

REMARKS
UPON
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD,
THE
ONLY TRUE GOD.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
REMARKS
UPON THE
DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE,

BY THAT FAITHFUL SERVANT AND MINISTER OF CHRIST,

JOB SCOTT.

FROM THE TWO-VOLUME EDITION OF JOB SCOTT'S WORKS
PUBLISHED BY JOHN COMLY IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1831,

COMPARED WITH THE 1824 EDITION OF
ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD
PUBLISHED BY EMMOR KIMBER IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1824,



AND EDITED FOR A MODERN READERSHIP
BY JOHN JEREMIAH EDMINSTER, 2023

THE WORDS OF JOB SCOTT AND OF HIS 1824 EDITOR EMMOR KIMBER,
AS CONTAINED HEREIN, ARE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.



(A MODERN SOURCE OF THE 1824 EDITION IS [THE DIGITAL QUAKER COLLECTION](http://dgc.esr.earlham.edu/),
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PREFACE.¹

One Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism. Eph. 4:5.

FINDING an engagement on my mind, to commit to writing some considerations respecting *the one true God*, especially the true and saving knowledge of him, *the one true and only saving faith*, and *the only christian baptism*, my breathings have been frequent and fervent to the Lord, for his help and direction: certainly and sensibly knowing, by multiplied experience, that of myself, without his aid, I can do nothing that will please him, or further my own or others' salvation. Thus looking to him, who I trust fastened this concern on my mind, and has opened some gospel truths relative to these important subjects with clearness on my understanding, and humbly imploring his almighty aid, that through the influence of his Holy Spirit, what I write may be agreeable to his Divine will; and that not a word may be suffered to escape my pen that would hurt the souls of any,—I proceed first to some brief *Remarks upon the Knowledge of the One Lord, the Only True God*.

¹ This, Scott's Preface, which appears on page 278 of v. 2 of John Comly's 1831 edition of Scott's *Works*, is identical in wording to the "Preface by the Author" appearing on pages vii-viii of the single volume in which Emmor Kimber had published this essay in 1824. Kimber there appends this footnote to it: "A part of this Preface alludes to other works, — but, as the editor [Emmor Kimber himself] found it prefixed to this, he has thought it most advisable to insert it entire." Scott's "other works alluded to" (in the epigraph "one Lord, one faith, one baptism") would doubtless include "The Faith and Patience of Saints, Displayed, in Their Not Making Use of Carnal Weapons in Their Own Defence" (*Works*, v. 2, 253-271) and "The Baptism of Christ, a Gospel Ordinance: Being Altogether Inward and Spiritual" (*Works*, v. 2, 424-561).

Job Scott's reference to his "frequent and fervent breathings to the Lord" hints at the intensity of his concern to write a clear and convincing enough treatise to rescue at least some of his readers from a spiritual complacency that might leave them content with a less-than-saving "knowledge of the Lord," and so in unrelieved danger of damnation.

We modern readers may be so attached to images of a Creator whose nature is Love Itself (1 Jn 4:8) and whose declared will is to save every human soul (1 Tim 2:4), that we resist acknowledging the possibility that we ourselves, or loved ones of ours, might risk serious suffering at what is called "the Judgment" or "the Life-Review." This is an event that, we are warned by many world religions, follows the death of the body. There we may emerge (or fling ourselves, in horror or hatred of what we see then!) either into fires of hell (Matt 5:22,29-30; 6:15; 10:28, 23:33, Luke 12:5) or into "the outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 13:42, 50) — notwithstanding the possibility that God may have ways of eventually bringing such suffering to a merciful end.

In any case, we easily forget that for Quakers of the first century and a half, eternal damnation was a real danger. Scott ends the present essay with a section "On Perseverance," which warns against the then-popular but unsupportable notion, "once in grace, always in grace."

Scott also argues earnestly against what he considers a false and seductive doctrine of universal forgiveness and salvation (still popular!) in his essay "Future Rewards and Punishments maintained, as evidently held forth in the scriptures" (*Works*, v. 2, 339-423). — JJE

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: SAVING KNOWLEDGE, SAVINGLY KNOWN

READER, you are about to embark on what may be the most thoroughgoing early Quaker treatise still extant on *saving knowledge*, a term in currency among Friends (along with its cognate, *savingly known*) until its gradual obsolescence over the course of the nineteenth century. Saving knowledge, is, of course, that knowledge of God and Jesus Christ in which, Jesus declares, eternal life consists:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3 KJV).²

But readers of the New Testament will recall reading that there is also a knowledge of God that is *not* saving:

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19).

