lutherans would be the key to unlock the problem of the Evangelical Anglican tension which had plagued the Society since its founding. Opposition to the Society’s plan to send catechists to the mission field was to be circumvented by sending *ordained* Lutheran ministers. At the time, sending Lutherans would have been viewed by most English churchmen as an ecclesiastically acceptable practice, given that Anglicans, even in high church circles, had typically accepted Lutheran orders as being on par with their own since the time of the Reformation.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, English Evangelicalism and German Pietism shared many qualities, specifically, a love for Scripture and an emphasis on the heart in religious

¹⁹²Committee Minutes, March 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁹³Committee Minutes, March 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁹⁴See Peter Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760–1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 153–60; John Pinnington, “Anglican Openness to Foreign Protestant Churches in the Eighteenth Century,” *Anglican Theological Review* 51 (1961): 133–48. This acceptance of Lutheranism, however, was not universal in the Church of England, and high churchmen gradually changed their perspective on the legitimacy of ordination among Protestant churches that had suspect claims to apostolic succession and who had rejected opportunities to implement episcopacy in their state churches. Ultimately, the Tractarians would rescind formal recognition of continental Protestants outright. The CMS itself later had significant problems with the Lutheran missionaries it sent out because the missionaries naturally exhibited more loyalty to the principles and doctrines in which they were ordained rather than those of the Church of England. See John Pinnington, “Church Principles in the Early Years of the Church Missionary Society: the Problem of ‘German’ Missionaries,” *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s., 20, no. 2 (October 1969): 523–32.

devotion. For the CMS, which had insisted on the importance of character, spirituality, and zeal in its missionary candidates from the beginning, consorting with Lutherans who shared those values was only natural.

Thomas Scott's involvement in these negotiations appears to have been minimal at first. He was not a part of the sub-committee appointed to look into this matter, and therefore his involvement would have mostly been at the General Committee level. The Minutes do not say anything specifically about his activities during the first quarter of 1802. However, evidence exists that he was involved in the correspondence early on and that he was working on the project, even if it was mostly behind the scenes. One indication that Scott was actively involved in the quest for German missionaries can be found in a letter from Joseph Hardcastle of the LMS, which was written to Scott and dated March 22, 1802. In this letter, Hardcastle told Scott that he had "mentioned the substance of your application to me relating to this subject to our Directors, who expressed unanimously the most cordial attachment and affection both to the object of your institution and its conductors."¹⁹⁵ The subject Hardcastle was referring to was "the Missionary Seminary at Berlin."¹⁹⁶ The letter indicates that Scott had either written Hardcastle or approached him in person about the seminary sometime earlier that month.¹⁹⁷ What is curious about this exchange is that the CMS Minutes contain no resolution for Scott to contact the LMS or Hardcastle about this or anything else. The Minutes of March 1 do mention the fact that the LMS was planning on sending two

¹⁹⁵Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, March 22, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/88.

¹⁹⁶Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, March 22, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/88.

¹⁹⁷One wonders if Scott had mentioned the Berlin seminary to Hardcastle at the Surrey Chapel in Southwark, where the LMS often held meetings. Scott's interactions with Hardcastle happened to correspond closely in timing to Thomas Robinson's scathing letter to Scott about irregularity, wherein Robinson specifically mentioned the fact that Scott had "been in the habit of preaching at S. Chapel." See Thomas Robinson, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 26, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/90.

missionaries from Germany, but there is no indication in the records that Scott had been officially dispatched to Hardcastle for discussing the situation.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Scott's discussions with Hardcastle had an official sound to them. Hardcastle even offered to send a letter of introduction from the LMS on behalf of the CMS to Mr. Georg Siegmund Stracke, one of the seminary's directors,¹⁹⁹ which he duly sent on April 14.²⁰⁰ Evidently, Scott took it upon himself as the Society's Secretary to initiate a conversation with the LMS about German missionaries and the seminary in Berlin. Of course there is no reason to believe that he was trying to undermine the work of the sub-committee. In all probability he was working closely with them, as evidenced by the fact that William Cardale, the chair of the committee, was forwarding the letters he received from Mr. Latrobe to Scott with a deferential notice that Cardale was "leaving to [Scott's] Discretion what course to pursue."²⁰¹ Scott's interactions with Hardcastle in March and April also explain why the General Committee asked him in May to write letters to Georg Stracke of the Berlin Missionary Seminary and to Joseph Hardcastle of the LMS in order to obtain more information about the seminary and its students.²⁰² The Committee's action was only natural because he had, whether on his own initiative or at the behest of the sub-committee, already participated in these conversations.

These details may at first glance appear to be nothing more than the ponderous ramblings of a historian who is obsessed with committee and sub-committee

¹⁹⁸Committee Minutes, March 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1. The Minutes read, "Two other Persons, educated by the same Society, are also lately come to England, thro' the means of a Minister in East Friedland, to be employed under the London Missionary Society."

¹⁹⁹Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, March 22, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/88.

²⁰⁰Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, April 14, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/89.

²⁰¹William Cardale, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 7, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/95.

²⁰²Committee Minutes, May 3, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

minutia. However, Scott's activities in the German missionary affair are actually quite significant for the main subject of this dissertation for several reasons. First, both Scott's biographers and the CMS historians have virtually ignored Scott's CMS activity in his final year as Secretary. His biographers have focused almost exclusively on the difficulties he faced at the Lock in 1802, and the CMS historians lend the impression that he did little more than show up to General Committee meetings, though the latter can certainly be forgiven as their purpose was not to talk primarily about Scott. Nevertheless, these historians have left an incomplete picture of Scott's secretariat. He was not so distracted by his situation at the Lock or at Aston Sandford as to render him a mere titleholder in the Society after he had preached his anniversary sermon in 1801. Rather, he remained an active participant in the Society's affairs, specifically in what was at the time the most significant business in which the Society was engaged. Second, Scott's active role in the Society's German missionary recruitment plan prepares the way for the next period of his ministry, his time as a missionary trainer. Why did the CMS directors turn to Scott in 1806 to be the main theological instructor for the Society's missionaries? The obvious answer, if one sees Scott as actively involved in the formation of this English-German partnership, is that Scott was personally invested in its success. Finally, Scott's interactions with Hardcastle and Stracke support what has been argued as a central thesis of this dissertation, that Scott's personal solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension explains his heavy involvement in the CMS. Scott, an Anglican, apparently on his own initiative, contacted Joseph Hardcastle, a Dissenter, to discuss the possibility of a missionary partnership with a Lutheran in Georg Stracke. The CMS had provided an environment in which he could maintain his loyalty to the Church of England but also allowed him the freedom to interact with evangelicals outside of his own denomination in order to further the cause of missions. It is rather telling that of the twenty-three extant letters written to Scott as Secretary from May to December in his

final year, over half of them were written by non-Anglicans, and Scott would have been quite comfortable with this fact.²⁰³

The subject of the German missionaries appears to have been the chief CMS issue with which Scott dealt until he resigned as Secretary in late 1802. Beginning in May, the Society began to gain a clearer picture of the history and character of the Berlin Missionary Seminary, with which they hoped to form a partnership. Scott's correspondence with Hardcastle was central to much of the CMS research. Hardcastle wrote Scott on May 8 to inform him that a Jewish man named Mr. Frey, was willing to discuss "the subject of the Seminary at Berlin" with the Society.²⁰⁴ The meeting with Frey took place on May 17.²⁰⁵ A little over a week later Hardcastle wrote again to Scott, explaining that Mr. Stracke had informed him that there were two men at the Berlin Seminary that "are intended for your Society if you should be inclined to take them."²⁰⁶ On June 1, Hardcastle wrote once more to let Scott know that the LMS had determined to take four missionaries from the Berlin Seminary into their maintenance and to leave the two remaining students to the care of the CMS.²⁰⁷ He also noted encouragingly that if the previous students the LMS has received from the seminary "may be considered as specimens of the rest, we cannot avoid cherishing a very lively hope that their ministry among the Heathen will be rendered very useful."²⁰⁸

²⁰³For the letters counted in this statement, see the Church Missionary Society Archives, CMS/G/C 1/92–117. Not everything in this range was written to Scott, and some of the letters appear twice, once as the original and once in translation. Letters not written to Scott and the presence of translations have been taken to account in the reckoning.

²⁰⁴Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 8, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/98.

²⁰⁵Committee Minutes, May 17, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²⁰⁶Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, May 19, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/99.

²⁰⁷Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, June 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/100.

²⁰⁸Joseph Hardcastle, Letter to Thomas Scott, June 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC

Around the same time the CMS received a letter from John Jaenicke, who was one of the directors of the Berlin Seminary, a letter which prompted the CMS leaders to give direct financial support to the institution for the first time. Jaenicke gave a brief history and survey of the seminary. He explained that “the principal object we have in View, is to acquire a complete knowledge of the Scriptures.”²⁰⁹ He also laid out a few generalities about the curriculum and confessed that the seminary had “at present an arrear of 200 rix dollars.”²¹⁰ He proclaimed joyfully, “We have often thought, ‘How shall we, poor impotent children, contrive to send our Brethren to Africa or Asia . . . and where should that money come from?’ But now, O merciful Saviour, thou givest us an opening and answerest our Doubts about the Expenses.”²¹¹ Jaenicke was referring to (or perhaps more accurately, hoping for) English support—and support he would get. The CMS General Committee was so moved by his letter that they resolved “that the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds be raised by the Members of this Committee and their friends, as a private subscription to be immediately sent to them as a Benefaction.”²¹² As £50 was roughly the equivalent of 200 rix dollars, this gift from the General Committee not only covered the seminary’s debts, it also advanced their finances by 400 rix dollars. At the same meeting, it was resolved “that the Committee of Correspondence be requested to take into their early consideration, the letters lately received respecting the supply of Missionaries by the Berlin Society and the education of young men for Missionary labours.”²¹³ Scott, of course, was on that committee, and the resolution would have informed his activities from that time forward.

3/1/100.

²⁰⁹John Jaenicke, Letter to M. Steinkopf, May 8, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/97.

²¹⁰John Jaenicke, Letter to M. Steinkopf, May 8, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/97.

²¹¹John Jaenicke, Letter to M. Steinkopf, May 8, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/97.

²¹²Committee Minutes, June 7, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²¹³Committee Minutes, June 7, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

Genuine progress in obtaining missionaries was finally being realized, and momentum toward this end would continue to mount for the remainder of Scott's time in office. The correspondence between the CMS and the Berlin Missionary Seminary soon bore tangible fruit, and by the end of the summer, the CMS even knew the names of its first two missionaries. On June 16, Georg Stracke wrote to Scott to express his delight over the prospect of a partnership with the CMS and to assure him that the missionary candidates would be glad to subject themselves to the Church of England:

Having in this manner, properly considered every thing, agreeing with the conditions you propose, we do not hesitate to commit our young missionaries to you. For we see no obstacle to our leaving them with you, to be sent forth by you, when it appears proper to confer the orders of your Episcopal Church upon them. I therefore answer according to your desire. Our young Brethren who are educating have no objection to your Episcopacy.²¹⁴

The letter is significant in that it reveals that the Society planned to have these Lutheran students be ordained in the Church of England.²¹⁵ The letter also revealed who the first missionaries would be, namely, Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig, who declared “without reserve that they agree with us in this respect and are perfectly willing to receive your orders.”²¹⁶ Stracke added that “we must indeed make haste cautiously; but we have reasons why we wish that you would certify us as soon as may be whether we may venture to send over the two young men whom we have mentioned.”²¹⁷ The General Committee obediently considered the matter at their July 5 meeting, in which the Committee of Correspondence recommended Renner and Hartwig “as proper persons to be taken under the patronage of this Society.”²¹⁸ The General Committee also “resolved,

²¹⁴George Stracke, Letter to Thomas Scott, June 16, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/102.

²¹⁵However, when the missionaries eventually did go out, they went out with Lutheran orders and never received Anglican ordination.

²¹⁶George Stracke, Letter to Thomas Scott, June 16, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/102.

²¹⁷George Stracke, Letter to Thomas Scott, June 16, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/102.

²¹⁸Committee Minutes, July 5, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

that the Committee of Correspondence be empowered to engage the said students, and dispose of them as they might think proper.”²¹⁹ The General Committee determined “that the Committee of Accounts be empowered to defray the necessary expenses of their future education and support.”²²⁰ Scott was an integral member of the Committee of Correspondence, the committee that was authorized to direct the recruitment process for these German missionaries. In fact, he was probably the *de facto* head of the committee, given that all the incoming letters from the Society’s German correspondents were addressed to him and were replies to letters he had sent them. Thus, in Scott’s final months as a Society officer, he was taking the necessary steps to leave his successors with actual missionaries to send to the field.

Resignation and Promise

The business of obtaining the services of the German missionaries Renner and Hartwig progressed steadily throughout the remainder of 1802. On August 15, Georg Stracke again wrote to Scott and explained that Renner and Hartwig were studying English and that the leaders of the Berlin Seminary “now consider them as yours and it is your place to determine when they shall cross the Seas, or how long they ought to remain with us.”²²¹ With this information in mind, the General Committee addressed the matter of the two missionaries at their October 4 meeting, when the Committee “resolved, that the Rev. Mr. Stracke be requested to forward the two young men, Messrs. Peter Hartwig and Melchior Renner, to London, as soon as convenient.”²²² The Committees of Correspondence and Accounts were also made responsible for their provision while in

²¹⁹Committee Minutes, July 5, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²⁰Committee Minutes, July 5, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²¹George Stracke, Letter to Thomas Scott, August 15, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/1/109.

²²²Committee Minutes, October 4, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

London, and the Committee of Correspondence was to give them “due examination” and report back to the General Committee.²²³ Scott seems to have been at the heart of all this business. In the same meeting, the Secretary was given directions to coordinate with Stracke about the financial aspects of getting the missionaries to London.²²⁴ The Committee of Correspondence recommended that Stracke and Jaenicke be made “Foreign Corresponding Members of this Society,” a motion which the General Committee approved, and Scott was commissioned to notify the Germans of their appointment.²²⁵ He was also given the power to call a General Committee meeting at any time to discuss the business of the new missionaries, should any member of the Correspondence Committee desire one.²²⁶ The combination of Scott’s place on the Committee of Correspondence and his role as Secretary had already placed him in an influential position within the Society, and this October General Committee meeting seemingly increased his power and responsibility. In certain respects, Scott’s situation at the Society was then as good as it had ever been. The Society was finally on the verge of sending actual missionaries to the mission field, and Scott was actively involved in managing the project. Success was within reach!

Ironically, Scott would not be around, at least in an official capacity, to reap what he had sowed. Just one month after the General Committee determined to summon the Society’s first missionaries to London, Scott announced that he was leaving town. The Minutes for November 1, 1802, record that “the Rev. Mr. Scott gave notice that it is his intention to leave London and consequently to decline the office of Secretary to this

²²³Committee Minutes, October 4, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²⁴Committee Minutes, October 4, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²⁵Committee Minutes, October 4, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²⁶Committee Minutes, October 4, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

Society.”²²⁷ Scott’s notice of resignation would not likely have been a surprise to the General Committee. The Committee knew that Scott had come to deplore the internal politics at the Lock Hospital and that, for over a year, he was technically the Rector of Aston Sandford. The Society knew he was leaving, and no doubt a succession plan had already been discussed, though the uncertain timing of Scott’s departure would have made precise planning difficult.

The outworking of divine providence made for a fitting end to Scott’s time as Secretary. The General Committee postponed the matter of Scott’s resignation to the next monthly meeting, which took place on December 6. The Committee’s delay in accepting his resignation ensured that his removal from office would take place on the same day as one of the most important CMS gatherings in its history. Since May of 1799 the CMS had scrapped and fought to build a missionary enterprise. Under the leadership of Scott, Venn, and other like-minded Evangelicals, the Society had weathered the storms arising from the Evangelical Anglican tension and the lack of missionary candidates. At last, brighter skies were on the horizon. Scott may well have felt a mixture of sadness and relief when the Committee “resolved, that the Resignation of the Rev. Thomas Scott, as Secretary to this Society, (for reasons he has assigned) be accepted” and Josiah Pratt be put in his place.²²⁸ However, his heart almost certainly jumped for joy, when the Committee “resolved unanimously, that Messrs. Melchoir Renner and Peter Hartwig, the two persons referred to in the Report of the Committee of Correspondence, and formerly in the Committee July 5th last, as proper to be taken under the patronage of this Society, be accepted as Missionary Catechists Elect of this Institution.”²²⁹ The Society finally had

²²⁷Committee Minutes, November 1, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²⁸Committee Minutes, December 6, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²²⁹Committee Minutes, December 6, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

missionaries!²³⁰ Thus, Scott's resignation took place on the same day that the Society appointed its first missionaries, and it was fitting that he was there to see this resolution passed. He may have stepped down as Secretary, but he was leaving the Society with every prospect of future success.

Scott's removal from London and the Society soon followed the last meeting of 1802. Scott attended the first meeting of the Society in January of 1803, but he was not present when his resignation from the Committee of Correspondence was considered and accepted on February 7.²³¹ Sometime that spring, Scott moved to Aston Sandford, where he would spend the rest of his life. Scott's General Committee service had come to an end. Importantly, he had left on good terms, and it should be noted that his problems in London were with the Lock, not the CMS. The amicable nature of Scott's relationship with the CMS leadership upon his resignation is evident in that on December 6, 1802, the General Committee "resolved, that the thanks of this Committee be given to the Rev. Thomas Scott for his able and important services to this Society; and that the offer of his future Services in the Country, as occasion may require, be accepted."²³² These words indicate that the CMS leadership greatly appreciated what Scott had done in behalf of the Society. The statement also reveals that Scott maintained a favorable attitude toward them in return, and he promised to help their cause in whatever way he could from his new setting in the English countryside. Though neither Scott nor the Committee could have known it at the time, the resolution turned out to be prophetic. The Society would later require Scott's services, and he would literally render them from his country home.

²³⁰Over a year would pass before these missionaries were actually sent to Africa, and they would not go as catechists but as ordained missionaries. See Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 91–94.

²³¹Committee Minutes, February 7, 1803, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

²³²Committee Minutes, December 6, 1802, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

CHAPTER 7

THOMAS SCOTT AND THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY: PASTORAL ADVOCATE AND MISSIONARY INSTRUCTOR

When the CMS celebrated its two hundredth anniversary in 1999, the Society decided that some of its bicentennial festivities should take place at Haddenham near Aston Sandford.¹ In the June issue of its monthly newspaper, the Diocese of Oxford invited the community to participate in an event on June 26th, which was to include a fair, country dancing, music, and a “celebration service [at] 3pm led by Reverend George Koor, speaker Reverend Diana Witts, General Secretary, CMS.”² The villagers were also enlisted to put on a play about the Society, with three showings throughout the day.³ Significantly, the play was opened by a local actor who portrayed Thomas Scott. For the first time in one hundred, seventy-eight years, Scott, as it were, addressed the people near Aston Sandford:

My name is Thomas Scott. Where shall I begin my story? I could tell you all about my boyhood in Bratoft, in Lincolnshire in the 1700s; I could tell you of my apprenticeship to a surgeon/apothecary in Alford; I could tell you of the difficulties I had persuading my father to let me join holy orders – but no! I’ll start on that exciting day in April 1799 when I was present at the very first meeting of the Church Missionary Society.⁴

¹According to Nick Morgan, a churchwarden at Aston Sandford, “We were originally told that Aston Sandford should expect that they were to host up to 2,000 people who would [be] making the ‘Pilgrimage’ from Birmingham to South London” (Nick Morgan, e-mail message to David Peck, October 24, 2016). This plan was scrapped because the small parish church simply could not afford “to fund or manage such an operation” (Morgan, e-mail to Peck, October, 24, 2016).

²[Untitled Advertisement], *The Door*, June 1999, 22. This publication also goes by the name of *The Diocese of Oxford Reporter*.

³[Untitled Advertisement], *The Door*, June 1999, 22.

⁴Margaret Watkins and Sarah Wood, “A Play about the Church Missionary Society Performed at Haddenham,” unpublished script (1999), act 1, scene 1. The script for this play was graciously provided

As the opening scene continued, the play depicted two German missionaries having a conversation about their time under Scott's ministry at Aston Sandford. The dialogue concluded with one of the missionaries saying to the other, "We were so proud to be the first CMS missionaries. We all went to Africa after our training and were always grateful to Thomas Scott and the people of Haddenham."⁵

Calling the villages of Aston Sandford and Haddenham together in order to celebrate Scott's service in behalf of the CMS was historically felicitous, since both communities had rallied to support the Society as a result of Scott's pastoral influence. That the CMS chose the obscure, rural setting of Aston Sandford as the location for one of its celebrations is a testimony to the fact that Scott had not abandoned the cause of missions when he relinquished his role as Secretary in 1802. For the remaining years of his life, Scott took to himself the role of a pastoral advocate for the Society's causes; and for several years, he was enlisted by the Society to train missionaries prior to their embarkation to the mission field. Scott's ongoing support for the CMS as a pastor and as an instructor will be the subject of this chapter.

Thomas Scott as a Pastoral Advocate for the CMS

Taking up residency in the country at Aston Sandford was a welcome change of pace for Scott. In 1812, he described his new situation in positive terms, "I removed to Aston in the spring of 1803, and have here lived nearly nine years in quiet and privacy; with the opportunity of pursuing my studies to far greater advantage than in town, and of

to me by David Peck, the other churchwarden at Aston Sandford. The title of the play is merely descriptive and used for purposes of citation. The play had no official title in the script itself. According to Peck, "There were three performances of the play, the first on the village green in Haddenham near the church which was performed in the back of a lorry (truck), which was then moved by tractor to the Village Hall area for the second performance. There was a third performance in St. Mary's Church" (David Peck, email message to author, October 24, 2016).

⁵Watkins and Wood, "A Play about the Church Missionary Society," act 1, scene 1. Technically, the first CMS missionaries were not trained by Scott nor were they ever in Haddenham, as this chapter will explain.

reserving to myself time for recreation and exercise.”⁶ The relaxed setting of Aston Sandford afforded Scott the opportunity to focus on those things that really mattered to him. Of course, his writings were high on his priority list; but he did not neglect the spiritual needs of the community, nor did he forget the mission of the CMS. According to Scott, his new congregation was small, but the church was “generally well attended on the Lord’s day.”⁷ Apparently, the relationship between pastor and people was good from the start, surprisingly so for Scott, who had experienced a great deal of unpopularity at his previous assignments. In April of 1804, he wrote happily to Josiah Pratt, saying, “I believe I shall find my neighbours more disposed to concur with me than I expected. We are very amicable.”⁸ Very early on, this kindred spirit included a mutual commitment to the missionary causes of the CMS and other evangelical societies, and Scott encouraged his people to be involved in supporting gospel missions both financially and spiritually.

Thomas Scott’s Missionary Collections

The earliest evidence that Scott was promoting the CMS in his parish comes from that 1804 letter to Josiah Pratt.⁹ The timing of the letter is significant, in that it was written approximately one year after Scott arrived in Aston Sandford and one month prior to the CMS annual meeting, which took place each May. The letter reveals that the CMS had sent out a circular letter asking sympathetic ministers to preach special sermons designed to raise support for the Society. Scott had complied with the request, and he was

⁶John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself and Copious Extracts of His Letters*, 6th ed. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 373.

⁷Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 373.

⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 23, 1804, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/2/1, Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK (hereafter all letters in the CMS Archive will be reduced to the letter’s main details and the CMS Archive finding number).

⁹However, there is a report in the August 1887 edition of the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* that makes reference to the fact that Thomas Scott established a CMS Auxiliary at Aston Sandford in 1803. See *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, vol. 12 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1887), 512.

pleasantly surprised by the positive response he had received from his people:

I yesterday preached a sermon at this church for the Society. I had but small expectations; but to my surprise, we collected £16.4s, which all things considered is at least a fair proportion towards the expence. I hear Mr. Gilbert and some others mean to preach for the Society; and I hope many all over the kingdom will follow the example.¹⁰

The sermon was never published, but it set a precedent for Scott's preaching of a yearly sermon in behalf of the CMS, a practice he continued until his death. In 1806, Scott again wrote to Pratt about that year's sermon, and he once again praised his small congregation for their generosity:

I lose no time in remitting you £22.10.6 which I collected after a sermon preached yesterday, for the Society for Missions to Africa &c., in hope that it will arrive in time to be brought into you annual account. Considering the smallness of my village and church, and the low estate of my hearers in general, and the circumstance, that they know the collection is intended to be made annually, I think they have expressed their hearty good will to the important and excellent cause: and I shall rejoice to hear that *all* evangelical congregations were stirred up to emulate the example of some few.¹¹

As can be seen, the CMS offering at Aston Sandford had increased from £16.4s to £22.10.6 in two years under Scott's ministry, and his small parish church had set an example of missions giving that inspired other congregations to do the same.

The CMS annual reports show that Aston Sandford remained faithful in remitting funds to the Society each year. According to the 1820 annual report, which included the income from Scott's last annual sermon, Aston Sandford had raised £303.18.10 during Scott's tenure.¹² However, the people of Aston Sandford apparently mirrored Scott's own disposition to render aid to evangelical missionary causes irrespective of their denominational affiliations, which reduced the overall amount collected for the CMS. For example, Scott's letter about his 1812 annual sermon

¹⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 23, 1804, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/2/1.

¹¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 28, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/11.

¹²"Contributions by Associations," in *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East: Twentieth Year: 1819–1820* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1820), 54.

indicated that there was a competition for financial resources in the area:

As the accounts of your Society are generally made up to Whitsuntide, I thought it might be convenient to send you word, that I yesterday preached my annual sermon, and collected £27.18. Considering several local circumstances, which rather interfere with us, and the powerful *rival* (if such an *odious* name must be used for a most noble and almost *divine* coadjutor), the Society has in the Bible Society; I think the collection very good.¹³

Scott was referring here to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was an interdenominational organization designed, as the name suggests, to provide Bibles to people in Britain and abroad.