And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (Matt 8:29.)

The early Quaker movement had gathered around one man, George Fox (1624-1691), whose *Journal* records his reception of saving knowledge of God and Christ by direct revelation, whereby he also saw that —

The knowledge which the world hath of what the prophets and apostles spake is a fleshly knowledge; and the apostates from the life in which the prophets and apostles were, have gotten their words, the Holy Scriptures, in a form, but not in their life nor spirit that gave them forth. And so they all lie in confusion and are making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, but not to fulfil the law and command of Christ in his power and spirit; for that, they say, they cannot do, but to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, that they can do with delight.³

² All Biblical citations herein will be to the Authorized or King James Version, which was the translation most extensively used by early Friends, and the one used by Job Scott in particular.

³ John L. Nickalls, ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (London: The Religious Society of Friends, 1975), 10-11. Fox seems not to have used the terms “saving knowledge” or “savingly known” in his own writings, although his contemporaries Samuel Fisher, Isaac Penington, William Penn, and Robert Barclay did. The sole appearance of “saving knowledge” in his *Journal* (in Fox, *Works* (1831 American edition), 1:144), may have been an emendation by Fox’s early editor Thomas Ellwood, for it does not appear in the better-authenticated Nickalls edition of the same passage (*Journal*, 110). In *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded* (1659) Fox debunks the claim of “Priest Bennet” that “every man is enlightened only with a natural reason, and the elect are enlightened with a saving knowledge” (*Works*, 3:313), but Fox himself may have avoided the term as “unscriptural” because it did not appear in any of the English translations of the Bible then in use, and Fox was extremely punctilious about using “scriptural language.” However, his many references to men and women being brought up into the image or state of “Christ, that never fell... and into his everlasting kingdom” (*Works*, 2:319) suggest that he knew the state of saving knowledge well. “For every man and woman that receives [the

The very Spirit of God that had granted Fox *this* direct revelation also gave him faith that God would likewise grant saving knowledge to *any* sincere seeker, and Fox's subsequent preaching experience confirmed this: That is, that by welcoming the guidance of the indwelling Divine Light, men and women were putting themselves under the direct rule of Christ, their "Prophet, Priest, King, Teacher, Shepherd, Counsellor, Living Way, and Savior," by obeying whom *consistently* they could not fail of salvation.⁴

From its very beginning, Quakerism was a religion of personal experience, and not one of "notional" faith based on received doctrine. "It is a great matter to receive an understanding from the Lord; which until a man doth, his knowledge is neither true, living, nor saving," wrote Isaac Pennington (1616-1679) in 1671.⁵ Robert Barclay (1648-1690) begins *A Catechism and Confession of Faith* (1673) with a first chapter entitled "Of GOD, and the true and Saving Knowledge of Him."⁶ Barclay's best-known work, the *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (in Latin, 1675; in English, 1678), follows the same pattern, making "the true knowledge of God" the subject of his First Proposition. He avers in his Second Proposition that "the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed."⁷

Stephen Crisp (1628-1692), in the sermon "No True Worship without the Right Knowledge of God," argues that "all, in all ages, that have attained to the knowledge of God, they have been *made partakers of his divine nature* [2 Peter 1:4] and his divine qualities," and "the law written in their heart" [Jer 31:33; Heb 10:16] "saith, submit thyself to him that redeemed thee, thou art his, thou art no more thine own; this law being written in the heart obligeth a man... to *worship God in spirit and truth*...."⁸

Job Scott (10/18/1751–11/22/1793) penned *Reflections upon the Knowledge of the Lord* sometime in the period 1788-1793, and it falls squarely into this tradition.

blessing of God] comes to know him to reign in his grace, truth, light and life, over death and darkness, and the Devil, the power of it" (Sermon to London Yearly Meeting. 1681, in Skinner and Stillwell, eds., *That Thy Candles May Always Be Burning: Nine Pastoral Sermons of George Fox* (Camp Hill, PA: New Foundation, 2001), 228.

⁴ Fox made many listings of the "offices of Christ," and Lewis Benson's massive *Notes on George Fox* (Moorestown, NJ: n. p., 1981) contains two appendices devoted to these listings. Noteworthy are the one made in Fox's famous Firbank Fell Sermon (1652; summarized in Nickalls (1975), 109), and one in Fox's Epistle No. 391 (1684), in *Works*, 8:247.