The fact that Scott's people supported the BFBS is really no wonder because he himself supported it. In the same 1812 letter, he confessed that he a desire to preach publically in support of both societies:

I own, I felt half an inclination to preach for the Bible Society, alternately, with our Society (for I must not at present preach more than one sermon of this kind in the year, nothing of the sort having been ever thought of before I came hither): but I am happy to say, that the people without my immediate interposition, have rendered it unnecessary. . . . On their next quarterly meeting, I mean to preach on the Bible Society, explaining the nature and advantages of it: but without making a collection, leaving the penny Society to its own operation: and thus the way will be kept open for my annual sermon for our Society, without my seeming to disregard the Bible Society, to which I own I am wonderfully attached.¹⁴

This example of Scott's evangelical spirit was not an isolated incident. Two years later, he did much the same thing for a local association which had formed to raise money for missions:

A few persons in this neighbourhood have associated, some of one denomination, some of another, to aid the cause of missions in general. By means of a sermon, which I preached for them in the neighbourhood, their small fund was increased to about £25. This I brought to London in May, divided into three parts of about

¹³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

¹⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40. The omitted portion of the letter reveals that Scott and his sons were instrumental in starting a penny society for the BFBS and that the chief participants were members of his own church: "My son from Gawcott went among some whom he knew, and showed how much might almost imperceptibly be done by penny Societies; and at the same time I dispersed a number of my other son's (at Hull) sermons concerning the Bible Society; and the consequence has been, that a penny Society has been formed and a subscription of above £40 per annum for the Bible Society is now raised, principally, though not exclusively, in my congregation."

£8.10s. each, a little under or over; and gave one to our Society, one to the London Society, and one to the Baptist Society.¹⁵

Technically, this sermon was preached to the benefit of the CMS, but Scott knew that his support of this local organization was helping other evangelical societies too. His evangelicalism manifested itself again later that year, when he reported a drop in the size of the CMS offering collected after his annual sermon:

The sum collected at the annual sermon is less than formerly; but in one way or other, our Society receives as much or more from the neighbourhood: and far more is raised for the general causes. But the Baptist meeting opened at Haddenham, and concurring causes, drain off a good deal, which used, though my hands, to come to you; and convey it to the Baptist Missionary Society; and some in another way, is conveyed to the London Missionary Society. I hope the common interests of Christianity are promoted, and that is enough.¹⁶

In the background of this letter was an infant baptism controversy that had been going on in Aston Sandford in which Scott lost a number of his parishioners to the Baptist church in Haddenham.¹⁷ As disappointing as their departure was, Scott had shaped their affections positively towards the cause of missions, and they took this passion with them when they became Baptists.

Thomas Scott's Missionary Prayers

The quotes provided in the last section show that Scott had led a good number of people from several denominations to support evangelical missions financially. His attempts to raise money in a variety of settings had benefitted four missionary societies, even if his actions had the unintended consequence of reducing contributions to the CMS. However, he hoped that his efforts to heighten missionary fervency went beyond the ledger book and into his people's hearts. Admittedly, it is impossible to measure the spiritual impact he had on his parishioners with respect to missions; but, if the giving of

¹⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 3, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/241.

¹⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 20, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/9/151.

¹⁷See Charles Hole, "A Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Scott," unpublished manuscript CMS/ACC87 D17, Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 203–14.

money is any indication of the state of the heart, there is every reason to believe that genuine spiritual good had come from his ministry. However, from Scott's vantage point, money was not sufficient of itself to ensure the success of the CMS or any other missions organization. What the CMS needed far more than financial support was the constant and fervent prayers of its benefactors. Therefore, Scott encouraged his people to devote themselves to praying for missions, and he provided them with an example of this discipline in his own life. Prayer was a vital part of Scott's missionary mindset and an important aspect of his pastoral influence at Aston Sandford, and his commitment to prayer was made evident to many by the way he conducted family worship in his home.

For Scott, family worship had taken on a new-found significance after he became an Evangelical, as private worship in the home effectively became "the badge of an Evangelical allegiance."¹⁸ Scott maintained family worship wherever he went, including Aston Sandford. According to his grandson, Sir George Gilbert Scott, "Family prayers at Aston rectory were formidable, particularly to a child. They lasted a full hour, several persons from the village usually attending."¹⁹ Thomas Scott's family devotions may have lacked brevity, but they did not despair of spiritual impact. John Scott later wrote of them, "I apprehend no reflecting person can have enjoyed the advantage of being repeatedly present at his morning family worship, without being forcibly struck with it."²⁰ Importantly for the present purposes, Scott's private services were not limited to his family, and members of the community often attended.

Biblical exposition constituted the greatest portion of the family worship hour, but prayer was also an important part of the agenda. Initially, the program primarily

¹⁸Charles Smyth, *Charles Simeon and Church Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 16.

¹⁹George Gilbert Scott, *Personal and Professional Recollections*, ed. Gavin Stamp (Stamford, UK: Paul Watkins, 1995), 28.

²⁰Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 74.

consisted of written form prayers; but over time, Scott “was gradually led to adopt the method of extemporary prayer,” which he considered well-suited to the ever-changing circumstances of life.²¹ The trouble with extemporary prayers, as far as the historian is concerned, is that they are rarely preserved for later study. Thankfully, Scott’s transition from form to extemporaneous prayers took place in stages, and along the way he wrote and subsequently published eight prayers that provide some insight into the general character of his prayer life.

Scott’s published prayers were arranged in a morning and evening format and contained sections of praise, confession, and petition. In a number of places, the prayers exhibit concern for both domestic and international gospel ministry. For example, the first morning prayer said, “We would also, most gracious Lord, pray thee to bless all the ministers of thy gospel; to send forth labourers into thy harvest; to prosper every method of sending thy saving truth to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.”²² The second morning prayer contained a similar request:

We pray that thy blessed gospel may be effectually preached to all the numerous and populous nations, which now sit in pagan darkness, or under Mahometan delusion. May plans be formed in wisdom, and executed with zeal, for the accomplishment of this great design. O raise up, qualify, and send forth under thy special protection, proper instruments for this arduous, but honourable service.²³

Both of these prayers expressed a desire for God to raise up missionaries, which certainly was a major point of concern for Scott leading up to the establishment of the CMS and during the Society’s early years.

A few other missionary-related entreaties were made in the prayers. For instance, Scott mentioned missionaries who were already serving on the mission field in one of his evening prayers: “Bless, O Lord, all endeavours to spread thy gospel, and to

²¹Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 73.

²²Thomas Scott, “A Morning Prayer for a Family,” in *Theological Works: Published at Different Times, and Now Collected into Volumes* (Buckingham: J. Seeley, 1805–1808), 4:527.

²³Scott, “A Morning Prayer for a Family,” in *Theological Works*, 4:535.

promote the peace and happiness of mankind: and remember with peculiar regard such as are labouring in remote inhospitable regions, to make known thy salvation among poor benighted Pagans.”²⁴ Likewise, the seventh prayer called on God to send out new missionaries and strengthen those already on the field:

Send forth, O thou Lord of the harvest, more labourers thoroughly furnished for thy work. Enlighten the dark parts of the earth with thy saving grace. Remember, with special regard, such as are employed in distant regions and arduous circumstances, to make known thy gospel; comfort their hearts, prosper their endeavours, and raise them up many helpers.²⁵

Some of the prayers even had millennial overtones in them, such as the sixth prayer:

Oh, that increasing numbers may be added to thy churches, of such as shall be saved; and many able and faithful labourers sent forth into the harvest; and may the Sun of righteousness diffuse his healing influence, wherever the sun in the firmament enlightens the nations with his beams.²⁶

While the sixth prayer is somewhat vague about the institution of Christ’s kingdom on earth, the fifth prayer was more specific: “Send forth thy light and truth to the nations: dispel the dark clouds of idolatry, impiety, superstition, and infidelity; and set up thy kingdom of peace and righteousness throughout the earth.”²⁷

If these extracts from Scott’s written prayers in any way reflect common themes in his extemporary prayers, the people of Aston Sandford witnessed a model of prayer that habitually included supplications in behalf of missions and missionaries. The importance of praying for missionaries was later underscored when the CMS began sending missionaries to Scott for theological education, and attending Scott’s family prayers practically became part of the missionary curriculum. In 1808, Scott wrote of the missionaries, “Their conduct is consistent; they are very diligent in study; and remarkably teachable. They miss no opportunity, even on dark and wet evenings, in coming over,

²⁴Scott, “Another Evening Prayer for a Family,” in *Theological Works*, 4:540.

²⁵Scott, “A Family Prayer for the Lord’s Day,” in *Theological Works*, 4:557.

²⁶Scott, “A Family Prayer for Saturday Evening,” in *Theological Works*, 4:551.

²⁷Scott, “Another Morning Prayer for a Family,” in *Theological Works*, 4:545.

when I expound the Scriptures to a few parishioners.”²⁸ This arrangement meant that the parishioners who attended Scott’s family prayer time not only had an opportunity to study the Bible and pray; they were also able to interact with future CMS missionaries. Therefore, praying for missionaries in Aston Sandford had a personal aspect to it that was absent in other places, and Scott’s people became deeply concerned in the welfare of the missionaries when they left for the field. However, the extent of the community’s interest in the missionaries Scott trained cannot be appreciated adequately without knowing more about the seminary he ran out of his own home.

Thomas Scott as Missionary Trainer for the CMS

When Scott resigned his position as CMS Secretary in 1802, the CMS was on the verge of sending out its first missionaries. After a series of delays, the Society’s first two missionaries, Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig, set sail for Africa in early 1804. The whole endeavor amounted to a great experiment, and before long friction developed between the missionaries and the CMS directors who were overseeing them. Much of the trouble arose out of poor communication, which was inevitable in the case of an English missions society that employed German missionaries whose grasp of the English language left much to be desired. Before long, the Committee of Correspondence grew frustrated with the derelict record keeping of the missionaries, and the ongoing need to employ a translator just to maintain a correspondence with them.²⁹ Often, the Committee did not have a firm grasp on what was happening at the seminary in Berlin, where its missionaries were being trained, or on the mission field itself.

The issues, however, extended beyond the language barrier. In 1806, the Committee of Correspondence discovered that the missionaries, after two years in Sierra

²⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

²⁹See Charles Hole, *The Early History of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East to the End of A.D. 1814* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1896), 103–5.

Leone, Africa, had done virtually nothing to reach the African people and had neglected to make an effort to learn the Susoo language, which would be required to reach the natives.³⁰ The Committee blamed the missionaries for ignoring their expressed duty to preach the gospel among the Susoo people; but as Charles Hole has observed, the missionaries had been thrown into an impossible situation:

The two missionaries had been sent out to the Susoos without Susoo. They were located in the Colony until they had learnt Susoo. Yet they could not learn Susoo without going among the Susoos. But the Susoo country was dangerous, and colonial protection was necessary. The Governor and Council must approve of the missionaries' movements, and if they were over-cautious, seeing that a previous missionary, Brunton's colleague, Mr. Grieg, had some time before been murdered there, we cannot much wonder. The difficulty then came to this, the missionaries must not go into the water until they could swim.³¹

Compounding the situation, as Hole again perceptively recognized, was the fact that “two Germans were in an English settlement, and strangers to the English as well as to the Susoos.”³² Furthermore, the ongoing slave trade in West Africa, which would not be outlawed in England until 1807, made the Africans rather suspicious of white men and the white man's religion.³³ If all of this was not trouble enough, one of the missionaries “manifested faults of character which made him little suited to his sacred employment, and soon afterwards necessitated his severance from the Society.”³⁴ In response to these disappointments and failures, the General Committee decided that all future missionaries must first pass through a time of training in England under the instruction of people associated with the Society itself.

³⁰Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 128–29.

³¹Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 129.

³²Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 129–30.

³³Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 130.

³⁴Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 130.

The Bledlow Seminary

During this time of crisis, the CMS General Committee agreed that it was time to cash in on Thomas Scott's promise to render whatever aid he could to the Society after leaving London. In early June of 1806, the Society attempted to procure Scott's services toward the formation of a missionary seminary at Aston Sandford. On June 17, Scott wrote back to Josiah Pratt and attempted to decline the proposition:

I feel myself greatly honoured by the vote of your committee; and it would give me very great pleasure, to be able in any way to promote the great and excellent cause, in which they are engaged: but it does not appear practicable for me, as I am at present circumstanced, to render any effectual help.³⁵

He cited inadequate housing and a lack of time as reasons he could not fulfill the Committee's request, but he did offer an alternative solution by suggesting that the Committee consider starting the seminary in Bledlow, which was close to Aston Sandford.³⁶ The situation in Bledlow was attractive because the prospective host, William Dawes, had been the Governor of Sierra Leone, and Scott believed that "his acquaintance with Africa and other remote places would enable him in various ways to give useful information to the intended missionaries."³⁷ Scott also believed that Nathaniel Gilbert, who also lived in the area, might "be induced to give some measure of religious instruction, to the young men."³⁸ He did not entirely absolve himself from taking part, and he promised to "undertake once or twice a week, to give them expository lectures on some select portions of Scripture, with reference to their peculiar situation and services to which they are designed."³⁹

The Committee was not easily discouraged by Scott's initial refusal, and he

³⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 17, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/23.

³⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 17, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/23.

³⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 17, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/23.

³⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 17, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/23. Nathaniel Gilbert had been a chaplain in Sierra Leone and was a friend of William Dawes.

³⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 17, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/23.

was summoned to London for the August 4th Committee meeting so that he might “give his opinion respecting the best method of educating the Missionary Students in future.”⁴⁰ Scott had already given his opinion in his letter to Pratt; but the Committee seemed to be convinced that sending the missionaries to Scott was the best method for their education, and again the Committee asked him if he would start the school.⁴¹ Scott’s answer was the same. He “replied that he could not wholly do so; but that, if Mr. Dawes who resided in his neighbourhood, and whom he thought eligible for such an undertaking would do so, and the Committee should approve, he (Mr. Scott) had no objection to receive them once a week and do what lay in his power to compleat (sic) their education.”⁴² At this point, the Committee gave in and “resolved, that the Secretary do write to Mr. Dawes, requesting to know his mind upon the Subject; and that the business be afterwards referred to the last Sub-Committee.”⁴³

After a few particulars were ironed out in late 1806, Dawes agreed to take in the Society’s missionaries at Bledlow. The first missionary candidate to go there, amazingly enough, was English; but having arrived in January of 1807, he withdrew from the school in late March.⁴⁴ Once again the Society turned to their friends in Germany, and four missionary candidates were sent to England for training in Bledlow. All of this took some time, however, and it was not until August that the missionaries arrived at the seminary. The missionaries had not been in Bledlow for more than a month when trouble started brewing. Their studies began almost immediately, at least under Scott, who received them on Tuesdays and Fridays, but Nathaniel Gilbert, who was supposed to

⁴⁰Committee Minutes, August 4, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK [hereafter cited as “Committee Minutes, CMS”].

⁴¹Committee Minutes, August 4, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁴²Committee Minutes, August 4, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁴³Committee Minutes, August 4, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁴⁴Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 119.

oversee their instruction in Bledlow, became very sick and eventually died on November 18, 1807.⁴⁵ Further complicating the arrangement was the fact that Dawes ended up having some financial and estate problems, which put him in a position of needing to return to London in order to find gainful employment.⁴⁶ Therefore, after just a few months of missionary instruction, the Bledlow seminary dissolved without producing a single missionary.

Nothing ever seemed to go quite according to plan for Scott. His strategy to be nothing more than an adjunct professor at the Bledlow seminary had fizzled out in less than a year's time. When it became abundantly clear that the Bledlow project had failed, the General Committee turned again to Scott for help, resolving "that the Secretary do write to the Rev. Thomas Scott of Aston Sandford, to enquire, if he can provide accommodations for the Missionaries at present with Mr. Dawes, in or near his Parish."⁴⁷ Scott knew that the Society did not have many viable options other than himself for the instruction of the missionaries, especially on such short notice. His own circumstances had also changed over the course of the last year, and he was more open to the idea of superintending a seminary in his parish as a result. On October 7, Scott told Pratt that he was nearing the completion of another edition of his Bible commentary, and that his "services, in respect of the missionaries, shall be at the disposal of the Society, as far as consists with other duties, and as far as circumstances will admit."⁴⁸ He explained that he had "no room for any in [his] house," but he thought that "the Missionaries might be boarded at Haddenham, (about a mile from Aston, a pleasant walk, except in very dirty

⁴⁵Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 120.

⁴⁶Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 119–20.

⁴⁷Committee Minutes, October 5, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

⁴⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/76.

weather, or in a flood,) at the houses of a few of our people.”⁴⁹ He assured Pratt that there were “persons, who would be glad to converse with them on religion,” adding that “our people are wonderfully interested about the missionary concerns.”⁵⁰

Scott’s pastoral work with respect to missions had prepared the way for his people’s involvement in a local seminary, and their eagerness to help was probably excited by seeing the missionaries twice a week while they were still living in Bledlow. As soon as word came that Dawes was definitely going to leave Bledlow, Scott began scouting out potential lodgings for the students. His search yielded results fairly quickly, as a local businessman named George West was “was willing to take them all, having two bedrooms, and a parlour for their use.”⁵¹ Scott negotiated a boarding rate of “£35 each, *washing* included: so that there will be no other expence, on account of lodging, boarding, and washing; except sickness, or any other cause, should render *wine &c.*, necessary.”⁵² The General Committee considered Scott’s proposal on January 4, 1808, and agreed to the plan, resolving “that a letter be written to the Missionaries requesting their strict and diligent attention to the same.”⁵³ The missionaries complied and relocated to Haddenham before the end of January.

The Aston Sandford Seminary

The subject of Scott’s humble seminary in Aston Sandford, which was in operation from 1808 to 1814, will constitute the remainder of this chapter. However, the present treatment will not proceed strictly in a chronological manner. Scott’s correspondence with the CMS leadership about the school contained certain elements that

⁴⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/76.

⁵⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/76.

⁵¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, November 5, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/78.

⁵²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/76.

⁵³Committee Minutes, January 4, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

would make the narrative ponderous and repetitious if presented in sequence. Therefore, a thematic scheme appears to be more conducive to relating the history of the Aston Sandford seminary.

The seminary curriculum. The Aston Sandford seminary was very primitive, at least by modern educational standards. The school had no formal campus, library, faculty (other than Scott), or any of the other conveniences associated with twenty-first-century education. Scott's seminary was far more basic, consisting more or less "of a house, a person to take care of domestick concerns, and a superintendent to instruct the young men in other parts of knowledge suited to their intended service."⁵⁴ Just what the instruction was supposed to entail was not made overly clear when the General Committee had asked Scott to train missionaries. Initially, the seminary's curriculum was left primarily to his discretion, but the experimental nature of the program meant that changes were to be expected.

Implementing any prescribed course of study was always going to be difficult since the CMS had sent Scott four German missionaries who did not speak English, and he himself knew no German. Even prior to the missionaries' arrival in Aston Sandford, when he was trying to ascertain what was going on in Bledlow, he complained that his only information about Dawes came "through the broken English of my German brethren, which I could not understand, as anything decisive."⁵⁵ Therefore, teaching the missionaries English was first and foremost, and he had this necessity in mind when he proposed the school's first curriculum:

I purpose to take different subjects for my observations, on each day. One or two for English, (always keeping that in sight); One for expounding some parts of scripture: another for lecturing on divinity, in a more systematick manner; making my Essays the text: Another for reading, and making observations from the diaries of

⁵⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 17, 1806, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/23.

⁵⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, November 5, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/78.

missionaries, or the history of missions. In addition to this, I purpose, that they shall constantly attend my morning family prayer; in which, I have long been in the habit of expounding the new testament, with some reference to the instruction of those who are to be ministers, for the benefit of my sons, while with me.⁵⁶

Scott's original strategy of teaching English just once or twice a week was almost immediately changed after the missionaries began taking classes because he found "all of them very defective in the knowledge of general grammar, and that they had not learned English with a proper attention to that point."⁵⁷ In order to correct this problem, he began giving English lessons nearly every day, and he had the students write sermons in English, which doubled as a means for theological and homiletical instruction.⁵⁸ He also added the study of Latin in order "to improve them in general grammar, and to give them an idea, by what kind of process, a man, who will be industrious, may soon learn a language, so as read a common book in it, without a tutor."⁵⁹

Early on, the teaching program focused primarily on basic theology and Bible interpretation. After about six months with the missionaries, Scott highlighted this aspect of the training in a report to Pratt:

The chief thing in which I trust they are making progress, is the study of divinity; an enlarged, or enlarging view of Christianity, in its simplicity, and a symmetry as a whole; and the relation which each part bears to all the rest: and in an acquaintance with the holy Scriptures, and the true meaning of them, and rules for explaining them.⁶⁰

The main textbooks were Scott's own books, and he mentioned using his *Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion, Family Bible, Theological Works, Notes on Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism* in several of his letters.⁶¹

⁵⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, November 5, 1807, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/78.

⁵⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁵⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁵⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁶⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 2, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/104.

⁶¹E.g., Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 2, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/104; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149; Thomas Scott,

His writings were supplemented by other popular works of theology, mostly from the Calvinist tradition. These books included Thomas Boston's *Body of Divinity* and *The Fourfold State*, Herman Witsius's *Economy of the Covenants*, and John Owen's essays "On the Spirit" and "The Evidences of the Faith of God's Elect."⁶² As time went on, the focus of the curriculum appears to have shifted from the study of theology to the study of languages. Scott's letters became increasingly consumed with issues related to Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Susoo, and Arabic. Only rarely did they mention theology. The emphasis on learning languages was partially motivated by the practical needs of foreign missionary work and partly by the example set by William Carey, whom Scott admired for "circulating tracts or parts of the scripture in the native languages."⁶³ Scott did not seem overly concerned about the move toward a more language-centered curriculum because, as he expressed to one of his correspondents, "I only teach languages *in ordine ad* teaching divinity."⁶⁴

Latin was the first language, other than English, that he introduced to the missionaries. His original purpose was to teach the principles of grammar, but the study of Latin took on another significance when the Committee asked him to teach Arabic and Susoo in June of 1808. Scott believed that "without a competent knowledge of Latin, the Arabick cannot be learned in Europe to any great degree."⁶⁵ The reasoning was that the

Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 30, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/5/105; Thomas Scott, Letter to Thomas Smith, October 6, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/2; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 3, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/241.

⁶²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, September 10, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/74.

⁶³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86. See also, Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

⁶⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to [Thomas Webster?], November 18, 1813, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 384. John Scott does not disclose the recipient of this letter, simply calling him "a clergyman." However, it is almost certainly Thomas Scott's nephew, Thomas Webster. The content of the letter in Scott's biography is about the training of missionaries, which Webster was considering taking over from this uncle. Cf., Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, November 24, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/106. It should be noted that these letters were written just days apart.

⁶⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC

“lexicons, and even elementary books are in Latin.”⁶⁶ Thus, the missionaries needed to learn Latin so they could understand the books that were supposed to teach them Arabic. Scott approached the study of both Latin and Greek in the way of the common English schoolhouse, assigning exercises based on classical texts such as those by Virgil, Xenophon, Terence, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Homer.⁶⁷ Always keeping his mind directed toward the overall mission, Scott prioritized the study of Greek “because the translation of the New Testament will take the lead.”⁶⁸ His students spent a great deal of time translating the New Testament, with special attention paid to the Gospels and the book of Romans.⁶⁹

Since Bible translation work was one of the Society’s main objectives, the Committee wanted the students to learn Hebrew as well, and they called on Scott to add it to the course of study after the missionaries had been with him for about six months. Given the importance of Hebrew to Old Testament studies, the request would have been reasonable enough were it not for the bizarre stipulation that Scott teach it without the Masoretic vowel points. Scott was stunned by what he viewed as an utterly unreasonable and immaterial demand, and he protested vehemently:

I began to learn that language above 30 years since, *with points*; and have always been in the habit of reading *according to the points*; whether with them or not; it seems absolutely impossible for me to *unlearn* this way of reading and pronouncing; and to learn another. At least it is immensely a more difficult task than learning Arabick; and I must therefore decline attempting it.⁷⁰

His exasperated dissent went on for several more lines, wherein he explained that he did

3/3/131.

⁶⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

⁶⁷See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 23, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/154; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 17, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/32.

⁶⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149.

⁶⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

⁷⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149.

not “think that it is of any consequence how the Hebrew is *pronounced*, provided it be thoroughly *understood*.”⁷¹ He concluded with a clever illustration: “When you speak of the *Encumbrance* of points, it sounds to me, like the *encumbrance* of crutches to a lame man, or of a walking stick to an old man. Sound and young men may deem them encumbrances, not lame and old men.”⁷² Apparently, the Committee rescinded the mandate, and the teaching of Hebrew continued. Scott’s first class “read Hebrew every morning,”⁷³ and subsequent students “read ten verses of the Hebrew Bible”⁷⁴ every day.

Like Latin, the study of Hebrew became an important tool for learning Arabic, though for a different reason. Arabic was an important language for missionaries in Africa because many Africans were Muslims, particularly in the North. When the Committee asked Scott to teach Arabic to the missionaries, he really needed someone to teach it to him. Shortly after receiving the Committee’s request, John Scott received a letter, probably from Mrs. Scott, that described his father’s reaction to the proposition:

Mr. Pratt (the Society’s secretary) begs that your father will begin to teach the missionaries Susoo and Arabic, of neither of which languages has he any knowledge! He felt very uncomfortable about this for a day or two. However, he has now begun to study these new languages with them.⁷⁵

That November, Thomas Scott personally wrote to his son to tell him how his Arabic studies were going: “We make little progress; yet so far that I have no doubt of being able to read the Koran with them, should they continue here. It is in itself a most difficult language . . . but my knowledge of Hebrew gives me an advantage.”⁷⁶ The linguistic similarities between Hebrew and Arabic, along with Arabic books such as Erpenius’s

⁷¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149.

⁷²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149.

⁷³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

⁷⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 17, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/32.

⁷⁵Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 381–82.

⁷⁶Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 382.

grammar,⁷⁷ Richardson's grammar and lexicon,⁷⁸ and Wilmett's lexicon,⁷⁹ allowed Scott to teach himself enough Arabic to instruct the missionaries.⁸⁰

Progress in the Arabic was slow, as was to be expected when the grammars and lexicons everyone was using were written primarily in Latin. In the beginning, the class "read a small page, extracted from the Koran, every other day; scarcely leaving one word till fully understood."⁸¹ This practice was initially supplemented by reading a translation of the Koran; but, as Scott wryly put it, "It tired us, we could not do all; and we dropt it."⁸² After about nine months of study, Scott was more comfortable with the language, and he sent a positive report to Pratt:

As to the Arabick, I am so mere a novice, that it seems presumption in me to speak: but I, and they too, have so mastered the first formidable difficulties; that, should health be granted, I see no ground to fear being able in no very long time to read, and they with me, a portion of the Koran, in the manner in which I can a page of Homer, or Thucidydes.⁸³

Despite his optimism, the study of Arabic demanded a tremendous amount of time and was always hindered by a lack of good resources. On May 17, 1814, he delineated the difficulties for Pratt and the Committee:

⁷⁷Thomas Erpenius, *Gramatica Arabica* (Leidae, 1613). Thomas van Erpe, or Thomas Erpenius, was a Dutch Oriental language expert who wrote several books related to Arabic studies. See also, idem, *Rudimenta Linguae Arabicae* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1628); idem, *The Saracenic Historie, . . . written in Arabike, and Translated into Latin by T. E.* (1626).

⁷⁸John Richardson, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (London, 1776); idem, *A Dictionary of Persian, Arabic, and English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1777–1780).

⁷⁹Joannes Willmet, *Lexicon Linguae Arabicae* (Rotterdam: C. R. Hake, 1784).

⁸⁰Scott mentions these sources in several of his letters. E.g., Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, September 10, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/74; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/5/162; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 10, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/6/43.

⁸¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

⁸²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

⁸³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

As, however, we have only one Koran among seven of us: every verse construed from that must be written out by each of the missionaries; and the enormous folio carried to Haddenham and back again, two or three times a week for that purpose. This is our only book of *pointed* Arabic: and if we did not keep to that, we should not be competent to the *unpointed*.⁸⁴

These problems notwithstanding, Scott kept on teaching Arabic until the seminary closed.⁸⁵

The last component of Scott's curriculum that deserves some attention is the study of Susoo. The word *Susoo* is the archaic spelling for *Susu*, which is used as a reference either to "a member of a West African people inhabiting parts of Guinea and Sierra Leone" or to refer to "the Mande language of the Susu."⁸⁶ Scott described himself as "wholly a stranger to the Susoo" when the Committee asked him to teach it to the missionaries, yet he soon made headway in reading a Susoo catechism written by Henry Brunton.⁸⁷ Before long, he had the students translating portions of the New Testament "merely as an exercise, into Susoo, each having taken on a gospel."⁸⁸ However, the study of Susoo was severely hampered by a lack of proper resources:

The difficulty is very great because the vocabularies, which we have, contain not a Susoo word for one out of ten, or perhaps twenty, of the English words. In reading Mr. Brunton's catechisms &c., we do not sensibly feel this: but in rendering English into Susoo, it meets us forcibly: so that, we are often, for a considerable time together, constrained to whet our wits to find out, with our scanty vocabularies, how to convey the meaning of a single clause, by some *periphrasis*. In general, we do not give up the attempt: but doubtless one acquainted with the language will find, that

⁸⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 17, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/9/35.

⁸⁵In spite of the trials associated with learning Arabic, Scott seems to have fallen in love with it. He even asked the CMS if he would be allowed to keep his Arabic books after the last missionaries had left him. See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 30, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/9/180.

⁸⁶*American Heritage College Dictionary*, 4th ed., s.v. "Susu." According to Joshua Project statistics, approximately 1.7 million people speak the language today. See "Language: Susu," Joshua Project, accessed September 28, 2016, <https://joshuaproject.net/languages/sus>.

⁸⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

⁸⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

we have succeeded very poorly.⁸⁹

The necessity of translating sentences in this round-about way gave Scott opportunities to discuss “the principles and methods to be adopted in translating the Scriptures and the enquiries to be made among the Susoos.”⁹⁰ Just how far these studies went to prepare the missionaries for field service is hard to determine. Scott himself admitted that “as to the Susoo, no great progress can be made in England, unless more copious vocabularies were formed in Africa.”⁹¹ Yet, one of his students was able to complete a translation of the gospel of John before setting out for Africa, and another completed the first fourteen chapters of Luke.⁹² If nothing else, Scott’s students were introduced to some of the basics of the Susoo language and were afforded some practice in translation.

The first missionary class. The first class consisted of four German men—Charles Barneth, Charles Frederick Christian Wenzel, Jonathan Solomon Klein, and John Godfrey Wilhelm. These men were all in their early thirties, except for Barneth, who was in his mid-forties. As their ages make plain, Scott’s students were mature men, a good decade older than would have been customary for most students entering English universities at the time. They possessed a degree of spiritual maturity corresponding to their ages, and they had all been ordained in Lutheran orders prior to coming to England.⁹³ Scott was pleased to report that “there appears no reason at all to doubt the genuine piety of any one of them: indeed, I think religion has a very deep root in their hearts.”⁹⁴ Scott’s letters about his first students indicate that he thought highly of them

⁸⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 30, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/134.

⁹⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁹¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149.

⁹²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

⁹³Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 116.

⁹⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

from the beginning, and the students effectively became a part of his family. Shortly after receiving the missionaries to Aston Sandford, Scott reported to Pratt, almost in a tone of embarrassment, that his new pupils “seem well satisfied, and call me father,” noting parenthetically that “perhaps they ought not: but this may give an idea of our connexion; as I take great pleasure in instructing them.”⁹⁵ Scott’s depictions of his new “sons” continued to have fatherly overtones, and combining his statements from several letters paints a decent picture of their abilities and character.

Charles Barneth was the oldest man in the class by about ten years, as he was forty-three or forty-four when he came to Aston Sandford.⁹⁶ Scott described him as “an excellent man, and has very good views of religion.”⁹⁷ His spirit was “modest, mild, and kind,” but he did not possess some of the same abilities exhibited by the others in language acquisition and preaching.⁹⁸ In many of his letters, Scott relayed that Barneth was the worst of the students when it came to translating, but he always thought that he would “make a very good missionary.”⁹⁹ Scott attributed Barneth’s inability to learn languages to his age, but Scott’s assessment changed somewhat when Susoo and Arabic were introduced into the curriculum.¹⁰⁰ In late December of 1808, Scott was able to say, “Mr. Barneth will, as I observed before, never learn English or Latin well: but he seems to promise more in Susoo: and he knows more Arabick than any of us, if I could but

⁹⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁹⁶He was forty-three in August of 1806, when he was approved by the CMS as a missionary. Wenzel, Klein, and Wilhelm were thirty-four, thirty-one, and thirty-one respectively. See Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 116.

⁹⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁹⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

⁹⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

¹⁰⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 2, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/104.

understand him.”¹⁰¹ Scott was quick to remind Pratt, that despite Barneth’s struggles with language, “I believe him to be an excellent man.”¹⁰² Barneth had a heart inclined “towards actual employment among the natives of Africa, or any other idolaters,” and Scott thought “it probable, that he would learn to talk with the natives, and in some sense preach to them, when he had been a little while conversant among them.”¹⁰³ In Scott’s estimation, Barneth was not an overly eloquent speaker, but he was capable of basic Christian instruction. Scott wrote that “his sermons indeed, whenever preached, will be poor *compositions*: but he clearly indicates the leading truths of the gospel, with many repetitions, and in different views, with much fervor and earnestness; that perhaps he may succeed better, than I once supposed.”¹⁰⁴

The other three missionaries—Wilhelm, Klein, and Wenzel—were far more capable of linguistic achievement than Barneth. Scott’s first impression of Wilhelm was that he “readily takes anything, which he is taught. He now writes English with tolerable correctness, and will, I think make a good preacher.”¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Klein had “a strong understanding, a remarkably quick perception of your meaning, and will I think, be an able man, capable of considerable things.”¹⁰⁶ Scott was impressed by the progress both of these men made in the study of Susoo. “I cannot but think,” he wrote Pratt, “that Mr. Wilhelm, and indeed Mr. Klein, would in the course of a year, make such proficiency; as to be able to superintend the studies of young missionaries; in many respects; as well as

¹⁰¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

¹⁰²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

¹⁰³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹⁰⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹⁰⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

¹⁰⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

be preparing to translate the Scriptures, into the Susoo &c.”¹⁰⁷ Though it is impossible to say for sure, Wilhelm and Klein may well have developed a deep friendship that made them good ministry partners. Scott at least thought that their respective strengths complemented one another. He told Pratt that “Mr. Klein has very good health and spirits: and he and Mr. Wilhelm are so useful to each other, in different ways, that they should never be parted.”¹⁰⁸

The last of the missionaries, Wenzel, was perhaps the most gifted of them all. Scott thought that he had “the most talent.”¹⁰⁹ Initially, Scott had some concerns about Wenzel’s temperament. “He is something, like Peter, during our Lord’s lifetime,” wrote Scott, “prompt to speak &c., but I can, on further examination see nothing that implies a want of modesty, teachableness, and kindness.”¹¹⁰ Wenzel was both a good preacher and capable translator. Scott reported that “both Wilhelm and Wenzel have produced parts of sermons in English, by no means inferior to what are generally preached by young Englishmen who are thought good preachers.”¹¹¹ Scott also saw great potential in his ability as a translator: “He acquires knowledge rapidly: and, I cannot but hope, may, in some part of the world, become capable of doing something of the same kind, which Mr. Carey is doing in the East Indies; I mean in circulating tracts or parts of the Scripture in the native languages.”¹¹² In keeping with Scott’s hopes, Wenzel, “who arrived in Africa August 5, 1809, had by December, 1809, compiled an English-Susoo dictionary as far as

¹⁰⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹⁰⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹⁰⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

¹¹⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

¹¹¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

¹¹²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 20, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/86.

U.”¹¹³ Wenzel probably got the idea of writing a dictionary from Scott, who had written to Pratt shortly before Wenzel arrived in Africa, concerning his hope “that our brethren about to go to Africa, will after a time send us some more copious vocabularies.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, it may not be too much to say that Wenzel’s dictionary was written in some ways for the Aston Sandford seminary.

Managing missionary finances. With the arrival of the first class and the development of the basic curriculum, seminary classes commenced. Scott’s primary responsibilities were related to his students’ education, but it should be noted that his duties went far beyond the classroom. The minuscule size of the seminary meant that the entirety of student life fell under Scott’s purview. He was the seminary’s president, professor, housing superintendent, accountant, and dean of students simultaneously. Therefore, he could just as easily be seen accounting for the cost of candles as parsing Greek and Latin verbs.¹¹⁵ While these matters may seem mundane, they both reveal Scott’s love and care for those under his charge as well as bring to light some of the policy issues with which early missionaries societies were wrestling.

One of the key aspects of Scott’s involvement in student life was the distribution of funds for the maintenance of the missionaries. The way Scott handled this aspect of the seminary manifested some of his weaknesses and strengths, and it seems that Scott was not very good at accounting. He admitted as much when he opened one of his letters to Pratt by saying, “I am a wretched accountant.”¹¹⁶ In the same letter, Scott disclosed that he had lost the last statement of accounts Pratt had sent him, and he had no

¹¹³Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 124n1.

¹¹⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 5, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/149.

¹¹⁵He literally did account for the cost of candles. See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 3, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/241.

¹¹⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 30, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/5/105.

idea about the specifics of the seminary's finances. Later the same year, he again confessed his mishandling of the money. This time he had spent more than had been sent him by the Society on lodging, and he still did not know where the school's finances stood. His evaluation of himself in this case was similar to his previous self-assessment—"I am the worst accountant in the world."¹¹⁷ His fiscal record-keeping never really improved. As late as 1814, he was still "in some degree of confusion and uncertainty respecting my accounts with the Society," and he was constantly calling on the Society's leadership to check his statements against their own.¹¹⁸

Despite his evident shortcomings in properly keeping a ledger book, his suggestions on how Society money should be spent in order to maintain the missionaries demonstrated greater wisdom. As is common with new organizations, the CMS was extremely cautious with its money, and frugality was stressed in every quarter. At times, however, the Society's emphasis on limiting expenditures put unnecessary stress on those associated with the Society, especially the missionaries. Even Scott's salary as an instructor was initially unfair to him, and he was forced to renegotiate his pay after a few years of teaching. The initial arrangement was for Scott to be paid £20 per student per year.¹¹⁹ The trouble with this setup was that running the seminary required the same amount of his own time in teaching and preparation whether he was teaching one student or four.¹²⁰ He proposed that the Society should determine a yearly salary that did not change with the number of students in his care.¹²¹ The General Committee agreed to this settlement and "resolved that this Committee do approve of the recommendation of the

¹¹⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, September 16, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/6/190.

¹¹⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 31, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/160.

¹¹⁹See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 26, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/48.

¹²⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 26, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/48.

¹²¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 26, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/48.

Committee of Correspondence to request of the Rev. T. Scott to accept of one hundred pounds, and that he be allowed £80 per annum as Instructor of the Missionary Students, and for every student above four an additional sum of £20 per annum.”¹²² Scott had not asked for the additional £100 the Society sent him, but the money was probably viewed as back-pay for the times when his salary had been reduced.

Scott’s financial advice to the Society went beyond his own salary. In fact, his financial concerns were more often directed to the needs of the students. Three years prior to his letter about his salary, Scott wrote to Pratt to plead for basic provisions for the missionaries. Just how miserly the CMS was in those days can be seen from the fact that Scott had to tell the Society that “the missionaries have been in this neighbourhood a year and half, or more; and have had no new coats &c.”¹²³ The situation was pathetic:

[The missionaries] petition therefore for a new coat (I should vote for the suit), and a new hat each, (the latter, they exceedingly want). Probably on more particular enquiry, some addition to their stock of linen, and other garments will be found needful. I believe they, as well as I, wish to be frugal, but after all, clothes will wear out.¹²⁴

If these words are anything to go by, it seems that the missionary students were living in what can easily be described as near poverty, and Scott did what he could to improve their situation. Accordingly, the Committee resolved to provide for the clothing needs of its missionaries,¹²⁵ but the way the Society continued to handle the matter created further stress. Any time clothes were to be purchased, the Society’s basic practice was to make the missionaries provide an itemized request of the articles they needed to the Society’s leadership in London, who would then in turn make arrangements to purchase them. The goal, of course, was to save money. However, this procedure proved both insulting and

¹²²Committee Minutes, July 3, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹²³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹²⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹²⁵Committee Minutes, May 1, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

embarrassing for the missionaries, and Scott felt compelled to address it:

I shall only add, that in all cases, but especially, where women are concerned, it would be far better to make an annual allowance for clothes &c., than to require them to particularize what they want. This, I know is unpleasant to them; and, I must think, putting them too much on the footing of school boys. I do not think the expence would be greater.¹²⁶

This letter shows Scott to be conscientious both about his students' general welfare and their basic treatment as people, and the Committee once again saw the value of Scott's suggestion and changed to an allowance system.¹²⁷

Another example of Scott's concern for the financial welfare of the missionaries deserves some attention, although it concerns a problem that transpired shortly after part of the first missionary class left for Africa rather than an issue related directly to the school. During the summer of 1809, Wenzel and Barneth, were nearing the completion of their training. At the time, the missionaries were, according to Scott, "always supposing that they are now as soldiers, who must go directly, should the drum beat to arms."¹²⁸ The summons was soon forthcoming and the two missionaries arrived in Sierra Leone on August 5, 1809.¹²⁹ Almost immediately, however, the missionaries found themselves in trouble with the CMS leadership. The exact details of what happened are a bit unclear, but the basic story can be reconstructed from Scott's letters.¹³⁰ Soon after the missionaries arrived in Africa, the missionaries were forced by illness and other circumstances to borrow some money to pay for expenses associated with starting life in Sierra Leone. When the CMS leadership learned that the missionaries had gone into debt,

¹²⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

¹²⁷Scott speaks about the missionaries' clothing allowance in a number of subsequent letters. E.g., Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 21, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/130; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 3, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/241.

¹²⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 14, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/151.

¹²⁹Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 136.

¹³⁰See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 18, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/161; Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 23, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/162.

the members of the Corresponding Committee were furious. In their view, the Society had supplied Wenzel and Barneth with ample provisions in the cargo that had accompanied the missionaries on the ship, and the Committee blamed the missionaries for financial mismanagement and for developing a love for money as other German missionaries had done previously.

Scott was horrified by the accusations against his students, and he responded with what might be the two most emotionally charged letters he ever wrote to Pratt. Scott tried to be diplomatic, saying that he “by no means wish[ed] to *intrude* my opinions on the Committee,” but he simultaneously defended the missionaries and proposed a change in strategy to the CMS leadership, implying that it was CMS field policy that was more to blame than were the missionaries:

Mr. Wenzel’s account of his difficulties by reason of debt, as it appears, unavoidably contracted, is written in the most simple and resigned language: yet it impresses my mind, that exposing a man to such difficulties in a strange land, when oppressed by sickness himself, and in his connexions, was not desirable. If my opinion be erroneous, I am willing to stand corrected: but I could not but hint them to you, and by you to the Committee.¹³¹

Scott was “decidedly for requiring *frugality* from Missionaries,” but he pointed out that the difficulties associated with starting out in a foreign country without financial capital tended “almost to *necessitate* the contraction of debts.”¹³² He also believed that the missionaries shared this commitment to frugality, and they would have only abandoned it in a case of extreme necessity:

While here, I never saw in any men, during my whole life, such as perfect indifference about money; and so entire a willingness to be without whatever money can purchase; (in this I include those now with me). It does not appear to me, that during their continuance here, they spent five shillings, in such things as were unavoidable, hardly any men ever in such a situation incurred less expence. I indeed incessantly inculcated this frugality; but it seems to me to have been dictated to

¹³¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 18, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/161.

¹³²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 18, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/161.

them rather by *principle*, than *instruction*. I cannot therefore think that the circumstance of a voyage to Africa has wholly subverted this principle: or, that they, who would not, I am confident, have spent 5s needlessly at Haddenham, should now spend £5. If they did this: I should only leave to lament, as in many other instances, the disappointment of my too sanguine hopes.¹³³

However, what is clear from Scott's letters was that he loved the missionaries greatly, and he made that clear in his conclusion to his second letter: "Perhaps, I am wholly wrong, in this interfering: but I must either thus intrude, or give up, my kin-ploy: for all put under my care, who behave properly become my *children*; and I cannot be indifferent to their concerns."¹³⁴

Scott's letters about the problem of missionary debt are not only valuable for illustrating Scott's concern for the plight of missionaries; they also demonstrate Scott to be a person who could offer wise solutions to a vexing problem. In his estimation, bad field policy had set the missionaries up for failure. "Though the Committee had *bountifully* provided from cargo, things needful and comfortable for their future settlement," Scott argued that the missionaries were "distressed for *ready money*."¹³⁵ In order to mitigate this problem, he proposed the following solution:

I give it as my opinion, that besides the annual allowance, there should be an extra sum allowed, perhaps proportioned at the discretion of some confidential person, in the settlement; for the intervening space, between the missionaries landing, and their being able, in respect of health and other things, to enter on regular employment; especially when the missionaries or their wives, are sick, as it seems all must expect to be, in the rainy season.¹³⁶

Once again, Scott's insight into the human side of missions was on display, and his proposition to give missionaries some cash for unexpected expenses made good sense.

¹³³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 23, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/162.

¹³⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 23, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/162.

¹³⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 18, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/161.

¹³⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 18, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/161.

What the CMS did with this advice is uncertain, as the CMS Minutes do not mention Scott's remarks.¹³⁷ Perhaps the whole thing was too embarrassing to put on record. However, it is certain is that the missionaries were not pulled from the field over this fiasco, Scott having defended their character sufficiently enough.

Managing missionary marriages. Money was not the only aspect of student life Scott found himself managing. In some cases, he had to get involved in the personal lives of students who were considering marriage. Two students in Scott's first class were married while they lived in Haddenham, and these marriages further strengthened the close connection Scott had to his students, as one student married one of his parishioners and another married his niece. In both cases, Scott had been the liaison between the missionaries and the CMS leadership, with the latter being greatly concerned over how marriage might affect the missionaries' ability to deploy to the mission field. The two missionaries who eventually married women from the Aston Sandford area were Wenzel and Klein.

The story of Wenzel's marriage is comical at points, and Scott managed to embarrass himself considerably in his letters to Pratt on the subject. Scott first mentioned Wenzel's desire to marry in December of 1808.¹³⁸ Scott described Wenzel's intended as "a woman of my congregation, of established piety, of good natural understanding, of plain habits, yet capable of those things, which the situation of a missionary's wife would require."¹³⁹ Scott also noted that "she understands Christianity well: and will I trust in

¹³⁷Uncharacteristically, the normally thorough Charles Hole did not even mention the incident, and neither did Eugene Stock. Hole quotes from the December 18, 1809 letter, so he had to know about it. The portion he quoted, though, was about the lack of English volunteers for missionary service. See Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 125.

¹³⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

¹³⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

many ways be useful.”¹⁴⁰ Naturally, Wenzel wanted to know what the Society thought about his proposed marriage and when the marriage might take place should it be approved. Every indication points to the fact that the CMS had no material objection to Wenzel getting married, although the leaders were concerned that the union might cause delays in Wenzel being able to go to Africa.

However, before these details could be sorted, the situation turned into something of a local saga. Just over a month after Scott’s first letter about the possibility of Wenzel marrying, Scott wrote again to tell Pratt that the whole thing had seemingly unraveled, stating that “circumstances have arisen, from the *too long delayed*, if ever *intended* opposition of relations, &c., which, I believe will finally terminate the business.”¹⁴¹ Wenzel, however, was not willing to abandon the plan:

He feels indeed, and no wonder, rather reluctant to forego the hope of taking a suitable companion with him to Africa; and perhaps cherishes a distant hope, that these hindrances may be at length removed. In this I think he will be disappointed and on this account alone, I hesitate to say, that the business is done with. The Committee however, need not, arrange their plans to accommodate him in this respect.¹⁴²

As it turned out, Scott’s belief that Wenzel’s relationship had ended in disappointment was misguided. In April of the following year, Scott wrote back to Pratt with an expectation that the information he then conveyed would “excite the laugh of the Committee at my reports.”¹⁴³ Instead of confirming that Wenzel’s intended marriage had collapsed, he provided the unexpected news that Wenzel was on the verge of getting married. He explained, “I had no sooner stated, that the whole affair of this intended marriage was, as far as I could see, finally terminated; then a sudden turn took place: and

¹⁴⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 22, 1808, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/131.

¹⁴¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 30, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/134.

¹⁴²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 30, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/134.

¹⁴³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

a full and firm engagement was made, by the young person concerned, with the consent of the relations who opposed it, to accompany him to Africa, or elsewhere.”¹⁴⁴

What happened to bring about the change is unclear, but Scott blamed Wenzel’s fiancé for how she had handled Wenzel’s proposal. According to Scott, the engagement “was preceded with a deep conviction, and was accompanied and followed, with an unreserved confession, that she had behaved very wrong, both against God, against him, and all concerned.”¹⁴⁵ Scott did not expound upon the details of her alleged wrong doing, but it should be remembered what was at stake for her. To be fair, this was no ordinary marriage. Not only was an English woman about to marry a German man, this man was planning on taking her to Africa, away from her country, friends, and family. She had to have known that her chances of seeing her relatives and friends again were slim; and, understandably, she and her family hesitated. Time was needed to count the cost; and after a period of about two months, she and her family concluded that the cost of a missionary life was worthwhile. Once she definitively committed to the marriage, the only real issue left to decide was the timing of the wedding. Wenzel deferred this matter to the discretion of the Committee in London, and it was decided that the wedding should take place just before Wenzel and Barneth were to go to Africa. Thus, on June 19, 1809, Wenzel was married in Haddenham; and in about a week’s time, the newlyweds had reported to London in view of going to Africa.¹⁴⁶ Little time was afforded the couple to get used to married life since they were quickly dispatched to Africa, where they arrived on August 5, 1809.¹⁴⁷

The other missionary marriage with which Scott had to deal was not nearly as

¹⁴⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹⁴⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 24, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/143.

¹⁴⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 14, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/151.

¹⁴⁷Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 136.

dramatic as Wenzel's, but it was a bit more personal, given that Klein decided to marry Scott's niece, Susanna. Not much is said about this marriage in Scott's letters, which may indicate that Susanna had fewer reservations about going to Africa than had Wenzel's wife. Scott first mentioned Klein's intended marriage on June 7, 1810, but little was said.¹⁴⁸ The next mention of the subject only contained a brief request for the Committee to determine approximately when Klein would be sent to Africa, so proper wedding arrangements could be made.¹⁴⁹ On September 4, 1810, Scott told Pratt that the wedding banns had been published, though he did not give the projected date for the wedding.¹⁵⁰ If the space of time between the publishing of the banns and the wedding was similar to that of Wenzel's marriage, it is likely that the Klein wedding took place within short order. However, the Kleins spent nearly a year longer waiting to leave England because the Society decided that it would be good for the missionaries to learn the skills necessary for printing, making fishing nets, and practicing rudimentary medicine.¹⁵¹ Thus, the Kleins and Wilhelm did not reach Africa until December 22, 1811.¹⁵²

Commissioning Missionaries for Service. On August 9, 1811, the General Committee held a special meeting in William Goode's home, at which time the Committee decided that it was time for the Kleins and Wilhelm to go to Africa. During the meeting, it was "resolved, that the Secretary write to the Rev. Thomas Scott, requesting him to come to town, at the expence of the Society, in order to address the Missionaries, preparatory to their departure, at an open Committee to be convened for the

¹⁴⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

¹⁴⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 13, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/175.