⁵ "A Few Words in General to Those That Desire the Knowledge of the True God," in *Life and Immortality Brought to Light through the Gospel* (1671) in Isaac Pennington, *Works* (Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 1997), 4:53.

⁶ Robert Barclay, *A Catechism and Confession of Faith*, published online by Quaker Heritage Press at <http://qhpress.org/texts/barclay/catechism/chapter1.html>.

⁷ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (Farmington, ME: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002), 9.

⁸ Stephen Crisp, *Scripture Truths Demonstrated, in Thirty-two Sermons, or Declarations* (David Johnson, ed. Casper, WY: New Foundation Fellowship, 2022), Sermon 26.

Referencing the self-evident character of saving knowledge, Scott asks, “Does any true believer who has... ‘the witness in himself’ doubt his own adoption and sonship, or the reality of... ‘the love of God shed abroad in the heart’, because wicked men and ignorant enthusiasts have the audacity to claim the same thing?”⁹

I believe that the time has come for the return of the term “saving knowledge” to Friends’ (and all God-believers’) vocabulary, for no other would-be synonym has quite the same range of meaning. “Enlightenment,” “theosis,” and “unitive consciousness” suggest exalted states (as do many terms imported from non-Abrahamic faith traditions: *samadhi*, *nirvana*, *satori*), but *saving knowledge* can enter into a mind of quite humble condition, whenever and however the Lord sees fit to bestow it. Jesus saw from her behavior that the sinner woman at the banquet, who knew her many sins forgiven, had it (Luke 7:36-50). Luke also reports that He assured a repentant armed robber, dying on a cross next to His own: “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

How much blood has been shed, how much ink wasted, over whose knowledge *about* God was more correct than someone else’s! And while the theologians quarreled, humble innocents gifted with knowledge *of* God, unremembered by history, were brightening their loved ones’ and neighbors’ lives simply by letting their light shine!

I’ve met such people. And I myself have been given the gift of saving knowledge, though I’m sure I’ve out-sinned many of my readers in my lifetime, so it can’t be because of my own merit. Perhaps it came merely because, in mid-life, I asked for the gift of obedience to God’s will. After that, I inwardly heard the Lord’s voice assure me, “I will not let you fall into sin.” Don’t other Friends today hear that same warning and reassuring voice? And don’t they sense the absolute goodness and almightiness of the Lord without knowing how they know it?¹⁰

Don’t we resonate with Stephen Crisp’s *Thou art His, thou art no more thine own*? Perhaps we lack saving knowledge because *we’re* withholding something from *God*: acknowledgement of some particularly shameful sin, for example, perhaps one buried under years of denial — or we’re refusing to give up some secret addiction, some cherished “freedom” that we dread losing.

⁹ Paragraph (¶) 80 in the text, below.

¹⁰ The Apostle Paul (Rom 1:19-20 ff.) claims that what may be known of God is initially shown to every human being, but all who choose to sin (i.e., all but Jesus) reject this knowledge and so lose it, until “the goodness of God” leads them to repentance (Rom 2:4). Similarly, the Qur’an (7:171-172) holds that all are taught, prenatally, that God is their Sustainer, so that no one can claim at the Judgment that they were never informed. Mis-education or sin may obscure this knowledge, but never erase it. “The Condition of Man in the Fall” is treated at length, from a Quaker perspective, in Barclay, *Apology*, Prop. 4 (<http://qhpress.org/texts/barclay/apology/prop4.html>).

These are secular-minded times, and Friends in our Meeting may no longer be comfortable with the idea that we're all fallen souls (that is, "sinners") in need of something called "salvation" before we face something called "the Judgment." Indeed, if we show concern about such things, we may be shamed as selfish, considering how many structural evils (war, plutocracy, racism, environmental destruction) there are for good people to mobilize against! Why be concerned over relations with God if we're not "speaking truth to power" and shaking malefactors by the lapels? Worry over the destiny of our souls might better be taken to a psychotherapist than a fellow Quaker in our Meeting! — With such thoughts as these, concern over how we and our loved ones may fare at a Judgment is banished from our mind.