¹⁵⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, September 4, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/177.

¹⁵¹Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 137–38.

¹⁵²Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 139.

purpose.”¹⁵³ Scott agreed, and the commissioning service took place later that month on August 28. Scott’s address to the missionaries is one of his lesser known sermons and has not received the same sort of attention as have his sermons before the CMS and LMS. The sermon is rather long in printed form and cannot, as a result, be considered in great detail here.¹⁵⁴ Much of the content would have been expected for a sermon directed at missionaries, with themes such as missionary hardship and character making up the greatest portion. However, several aspects of the message shed light on Scott’s approach to missions generally and to missionary training and support specifically.

In his first major point, Scott gave an overview of what he believed to be the office and object of a missionary. In terms of the office, a missionary was simply “one sent forth ‘to preach the gospel where Christ is not named.’”¹⁵⁵ The missionary’s object, then, “is the salvation of Gentiles, Mohammedans, and Jews, or of those who do not bear the Christian name.”¹⁵⁶ In explaining how this differed from regular ministers, Scott reverted to his favorite metaphor—the military. Regular ministers “garrison, as it were, the towns and cities already in our hands, and defend our country from invaders.”¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, missionaries “go abroad, as voluntarily engaging to invade the enemy’s territories, and to venture, and spend, and lay down their lives, in attempting to wrest them from him.”¹⁵⁸ The great sacrifice that missionaries make was something Scott clearly admired, and he proclaimed that “genuine missionaries, therefore, are the heroes of the church militant; and are entitled to every degree of affectionate, grateful, and

¹⁵³Committee Minutes, August 9, 1811, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/1.

¹⁵⁴“Address from the Rev. Thomas Scott, to the Missionaries Wilhelm and Klein,” in vol. 3 of *The Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1810–1812), microfilm, 463–95.

¹⁵⁵Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 466.

¹⁵⁶Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 469.

¹⁵⁷Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 469.

¹⁵⁸Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 469.

respectful attention from all their brethren.”¹⁵⁹ “Others give their money or time,” Scott said, “but the Missionaries give themselves.”¹⁶⁰ Later on in the sermon, he emphasized the fact that the work of the missionaries was of great worth: “Indeed should you spend your whole lives in assiduous labours, and win but a very small number of true converts from the kingdom of darkness; you will have lived to more purpose, not only than the most celebrated warriors, poets, orators, and historians, but even than legislators and philanthropists.”¹⁶¹

The importance of the missionary’s work had implications for how a missionary society should operate with respect to the missionaries themselves. A society was obligated to provide its missionaries with the requisite preparation for their intended service abroad and to care for them as best it could. In the former case, Scott stressed that “the knowledge of the learned languages is useful to a Missionary, chiefly as the very learning of them gives him a facility in acquiring other languages grammatically and accurately.”¹⁶² He went on to mention the importance of learning Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Arabic for CMS missionaries.¹⁶³ In other words, he highlighted the main subjects of the Aston Sandford curriculum.

Since the missionaries had an experiential knowledge of Scott’s beliefs respecting missionary training, he did not need to say a whole lot on the subject. However, with the Kleins and Wilhelm on the brink of an altogether different set of experiences, he did take a few moments to address the need for the CMS to take care of the missionaries. In all probability, Scott had in mind his earlier disagreements with Pratt

¹⁵⁹Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 469.

¹⁶⁰Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 469.

¹⁶¹Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 484.

¹⁶²Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 482.

¹⁶³Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 482–84.

over Wenzel's debts when he raised this subject, and he was likely speaking more to the CMS directors and members than the missionaries themselves. Wilhelm and the Kleins, after all, were also members of Scott's first missionary class, and he did not want to see the same type of thing that happened to Wenzel happen to the rest of the class. Scott knew that the CMS was radically committed to frugality, but the Society needed to remember that "a genuine and able Missionary is the Society's most valuable treasure: he is procured with great difficulty, and generally prepared at considerable expense."¹⁶⁴ Saving money was important, but "the death or incapacitating sickness of any one of them is, besides the general loss to the church and to mankind, a heavier loss to the Society than that of a large portion of their funds, and far more irreparable."¹⁶⁵ Therefore, "every prudent means should be used, every arrangement made, and every expense readily incurred, to prevent Missionaries from being exposed more than the nature of the service necessarily requires."¹⁶⁶ The call to take on additional expenses for missionary care is reminiscent of Scott's proposal for sending cash with the missionaries in order to prevent them taking on debts, and his final words on the subject were a bit guarded, perhaps indicating that he had purposely raised a controversial issue: "This digression from our subject will, I hope, be favourably received, as immediately connected with our grand object."¹⁶⁷

Scott had developed a real, loving concern for his students, and he was committed to protecting them from the CMS budget-strings and from their own personal behavior. In the final section of the sermon, Scott made a statement that stands out from the rest. Most of the sermon was directed toward the work of the ministry, focusing on

¹⁶⁴Scott, "Address to Wilhelm and Klein," 470.

¹⁶⁵Scott, "Address to Wilhelm and Klein," 470.

¹⁶⁶Scott, "Address to Wilhelm and Klein," 470.

¹⁶⁷Scott, "Address to Wilhelm and Klein," 471.

engaging the Africans and the like. However, the first of three concluding remarks directed toward the missionaries was this: “Let nothing induce you to neglect all due care of your health.”¹⁶⁸ Practically, that meant refusing “to take voyages or journeys, at those seasons in which experience proves that they are perilous to European constitutions.”¹⁶⁹ The reason for this was that their lives were valuable “to us, who long for the conversion of the heathen; to the Society, and the common cause of Christianity.”¹⁷⁰ In exhorting his pupils to take care of themselves, Scott did not intend “to plead for a timid, cowardly care of life and health,” but he recognized that men who had committed themselves to the dangers of the mission field were often “too ready to expose themselves [to personal risk], to be left without counsel and caution not to do this without good reason.”¹⁷¹

In reading these lines from Scott’s sermon, the interpreter might be led to think that Scott thought of the missionaries only as assets to be protected, like one would protect physical property. One might conclude that Scott was worried more about the financial implications of the loss of a missionary than the loss of a person, but such a conclusion fails to take into account the broader historical context for his words. As noted above, this sermon was preached in August of 1811. However, just above a year prior, in May of 1810, he had preached a sermon on an altogether different occasion—the death of one of his missionary students. If some portions of Scott’s sermon pertaining to missionary well-being were influenced by the Wenzel debt controversy, others were impacted by the fact that Charles Barneth had died just months after arriving on the African coast. Scott did not want to experience anew the grief and pain associated with losing another of his students to African disease, and his exhortations for the missionaries

¹⁶⁸Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 491.

¹⁶⁹Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 492.

¹⁷⁰Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 492.

¹⁷¹Scott, “Address to Wilhelm and Klein,” 492.

to take care of themselves came not from a calculating mind intent on preserving materials assets, but from a heart wounded by the loss of a friend.

Dealing with death on the mission field. Throughout his years as a missionary instructor, Scott carried on his teaching with the solemn realization that he would probably never see his students again once they left for the mission field. In the months leading up to the commissioning service for Wilhelm and Klein, Scott had written to Pratt to let him know that “Mr. Wilhelm would also be gratified, by coming down with Mr. Klein, to see us once more, previous to our separation, probably final as to this world.”¹⁷² Everyone knew that the “goodbyes” exchanged prior to the missionaries going out were probably their last. Difficulties in travel prevented most missionaries from coming back on furloughs, and the lack of advanced medical knowledge and treatment meant that missionaries were under a constant threat of succumbing to life-threatening illnesses. The problem of disease was particularly acute in Africa, where many Europeans perished from sickness in the harsh and unforgiving environment.¹⁷³ In early 1810, Charles Barneth had become yet another victim of the physical perils inherent in African ministry.

Barneth, the oldest of Scott’s students and one of the first to go to Africa from the Aston Sandford seminary, had never been a particularly good student, but Scott believed that he would be useful on the mission field. Sadly, whatever potential Barneth had as a missionary was never realized. He became severely ill shortly after arriving in Africa and never recovered. As Hole tersely remarked, “Barneth, who arrived in Africa

¹⁷²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, September 4, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/177.

¹⁷³E.g., Anna Maria Falconbridge, who had spent several years living in and about Sierra Leone in the early 1790s, reported that the natives did not have a tremendous amount of trouble with the “evil consequences from the unhealthy putrid vapour that almost constantly hovers about these mountains,” but “the poisonous effects” of the vapors “[carried] off numbers of foreigners” (*Two Voyages to Sierra Leone, During the Years 1791–2–3, in a Series of Letters* [London, 1794], 84).

on August 5, 1809, died at the Rio Pongas Mission on February 2, 1810.”¹⁷⁴ He had not survived six months. Despite his short time in Africa, Barneth managed to leave a noteworthy testimony of missionary commitment to his survivors. Melchior Renner, the senior CMS missionary on the field, described Barneth’s conduct during his illness in memorable language:

The many tears which he shed in his sickness, while he lamented that he could not do the work for which he was sent out, are as a blessed dew on the heathen among whom he died, and on the land which he was permitted but to see. The short time that he lived in the country, he was much beloved by the natives, and respected by all who knew him.¹⁷⁵

According to Renner, Barneth was buried “decently in the garden close to the dwelling-house,” in a grave that is almost certainly lost today.¹⁷⁶

The news of Barneth’s death took several months to make its way back to Aston Sandford, where it “excited a deep sensation, both in [Scott], and in those who knew [Barneth].”¹⁷⁷ Scott tenderly described the event as “the death of poor dear Barneth.”¹⁷⁸ Because of the close connection Aston Sandford had to Barneth, Scott decided to preach a memorial sermon in his honor, which was delivered in the parish church on May 27, 1810, and later published under the title of *The Spirit and Principles of a Genuine Missionary*. He explained his purpose for publishing the sermon in the preface. He observed that “a considerable number of missionaries, from the recently instituted societies, have died, soon after they had entered on their labours. This is, certainly, in itself, a mysterious and disheartening event; but, I apprehend, at the same

¹⁷⁴Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 125n2.

¹⁷⁵Quoted in Thomas Scott, *The Spirit and Principles of a Genuine Missionary: A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. John Charles Barneth* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1810), 31.

¹⁷⁶Quoted in Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 30.

¹⁷⁷Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, preface.

¹⁷⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

time, replete with instruction.”¹⁷⁹ He went on to say that he did “not know, that any sermon, or publication, on the subject, has been brought forward, to counteract the discouragement, or to improve the mysterious dispensation.”¹⁸⁰ Thus, the sermon was intended for a wider audience than just those within his parish or those within the CMS. The sermon was designed to help those of all missionary societies cope with the disheartening loss of missionaries on the field.

The sermon shared many of the same themes as Scott’s sermon to Wilhelm and Klein. Based on Acts 20:24,¹⁸¹ Scott compared the mindset of the Apostle Paul to the outlook of a missionary. Paul was a man “all in earnest, in the pursuit of one favourite object; an enthusiast in the cause; decided to venture, and part with, and suffer, every thing, in order to accomplish it; and disregarding even life itself, if the preservation of it should interfere with this grand concern. This is the very spirit of a *hero*.”¹⁸² The implication drawn was that Barneth and those like him were heroes.¹⁸³ Additionally, Paul had “an abiding and influential view of eternal things,” and a conviction “that there was one all-sufficient and effectual salvation for lost sinners” that motivated him to go to endure many trials to bring the gospel to those who had not heard it.¹⁸⁴ Missionaries shared this perspective and determined to devote themselves to reaching lost sinners in remote places and at great cost.

However, in some cases, missionaries ended up being “removed by death, at

¹⁷⁹Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, preface.

¹⁸⁰Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, preface.

¹⁸¹Acts 20:24 reads, “ But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” (KJV).

¹⁸²Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 2.

¹⁸³It should be observed that Scott called missionaries “the heroes of the church militant” in his address to Wilhelm and Klein.

¹⁸⁴Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 4–5.

the very crisis when [they were] about to enter on [their] pious, zealous, and benevolent labours.”¹⁸⁵ Scott called this reality “the mysterious providence,” and he sought to help others come to grips with it.¹⁸⁶ He pointed out that this phenomenon was nothing new. Even in apostolic times, some ministers enjoyed a lifetime of fruitful ministry, while others lost their lives after little time in Christian service. Among a number of examples, he cited the differing fortunes of James and Peter in Jerusalem.¹⁸⁷ James was arrested by King Herod and killed by the sword.¹⁸⁸ Peter was also arrested, yet God chose to deliver him miraculously from prison.¹⁸⁹ Scott noted that “the two apostles were doubtless like-minded . . . but James terminates his course; whereas Peter lives for many years to exercise his ministry.”¹⁹⁰ He then applied this case to the situation with Barneth: “Let us hope, my brethren, in like manner, that while God has taken one of the two missionaries who have left us, to his heavenly glory; he will, in answer to our prayers, spare the other for great and permanent usefulness.”¹⁹¹ Scott did not so much explain *why* God’s providence plays out as it does; after all, it is mysterious. However, he tried to emphasize that even though some may die before their work has begun or is completed, God usually ensures that there are others around to carry on the mission:

I am of opinion, that no attempt has ever been made, to make the gospel of Christ known to those who sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, upon Christian principles, and in a right spirit; but some of the select instruments have speedily been taken away, to the grief of their brethren; and others have been spared for substantial usefulness.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁵Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 16.

¹⁸⁶Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 16.

¹⁸⁷Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 17–18.

¹⁸⁸See Acts 12:1–2.

¹⁸⁹See Acts 12:3–19.

¹⁹⁰Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 18.

¹⁹¹Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 18.

¹⁹²Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 20.

Such, Scott hoped, was the case with Barneth; and on this ground, he urged Christians and Christian societies not to abandon their efforts in foreign missions.

Scott's attempts at comforting his hearers and readers should not be understood as encouraging something like a Stoic acceptance of the dispensations of divine providence. It is certainly true, that Scott conveyed a strong sense of duty in many of his writings, including this one. As was his custom, he employed military metaphors to describe the Christian's duty to the cause; but in keeping with his understanding of the gospel, he emphasized that a fallen missionary had hope of glory far beyond that of the missionary's military counterpart:

Certainly the object of societies for missions, and of all who support them, is of prime importance, and our obligation to attain it, is an indispensable duty: and as far as our measures according with the word of God, they are the result of divine wisdom. We send our missionaries, (as they do their [military] officers,) at the risk of their lives: but we have scarcely a doubt, that if our missionaries should lose their lives, their souls will be saved, and their bodies raised to incorruptible glory.¹⁹³

A few paragraphs later the general principle of eternal glory was contextualized:

My Christian brethren, while we mourn over the death of those, who, we trusted, would have been spared for much usefulness; let us not mourn "as men without hope." When our dear brother and his companions left for Africa; scarcely any of us expected to see them again on earth: and is there any doubt of our meeting our deceased brother in heaven?¹⁹⁴

The loss of Barneth had been a personal one for the people of Aston Sandford, yet Scott held out the hope of the resurrection as the ultimate means whereby they could comfort one another. In heaven, the believers in Aston Sandford would be reunited with Barneth.

The case of Barneth was not the only time Scott had to address the death of one of those who had left Aston Sandford for Africa. Approximately two years after Barneth's death, Mrs. Wenzel likewise succumbed to illness on December 28, 1811. The young woman who had initially resisted marrying a missionary had paid the ultimate

¹⁹³Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 22–23.

¹⁹⁴Scott, *Spirit and Principles*, 26.

price for the gospel cause. She had been in Africa a little over two years. Mrs. Wenzel, it should be remembered, was an Englishwoman who was part of Scott's congregation in Aston Sandford, and thus her death would have been felt acutely by those she left behind. When news reached England a few months later, Scott wrote to Pratt to express his belief that her death was "a most lamentable event, as she was I am confident, peculiarly suited to her situation; and I believe, without one dissenting voice in this neighbourhood, considered as a very excellent Christian."¹⁹⁵ As he had done with Barneth, Scott preached a funeral sermon for Mrs. Wenzel. Consistent with her personal connections to the area, "the congregation was crowded perhaps beyond example" on the day of the service.¹⁹⁶ Scott's sermon, which was never put into print, was based on 1 Thessalonians 4:13.¹⁹⁷ As the text indicates, the subject of hope in the resurrection was no doubt emphasized, and Scott explained that he had "especially showed that though she was taken away, her going to Africa had not been in vain; but that a most beneficial impression had been made on the minds of numbers, and a way prepared for those who may follow."¹⁹⁸

Receiving additional students. Scott's reference to Mrs. Wenzel's preparing "a way for those who may follow" was made in light of the situation in Aston Sandford in 1812. Though by this time the entirety of Scott's first seminary class had left for Africa, other students had come to the parish for training, and others were soon to follow. The informal nature of the seminary, which lacked formal academic terms and student classifications, makes it difficult to speak of distinct classes beyond the first class of Barneth, Wilhelm, Klein, and Wenzel. The students often arrived at different times

¹⁹⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

¹⁹⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

¹⁹⁷The text reads, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." (KJV).

¹⁹⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

throughout the year, and language proficiency rather than course hours determined a student's length of stay. However, the students arrived in roughly four waves, which are loosely described as "classes" in this chapter. The first wave of students has already been discussed. A second wave arrived during the years 1809 to 1811. A third group came in 1812, and a fourth in 1813.

The second class. The second wave of missionary students can hardly be called a proper class. The three students who made up this class arrived at separate times, and the first student of the group turned out to be a complete washout. In this case, the CMS Committee sent Scott a young man, named P. Cox, who was supposed to spend some time in Aston Sandford in preparation for going to Cambridge for a university education. The hope was that Cox, with a Cambridge degree, would be more likely to obtain Anglican orders and be able to go to the mission field as a full-fledged English clergyman. Regretfully, Cox was an awful student. Scott told Pratt that "Mr. Cox, I believe, applies very diligently to study; but it is according to his own plan, and not according to my direction."¹⁹⁹ Cox refused to do much of the translation work Scott required; and after some investigation, it was discovered that Cox believed that the classic Roman and Greek authors being translated "contained so many lies, that it was not worth bestowing pains about."²⁰⁰ Naturally, any student who refused to spend time in classical literature, for conscience sake or otherwise, would have found the classical education at Cambridge revolting. Therefore, the plan to send Cox to Cambridge was abandoned, and he was dismissed from Aston Sandford.

In contrast to the failure of Cox, the next student who arrived at Aston Sandford proved to be a resounding success, both as a student and as a missionary. This

¹⁹⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 23, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/154.

²⁰⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 23, 1809, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/154.

man was an Englishman named Thomas Norton, who arrived, together with his wife Ann, in January of 1810.²⁰¹ Much like William Carey, Norton was a shoemaker by trade and seemed to possess a natural ability to acquire languages. Scott's first impression of Thomas was that he was "a very good character, and a very promising man."²⁰² Likewise, Ann was "a very amiable good woman."²⁰³ Thomas Norton's language abilities were so evident, that Scott thought "it practicable to make him a complete linguist, and fitted to be a tutor to a Seminary of missionaries," though Norton never performed this function.²⁰⁴ Upon completion of his seminary training and after a prolonged attempt to obtain ordination in the Church of England, Norton became one of the first CMS missionaries to India.

The third student of the second class was William Greenwood. Like Norton, Greenwood was an Englishman and had a background in manual labor, being a blanket-maker by trade. Scott did not say much about Greenwood's character and personality in his letters, but he did remark that Greenwood was "quick at taking learning."²⁰⁵ Greenwood bears the notable distinction of being the first CMS missionary candidate to be ordained in the Church of England.²⁰⁶ In 1815, Greenwood accompanied Norton to

²⁰¹For biographical information on Thomas Norton, see Gillian Mary Webb, *Thomas Norton: Man on a Mission* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016). This book was written by one of Thomas Norton's descendants and is largely based on personal family papers owned by Webb, many of which are now housed by the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham.

²⁰²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

²⁰³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169. In this same letter, Scott reveals a remarkable story about Ann, whose quick thinking saved the life of a local man. Scott wrote, "She is not disposed to be idle: she visits the sick and the poor; and has certainly merited one civick crown, by saving the life of a citizen: who was given over by all parties and supposed to be dying: but she went to him, did what she could, Mr. Norton sent at eleven o'clock at night to us, (who knew nothing of it), and procured medicines; and in short, beyond all hope, the poor man recovered; and is now I believe employed in my kitchen, about brewing."

²⁰⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 7, 1810, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/3/169.

²⁰⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 21, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/130.

²⁰⁶Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 273.

India.

Thomas Norton's ordination struggle. In addition to his work as an instructor at the seminary, Scott was also something of a guidance counselor for those of his students who needed to obtain ordination prior to their departure to the mission field, and Thomas Norton was the first student Scott tried to guide through this process. The question of Norton's ordination was first put to Scott in March of 1812 when Norton was nearing the completion of his studies.²⁰⁷ Scott's response was rather cryptic, and he sought a more thorough explanation for what the Committee meant when they asked him if Norton was "qualified for orders."²⁰⁸ Scott affirmed that Norton was capable of passing the language exams, but he subtly departed from the subject of ordination in the course of the letter. That May, Scott again had to answer Pratt about ordination, and he reiterated his belief that the language portion of the exam would not be a problem.²⁰⁹ However, he once again withheld a straightforward answer, arguing that Norton should be kept in Aston Sandford to continue his Arabic study for five or six months longer.²¹⁰ The normally candid Scott was clearly dodging the question, but why?

The first hint as to Scott's elusiveness followed the proposed extension of Norton's coursework. Scott wrote, "I do not think, that my son at Hull, or any friend of mine, who is not also known as a cordial friend to your society, could do any thing, to smoothe the way to the ordination of Missionaries. Mr. Wilberforce is the most likely."²¹¹ These words are rather insightful as to what was really going on, namely, that Scott viewed being a "cordial friend" to the CMS as an impediment to ordination, and he was

²⁰⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 17, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/32.

²⁰⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 17, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/32.

²⁰⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 26, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/48.

²¹⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 26, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/48.

²¹¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 26, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/48.

afraid of getting his Evangelical friends involved. John Scott, his son, was a known Evangelical and a CMS annual subscriber. In all likelihood, Scott's "friends" were too. Wilberforce was certainly a friend to the CMS, but his place as a respected MP may have prevailed over his religious connections. In speaking as he did, Scott was apparently squirming under the pressure of the Evangelical Anglican tension.

The context in which this discussion was taking place lends further support to this interpretation. Important to understanding Scott's hesitancy in the matter is the fact that, in the year prior, Scott had published his *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*.²¹² The book was a spirited defense of Evangelicals and was directed against George Tomline, who was then the Bishop of Lincoln and consequently bishop over Scott's parish. Scott's tit for tat with Tomline put Scott in an awkward position, and Tomline could hardly be expected to be sympathetic to any ordination request coming from Scott or any of his close associates. In fact, Tomline would later oppose Scott's son-in-law's ordination application, despite the young man's obvious proficiency at the examination.²¹³ In circumstances such as these, Scott naturally felt that he was not a reliable means to obtaining Norton's ordination.

As events played out, the road to Norton's ordination proved to be nearly impassible and underscored the problems associated with the Evangelical Anglican tension. The most discouraging aspect of the process took place in Wales. Convinced that Scott and his friends would have difficulty providing a title for purposes of Norton's ordination, the CMS sent Norton to Wales, where he was to become the curate of an elderly clergyman named Joshua Davies. The plan was to have Norton receive ordination from Richard Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff, under Davies's title. On all accounts,

²¹²Thomas Scott, *Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism*, 2 vols. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1811).

²¹³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, November 1, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/76.

Norton did well at his ordination examination, but Watson ultimately refused to grant him ecclesiastical orders. When the astonished Norton asked the bishop why he had been refused, Watson responded by saying, “I do not like your Rector and I will not ordain you for him.”²¹⁴ The bishop’s dislike for Davies was rooted in the fact that Davies was an Evangelical, and an irregular one at that, as was made plain in one of Scott’s letters:

The man who gave the title was so objectionable, that nothing could countervail it. He has I do not know how many churches or chapels, at a considerable distance, and some poorly attended to: yet he preaches among the Dissenters; and the very week, when Mr. Norton went to the Bishop, he received from the Bishop, a long and severe reprimand before all the clergy.²¹⁵

From Scott’s point of view, the CMS’s strategy was to blame. The Bishop of Llandaff seemed to have thought highly of Norton himself, which was encouraging; but as Scott put it, “In vain are the candidates unexceptionable; if they who give the titles are greatly and justly exceptionable.”²¹⁶

What was needed was a different strategy, one in which the minister providing the title was unobjectionable to the ordaining bishop. For a while Scott and Pratt considered trying to get Norton ordained as Scott’s curate, but the lack of ministry opportunities in the small Aston Sandford parish combined with Scott’s uneasy relationship with Tomline made this option undesirable. The solution finally presented itself in December of 1813, when the Rev. John Graham in York offered his curacy to Norton. Graham had discussed Norton’s ordination with Edward Venables-Vernon, the Archbishop of York, who agreed to “ordain Norton on condition of his remaining in his title till this time next year.”²¹⁷ All parties agreed to this stipulation and Norton was

²¹⁴Thomas Norton, Letter to Josiah Pratt, June 28, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/6/19.

²¹⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 10, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/6/43.

²¹⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 10, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/6/43.

²¹⁷Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 363–64. Even this arrangement was not entirely removed from the Evangelical Anglican tension. Hole quotes an excerpt of a letter from Graham to Pratt in which Graham conveyed the outcome of his conversations with the Archbishop. Graham wrote, “The uncommon readiness to gratify all my wishes which he has ever shown, induced me to

ordained in York on December 19, 1813. The ordination proceedings went well, but it is noteworthy that Norton's association with Scott may well have proved a hindrance to Norton at his examination. Writing to Pratt, Norton admitted that the Archbishop had "examined me *viva voce*, and particularly, understanding that I came from Mr. Scott, with regard to predestination, etc. But through mercy I was enabled to answer him either in Scripture language or that of our Articles."²¹⁸ In thus satisfying the Archbishop, Norton set out to fulfill his year-long obligation as Graham's curate; after which, he was ordained as a priest in late 1814. By this time, Norton's quest for ordination had taken nearly two years. The troubles he experienced in this regard show just how much the Evangelical Anglican tension could affect Evangelicals who sought to engage in foreign missions.

The third class. While Norton, Scott, and the CMS were wrestling with the bishops on the subjection of ordination, the seminary at Aston Sandford continued its operations, and the student body grew significantly in the year 1812. As time went on, Scott's letters contained less and less personal details about his students. His increasing familiarity with the process, his declining health, and his workload are probably all partially to blame for this fact. The result of this phenomenon is that few details can be given for those who were a part of his later classes. Hence, the description of the third and fourth classes will be cursory for the most part.

hope that I should not suffer by frankness on this occasion. Therefore, I stated the *whole case* to him, though I have reason to suspect that he is not a *warm admirer* of your institution" (Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 363). That the Archbishop was not kindly disposed to the CMS is not all surprising since he was personally a strong supporter of the SPG. In fact, he had preached the sermon for the SPG annual meeting in 1798. See Edward Venables-Vernon, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London: S. Brooke, 1798), 3–21.

²¹⁸Thomas Norton, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 18, 1813, quoted in Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 364. One wonders what colored the Archbishop's negative attitude toward Scott. Had he read Scott's writings? Was it Scott's association with the CMS? Was it the way Scott had retaliated against Bishop Tomline? Ironically, Norton was able to overcome his objections by speaking in Scriptural language and in the language of the Thirty-Nine Articles, a tactic he probably had learned from Scott himself.

The first student of the third class was named Richard Wilkinson. Wilkinson was an African youth that had been brought to England in hopes, evidently, of getting a theological education and of returning to Africa in the Society's name. He came to Aston Sandford in June of 1812, but his stint under Scott did not last longer than a few months. Wilkinson's behavior was disturbing enough to Scott that he wrote to Pratt, saying, "I am sorry about Richard: yet [I am] convinced that he must not stay."²¹⁹ The main reason Scott wanted Wilkinson to leave town was that the latter had developed what Scott called "a vehement affection" for a local girl.²²⁰ His affection was so strong that it "on some occasions had powerful effects on his animal frame."²²¹ Scott sensed that this relationship was only going to lead to trouble, and he insisted Wilkinson leave.

Wilkinson's vacancy at Aston Sanford was quickly filled by the arrival of five new missionary students in late 1812. Three of these students were Englishmen—Benjamin Bailey, John Collier, and Thomas Dawson. Two of them were German Lutherans—Johann Christian Schnarre and Charles Theophilus Ewald Rhenius.²²² After a little over six months with these students, Scott had mostly good things to say about them. Concerning the Englishmen, he reported, "My new students make good proficiency, especially Mr. Bailey; Mr. Collier also gets on very well. Mr. Dawson is rather slower; but gets ground."²²³ Rhenius's linguistic abilities made an immediate impact on Scott, who praised the German for knowing "much more than I supposed."²²⁴

²¹⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, September 10, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/74.

²²⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 19, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/5/137.

²²¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, May 19, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/5/137.

²²²On the latter, see J. Rhenius, *Memoir of the Rev. C. T. E. Rhenius* (London: James Nisbet, 1841).

²²³See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 10, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/6/43.

²²⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 21, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/130.

Scott also thought him “a very pleasing and promising man.”²²⁵ Schnarre, on the other hand, was “not so acute,” but Scott considered him a man with “a good solid understanding, with deep piety.”²²⁶ This “class” of five went on to do great things for the CMS. Bailey was sent to India, where he was instrumental in “revival work” among members of the Syrian Church and in translating the Scriptures into Malayalam.²²⁷ Dawson, Rhenius, and Schnarre also performed valuable work in India,²²⁸ and Collier went to Africa as a chaplain.²²⁹

The fourth class. The last group of missionaries to arrive at Aston Sandford consisted of four German Lutherans—John Christopher Sperrhacken, John Henry Schulze, Frederick Christian Gotthelf Schroeter, and George William Schaffner. These men arrived in England in September of 1813 during a period when Scott’s health was particularly poor. The CMS wanted them to go to Aston Sandford for training, as had taken place with the previous missionaries. However, on October 7, 1813, the ailing Scott wrote to raise concerns about his ability to continue teaching:

I am not materially worse, than when I wrote last: but the winter most tries me. I am

²²⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 21, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/130.

²²⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, December 21, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/130.

²²⁷See Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 1:23–35. The modern-day Benjamin Bailey Foundation is a Malayalam research organization named in his honor.

²²⁸For brief overviews of the missionary contributions of Rhenius and Schnarre, see K. M. Jackson, “Schnarre, Johannes Christian,” in *BDCM* and Hans-Werner Gensichen, “Rhenius, Charles Theophilus Ewald,” in *BDCM*. Dawson spent two years on the mission field. He worked among English-speaking Jews and Dutch settlers until he was forced to leave on account of poor health. See Walter Chapin, *The Missionary Gazetteer* (Woodstock, VT: David Watson, 1825), 107.

²²⁹Little detail is known about Collier’s work. Stock wrote that “the chaplains threw themselves heartily into missionary work, and the missionaries performed the chaplains’ duties when death or absence left vacancies” (Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:174). In the case of Collier, he died in 1819, having served less than two years. See Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1:115, 163, 174–76.

willing to do what I can to aid the Society: but it cannot be expected, that I can do anything much longer; and you must without delay, seriously apply yourselves to form a permanent seminary, with proper instructors; suited to the enlarged scale, on which the Society will, probably, be henceforth conducted.²³⁰

It is worth pausing for a moment to take in what Scott had just said. Though he wrote these words when he was obviously weakened by illness and age,²³¹ these lines are a remarkable testimony to his faith, hard work, and persistence in the CMS. While he was CMS Secretary, there were no missionaries at all. Nevertheless, he had stayed the course, and by 1813, there were more missionaries than Scott could handle. Even still, he struggled to retire, not wishing to let the Society down, and he was willing to press on a little longer despite his failing health. “What I do must be considered as a mere *temporary accommodation*,” he warned, “except, as I think, if not much worse, I could go on with the three younger for some time longer.”²³² He made this “accommodation” against the wishes of his family, admitting to Pratt that it was “with great reluctance, and against the wishes of all around me, that I concede so far as I do in this letter: and if you can, without great inconvenience, dispose of your new comers in another way.”²³³

Scott had come as close as he ever had to refusing outright the admission of additional missionaries. He was practically begging the CMS to send the new missionaries elsewhere; but in a way similar to when the seminary first began, the Committee sent them to Scott anyway. He soldiered on, once again trying to teach English to the Germans, along with the other languages in the curriculum. He wrote a month later to report on their progress, “I shall, I think, at present, be able to get on with the others; and I hope our German brethren, when they get to understand me better, will

²³⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/3.

²³¹He was sixty-six at the time.

²³²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/3.

²³³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, October 7, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/3.

soon be able to join in the same reading with the others.”²³⁴

Although Scott’s new class did well academically, one of his students, George Schaffner, presented Scott with one final student life problem. Just a few months into 1814, Schaffner got homesick and wanted to return to Germany. Scott was furious with Schaffner, and Scott forcefully outlined his greivances against Schaffner, stating that he

considered his conduct as contrary to the plain rules of equity: such as obtaining orders, as a Missionary, which otherwise would not have been granted: and then employing them, in a manner suited to prevent the ordination of future missionaries: deserting, not as a conscript, but a volunteer: putting the Society to expence for no purpose; and violating the vows of God, which were upon him and indeed, I said all I could to show them all how serious a light such a dereliction must be considered according to the New Testament.²³⁵

Even though Scott had always had something of a reputation for bluntness, he seemed to be uncharacteristically harsh on Schaffner, and one wonders if Scott’s irritation was exacerbated by the fact that he had not really wanted to take in more missionaries in the first place and by his liability toward ill-health in the winter months.²³⁶ Whatever the cause, Schaffner’s explanation that “he thought, ever since he came into England, that he was unfit for the service; and that this sense of unfitness was his motive for declining it” did not satisfy Scott one bit.²³⁷ Scott “was afraid, it was the want of a heart made up to the privations and perils and hardships of a missionary life; which was his chief unfitness,” and he questioned whether Schaffner had undergone a “true conversion, and pressed him very strongly to self-examination in this respect.”²³⁸ Scott had essentially

²³⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, November 1, 1813, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/76.

²³⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 7, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/96.

²³⁶Later on in the letter, Scott stated, “I do not know, that I am more wearied in teaching the missionaries, than I was six months since: but I shall be glad, when your plans are matured” (Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 7, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/96). This sentence may be an indication that Scott sensed that his attitude was being affected by his physical condition and his ongoing situation as instructor, though he tried to downplay it.

²³⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 7, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/96.

²³⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 7, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/96.

called Schaffner a coward and had questioned his faith, but he was not finished. He further added that Schaffner's faults included "the want of humility," a "levity, even in religious engagements," and "he does not relish either my private or publick religious instructions."²³⁹

When everything is considered in context, it is hard not to conclude that Scott overreacted. Schaffner, it should be observed, was only twenty-three years old, and one of the youngest missionaries Scott had ever received. By comparison, the three other missionaries who came with him were thirty-two, thirty-one, and twenty-seven respectively. Schaffner came to England knowing little-to-no English. Everyday communication would have been incredibly frustrating, and the lack of conversation was compounded by the fact that the older missionaries who accompanied him did not like him.²⁴⁰ Thus, Schaffner was a young man who was living in a foreign country with no friends. Furthermore, he could barely understand the instructions he was receiving in the classroom. About a week after Scott's initial letter to Pratt on the subject, Scott wrote again and acknowledged that Schaffner "has been twice with me, and has endeavoured to make me understand his views and wishes: but he speaks English so poorly, and I am so dull of hearing, that I cannot fully understand them."²⁴¹ In other words, Schaffner's attempts to explain himself had literally fallen on deaf ears.

The whole affair was a complete mess, and there was blame to go around. It is probable that Scott's criticisms were not completely unfounded, and thus blame could

²³⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 7, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/96.

²⁴⁰See Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 31, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/160. In the postscript of this letter, Scott revealed that the other missionaries had "an unfavourable opinion of him; especially the Germans, who say, that he behaved in a very improper manner at Berlin." It should be noted that the conversation wherein Scott learned about the other German missionaries' dislike for Schaffner took place after Schaffner's behavior had come under scrutiny by Scott and the CMS. Therefore, it may not have been a factor in Scott's initial dislike of Schaffner but rather confirmed him in his negative opinion.

²⁴¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 12, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/113.

rightly be directed at Schaffner. However, the screening process in Berlin left much to be desired; and the CMS leadership, including Scott, had shown little patience and understanding in their interactions with him. Thankfully, some grace was displayed by all parties in the matter's resolution. In his second letter to Pratt on the subject, Scott toned down his rhetoric somewhat and revealed that Schaffner "takes [the hurt by what I said to him] better than I expected: and seems in some measure softened and humbled."²⁴² Scott even suggested Schaffner should be allowed to go home as an experiment, stating that "if his heart be not in the work, most probably he will not return; but, if it be as 'a burning fire shut up in his bones,' he will and may then probably be entitled to more confidence."²⁴³ This suggestion is more becoming of Scott, and combined wisdom with a spirit of forgiveness. The Committee took Scott's advice and allowed Schaffner to go home, even offering to pay his travelling expenses.²⁴⁴ Schaffner immediately took the opportunity and returned to Germany, but he never came back to England.²⁴⁵

The Schaffner fiasco notwithstanding, Scott's final class proved to be largely productive. The three remaining students remained with Scott for approximately a year, and all were sent by the CMS to the mission field. Sperrhacken and Schulze went to Africa, and Schroeter went to India. However, Scott's handling of Schaffner confirmed the need for the CMS to put the burden of training missionaries on someone else.

The seminary closes. In the course of 1814, the CMS took steps to relieve Scott of his duties and close down the seminary. The transition took place in two phases. First, the remaining English students from Scott's third class—Collier, Dawson, and

²⁴²Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 12, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/113.

²⁴³Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, March 12, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/8/113.

²⁴⁴See Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 415.

²⁴⁵If there is a silver-lining to this story, it is the fact that Schaffner did go on to become a pastor in Spire. See Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 533.

Bailey—were sent for further training in Dewsbury under the Rev. John Buckworth. This took place on July 1, 1814. Scott wrote to Pratt about the occasion and spoke warmly about the students, saying, “I can only add respecting them: that their conduct has been uniformly consistent and exemplary.”²⁴⁶ The second phase took place later that year when the three German students who remained with Scott were called by the Society to go to their respective mission fields. A small glimpse of Scott’s final Sunday with missionaries in attendance at Aston Sandford is a fitting conclusion to the history of the seminary. On October 30, 1814, Scott preached a sermon just prior to Sperrhacken and Schulze leaving for Africa. In a letter dated November 3, Scott reported that his students “are much beloved in the neighbourhood, and I never saw my little congregation more impressed and excited than on Sunday, when I addressed the Missionaries and addressed the congregation respecting them.”²⁴⁷ Clearly, Aston Sandford had caught the missionary spirit from Thomas Scott. Despite his age, he had not lost it either. To this end, he wrote, “I trust many prayers will be offered for them, and I hope I shall not cease to pray for the success of the Society and all its agents, though I no longer can take an active part in its concerns.”²⁴⁸

The Legacy of the Aston Sandford Seminary

Though there are probably many things that could be listed as part of the seminary’s legacy, four items stand out. First, Scott provided a model of Christian piety to future missionaries. Even though much of Scott’s curriculum pertained to language study, it is important to recognize that all of this instruction was taking place in an environment in which spirituality was emphasized. In fact, Scott took his own piety as a

²⁴⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, July 30, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/9/180.

²⁴⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to [Josiah Pratt?], November 3, 1814, quoted in Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 592. This letter is apparently missing from the CMS Archive records at the Cadbury Research Library.

²⁴⁸Hole, *Early History of the Church Missionary Society*, 592.

necessary requisite to his work as an instructor. In a letter written to Thomas Webster about being a seminary instructor, Scott wrote, “Your example, spirit, views, and instructions, will be almost inseparably connected with the conduct, spirit, and instructions of those, who are to give idolaters and Mohammedans their impression of the Christian religion, in many parts of the world.”²⁴⁹ He added, “[Seminary instruction] is a service to be engaged in with much seriousness and prayer—*Who is sufficient for these things?*—and in entire dependence on the grace of the Lord Jesus.”²⁵⁰ Though directed to Webster, these words represented Scott’s spiritual approach to his part in the seminary. The missionaries were daily exposed to Scott’s piety in his morning and evening family devotion times, in his sermons, and in their daily interactions with him in the classroom. Since many of his students became teachers on foreign mission fields, his example would have served them well.

Second, Scott’s faithfulness through personal trials instilled the importance of perseverance in his students. He had battled illness throughout the seminary’s operations, yet he had remained steadfast in his duties. His commitment to duty clearly made an impression. That at least four of his students—Norton, Greenwood, Rhenius, and Schnarre—referred to this character trait in their speeches just prior to their leaving England for the mission field is telling.²⁵¹ For example, Norton and Greenwood spoke of Scott’s care for them despite his physical limitations:

He has carefully watched over us and assiduously prepared us, under great bodily infirmities, for our future labours. We lament that his infirmities deprive him of the pleasure which he would have felt this day. For how would it have gladdened his

²⁴⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to [Thomas Webster?], November 18, 1813, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 384–85. For the background information on this letter, see above, 290n65.

²⁵⁰Scott, Letter to [Thomas Webster?], November 18, 1813, quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 385.

²⁵¹“Reply of the Rev. Thomas Norton,” in vol. 4 of *The Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1813–1815), microfilm, 358–60; “Reply of the Rev. C. T. E. Rhenius,” in vol. 4 of *The Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1813–1815), microfilm, 360–63.

heart to unite, with animation and love, in exhorting us to persevere and abound in the work of the Lord!²⁵²

The idea of perseverance so permeated Scott's ministry that Norton and Greenwood surmised that, if had Scott addressed them at their departure, he would have spoken on the subject of perseverance.

Third, Scott's legacy included an emphasis on language study and translation work. Linguistic training was at the heart of the seminary's curriculum, and several of his students were responsible for the production of dictionaries, Bible translations, and religious literature in various languages. Important examples of this part of Scott's legacy were Wenzel's Susoo dictionary and Bailey's Malayalam translation of the Scriptures.

Finally, Scott cultivated in his students a love for gospel missions all around the world. Again, his own students testified to this fact. At the same dismissal ceremony involving Norton and Greenwood, Rhenius and Schnarre said about Scott, "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 from his ardent Christian love toward all mankind."²⁵³ The missionary students had witnessed this love as year after year Scott took up collections for missionary and Bible societies of various denominations. They had heard it in his sermons and felt it personally, as they themselves, many of them Germans, became part of his family.

²⁵²"Reply of the Rev. Thomas Norton," in *Proceedings*, 360.

²⁵³"Reply of the Rev. C. T. E. Rhenius," in *Proceedings*, 361.

CHAPTER 8

THOMAS SCOTT AND EVANGELICAL MISSIONS: NON-ANGLICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

Approximately nine months after Thomas Scott resigned as CMS Secretary, he wrote a letter to his Baptist friend, John Ryland, Jr., in which he articulated the spiritual kinship he felt toward Christians outside of his own denomination: “I look on you, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Carey, and many others, as brethren in Christ and in the ministry, so much as dear Mr. Newton himself.”¹ The significance of this statement lies in the fact that Scott looked on ministers and members of evangelical churches outside of the Church of England not just as his brothers in Christ, but as brothers *in ministry*. This language about a ministerial brotherhood existing between Scott and his Baptist friends implied that he was willing to participate actively in gospel causes with those who would normally be classed as ecclesiastical Dissenters. In thinking this way, he was being consistent with his own solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension and with the CMS’s *Account*, which had called for a “cordial union amongst all Christians, in promoting the common salvation of their Lord and Saviour.”² In 1799, he had been the instigator of a pecuniary collection for the LMS in the aftermath of the *Duff* disaster. During his pastorate in Aston Sandford, he had participated in a number of fundraisers, which had benefitted societies other than the CMS. Likewise, his prayers had had been offered for all those who preached the gospel faithfully around the world.

¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., September 9, 1803, The Scott Family Correspondence to John Ryland 1786–1825 [Scott Family Correspondence], Bristol Baptist College Library Special Collections, Bristol, UK.

²“Account of a Society for Missions,” in *Proceedings of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East*, vol. 1 (London: Jaques and Co, 1801–1805), 13.

The goal of this chapter is to delve further into Scott's participation in non-Anglican missionary societies so as to ascertain the nature and extent of his ecumenical commitments. In order to accomplish this objective, Scott's involvement with four evangelical societies—the BMS, LMS, BFBS, and the LSPCJ—will be examined in order to learn exactly how he sought to help these respective groups. As will become clearer in the course of the discussion, the extent of his activity varied from society to society; and thus, after surveying Scott's contributions to all four societies, an attempt to explain these variations will be made in the concluding section of the chapter. The explanation for these differences, it will be argued, contributes a great deal to a proper understanding of Scott's handling of the Evangelical Anglican tension.³

The Baptist Missionary Society

The relationship between Scott and the BMS came about largely as the result of personal friendships with prominent Baptist leaders who were influential in the Society's early years of operation, including Andrew Fuller, John Sutcliff, William Carey, and especially John Ryland, Jr. Scott displayed a keen interest in the BMS and followed its progress closely, especially as it related to Carey's work in India. On April 11, 1798, Scott wrote to Ryland and said, "I rejoice in the accounts of your Missionaries in India. I feel my heart peculiarly knit to Brother Carey; and I have a confidence that, tho' *slowly*, he will *surely* be an instrument of making way for the gospel of Christ in those immense regions."⁴ Scott had great respect for Carey; and during those bleak days when the CMS was struggling to find English missionaries, Scott once wrote to Ryland to say that "if God should raise us up a [few] *Careys*, all other difficulties would be got

³The structure of the chapter has been arranged chronologically with respect to the founding dates of the societies under consideration. The founding dates are as follows: BMS (1792), LMS (1795), BFBS (1804), LSPCJ (1809).

⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., April 11, 1798, Scott Family Correspondence.

over.”⁵

From all accounts, Scott believed the BMS to be a model missions society. In an 1803 letter, he assured Ryland that “you go the right way to work. The word of God translated and dispersed; and attempts to get helpers from the natives.”⁶ In another letter written later that year, Scott said, “I perhaps approve throughout the proceedings of your Society and of the persons sent forth, more than those of any other Society.”⁷ Carey’s example had provided the inspiration for some of the curriculum of the Aston Sandford seminary;⁸ and even after some of Scott’s own students had been laboring in India for a number of years, Scott poured praise on the BMS:

I do most heartily rejoice in what your missionaries are doing in India. Their’s is the most regular, and best conducted plan against the kingdom of darkness; that modern times has shown; and I augur the most extensive success. More genuine Christian wisdom, fortitude, and disinterested assiduity, perseverance, and patience appear, than I elsewhere read of: May God protect and prosper; May all India be peopled with true Christians; even though they be all Baptists.⁹

His Prayers for the BMS

In light of all of this recurring and exuberant praise, it comes as something of a surprise to discover that Scott did not take a very active role in the Society’s affairs. So far as can be determined, he never attended any of the Society’s functions, nor was he an annual subscriber.¹⁰ His primary contributions came in the form of prayer and an

⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., February 1, 1803, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁶Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., February 1, 1803, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 19, 1803, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁸Scott had also sought out Ryland’s advice on training the missionaries. See Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., January 8, 1808, Scott Family Correspondence. In this letter, Scott wrote, “I am now become a tutor of missionaries, and have four Germans, under my care, tho not under my roof. If you can drop me any hints on the subject, I shall be obliged to you.”

⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., December 3, 1814, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁰I checked a number of the BMS annual reports, both before and after Scott’s involvement with the CMS, and his name does not appear among the list of contributors. When Scott did take up a collection for the Society in 1812, he did not even know where to send the money. See Thomas Scott,

occasional monetary collection. As to prayer, he seems to have prayed for the BMS consistently. In 1803, he told Ryland, “I trust no day passes, but your missionaries are remembered by me.”¹¹ In 1808, he wrote:

I trust the controversies about missions will have a very good effect. I do not neglect to pray for success to that cause; and to your missionaries particularly, who, I must own, proceed more exactly in the manner, which meets my view of the subject, than any other missionaries, that I hear of.¹²

Even as his life was drawing to a close, he was still praying for the BMS. In 1819, he wrote, “I never miss a day praying for your missionary Society, as well as others; and with an *especially* very often.”¹³

His Financial Contributions to the BMS

While Scott’s prayers for the BMS were frequent, his financial involvement in the Society was disproportionately sporadic. In fact, his letters only mention two occasions when he was involved in raising funds for the BMS, and the second of these only indirectly benefitted the BMS. This second instance, which was mentioned in passing in the previous chapter, involved Scott preaching a sermon to the benefit of a small group of people in the Aston Sandford area who were trying to raise money for the general cause of missions.¹⁴ In doing so, he raised about £25; but the sermon was not preached specifically for the BMS, and the funds were disbursed between three societies. The only clear-cut instance of his efforts directly supporting the BMS financially took place in 1812, in the aftermath of the Serampore printing press disaster. On March 11,

Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 5, 1812, Scott Family Correspondence. He did, however, make a personal subscription for the expansion of the Baptist Academy in Bristol on at least one occasion. See Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., April 23, 1807, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., February 1, 1803, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., June 20, 1808, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., August 12, 1819, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁴Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, January 3, 1814, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/7/241, Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK (hereafter all letters in the CMS Archive will be reduced to the letter’s main details and the CMS Archive finding number).

1812, the BMS print shop caught fire, and valuable Bible translations, Sanskrit manuscripts, and printing supplies were destroyed.¹⁵ As a result, the BMS sustained an estimated £10,000 in damages.¹⁶

When Scott heard “the afflictive news of the calamity,” he was moved with compassion for his Baptist brethren, and he “determined to address [his] little company on the subject; and to raise a small sum, as a testimony of brotherly sympathy, and cordiality to the cause, in which your honourable *corps* in the east are engaged.”¹⁷ In doing so, he hoped that he would “induce others, even in the establishment, to do the same, and on a larger scale.”¹⁸ As to his own collection, he was disappointed at the result of his efforts. He had hoped to raise at least £20, but he “only got £15.16.7.”¹⁹ However, he thought Ryland should be encouraged by an expectation of “assistance from every quarter for it is the common cause of Christianity.”²⁰ Subsequent events proved Scott correct. Christians from all around England rallied in support of the BMS, and the response was so overwhelming that, according to Francis Cox, “the entire sum required on account of the fire, was raised in the short space of *fifty days*.”²¹ Cox also recounted hearing Andrew Fuller report to the BMS General Committee that “so constantly are the contributions pouring in from all parties, in and out of the denomination, that I think we must in honesty publish an intimation that the whole deficiency for which we appealed to

¹⁵For an account of the disaster, see Francis Augustus Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society from 1792 to 1842* (London: T. Ward, 1842), 1:213–20. For the context in which the fire took place see, Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792–1992* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 36–39.

¹⁶Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:216.

¹⁷Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 5, 1812, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 5, 1812, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 5, 1812, Scott Family Correspondence.

²⁰Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., October 5, 1812, Scott Family Correspondence.