Many Christians, historically, have escaped anxiety about their fate after death by fancying that because they've had such-and-such "sacraments," or held such-and-such notional beliefs about having Christ's merits *imputed* to them while they themselves remain sinners, they will avoid reaping, in an afterlife, the evils that they have sown in this life.¹¹ Today, though, believers may more likely take refuge in a hope that God will prove all-forgiving and save everyone without punishment; or that hell, if it exists, will prove tolerable and temporary; or that reincarnation will prove a more gentle way to expiate sins than the permanent, dichotomous heaven-or-hell paradigm that traditional Christianity has long offered. I hope, by republishing Scott's essay now, to provoke more prayerful thought on the matter.¹²

In this connection, Scott's postscript "On Perseverance" (§129-§149, below) deserves attention. Many early Quaker writers expressed a belief that a sinner's "day of visitation," during which cleansing from sin (and therefore salvation) was available, might expire before life on earth ended, so repentance was not to be put off till tomorrow; neither should regenerated souls think themselves immune from falling from grace: therefore all ought to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet 1:10).

Job Scott wrote a number of essays that he did not submit for publication in his own lifetime, and *Reflections upon the Knowledge of the Lord* is merely one of them. True, Scott seems to have hoped for a future opportunity to further "digest" his ideas before publishing them, had his life not been cut short by smallpox at age 42. But a major reason for his reluctance to attempt publication seems to have been a well-grounded fear that opponents of his views within the Society of Friends might consign them to the permanent oblivion of the "yearly

¹¹ Early Quakers battled staunchly against what Scott calls the doctrine of the "imputarians," which derives from Calvinism. Fox called this "pleading for sin and imperfection" (see footnote 41, to §74, below). Scott addresses this problem in §88-§96 and §103 of his text.

¹² Among items published in the 1831 ed. of Job Scott's *Works* is an argument against universal salvation entitled "Future Rewards and Punishments Maintained, &c." (*Works*, v. 2, 343-423).

meeting chest.” He wisely took precautions to protect his reflections from being lost or suppressed, however, by putting his manuscripts into the protective custody of his father-in-law before leaving on the 1793 voyage to Ireland from which he did not return. The Quaker Heritage Press edition of Job Scott’s *Essays on Salvation by Christ* valuably preserves such evidences as we retain today of the author’s hopes and cautions about his literary legacy.¹³

In editing this text I’ve treated the 1831 publication by John Comly as more authoritative than Emmor Kimber’s 1824 edition, because printed from a better collation of manuscript copies. However, for those readers who wish to compare the easily available 1824 Kimber edition (in the Digital Quaker Collection of Earlham School of Religion, <http://dqc.esr.earlham.edu/>), I’ve indicated the pagination of that edition with numbers in angular brackets inserted where the 1824 edition’s page number changes, thus:

... such multiplied and indubitable demonstrations <2> of the being of an all-wise almighty...

I’ve numbered the paragraphs consecutively to aid the reader in tracking the sequence of steps in Scott’s argument. To remind the reader that these paragraph numbers are my editorial additions, not from either the 1824 nor the 1831 sources, they are placed within square brackets, thus: [127.].

The sources show the first publishers’ inline Biblical citations in this format: “1 Cor. i. 21.” I have modernized the format to read “1 Cor 1:21.” I’ve added new, additional inline Biblical citations for the benefit of a modern readership that may be less apt to recognize allusions to the King James Bible than the Quaker readers of 1824 or 1831 would have been. These editorially *added* citations are set off within square brackets, thus: [Jer 5:2]; [1 Cor 12:3].

I’ve modernized a few spellings, punctuations, and capitalizations in Scott’s text, and corrected a few obvious typographical errors. In the interest of not distorting the author’s voice, I have not tried to make his language gender-inclusive: God remains “he” and humankind remains “man.” Neither have I censored out his disparaging characterization of an indigenous American in paragraphs 32-33, nor mitigated the sting of his reference to “the Jews” (paragraphs 43, 59, 86, and 87) as those who rejected the ministry of Jesus and His followers (who were also Jews). For this I ask forgiveness to all who, like myself, find such language offensive when we read it today. But Job Scott was a child of his time, and I see no reason to try to make him sound like a child of our own generation.

John Jeremiah Edminster, Fifth Month 2023, as updated 1/7/2024.

¹³ Job Scott, *Essays on Salvation by Christ, and the debate which followed their publication*, etc. (Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 1993). Scott’s anxiety about the “yearly meeting chest” is attested in Emmor Kimber’s introduction to the 1824 ed., page v.