²¹Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:220.

them is removed.”²² Just how influential Scott had been in garnering some of this support is impossible to determine, but he had been a part of one of the most significant events in BMS history. As Cox has observed, “the greatest advantage [of the Serampore fire] was the powerful impulse given to the mission, by rendering it more generally known, and producing a simultaneous feeling of interest in all denominations.”²³

The London Missionary Society

For a few years in the early 1790s, the BMS was the only evangelical missions society available to Scott. That all changed, however, in 1795 when the LMS was organized by representatives of several denominations, including the Church of England. Scott’s relationship with the LMS is an intriguing component of his evangelicalism. Some aspects of this relationship have already been raised in previous chapters. On one hand, he had been a vocal critic of the LMS missionary strategy and had refused to join the Society on that account. On the other, he had been an ally when the *Duff* had been captured, and he had maintained a cordial correspondence with Joseph Hardcastle when the CMS was exploring the possibility of sending out German missionaries. Additionally, the same sermon Scott preached to collect funds for missions, mentioned in the last section in reference to the Baptists, also benefitted the LMS. However, as was the case with the BMS, he was not a regular subscriber to the LMS, either at the time of its founding or in subsequent years.²⁴ Thus, Scott’s involvement with the BMS closely paralleled his participation in the LMS. However, there was one major difference between Scott’s role in the LMS and his work with the BMS—he was one of the keynote

²²Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:220.

²³Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:220.

²⁴I checked the LMS Annual Reports for the years 1815–1819 and 1821, and Scott’s name was absent from them all. Through an e-mail correspondence, Sujana Nadanwar, of the SOAS Library at the University of London, explained to me that she had “been unable to find any records relating to Thomas Scott within the LMS annual reports or any part of the collection” (Sujana Nadanwar, e-mail message to Timothy Scott, February 8, 2017).

speakers at the 1804 LMS annual meeting.

The Decision to Preach for the LMS

Scott's willingness to speak at the LMS annual meeting in 1804 is an important indication of Scott's evangelical propensities, especially when considered in light of Thomas Robinson's 1802 letter to Scott about irregularity.²⁵ Robinson had chided Scott for preaching at Surrey Chapel, and the letter indicated that Scott had promised to stop the practice. Surrey Chapel had long been closely associated with the LMS and had repeatedly hosted the LMS annual meetings. Rowland Hill preached a sermon for the first general meeting of the Society there in 1795, and "the contributions of the Surry [sic] Chapel congregation to the cause of missions were immense; and the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society, which took place within its walls, was one of the most striking sights of the kind to be seen in the metropolis."²⁶ Therefore, preaching at the LMS annual meeting would seemingly have been inconsistent with Scott's prior promise to Robinson to end his irregular preaching. However, the title page of Scott's published sermon reveals that Scott preached to the LMS at St. Saviour's Church in Southwark, not at the Surrey Chapel.²⁷ Thus, when Scott preached for the Society, he did so at an Anglican church and could not have properly been accused of irregularity. That the better

²⁵This letter was treated at length in chapter 4.

²⁶Edwin Sidney, *The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M.* 4th ed. (London: Seeley, Burside, and Seeley, 1844), 160.

²⁷Thomas Scott, *A Call to Prayer for the Sending Forth of Labourers* (London: L. B. Seeley, [1804?]), title page. The church was probably the church that is today known as Southwark Cathedral. In 1896, the *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* gave a description of some of the old offices the LMS had utilized in its early days. In its depiction of Joseph Hardcastle's office, the *Chronicle* explained that "in the early years of the century [i.e., the nineteenth century], before the present London Bridge was built, and before most useful, but very ugly, steamboats appeared on the river, the view must have been much more pleasing. The principle feature in it is St. Saviour's Church on the other side of the river" (Henry Morris, "A Memorable Room," *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* 52 [April 1896]: 75–76). Southwark Cathedral's website describes the building as being "situated on the south bank of the River Thames close to London Bridge," a description that fits the language of the *Chronicle* perfectly ("Visit Us," Southwark Cathedral, accessed April 30, 2017, <http://cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/visit/>). The larger building would have been suitable for the large gathering of the LMS.

part of those in attendance were Dissenters did not change this fact, and the setting for his sermon allowed him both to maintain his allegiance to the Church of England and also to promote the cause of a fellow evangelical institution.

Nevertheless, the opening portion of the sermon contains hints that Scott was aware that his presence at a major LMS gathering might raise a few questions among his Anglican friends, and he argued that he did “not at all act inconsistently with [his] more immediate relation to another society, formed for the same pious and benevolent purposes.”²⁸ He admitted that he had been asked, “Why preach for both societies?”²⁹ His answer was that it was “for the same reason, that I would preach for both the Westminster Infirmary and St. George’s Hospital (contiguous charities, both for the same purposes) because both are needful and useful and entitled to support.”³⁰ He also made his evangelical motives clear, “I do not come to urge subscriptions, but to recommend the general cause of missions, and of this society in particular, as standing forward in that cause: and to intreat at least the assistance of your fervent prayers.”³¹ He stressed that his support for missionary societies other than the CMS was consistent with both his personal principles and those of the CMS. He did so by quoting at length his own comments from his CMS sermon and by quoting the CMS *Account* in those places where the respective documents called for “amicably striving together for the faith of the gospel” and for missionary societies to act as friends and not competitors.³²

Perhaps the most revealing part of his rationale for speaking for the LMS came immediately after these quotations from his CMS sermon and the CMS *Account*. At this

²⁸Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 4.

²⁹Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 4.

³⁰Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 4.

³¹Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 4–5.

³²Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 5–6.

moment, he made a statement that expressed his guiding principle for participating in missionary societies:

In general, the interest of a charitable or pious institution, properly speaking, is the power possessed by that society of glorifying God, and doing good to men: and if good can be more advantageously done by another society, it is equally entitled to assistance and support; and the wise and benevolent will countenance all, in proportion as likely to be useful, and none in opposition to the rest.³³

The key statement in this paragraph is that “the wise and benevolent will countenance all, in proportion as likely to be useful,” and from these words it becomes plain that Scott took something of a pragmatic approach to his missionary engagements. When confronted with multiple causes that might be judged “good,” Scott believed that a person should decide which of those causes would benefit most by that person’s contribution and then support that cause. However, support of this kind does not necessarily mean that the person who has chosen to expend resources in one society is opposed to the work of others. In this way, his participation with the LMS was consistent with “countenancing all” and showing no “opposition to the rest.”

An Overview of His LMS Sermon

The main subject of the sermon was the lack of available missionaries, especially English missionaries, which was a problem that had plagued both the CMS and the LMS. By 1804, both societies had looked to Germany for missionaries to send overseas; and while the LMS had fared better than the CMS in finding English missionaries, both organizations were discouraged by the lack of homegrown volunteers. Scott sought to encourage LMS supporters not only to pray, but to anticipate, on the basis of biblical prophecy, that God would soon send numerous missionaries into the world. The sermon was based on Luke 10:2, where Jesus instructed his disciples to pray for laborers to be sent into the harvest. The overall exposition of the text was fairly

³³Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 7.

straightforward and dealt with the “largeness of the harvest, the small number of labourers, [and] the duty and efficacy of prayer in this behalf.”³⁴ Some parts of the sermon rested on Scott’s opinion that the modern missionary movement was part of the fulfillment of millennial prophecies in Scripture.³⁵ Other sections dealt with the theme of a true missionary spirit.³⁶ However, his main concern was prayer. In emphasizing prayer, he argued:

And he, who prays constantly and earnestly, for the success of missionary designs, and that the Lord would furnish missionaries, and prosper their labours, will be found a more valuable friend to the cause, than he who gives money or his time; nay, than he who preaches sermons, and writes books to promote it, if he do not also unite with them his fervent prayers.³⁷

This statement was consistent not only with the way Scott had ended his CMS sermon in 1801, it also corresponded with his own practice of praying for missions in his family worship. His conclusion was also fitting to his own relationship with the various missionary societies in existence at the time, as he called on his hearers to “join your efforts at least with some of our societies; and let us have your prayers for them all.”³⁸

The British and Foreign Bible Society

In the same year Scott preached before the LMS, a new society began that was to be very dear to his heart. Indeed, the BFBS is not expressly a missionary society in the traditional sense, seeing as it was more concerned with the printing and circulation of Bibles than the sending of missionaries or planting churches. However, Bible distribution has always been an important component of the missionary task since biblical literacy is vital to Christian discipleship. Supporting a Bible society was only natural for a man like

³⁴Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 13–14.

³⁵Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 14–19.

³⁶Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 25–28.

³⁷Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 29.

³⁸Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 34.

Scott, who had devoted thirty-some years to writing and revising a Bible commentary for use in evangelical homes. From the time of his conversion onwards, his desire had always been for people to read, study, and understand the Bible; and the BFBS provided an opportunity for him to realize part of this goal. What may not be expected, given his limited involvement in the BMS and LMS, was the extent to which he enthusiastically supported the BFBS. From its beginnings in 1804, he focused considerable energy in promoting the BFBS, energy that was only surpassed by his work with the CMS.

His Role in Founding the Bible Society

Part of the reason for his heightened fervor was his own role in the founding of the Society. The published histories of the BFBS trace its conceptual genesis back to the year 1787, when there was a “scarcity of Welsh Bibles in the Principality.”³⁹ According to John Owen’s account, “a Clergyman in London” had written to another minister in Wales on May 15, 1787, saying, “In consequence of what you wrote concerning *the scarcity of Bibles*, I have received twenty-five from the Society for distributing Bibles among the soldiers and sailors, &c. Besides this, I am collecting money to send you some more, which I buy of the SPCK; *who alone in London have got any Welsh Bibles*.”⁴⁰ John Scott has identified this London clergyman as Thomas Scott.⁴¹ John Scott’s account includes a longer portion of his father’s letter to his Welsh counterpart, which shows that his father was “collecting money to send [him] a hundred [Bibles].”⁴² According to

³⁹John Owen, *The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Tilling & Hughes, 1816), 1:2. See also George Browne, *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society: From Its Institution in 1804, to the Close of Its Jubilee in 1854* (London, 1859), 1:3–4.

⁴⁰Owen, *Origin and First Ten Years*, 1:3.

⁴¹John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks: Including a Narrative Drawn Up by Himself and Copious Extracts of His Letters*, 6th ed. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 262.

⁴²Quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 264.

another letter, dated June 11, 1787, the elder Scott ended up sending a total of one hundred and twenty-five Bibles to Wales.⁴³ However, Scott had bigger plans, plans of raising the money to send another thousand Welsh Bibles to his correspondent. Sadly, after almost a year of inquiry, he wrote of his failed plans on April 30, 1788:

I have delayed so long to write, in hopes of sending you some good tidings about the Welsh Bibles; but *alas! I have only waited for a disappointment*. There was a prospect of obtaining, through the assistance of another Society, and with the help of Mr. T[hornton]'s purse, no less a number than 1000; but *the Society* (viz. the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) *refuses to part with more than 500*, and those at a price which altogether makes 5s. 6d. each. *This has entirely defeated the design*, as far as I am concerned in it.⁴⁴

Though his grand design may have been defeated, Scott's determination to assist his Welsh brethren was not. Evidence to this end can be seen in another letter Scott wrote to his Welsh friend on February 24, 1789. In this letter, he reported that his friend would "receive, as soon as they can be got ready and sent, another cargo of Bibles, one hundred to give away, at Mr. Thornton's expense, and the other two or three hundred to sell."⁴⁵ He added, "I believe that the whole impression of Welsh Bibles is now nearly exhausted; and I would be thankful that the Lord has made me, almost without any thought of it, an instrument of bringing a considerable number out of the warehouses, to be disseminated where they were wanted."⁴⁶

In the aftermath of Scott's efforts to send Bibles to Wales, other clergyman made attempts to have the SPCK publish ten thousand more copies of a Welsh edition of the Bible, but the SPCK deemed the initial calls for a new publication economically unfeasible. The continued demand for the Bibles eventually led to the SPCK approving, in 1796, the publication of the requested ten thousand copies of the Welsh Bible and an

⁴³Quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 264.

⁴⁴Quoted in Owen, *Origin and First Ten Years*, 1:4.

⁴⁵Quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 267.

⁴⁶Quoted in Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 267.

additional two thousand copies of the New Testament, but the order was not filled until 1799.⁴⁷ When the new Bibles were finally printed, the demand far exceeded the supply. John Scott reported that his father was able to procure “eight or nine hundred copies of the whole Bible” at this time, but the latter’s final letter to his Welsh corresponded claimed that “the demand has already so far exceeded the impression, that each person is put off with fewer than he applied for, and thought he had secured.”⁴⁸

Despite the evident demand for more copies of the Welsh Bible, the SPCK declined further solicitations to print further copies after its supply was exhausted. The SPCK’s unwillingness to keep up with the calls for additional Bibles prompted a number of evangelical clergymen and laymen to explore other avenues of publication and distribution. Owen credits a Baptist minister named Joseph Hughes (1769–1833) with making the suggestion of taking “such steps as might be likely to stir up the public mind to a *general* dispersion of the Scriptures” in the course of several meetings involving the Committee of the Religious Tract Society, which was concerned with the lack of Bibles in Wales and in other parts of the world.⁴⁹ Hughes proposed that a Society be established that would meet “the demands of Wales and the necessities of our own country,” but he also stressed that the new organization “be comprehensive enough to embrace within its range and scope the entire world.”⁵⁰ Hughes’s suggestion ultimately led to the formation of the BFBS in 1804.

His Friends in the Bible Society

Scott cannot be properly identified as one of the BFBS’s founders. He had left London for Aston Sandford by that time and was not involved in the meetings of the

⁴⁷Owen, *Origin and First Ten Years*, 1:10.

⁴⁸Scott, *Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott*, 268.

⁴⁹Owen, *Origin and First Ten Years*, 17.

⁵⁰Brown, *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 5.

Religious Tract Society. Nevertheless, BFBS historians have consistently traced the Society's roots to Scott, and this fact alone demonstrates that a kindred spirit existed between himself and the Society's founders. However, his ties to the BFBS were more extensive than just a common goal. Importantly, some of his friends either played key advisory roles to those who founded the Society or were among its officers. For example, William Wilberforce and Charles Grant were consulted for advice prior to the Society's founding, and Charles Steinkopff and Josiah Pratt were elected as co-secretaries.⁵¹ Additionally, the BFBS General Committee contained a number of Scott's friends and several prominent Evangelical Anglicans, including Thomas Babington, Charles Grant, Joseph Hardcastle (a non-Anglican friend), Zachary Macaulay, Granville Sharp, and William Wilberforce.⁵²

The presence of his friends in the government of the BFBS emboldened Scott to take a more active role in this Society than he had in others, and the strong presence of Anglicans in the Society would have had the same effect. According to George Brown, "it was determined that the Committee should consist exclusively of laymen; that of the thirty-six Members, to which number it was limited, six should be foreigners, resident or near the metropolis; and the remaining thirty, one half should be members of the Established Church, and the other half members of other Christian denominations."⁵³ Assuming that the fifteen members who were of other Christian denominations were distributed among Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and the like, the Church of England necessarily had more representatives than any other denomination on the governing board. Additionally, Josiah Pratt proposed that members of the clergy would

⁵¹Brown, *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 5, 11. Joseph Hughes was also elected as one of the secretaries. Having three secretaries was intended to have the Church of England, dissenters, and foreign Christians all represented in the governing body. John Owen, the Society's historian, later replaced Pratt as the Anglican secretary.

⁵²Brown, *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 13.

⁵³Brown, *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 12.

be able to “vote in the Committee, on the terms which made them Members of the Society; a provision which, while it concealed their names, recognized their privileges and retained their co-operation.”⁵⁴ By having a Society that was officially run by laymen, of whom a majority were members of the Church of England, and by allowing Anglican clergymen to participate in an inter-denominational religious organization without excessive public exposure, the BFBS had ensured that Evangelical Anglicans would participate in larger numbers than was the case with the LMS. Scott took advantage of this favorable ecclesiastical situation and rendered more direct service to the BFBS than he had previously to the BMS or the LMS. As his son later wrote, the BFBS “shared his warmest attachment, and its success afforded him the most unfeigned joy.”⁵⁵

His Fiscal Support for the Bible Society

The first indication that Scott felt more comfortable helping the BFBS was his willingness to contribute financially to the BFBS on a regular basis. Strangely, the first annual BFBS report does not list Scott as an annual subscriber, although it does list him as the sending agent of a donation from “C.B.” in the amount of £10.⁵⁶ A gift of £10 was considerably more than the customary £1 individual subscription sent by most of the Society’s supporters and therefore may represent a collection of subscriptions, including Scott’s (if he sent one that year). However, it could also have been a donation by an individual who wished to remain anonymous. If the latter explanation is correct, his failure to contribute in the Society’s first year remains a mystery. What is clear is that Scott was an annual contributor in the year 1806, and subsequent reports show him

⁵⁴Brown, *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 12.

⁵⁵Scott, *Life of Thomas Scott*, 386.

⁵⁶“Subscribers and Benefactors,” in *The First Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1805*, vol. 1 of *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Stanhope and Tilling, 1808), 62.

giving regularly.⁵⁷ As late as 1818, he is listed among the annual subscribers, but verifying his contributions in the last years of his life is difficult because later BFBS reports tended to leave out individual subscription records in favor of including auxiliary society reports.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the Buckinghamshire Auxiliaries, including the one at the Vale of Aylesbury to which Scott belonged, sent in a combined £200 in 1820, the year before Scott died.⁵⁹ The Vale of Aylesbury alone contributed £120 in 1821.⁶⁰ If Scott was still sending in his subscription in these late stages of his life, it was likely included in the auxiliary totals. While his financial donations to the BFBS indicate a higher degree of involvement in the Society than what he had done for the BMS and the LMS, those gifts were just one of several differences in his level of support for the BFBS vis-à-vis other evangelical societies.

His Office in the Bible Society

Another indication of Scott's pronounced activity with respect to the BFBS was his readiness to hold a formal office within the Society. The position he held in the Society was not as prominent as his role as the Secretary of the CMS had been, nor would it have been as demanding. In the year 1815, the Vale of Aylesbury Auxiliary Bible

⁵⁷"Subscribers and Benefactors," in *The Second Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1806*, vol. 1 of *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Stanhope & Tilling, 1808), 245. See also "Subscribers and Benefactors," in *The Third Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1807*, in *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Stanhope & Tilling, 1808), li; "Subscribers and Benefactors," in *The Fourth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1808*, vol. 1 of *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Stanhope & Tilling, 1808), lviii.

⁵⁸"List of Contributors to the Parent Society," in *The Fourteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Tilling & Hughes, 1818), [14]. The page number represents the page in the contributors list and has been supplied since there are no page numbers in the original source.

⁵⁹"Account of Remittances from Auxiliary Societies in England," in *The Sixteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1820*, vol. 7 of *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: J. Tilling, 1821), c.

⁶⁰"Account of Remittances from Auxiliary Societies in England," in *The Seventeenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1821*, vol. 7 of *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: J. Tilling, 1821), xciii.

Society was formed near Aston Sandford. The auxiliary's beginning must have been rather humble. The 1815 annual BFBS report only listed one officer, the Rev. Frederick Spring, who was the Auxiliary Secretary, and no contributions were reported for that year.⁶¹ Spring's time as the Aylesbury Secretary was necessarily limited, however, as he was a chaplain for the East India Company in Madras, India.⁶² By 1816, Spring was unable to continue as Secretary; and at the auxiliary's first anniversary meeting, it was resolved that Scott "be requested to accept the office of Secretary of this Institution."⁶³ Though the report does not record it, he must have accepted as the published version lists him as holding the office.

Scott's burdens as Auxiliary Secretary would have been minimal, and he does not mention any details about them in his letters. The "Laws and Regulations" of the Vale of Aylesbury Auxiliary only required three members of the Committee, which consisted of "the Treasurer, Secretary and twelve Lay-Members," to be present at any time to conduct business.⁶⁴ In terms of meetings, the rules only required five formal meetings throughout the year, "a General Meeting [to] be held annually" and a Committee meeting on "the first Thursday after each Quarter Day."⁶⁵ Thus, his secretarial duties would not have been a tremendous drain on his time, which he had more of anyway since the last of his missionary students had left him in late 1814. The only other responsibility he would have had was the collection of annual subscriptions, which was the stated responsibility

⁶¹"Auxiliary Societies," in *The Eleventh Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1815*, vol. 3 of *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: J. Tilling, 1815), 524.

⁶²Frederick Spring's participation in the BFBS was natural because he was involved in language study in India, and he was the author of a Malayalam grammar. See Frank Penny, *The Church in Madras* (London: John Murray, 1922), 3:235.

⁶³"Proceedings of the First Anniversary Meeting of the Vale of Aylesbury Auxiliary Bible Society," in *The First Report of the Committee of the Vale of Aylesbury Auxiliary Bible Society to Which is Added the Speech of the Rev. Thomas Scott* (Aylesbury: J. H. Marshall, 1816), 4.

⁶⁴"Laws and Regulations," in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 23.

⁶⁵"Laws and Regulations," in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 24.

of the Treasurer and the Secretary.⁶⁶ Despite the part-time nature of the job, Scott did not remain in his post for very long. While the BFBS annual report for 1817 did not contain a list of the auxiliary officers, the report for 1818 did, and the Aylesbury Secretary is listed as the Rev. S. Mathews rather than Thomas Scott.⁶⁷ Therefore, Scott's service in this role could not have lasted more than two years.

His Visits to the Bible Society

Another indication of Scott's active role in the BFBS was his participation in several different BFBS annual meetings. The earliest mention of his attendance at one of these BFBS meetings is in a letter he wrote to Josiah Pratt, on April 27, 1812, in which Scott disclosed that his going to the annual meeting of the Bible Society would "prevent my presence at the anniversary of our Society."⁶⁸ Later that same year, he was invited to deliver a speech at the first anniversary meeting of the High Wycombe Auxiliary Bible Society, which met approximately thirteen miles to the southeast of Aston Sandford. Scott's speech on this occasion was subsequently published in the auxiliary's annual report.⁶⁹ During the ensuing spring, he attended the annual meeting of the Uxbridge Auxiliary.⁷⁰ In a letter to Ryland, dated April 28, 1813, Scott described the Uxbridge meeting as "truly animating."⁷¹ Two admirals had spoken at the meeting, including Lord James Gambier (1756–1833). Scott was impressed with both speakers, and he told Ryland that they both had spoken "in a manner so genuinely Christian, that I could not

⁶⁶"Laws and Regulations," in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 24.

⁶⁷"Auxiliary Societies," in *Fourteenth Report*, 269.

⁶⁸Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

⁶⁹For Scott's speech, see "The First Annual Meeting of the High Wycombe Auxiliary Bible Society," in *The First Report of the Auxiliary Bible Society of High Wycombe* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1812), 16–24 [hereafter cited as "Speech at High Wycombe"].

⁷⁰Uxbridge is located in West London, approximately thirty miles southeast of Aston Sandford.

⁷¹Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., April 28, 1813, Scott Family Correspondence.

but admire it.”⁷² The final example of Scott’s involvement at annual BFBS meetings is that of the 1816 meeting of the Vale of Aylesbury Auxiliary mentioned above. At that meeting, he was the keynote speaker in addition to being elected Secretary.⁷³ Significantly, his speeches at High Wycombe and Aylesbury were published, and both speeches contain information related to his handling of the Evangelical Anglican tension.

His Defense of the Bible Society

Of the two speeches, the speech at the High Wycombe Auxiliary is of special importance as its contents were partly a response to an attack on the BFBS by Dr. Herbert Marsh (1757–1839), who was the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. On November 11, 1811, Dr. Marsh addressed the Senate of the University of Cambridge and spoke out against a proposal to start a new BFBS auxiliary at Cambridge.⁷⁴ In a calm but resolute tone, he criticized the participation of Anglican clergyman in the Bible Society and argued that members of the Church of England should only support the SPCK. His chief complaint was that the funds of the BFBS “are employed in the distribution of Bibles *only*, whereas the funds of the [SPCK] are employed partly on Bibles, partly on Prayer-Books, and partly on Religious Tracts, which are in unison with the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church.”⁷⁵ He was concerned that simply handing out Bibles without accompanying literature from the Church of England would have an adverse effect on uniformity of worship and inadvertently promote English Dissent. Marsh was clear that Dissenters had “full liberty to distribute Bibles, either alone, or accompanied

⁷²Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., April 28, 1813, Scott Family Correspondence.

⁷³Scott, “The Speech of the Rev. T. Scott,” in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 27–36.

⁷⁴The address was published by Cambridge Auxiliary Bible Society in 1812. See “Appendix,” in *A Report of the Formation of the Cambridge Auxiliary Bible Society*, ed. William Farish (Cambridge: Francis Hodson, 1812), 56–60. I have been unable to locate the publishing details of the original, and the Cambridge Auxiliary report describes it as a “printed paper.” The WorldCat bibliography information for this paper references the Cambridge Auxiliary report cited here.

⁷⁵“Appendix,” in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 56.

with such Religious Tracts, as they may think proper” and for this purpose to establish “a Society consisting *solely* of Dissenters.”⁷⁶ However, he questioned whether it was “prudent” for Churchmen “to *augment* the power of such a Society, by throwing into its scale the weight of the *Establishment*,” and he urged Churchmen to “give the *whole* of their influence to the *ancient* Bible Society [i.e., the SPCK]” because “they [would] *retain* the strength of the Established Church within its *own* channel, and thus contribute to *preserve* it.”⁷⁷

Additionally, Marsh was suspicious of the motives of Dissenters in joining with English Churchmen in the BFBS:

The Dissenters, however well affected in *other* respects, *cannot* be well affected to the Church, or they would not be Dissenters from it. Their *interests* in respect to religion are different from ours, and therefore *must* lead them a *different way*: and though we know from experience, that they can combine for the purpose of *opposing* the Church, it would be contrary both to experience, and to the common principles of human action, to expect their co-operation, if the object in view was the *interest* of the Church.⁷⁸

His view seems to be that Dissenters were by nature enemies of the Church of England; and though it was certainly reasonable to “tolerate” Dissenters, Churchmen should definitely “not *encourage*” them.⁷⁹ In keeping with this perspective, he concluded that “the very *constitution* of the modern Bible Society gives an importance to the Dissenting interest, which otherwise it would never have obtained, and consequently brings a fresh accession of the danger to the Established Church.”⁸⁰

Marsh’s criticism was obviously directed against Anglican members of the BFBS, and the latter certainly took notice. The weight given to Marsh’s *Address* in the

⁷⁶“Appendix,” in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 59.

⁷⁷“Appendix,” in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 59.

⁷⁸“Appendix,” in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 59.

⁷⁹“Appendix,” in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 59.

⁸⁰“Appendix,” in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 60.

Evangelical community can be partly gauged by the appending of his criticisms to the Cambridge Auxiliary's report, which stated that its inclusion was necessary because so many of the speeches made in behalf of the auxiliary referenced the document.⁸¹ The Cambridge Auxiliary also felt the need to publish a response to the *Address* written by Nicholas Vansittart (1766–1851), who was then the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Parliament.⁸² Marsh subsequently countered the speeches made by the Cambridge Auxiliary's supporters and Vansittart's letter in a number of publications and thereby started a letter, pamphlet, and book war between Marsh and his opponents.⁸³ Probably the most significant work to come out in the battle was Marsh's *Inquiry into the Consequences of Neglecting the Prayer Book*, which was a lengthy elaboration on the ideas he had previously stated in his *Address*.⁸⁴ Charles Simeon, whose close association with King's College at Cambridge and personal membership in the Cambridge Auxiliary Bible Society led him to be concerned with the matter, later dubbed the fallout of Marsh's *Address* as the "Marshian controversy."⁸⁵

In the midst of the controversy, Scott was called on to speak at the first anniversary of the High Wycombe Bible Auxiliary. Given the amount of space afforded to issues related to Marsh's attacks in his speech, one wonders if Scott was specifically

⁸¹"Appendix," in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 56.

⁸²"Appendix," in *Report of the Cambridge Auxiliary*, 61–64.

⁸³For a number of the primary sources involved in this controversy, see *The Pamphleteer*, vol. 1, no. 1 (London: A. J. Valpy, 1813). This resource contains Marsh's sermon on the BFBS, his *Address* at Cambridge, and Vansittart's two letters to Marsh. See also *The Pamphleteer*, vol. 1, no. 2 (London: A. J. Valpy, 1813). This source contains Marsh's answer to Vansittart's two letters to him on the subject of the BFBS.

⁸⁴Herbert Marsh, *An Inquiry into the Consequences of Neglecting to Give the Prayer Book with the Bible Interspersed with Remarks on Some Late Speeches at Cambridge and Other Important Matter Relative to the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 4th ed. (London: Law & Gilbert, 1812).

⁸⁵See Charles Simeon, *Dr. Marsh's Fact: Or, A Congratulatory Address to the Church-Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: James Hodson, 1813), 3.

asked to speak on the subject.⁸⁶ Either way, he addressed the topic in a manner which indicated that Marsh's objections hardly bothered him. At this time in his life, Scott was fairly comfortable both in his relationship to the Church of England and in his friendships with evangelical brothers of other denominations, and so he displayed a bit of playfulness as he began his reply to Marsh: "As a member, and now for above forty years a minister, of the established church, I may be supposed to have some predilection for her."⁸⁷ His lighthearted style continued as he addressed Marsh's primary concern that the Bible be distributed without the Prayer Book:

If the circulation of any other book, except the Bible, was thought likely to subvert the church of England, I should firmly discountenance the circulation: but, if the dispersion of the *word of God* ALONE, tend to subvert the church, then let it be subverted!⁸⁸

Judging from his language here, Scott must have thought Marsh's main objection to the BFBS to be utterly ridiculous. Nevertheless, he maintained enough composure to address the objection at more length, and his argument proceeded along several lines.

First, he argued that support for the BFBS did not prohibit those attached to the Church of England from distributing Prayer Books. To make this point, he compared the Bible Society to "a number of persons [who] form a coal-shed for supplying poor persons with fuel alone."⁸⁹ When people do something like that, he asked, "Do they exclude themselves from giving away bread, shoes, or clothes?"⁹⁰ The answer was obvious, as was the application. A member of the Church of England did not exclude himself from giving away a Prayer Book because he was part of a society that only distributed Bibles.

⁸⁶Almost sixty percent of the speech deals with objections to the BFBS, and Dr. Marsh is the only one explicitly named.

⁸⁷Scott, "Speech at High Wycombe," 18.

⁸⁸Scott, "Speech at High Wycombe," 18.

⁸⁹Scott, "Speech at High Wycombe," 19.

⁹⁰Scott, "Speech at High Wycombe," 19.

In fact, Scott argued that the opposite had been the case and that there was no proof that the rise of the BFBS had resulted in less distribution of the Prayer Book: “I ask, again, have fewer Prayer Books, in point of fact, been dispersed since the establishment of the Bible Society than were before? Have not more, far more than previously, been dispersed in the same number of years?”⁹¹ He answered his own question, “I answer, without fear of confutation, that far more have been dispersed.”⁹²

Having rejected the notion that membership in the BFBS would harm efforts at distributing the Prayer Book, he turned the objection on its head to show that Dissenters in the BFBS could make the same protest, only in their own behalf, by asking rhetorically, “Have the various denominations of Dissenters no favourite books or pamphlets, in which they suppose the principles they severally hold, and hold as the reason for their dissenting to be clearly stated or proved?”⁹³ An answer in the affirmative was obvious, and so he asked another question to prove his point:

Yet do not they recede (not indeed the liberty of dispersing them but) from the expectation of procuring them with their Bibles from the same society, in order to unite with their brethren in one grand design, of furnishing the inhabitants of the land and of the globe, with the word of God? Do *they*, in conceding this, fear the subversion of *their* several bodies?⁹⁴

The implication was that it was strange for the Church of England to fear subversion when Dissenters, who faced the same possible outcome, had no fear of this kind. He also reminded the audience that “the Dissenters give up even more than we of the Church of England, in supporting the home department of the Bible Society” since “it is well known that our present authorized translation was made by bishops and divines of the

⁹¹Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 19.

⁹²Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 19.

⁹³Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 19.

⁹⁴Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 19.

established church, and that it is, in every way, *our* translation.”⁹⁵ If Dissenters were willing to make concessions of this kind and agree “to leave all their own peculiarities at the door of those buildings in which the meetings of the Society are held . . . shall we alone determine not to enter, unless we may bring our peculiar sentiments along with us, to clog and retard the motions of the Society?”⁹⁶ If the Church of England required more of the Dissenters than it required of itself, its behavior would be disgraceful. As Scott himself put it, “My friends, let us be ashamed of a conduct so derogatory to the honour of that church to which we belong.”⁹⁷

At this point in the speech, he changed his method of argumentation from rhetorical questioning to arguing by analogy. In his first analogy, he compared his approach to the Bible Society to a fire brigade:

When a fire takes place, and threatens to spread its devastations, and persons offer their assistance to work the engines and to stop its progress, we do not previously inquire concerning their religious principles, before we allow them to assist. My brethren, sin is the fire, the destructive ravages of which prevail all over the world, with the most tremendous effects. The word of God is the grand means of extinguishing this fire.⁹⁸

On the basis of this analogy, he called for “all [to] join hand and heart in giving efficacy and extent to its salutary operations.”⁹⁹ However, he must have recognized that his analogy had limitations. Would he have been willing to ignore all religious principles in order to cooperate with others? The answer to this question is almost immediately answered as he added, “Let us go together *as far as ever we can consistently with our conscience*, in these united efforts.”¹⁰⁰ He stayed on this subject as he transitioned into his

⁹⁵Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 19.

⁹⁶Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 19–20.

⁹⁷Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 20.

⁹⁸Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 20.

⁹⁹Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 20.

¹⁰⁰Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 20 (emphasis added).

second analogy—one that has become familiar in this study—the military. Once again he called for Christians to “be as different regiments in the same army, not contending with each other, save which shall most distinguish itself against the common enemy.”¹⁰¹ These analogies are significant in that they demonstrated that Scott had rejected a fundamental assumption in Marsh’s reasoning, namely, that the prosperity of denominations outside the Church of England was inherently undesirable. To Scott, the spread of Christianity itself was more important than the maintenance and growth of the Church of England.

The remainder of Scott’s rejoinder to Marsh consisted of some clarification on some of the particulars of what Bible versions the BFBS utilized and the issue of the Bible Society’s place with respect to the SPCK. The former issue was minor and does not need discussing here. The latter, however, was something Evangelical churchmen felt a greater need to address. Opponents of the BFBS had argued that Anglicans should support the SPCK exclusively since it was exclusively an Anglican organization and that having a society in addition to the SPCK would reduce the SPCK’s effectiveness. Similar objections had been made to the idea of forming the CMS earlier, and some Anglicans had been concerned that a new society would impede the work of the SPG. In giving an answer to this complaint, Scott resorted once again to asking rhetorical questions and his line of reasoning was similar to what he had offered in defense of the CMS years earlier:

But I would merely ask, in this respect, have the resources of Bartlett’s Buildings Society been diminished or increased since the establishment of the Bible Society? Have its exertions been retarded or enlarged? To these several questions I answer, from ascertained facts, that its resources and exertions have been greatly increased; and I trust, its usefulness.¹⁰²

His argument was that the notion of the BFBS tapping into the resources of the SPCK was just an oft repeated fiction. He also pointed out that the SPCK was different than the BFBS on account of “the multiplicity of its objects, and the peculiarity of its constitution

¹⁰¹Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 20.

¹⁰²Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 21.

and circumstances.”¹⁰³ The chief difference, of course, was that the SPCK dealt in all kinds of materials related to religious education while the BFBS only distributed Bibles. The respective aims of these two societies was different enough that there was no danger of interfering with one another. As such, an individual could do no wrong by supporting one, or the other, or both. As Scott put it:

As far as the glory of God and the best interests of mankind are promoted by them, they are, either exclusively or along with others, entitled to support; but no further. And, if two Societies will do more to enlighten the world with ‘the light of life,’ than one would do, let there be two Societies; whatever becomes of the exclusive interests of either of them. And may God abundantly bless both.¹⁰⁴

Just how far this defense of the BFBS would have gone with a naysayer is hard to determine. He was speaking to a friendly audience who already supported the BFBS, so his approach might have been different had Marsh himself or another opponent been present. Admittedly, his fire brigade analogy was susceptible to scrutiny as an individual’s involvement in stopping a fire does not require any definitive religious views. No one would inquire about religious views in such a case because the task is not tied to religious activity. Furthermore, his appeals for the Church of England to be willing to set aside its peculiar beliefs in the same way that the Dissenters had done in the BFBS would have been unlikely to convince either, since the objection was to being a part of the union in the first place. Nevertheless, the present concern is not so much with the effectiveness or even the cogency of Scott’s arguments in the case against Marsh but with what his defense of the BFBS reveals about his approach to the Evangelical Anglican tension. In this respect, he is found to be once again thinking of different denominations as constituting different units in a single army. The overall success of the army was more important than the plaudits of a specific unit. He also reiterated his beliefs that Christian organizations are all entitled to support to the extent that they bring glory to God and that

¹⁰³Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 21.

¹⁰⁴Scott, “Speech at High Wycombe,” 22.

having a multiplicity of organizations is no cause for concern in light of the extensive task of spreading the gospel at home and abroad. By and large, he worried more about whether Christian missions was being done or not than about who was getting it done.

His Affection for the Bible Society

As this section on the BFBS comes to a close, something should be said about how much Scott loved the BFBS. He once described the BFBS, in the context of CMS matters, as “a most noble and almost *divine* coadjutor.”¹⁰⁵ In his speech before the Aylesbury Auxiliary, he made it clear that he saw the BFBS as a great unifying force in England:

In our land, the British and Foreign Bible Society, forms one central spot, in which the ministers and members of the Established Church, and all the different descriptions of Dissenters, may meet on friendly ground, and combine in one work of exalted piety and philanthropy, without giving up one tittle of their respective sentiments; and so learn to love, and bear with, and help one another; thus softening also the deplored asperities of religious controversy.¹⁰⁶

He also believed that the formation of BFBS auxiliaries would “excite the poor, to learn to read the book thus circulated among them, and parents, to get their children taught to read.”¹⁰⁷ His love for the Bible and his desire to see it made available to as many people as possible seems to have endeared him to the Bible Society to a greater degree than any other society, possibly even the CMS. Such seems to be the implication of some of his opening remarks at Aylesbury, when he said:

The different Missionary Societies, successively established, have all recognized and diffused the principle [of communicating the gospel to the world], and are acting extensively and decidedly upon it, with various measures of success. May that success be increased an hundred and a thousand fold, how much “soever it may be!” But I must here adopt the words of the Report, and say respecting them, and the British and Foreign Bible Society, “many daughters have done virtuously, but thou

¹⁰⁵Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

¹⁰⁶Scott, “The Speech of the Rev. T. Scott,” in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 34.

¹⁰⁷Scott, “The Speech of the Rev. T. Scott,” in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 34.

excelled them all.”¹⁰⁸

If that last sentence is in fact an admission that Scott prized the BFBS above all other missions agencies, then it is no wonder that he confessed to Josiah Pratt, that to the Bible Society, “I own I am wonderfully attached.”¹⁰⁹

The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews

The last evangelical agency to be considered in connection with Thomas Scott is the LSPCJ.¹¹⁰ This Society has never enjoyed the fame of the BMS, LMS, or the BFBS, but Scott paid a good deal of attention to its operations. The LSPCJ had its origins in early efforts made by the LMS to reach Jewish people in London. This work began at the instigation of a Christian Jew named Joseph Frey (1771–1850), who came to England in 1801 with the intention of going out as a foreign missionary under the LMS.¹¹¹ While he was in London, Frey recognized a need for evangelistic work among the Jews in the city, and he petitioned the LMS to allow him to stay in England and “devote himself to preaching the Gospel to his brethren.”¹¹² His request was granted; and in 1805, he started preaching to Jewish audiences and organized a school for Jewish children, a school which opened in 1807.¹¹³ However, the school soon floundered, and disagreements between

¹⁰⁸Scott, “The Speech of the Rev. T. Scott,” in *First Report of the Aylesbury Auxiliary*, 28.

¹⁰⁹Thomas Scott, Letter to Josiah Pratt, April 27, 1812, CMS Archive, CMS/G/AC 3/4/40.

¹¹⁰For a historical information pertaining to the LSPCJ, see [Hannah Adams?], *A Concise Account of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (Boston: John Eliot, 1816); W. T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews: From 1809 to 1908* (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1908); H. H. Norris, *The Origin, Progress, and Existing Circumstances, of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews: A Historical Inquiry* (London: J. Mawman, Ludgate-Hill, and W. Wetton, 1825). The Society still exists today, but its name has changed to “Church Ministry Among Jewish People” (CMJ).

¹¹¹Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 33. For an autobiographical account of Frey’s involvement with the LMS and subsequently the LSPCJ, see Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, *Narrative of the Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey*, 11th ed. (New York, 1834).

¹¹²Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 33.

¹¹³Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 33.

Frey and the LMS directors over funding and operational control gave rise to a rather testy and public struggle that ended with Frey leaving the LMS to start a new organization.¹¹⁴ In August of 1808, Frey and some of his friends created “The London Society for the Purpose of Visiting and Relieving the Sick and Distressed, and Instructing the Ignorant, Especially Such as are of the Jewish Nation.”¹¹⁵ A combination of LMS opposition and unrealistic objectives scuttled the Society in just a matter of months, but enough support remained for a Jewish mission within the doomed organization that its leaders reconstituted themselves as the LSPCJ on February 15, 1809.¹¹⁶

This new Society would prove more lasting than the LMS Jewish mission and Frey’s first London Society because the LSPCJ was focused exclusively on Jewish ministry. In addition to its singular purpose, the administrative structure contributed greatly to garnering widespread support from within the evangelical community. The Society’s government was inspired by that of the BFBS, which possessed directors from both the Church of England and English Dissent. Later historians bemoaned the decision to unite Anglicans and Dissenters in this project because the arrangement “necessarily contained within itself the germs of decay and dissolution.”¹¹⁷ Though an interdenominational administration had been a success for the BFBS, the same constitution would fail in the case of the LSPCJ because simply distributing Bibles was not intrinsically connected to ecclesiastical identification. The problem the members of the LSPCJ quickly discovered was that Jewish converts to Christianity needed to be baptized and united with a church, but what mode of baptism would be used and whose church would they attend? Further threatening the unity of the Society was the fact that

¹¹⁴See Norris, *Origin, Progress, and Existing Circumstances*, 10–19.

¹¹⁵Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 34.

¹¹⁶Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 34.

¹¹⁷Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 36.

the LSPCJ decided to build its own church in London in 1814, on a site that became known as “Palestine Place.” However, the church was consecrated as part of the Church of England, and consequently Dissenters were not allowed to conduct services there. Dissenting members of the Society became increasingly frustrated with their inability to function within the dictates of the organizational compact and eventually left the fold in early 1815, passing the Society entirely into Anglican hands.¹¹⁸

What is significant about the embedded instability of the LSPCJ’s structural framework was that Evangelical Anglicans held a majority stake in the Society’s leadership, and its membership ranks were filled with prominent Evangelicals. Among its members were William Goode, Nicholas Vansittart, William Wilberforce, Thomas Babington, Thomas Robinson, Charles Simeon, and Dr. Robert Hawker—essentially a “who’s-who” list of Evangelical Anglicans.¹¹⁹ The strong Anglican presence within the LSPCJ would have furnished Scott with little crisis of conscience in partnering with the Society, as had been the case with the BFBS. Consequently, his contributions to the LSPCJ paralleled closely those he made to the BFBS. Specifically, he rendered aid through financial giving, being a friend and advisor, preaching at Society events, and engaging in Jewish-Christian literary debates.

His Financial Contributions to the LSPCJ

In terms of finances, Scott became an annual subscriber very early on and continued his contributions right up to the end of his life.¹²⁰ His advisory role began in

¹¹⁸Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 46. It should be pointed out, given that this section of the dissertation is about Scott’s role in non-Anglican missions societies, that the majority of Scott’s contributions to the LSPCJ took place before 1815, while the Society was still an interdenominational entity.

¹¹⁹Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 36–37.

¹²⁰“Subscriptions,” in *Report of the Committee to the Second Half Yearly Meeting of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (London: J. D. Dewick, 1810), 55; “Appendix,” in *The Twelfth Report of the Committee of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (London: The Society, 1820), 20.

1810 when he agreed to be a corresponding member of the Society.¹²¹ This role was similar to that performed by the Country Members of the CMS whose job was to promote the mission of the LSPCJ in their own neighborhoods and to provide other assistance as needed. In 1810, he was still laboring as a CMS missionary trainer, so his efforts as a corresponding member would have been limited by other demands on his time. Tellingly, he never mentions his attachment to the LSPCJ in his CMS letters to Pratt, and it seems likely that he did not do much in the way of advertising the LSPCJ during those years.¹²² Scott did mention the LSPCJ in passing in an 1810 letter to Ryland, in which he complained of being “a good deal more hurried” on account of preparing his funeral sermon for Charles Barneth and for working on “a sermon to be preached before the London Society, for the poor Jews, on Wednesday Whitsun week.”¹²³ Thus, the clearest example of Scott publically supporting the LSPCJ as a corresponding member was the sermon he preached for the Society at its 1810 annual meeting. The sermon was later printed by the LSPCJ, and its insights into Scott’s views on missions, especially Jewish missions, warrants brief consideration here.¹²⁴

His Anniversary Sermon for the LSPCJ

Scott began his sermon by reflecting on what he had been called to do that day. He had been asked by the LSPCJ “to preach a Sermon and so to give my sanction to the undertaking and to solicit the concurrence and aid of my Christian brethren.”¹²⁵ Thus, his acceptance of the invitation can be seen as nothing less than a public endorsement of the

¹²¹Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 37.

¹²²The silence stands out when considered in light of Scott’s reference to the LMS, BMS, and BFBS in his letters to Pratt.

¹²³Thomas Scott, Letter to John Ryland, Jr., May 29, 1810, Scott Family Correspondence.

¹²⁴Thomas Scott, *The Jews a Blessing to the Nations, and Christians Bound to Seek Their Conversion to the Saviour* (London: F. Thorowgood, 1810).

¹²⁵Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 4.

Society, an endorsement he eagerly made. In underscoring his approval of the Society, he stated that he “could not allow any subordinate considerations to induce me to decline a service, so congenial to my views and feelings.”¹²⁶ He spoke nostalgically of praying for missions before there were missions societies and about his great surprise “that [he] should live to preach for three of these Societies.”¹²⁷ He added:

Two of these Societies I have already recommended to publick attention from the pulpit and the press, as far as my feeble testimony could be heard, and obtain regard: and with no less pleasure, cordiality, and gratitude, do I hail the institution of this Society, and embrace the opportunity of bearing my testimony in its behalf.¹²⁸

Admittedly, much of what Scott said in the opening portion of the sermon is reminiscent of comments he had made in his LMS sermon when he had also spoken of praying for missions before the advent of modern missionary societies. His statements about “cordiality” had been made in other contexts as well. However, these words should not quickly be dismissed as the niceties normally associated with public speaking. Rather, the repetitiveness of his words should be interpreted as an expression of Scott’s consistent position with regard to evangelical missions. He had long been a friend and advocate to the missionary cause, and he was predisposed to support any organization that was keen to bring the gospel to the world. His contemporaries recognized his passion as well, and the fact that three different missionary societies called on him to preach for their annual meetings most certainly indicates that he was considered one of the foremost missions advocates of his day.

Once he had finished his aside about his own part in the cause of missions, he turned to the subject of the sermon, which was based on Zechariah 8:23.¹²⁹ The choice of

¹²⁶Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 4–5.

¹²⁷Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 5–6.

¹²⁸Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 6.

¹²⁹Zechariah 8:23 says, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a

a prophetic text for a sermon about Jewish missions is intriguing. Like many of his contemporaries, Scott's involvement in missions was motivated in part by his understanding of eschatology, though he was fairly careful in not overly stressing the connection. In the first two points of his sermon, he argued that Zechariah's prophecy about the Gentiles coming to the Jews in a ten to one ratio had been fulfilled through the preaching of the gospel by the Jewish apostles and other Jewish Christians in the first century.¹³⁰ He also stressed the important role the Jews had had in producing both the Old and New Testaments.¹³¹ Thus, Gentiles owed a great debt to the Jewish people for giving them the gospel and the Scriptures, a debt that should be paid with attempts to reach unbelieving Jews.¹³²

Scott's third point, however, took a more eschatological turn. He argued that "a still more signal fulfilment of the prophecy in my text, will most certainly take place; and at no very remote period."¹³³ He asserted his belief that the Old Testament taught that "the nation of Israel, shall be restored from their dispersions, placed under the government of their promised Messiah, and (as far as I can judge) reinstated in their own land."¹³⁴ He saw the "extraordinary preservation of [Israel], as a separate people" to be "the effect of a peculiar interposition of Providence, reserving them thus distinct, for some special important purpose."¹³⁵ That purpose would be the ultimate fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. In making this case, he connected Jesus's assertion in Luke 21:24 that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be

Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (KJV).

¹³⁰Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 13–18.

¹³¹Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 18.

¹³²Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 18–24.

¹³³Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 24.

¹³⁴Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 24.

¹³⁵Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 27–28.

fulfilled” with the prophecy in Revelation 11:15, which speaks of the fulfillment of “the times” and “the conversion of the nations.”¹³⁶ He contended that when the “times of the Gentiles” came to an end, the Jewish people would once again be the instrument of bringing the nations to Christ, just as they had been in the first century. He described how the scattering of the Jews among the nations had allowed them to understand the languages and cultures of the people with whom they dwelt, making them ideal missionary candidates for those nations.¹³⁷ He then asked:

What then, do the scattered Jews want, in order to become suitable missionaries, already stationed in their respective places, and peculiarly qualified for the service? They want nothing but the knowledge of Christ, faith in him, and love to his name and cause, zeal for his glory, and love to their fellow sinners.¹³⁸

Scott reasoned that if Jews throughout the world would recognize Jesus as the Messiah, then there would instantly be “missionaries in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, even in Pagan and Mohammedan countries, and almost every nation, already in their places, and ready for their work.”¹³⁹

At this point, Scott’s eschatology and missions strategy met. He believed that “the bulk of [Israel], will after a time, be collected into their own land,” but he also thought that converted Jews would “be employed for the conversion of the nations where they reside.”¹⁴⁰ Logically, evangelizing the Jews themselves was a necessary prerequisite to this mass evangelism conducted by Jewish converts, and so he concluded his exposition by saying, “In attempting, therefore, the conversion of the Jews, we take the most effectual method of evangelizing the heathen, and of eventually promoting the grand end of all missionary attempts:—and this should never be lost sight of in our

¹³⁶Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 30.

¹³⁷Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 31.

¹³⁸Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 31–32.

¹³⁹Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 32.

¹⁴⁰Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 32.

reasonings on the important subject.”¹⁴¹ The implication of Scott’s eschatology, both stated and implied, was that the work of a society like the LSPCJ was the fulfillment of prophecy. In countering an objection that mission work among the Jews would counteract God’s purposes in judging the nation of Israel, he made some very telling remarks:

But, in fact, as far as prophecy is concerned, we are, not only not attempting to counteract the revealed purposes of God; but we are endeavoring to accomplish them, in the only unexceptionable way; even by obeying his explicit commandments. For it is evident, that the Jews will be converted to Christ, and that the time is at hand. None of us may live to see the accomplishment of this glorious event: but must no one plant an oak, because he cannot hope to see it become a full grown tree?¹⁴²

Based on these comments, it is no exaggeration to say that Scott genuinely believed that he was participating in fulfilling biblical prophecy by being involved in mission work, specifically Jewish mission work. He also possessed a sense of optimism, consistent with his post-millennial views of the end times, that global missions would soon usher in the Messianic Kingdom.

His Literary Support for the LSPCJ

In many ways, Scott had a unique relationship with the LSPCJ. Not only were his eschatological views a major reason for endorsing the Society’s mission, he was also involved directly in the Society’s evangelistic efforts themselves. Certainly, he had already been involved in missions work for a long time. After all, he practically ran the CMS for its first few years, and he spent several years of his life training missionaries. However, these tasks were support roles rather than field assignments. In other words, he had always been the missionary’s agent, not the missionary. Opportunity, of course, had a lot to do with this phenomenon. He was already fifty-two years old when the CMS was formed in 1799. One could hardly have expected that a man of his age would have gone

¹⁴¹Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 34.

¹⁴²Scott, *Jews a Blessing*, 35.

to Africa or India as a missionary. The hardships of travel and language acquisition were hard enough for a younger man. The situation with the LSPCJ was different though, since the mission field was not Africa or Asia, but London. Also, the main language of conversation was English, not Susoo or Sanskrit. Therefore, the LSPCJ afforded Scott some opportunities for frontline mission work that he could find nowhere else. The fact that the aging Scott, who turned sixty-two in 1809 when the LSPCJ began, took advantage of those opportunities speaks to his missionary zeal.

His evangelistic work among the Jews took two forms—preaching and writing. With respect to the former, he was involved in preaching directly to Jewish people on at least one occasion in 1809. Shortly after the Society was formed, a plan was put in place to have various ministers preach “courses of sermons to the Jews” in London, and Scott was one of the ministers involved.¹⁴³ Participation would naturally have meant sermon preparation and a trip to London during the busy years of the Aston Sandford seminary, but how often he spoke to the Jews or on what subjects he addressed them are not known because these sermons were never published. Likewise, the effect his message or messages had on the hearers is unknown. Nevertheless, he was one of the first preachers the Society solicited to engage the Jewish population in London.

The second way Scott tried to reach Jewish audiences was through written debates with two of the Society’s Jewish correspondents. The first debate took place within the pages of a LSPCJ periodical called *The Jewish Repository*. Often *The Jewish Repository* would publish letters and essays written by Jews against Christianity and allow Christian authors to respond to them. In April 1814, the editors published a letter written to the LSPCJ by a Jewish correspondent who identified himself simply as “S.M.”¹⁴⁴ “S.M.” challenged Christianity on several subjects, but the main issues were

¹⁴³Gidney, *History of the London Society*, 39.

¹⁴⁴S. M., “Objections Against the Messiahship of Jesus,” in vol. 2 of *The Jewish Repository*

the identity of David's Lord in Psalm 110, the difficulty of proving that Jesus was the son of David from Matthew's genealogy, and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. That same month, *The Jewish Repository* published Scott's reply to the letter.¹⁴⁵ His response was cordial and addressed the issues "S.M." had raised in a reasonable way given the nature of the medium. However, his answer offended "S.M.", who responded with an angry letter that was so harsh and unreasonable at points that the editors of *The Jewish Repository* felt compelled to insert several footnotes within the letter to defend Scott and his character.¹⁴⁶ The second letter from "S.M." did not really raise any new issues but simply elaborated on the same points already made, although in a much more aggressive tone. To Scott's credit, his response to "S.M." was patient and friendly, and he sought to clarify his position without abandoning it.¹⁴⁷ By this time, the debate had reached an impasse, both in the content and tone of the argument, and the sides disengaged, with neither being persuaded by the other.

Scott's second debate took place with a Jewish Rabbi named Joseph Crooll, who was a Hebrew professor at the University of Cambridge.¹⁴⁸ In the years 1811–1812, Crooll wrote a treatise of almost one hundred pages called *The Restoration of Israel*, in which he set forth his objections to Christianity.¹⁴⁹ He apparently did not publish the

(London, 1814), 148–53.

¹⁴⁵Thomas Scott, "Remarks on the Preceding Letter," in vol. 2 of *The Jewish Repository* (London, 1814), 153–56.

¹⁴⁶S. M., "An Examination of the Rev. Thomas Scott's Remarks on S. M.'s Objections Against the Messiahship of Jesus," in vol. 2 of *The Jewish Repository* (London, 1814), 250–51, 253.

¹⁴⁷Thomas Scott, "An Answer to the Preceding Examination," in vol. 2 of *The Jewish Repository* (London, 1814), 260–66.

¹⁴⁸Scott was not the only Christian to engage in debate with Crooll. William Cuninghame of Lainshaw (c. 1775–1849) also interacted with Crooll. See William Cuninghame, *Letters and Essays, Controversial and Critical, on Subjects Connected with the Conversion and National Restoration of Israel* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1822), 1–145. This book contains several letters written by Cuninghame to Crooll along with Cuninghame's own remarks on Crooll's *The Restoration of Israel*.

¹⁴⁹The date of this work can be ascertained by Crooll's comments in the treatise where he said in one place that "this year is 1811" and in another where he said that the present year was 1812. See R.

paper but rather sent it to the LSPCJ in the form of a manuscript and was so confident in his argumentation that he boasted “that those things which I have advanced in this book, it is impossible for the Committee to answer.”¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, he offered his work as a challenge to the LSPCJ: “What difficulties I have found, I have declared in the following pages, and if the Committee are able to answer them, it may be good for both parties.”¹⁵¹ The Society was troubled enough by Crooll’s work that the Committee applied to several people to offer an answer, including Scott. When Scott received the petition to answer the book, he “was fully engaged at the time [and] was not inclined to undertake the service.”¹⁵² However, as his duties as a missionary instructor subsided, he became “something less engaged” and revisited the project.¹⁵³ In late 1814, about two years after Crooll had sent the work to the LSPCJ, Scott published a book-length answer to *The Restoration of Israel* that was roughly three times as long as Crooll’s original.

Scott’s response to Crooll is probably one of Scott’s lesser known and underappreciated books, but he was well prepared to deal with Crooll’s arguments. His years of Bible study as a commentator had invested him with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, and he brought the full weight of this cumulative knowledge to bear in answering *The Restoration of Israel*. His defense of Christianity differed in strategy from the work of some of his contemporaries in that some apologists thought it best that “the peculiar doctrines of Christianity should be kept

Joseph Crooll and Thomas Scott, *The Restoration of Israel and an Answer* (London: B. R. Groakman, 1814), 16, 66 [*Restoration*]. It should be noted that though both Crooll’s paper and Scott’s reply are published together, each contributor’s work has independent pagination, hence the need to include what part of the work is referenced in parentheses in the notes.

¹⁵⁰Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, 4 (*Restoration*).

¹⁵¹Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, 4 (*Restoration*).

¹⁵²Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, iii (Scott’s preface).

¹⁵³Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, iii (Scott’s preface).

out of sight” when arguing that Jesus is the Messiah.¹⁵⁴ In contrast, Scott believed that

those views of Christianity which are maintained in the Creeds and Articles of our church, form so prominent a part of their objections to the New Testament; that they are nearly inaccessible to all other arguments: and must remain so, as far as I can perceive, till it is clearly shewn that these doctrines are contained in the Old Testament; or, are not at all inconsistent with its leading principles.¹⁵⁵

The practical result of this approach was that he tended to emphasize passages in the Old Testament that implied either a plurality of persons within the Godhead or the idea that the Messiah would be divine.¹⁵⁶

The length of Scott’s *Answer* prevents a detailed analysis of the work here. He literally dealt with Crooll’s arguments one by one and point by point, so the flow of thought is more dictated by Crooll’s book than by Scott’s arrangement, which results in a final product that is disjointed at times. Nevertheless, his response was comprehensive and still relatively readable. Naturally, the persuasiveness of his argumentation must be left to the mind of the reader, but what can be said definitively is that Crooll was not persuaded to convert to Christianity. Though Crooll did not answer Scott at length, William Cuninghame later reported that his own and Scott’s efforts had proven ineffective:

What we desire of Mr. Crooll is, that he will meet us upon this scriptural ground, and either refute our arguments drawn therefrom, or fall down at the foot of the cross of Jesus of Nazareth, and acknowledge him as Immanuel, the Redeemer of Israel. Mr. Crooll has not adopted either of these alternatives in the paper which I am answering.¹⁵⁷

The result, however, should not take away from the fact that Scott had exerted a considerable amount of time, energy, and thought in helping the LSPCJ answer a learned and respected opponent. His answer to *The Restoration of Israel* was the only book-

¹⁵⁴Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, vi (Scott’s preface).

¹⁵⁵Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, vi (Scott’s preface).

¹⁵⁶See especially, Crooll and Scott, *Restoration of Israel*, 266–81 (*Answer*).

¹⁵⁷Cuninghame, *Letters and Essays*, 106–8.

length publication he ever issued in behalf of a missions organization.

An Analysis of Scott's Participation in Non-Anglican Missions

In this final section of the chapter, a few observations will be made from the nature and scope of Scott's dealings with these societies in an attempt to shed further light on Scott's solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension as it applied to Christian missions. In the first place, the evidence presented above would suggest that Scott's missionary involvement in any evangelical missions society was not determined merely by a society's availability. Of the four societies surveyed in this chapter, the BMS and the LMS were in existence the longest, and Scott would have had the greatest opportunity in terms of time to invest in those agencies, had he chosen to do so. However, the BMS received the least of his direct effort, despite its being the oldest of all the evangelical societies in England. He never preached for an official BMS function, and he was not a regular financial contributor at any point in his life. By way of contrast, the LSPCJ, which was started over sixteen years after the BMS, benefitted from his financial contributions, preaching, and writings. Thus, the existence of an evangelical society did not compel Scott to devote himself extensively to it, and a fuller explanation for this disparity in participation must be sought.

Another important consideration in trying to understand Scott's missions activity is his financial contribution record. What has been learned is that Scott gave some money to every institution discussed in this chapter. However, his gifts were not equal in their regularity or nature. The BMS and LMS, for instance, received money from him when catastrophes like the burning of the Serampore printing press or the capture of the *Duff* afflicted those societies. He also raised money for them indirectly when he preached on the general subject of missions in his community. However, he never became an annual subscriber to either society, nor did he attempt to raise money for them

specifically. This practice differed markedly from his treatment of the BFBS and the LSPCJ, to which he subscribed almost from their respective beginnings and for which he was instrumental in raising funds through local auxiliaries and penny societies. This information suggests that he had a higher level of commitment to the BFBS and the LSPCJ than he had for the BMS and LMS. What then was the difference between the former two societies and the latter two?

The obvious answer to this question is organizational structure. What the BFBS and the LSPCJ had in common with one another, and what distinguished these two societies from the BMS and LMS was an internal government that gave Anglicans a leadership majority over Dissenters. Thus, Scott's theological views would have been consistent with the presiding majorities in the BFBS and the LSPCJ, and his prospects for personal influence would consequently have been multiplied. Conversely, he would have had absolutely no one in the governing board of the BMS who shared either his ecclesiastical views or his views on baptism. In a similar way, the LMS lacked clear ecclesiastical identity; and while the Society did have some Anglicans in its administration, Dissenters held a majority. What emerges from all of this is that Scott's decisions to partner with evangelical missions agencies were governed primarily by the extent of Anglican influence within those societies. Therefore, he was least supportive of the BMS because no Anglicans whatsoever were a part of its government. He was ready to go a little farther with the LMS by agreeing to preach for its annual meeting because the LMS had Anglican members and leaders, and he was allowed to preach his sermon in an Anglican church rather than at Surrey Chapel. However, the lack of an Anglican majority, coupled with Scott's objections to the LMS philosophy of ministry, dissuaded him from officially aligning himself with the Society through annual subscriptions. These inhibitions were non-factors in the BFBS and the LSPCJ.

If the CMS is also brought into this discussion, Scott's overall solution to the

Evangelical Anglican tension comes into better focus. When considering his involvement in evangelical missionary societies, Anglican influence was his primary concern, and his participation level corresponds to the degree of Anglican influence within each society. Where he found the most Anglican influence, he put in the majority of his effort. Since the CMS had an exclusively Anglican government, this Society received his greatest attention. However, his underlying evangelical principles did not preclude him from working with non-Anglicans; but when he decided to partner with Dissenters, he preferred to do so in predominantly Anglican contexts. Hence, involvement in the BFBS and the LSPCJ provided him ideal situations in which to express his evangelicalism and friendliness to those in other denominations and to do so on mostly Anglican terms. As Anglican influence diminished, as it did in the LMS and especially the BMS, Scott's vested interest declined accordingly. Thus, the words he uttered in his LMS sermon about offering support to organizations "in proportion as likely to be useful" succinctly encapsulates his solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension as it applied to the realm of missions.¹⁵⁸ He was willing "to go together as far as ever we can consistently with our conscience" in supporting gospel ministry, but his conscience was most comfortable with those endeavors which could be accomplished primarily in conjunction with the Church of England, where his usefulness could be maximized.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸Scott, *Call to Prayer*, 7.

¹⁵⁹Scott, "Speech at High Wycombe," 20.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In 1817, the *Christian Guardian* published a letter Thomas Scott had written to Joseph Butterworth (1770–1826), who was one of the founding members of the Baptist Irish Society. In the letter, Scott stated that he “was so well pleased with the plans and proceedings of the Baptist Society for attempting the instruction of the Irish, *especially the reading of the Scriptures in Irish, to those who understand no other language*, that I wish to become a subscriber to it.”¹ He went on to explain that even “though the present attempt be made by those from whom I differ in some points of inferior importance, it promises fair to lead the way to attempts of more extensive range, and of more enlarged success; and I wish therefore, to cast my mite as an annual subscriber of one guinea.”² In many ways, this little note captures Scott’s heart for evangelical missions. He was focused on making the Scriptures known the world over. His love for the Universal Church was manifest in his willingness to overlook “some points of inferior importance” to advance the gospel, and he was willing to support financially a missionary society other than his beloved CMS.

However, the letter is significant for other reasons as well. What stands out most is the fact that it was published in the *Christian Guardian* in the first place. Here was an Evangelical Anglican magazine publishing the fact that a prominent Evangelical clergyman had supported a Baptist missionary society. Scott’s action was not critiqued or

¹Thomas Scott, Letter to Joseph Butterworth, Esq., November 4, 1816, in *The Christian Guardian and Church of England Magazine*, vol. 9 (London: S. Gosnell, 1817), 69.

²Thomas Scott, Letter to Joseph Butterworth, Esq., November 4, 1816, in *Christian Guardian*, 69.

qualified in any way by the editors of the *Christian Guardian*, and one is left with the impression that the magazine was holding up Scott's example for others to emulate. Such boldness on the part of an Evangelical periodical would have been hard to imagine twenty or thirty years earlier, when Evangelicals in the Church of England were grappling with the pressure of the Evangelical Anglican tension. Indeed, the tension had not gone away entirely. The very next year, Daniel Wilson had to defend the CMS against the attacks of Josiah Thomas (1760–1820), the Archdeacon of Bath, who personally interrupted a local CMS Association meeting and “delivered an Address and Protest, which he has since published.”³ As this instance indicates, elements of the Anglican establishment were still not friendly to Evangelical missionary efforts. Nevertheless, by 1817, the CMS had been in existence for upwards of eighteen years, and there were no signs of its impending demise. While missions-minded Evangelicals still might face the odd attack here and there, the cause of Evangelical missions had advanced enough within the Church of England that the *Christian Guardian* did not fear publishing Scott's support for a Dissenting missionary agency.

What had brought about this change was the courage and steadfastness of Evangelicals like Thomas Scott. By clinging to the idea that the English establishment was the Church of England's official documents (Thirty-Nine Articles, Homilies, Liturgy) rather than the administrators of the Church, Scott was able to endure the Evangelical Anglican tension and remain in the Church of England long enough to effect change, especially in the realm of missions. He had been one of the few Evangelicals in the early 1790s who believed that a missionary society could be established that was both

³[Daniel Wilson], *A Defence of the Church Missionary Society against the Objections of the Rev. Josiah Thomas*, 2nd ed. (London: George Wilson, 1818), 11. See also, Josiah Thomas, *An Address to a Meeting Holden at the Town-Hall, in the City of Bath, Under the Presidency of the Hon. and Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, on Monday, the 1st Day of December, 1817; for the Purpose of Forming a Church Missionary Society in That City; Word for Word as Delivered from Writing; with a Protest against the Establishment of Such a Society in Bath*, 5th ed. (Bath: Meyler & Son, 1817).

evangelical and Anglican. He was present in those Eclectic Society meetings that led to the formation of the CMS. As the first CMS Secretary, he had, in the words of Eugene Stock, “plied the labouring oar . . . and his courage and faith again and again carried the day when more timid counsels nearly prevailed.”⁴ Scott preached the Society’s first anniversary sermon, and he instructed the Society’s missionaries in his own home for approximately seven years, despite his age and physical infirmities. In his parish church, he taught his people how to pray for missionaries, and his annual sermons in behalf of the CMS encouraged his people to support the cause of missions financially. In total, Scott spent over twenty years of his life advancing gospel missions through the CMS. The fact that the CMS lives on, over two hundred years later, is a testimony to the vision of Thomas Scott, who, in 1801, told the CMS that the building of their Society was like a man who “plants acorns, and raises timber-trees, for the use of future generations; being satisfied with the reflection, that others will in due time be profited by his labours.”⁵ Today, the tree is grown.

Yet, Scott’s missionary efforts were not limited to the CMS. His solution to the Evangelical Anglican tension included the notion that toleration should be extended as much as possible to those Christian groups and denominations that did not agree with the established church. The founding documents of the CMS called for “a friendly intercourse [to] be maintained with other Protestant Societies, engaged in the same benevolent design of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁶ As has been shown in the last chapter, Scott answered that call. He prayed constantly for the BMS and raised money to help rebuild the printing operation that had been lost in Serampore. He

⁴Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 1:79.

⁵Thomas Scott, “A Sermon Preached Before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East,” in *Proceedings of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East*, vol. 1 (London: Jaques, 1801), 61.

⁶“Rules,” in *Proceedings*, 19.

cancelled his travel arrangements to collect funds to help the LMS when the *Duff* was commandeered, and he promoted the Society's cause by preaching at one of its annual meetings. He was one of the instigators of the BFBS, and he enthusiastically assisted in its operations through preaching and administrating in local auxiliaries. In a similar way, he helped the LSPCJ by preaching at one of the Society's annual meetings and defending the Christian faith against Jewish protagonists with his pen. These activities prove Scott's commitment to the doctrine of the Universal Church. He affirmed that all those who believed and proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ were his spiritual friends and family, and he did what he could to help their missionary efforts.

However, it has also been shown that the lengths to which Scott would go to help these non-Anglican missionary societies was governed in large measure by the number of other Evangelical Anglicans who participated in those endeavors. This *modus operandi* emerged from Scott's Evangelical identity, an identity that was confessionally Anglican, despite sharing many commonalities with the broader evangelical movement. Consequently, the preponderance of Scott's missionary labor was directed toward the spread of Christianity in its Anglican form through the CMS. That said, the array of missionary causes supported by Scott suggests that he was concerned with far more than simply advancing Anglicanism. The cause of missions was more grandiose than that. For Scott, Christian missions was about taking the saving message of Jesus Christ to sinners who stood in eternal peril before a holy God. People the world over were in need of the justification that God had provided through the mediatorial work of Christ on the cross; but if they were to know about God's gracious redemption, someone had to go and tell them. Someone had to send them. Someone needed to follow the apostolic call and "preach his salvation and kingdom to all the nations of the earth, and to rational creatures of every description, and character."⁷

⁷Thomas Scott, "Notes on Mark 16:14–16," in *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New* 373

Scott not only saw this need, he endeavored to do something to ensure that people in other nations would have access to the gospel. He firmly believed “that the commission of Christ’s ministers extends to every creature, throughout the world; so that whenever a human being is found, we are authorized, nay expressly commanded, to propose to him the gospel of Christ, whatever reception he may give it.”⁸ As such, he had an obligation, a duty to Christ and dying sinners, to do what he could to provide all people with access to the message of salvation. Practically, Scott fulfilled this duty by preaching in his parish churches, by ministering the gospel to prostitutes in the Lock Hospital and Asylum, by procuring Bibles for poor people in Wales and Ireland, by training missionaries in Aston Sandford, and by contributing in various ways to a multiplicity of evangelical mission agencies.

Thomas Scott will probably never be considered one of the great heroes of the modern missions movement. He never made the personal sacrifices of a David Brainerd in order to minister to Native Americans. He did not have to overcome the trials associated with pioneer mission-work like William Carey or Adoniram Judson, nor did he achieve fame for bringing about the conversion of cannibals in the South Pacific like John Paton (1824–1907). Within the Church of England itself, Scott’s missionary achievements have largely been forgotten, having been overshadowed by some of his more famous contemporaries such as John Venn, Josiah Pratt, Henry Venn, and Zachary Macauley. Nevertheless, Scott did overcome the Evangelical Anglican tension, with its roadblocks to conducting Evangelical missions, and he helped generate a zeal for foreign missions in Evangelical circles, the effects of which were significant and far reaching. Thus, it does not stretch the bounds of credulity to conclude with William Wilberforce’s commending words about Thomas Scott, as a tribute to Scott’s contribution to

Testaments: With Original Notes, and Practical Observations [hereafter *Commentary*] (London: Bellamy and Robarts, 1788–1792), vol. 4.

⁸ Scott, “Practical Observations on Mark 16,” in *Commentary*, vol. 4.

evangelical missions: “Large indeed was the harvest he was allowed to gather in, many are the works which have followed him; and rich, doubtless, will be his remuneration, on that day when he shall hear the blessed address which I could for very, very few, anticipate with equal confidence, *Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*⁹

⁹William Wilberforce, Letter to John Scott, April 16, 1822, quoted in *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott*, ed. John Scott, 6th ed. (London: L. B. Seeley, 1824), 619.

APPENDIX

A TRIBUTE TO THOMAS SCOTT IN THE CMS ANNUAL REPORT OF 1821

When Thomas Scott died in 1821, the CMS paid tribute to Thomas Scott in two official ways. First, the Society passed a resolution a resolution of gratitude at its April 30, 1821 General Committee meeting.¹ This resolution was quoted at the outset of chapter six. Second, the CMS reworked and expanded the language of its resolution in order to pay tribute to Scott at the 1821 annual meeting, a tribute which was published in the 1821 Annual Report. The length of the tribute has prevented its incorporation into the main text of this dissertation, but this project would be incomplete without its inclusion somewhere. On account of its sheer eloquence and its ability to succinctly articulate Scott's missionary legacy, the tribute has been reproduced here in its entirety:

In recording the thankfulness of the Society to its living and active friends, the Committee are reminded of the departure to his eternal rest of one who may be justly denominated a Father of the Society The late Rev. Thomas Scott, with his once active co-adjutors and brethren Mr. Venn and Mr. Goode, and with the late Mr. Terrington (a steady and assiduous member of the Committee for the last eighteen years)—gone also to their reward—may be truly said, with other who are still spared to labour, to have laid, in faith and prayer, the foundation of that edifice which is now rising to view with augmented strength and usefulness every year. As the First Preacher before the Society, and for its first two years its Secretary, our departed Friend—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—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. When he could no longer take a personal share in our deliberations and proceedings, he still rendered to the Society the most important aid, by charging himself with the instruction of several of its Missionaries. We have heard in this place, from their own mouths, the most grateful testimony to his able instructions and his paternal care: and when his growing

¹Committee Minutes, April 30, 1821, CMS Archive, CMS/G/C 1/5, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

infirmities had disqualified him for this labour of love, he ceased not, to his latest hours, to pour out fervent prayers for the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, on all the labours both of this Society and of every kindred Institution, which, in these latter days, is made instrumental in accomplishing the purposes of Divine Mercy toward the world. He rests from his labours, and his works follow him!²

²“Exertions of the Society’s Friends,” in *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society* (London: L. B. Seeley, 1821), 40–41.

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ABSTRACT

THOMAS SCOTT AND EVANGELICAL MISSIONS

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This dissertation examines how Thomas Scott navigated the tension associated with being an Evangelical Anglican in the realm of missions. The paper's thesis is that the nature of Scott's Evangelical identity, which combined elements of the broader evangelical movement with a decidedly Anglican confessionalism, led him to devote himself primarily to Anglican missionary causes but did not preclude him from engaging in other Protestant missionary enterprises when circumstances permitted.

Chapter 1 examines the challenges Evangelical Anglicans faced within the Church of England as a despised minority. In many ways, Evangelicals had more spiritual kinship with Dissenters, and this tension had its effects on Evangelical missions.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of Thomas Scott's life and legacy. Scott's life story is told chronologically, and his legacy is described with respect to his writings and his personal influence on several key figures in English religious history.

Chapter 3 examines the general characteristics of Scott's Evangelical identity, including his theological beliefs about the Bible, justification, conversion, baptism, the Modern Question, and eschatology are examined.

Chapter 4 studies the ecclesiastical elements of Scott's Evangelical identity. The subjects treated are Scott's views on the nature of the English establishment, ecclesiastical irregularity, episcopal ordination, and Christendom.

Chapter 5 addresses Scott's role in the Evangelical Anglican missions

movement. Scott's devotion to the Church Missionary Society is attributed to the correspondence between his Evangelical identity and the Society's founding principles.

Chapter 6 explores Scott years as the Secretary for the Church Missionary Society. Emphasis is given to instances of the Evangelical Anglican tension in the first few years of the Society's existence.

Chapter 7 provides an overview of Scott's work as a pastoral advocate for the Church Missionary Society and as a missionary instructor in the years after he resigned as Secretary.

Chapter 8 surveys Scott's work with non-Anglican missionary societies, including the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews. Chapter 9 is the conclusion.

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