

Abilene Christian University

Digital Commons @ ACU

Stone-Campbell Books

Stone-Campbell Resources

1952

The Autobiography of Walter Scott (1796-1861)

Roscoe M. Pierson

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books



Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), [History of Christianity Commons](#), and the [History of Religions of Western Origin Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pierson, Roscoe M., "The Autobiography of Walter Scott (1796-1861)" (1952). *Stone-Campbell Books*. 242.
https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books/242

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stone-Campbell Resources at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stone-Campbell Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

Reprints of Disciple Documents

No. 2

THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
WALTER SCOTT
(1796-1861)

Edited and with a Foreword
By
ROSCOE M. PIERSON

BOSWORTH MEMORIAL LIBRARY
THE COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE
LEXINGTON, KY.
1952

Reprints of Disciple Documents

No. 2

THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
WALTER SCOTT

(1796-1861)

Edited, and with a Foreword by

ROSCOE M. PIERSON



BOSWORTH MEMORIAL LIBRARY
THE COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE
LEXINGTON, KY.
1952

Concerning the Autobiography of Walter Scott

A Brief Foreword by Roscoe M. Pierson

In late January 1937, Mrs. Mary Scott Brooks, a granddaughter of Walter Scott, presented a copybook of her grandfather's to the library of The College of the Bible. This book entitled *Gould's Universal Index, and Every Body's Own Book . . .* (New York: George F. Coolidge, 1842), is a common copybook, 25x19.5 cm., with leather spine and corners. The only uncommon thing about the book is that it lacks any overt date with the exception of the printed date on the title page; nor does it contain at any place an autograph of its original owner. The pages of the volume have printed numbering through page 304, the last page. The first 28 pages of the book contain printed instructions as how best to arrange notes, whereas pages 29-304 are ruled pages with alphabetic guides at the top. Pages 30 through 42 were cut from the volume prior to its deposit in the library.

Although most of the pages in the book are blank, about one-fifth of them contain entries by Walter Scott. For the most part these are sermon outlines and notes from his reading. In general they do not conform to the alphabetic arrangement of the printed scheme. Though these notes are of interest to the student of Scott, they are only mildly so when compared to the text that fills pages 301 through 304, the text marked simply *Biography*.

This *Biography*, which is the reason for this little pamphlet, in Scott's own penmanship, fills the last four pages of the copybook. It is strange that a man would start to discuss his life on the fourth from the last page of his notebook; however, since Scott filled the pages he reserved for this task, we of today should be sorry that he did not choose a page with a smaller number. Although Scott did not sign his work, his authorship is evident as can be readily seen. However, when he wrote the sketch is not so evident.

As the reader will shortly see, the work is not that of a young and vigorous man. It breaths gloom and heartache, and, to this writer, a shortly impending death. The detail with which Scott sets down some facts is startling when we see what is omitted. He carefully lists the birth dates of his first five children, but relegates to the narrative the sixth and seventh; in fact, mentions them in reverse order. His last wife, and wife at the time that the *Biography* was written, Eliza Sandidge, is not mentioned! Neither does he mention any of the men with whom he labored: not even Alexander Campbell.

There is, perhaps, one point from which we can hope to reconstruct a date for the work: on page 303 where he says "Carrie Allen Scott, now ten years old." The problem, of course, is to find Carrie Allen's birthdate, which at first appears to be simple. Not only is this date not given by any of Scott's biographers, it is not a part of the records

of the vital statistics of Mason County, Kentucky. Nor can we readily find the date when Scott married Carrie Allen's mother, Nancy B. Allen. This was discovered in the archives of the Kentucky State Historical Society as August 13, 1850. (It was also found at the same place that Nancy died November 18, 1854.) But we can see that from the wedding date in 1850 to Scott's death, April 23, 1861, that Carrie Allen could not have been ten years old when Scott died. Assuming that Scott was reasonably correct about his daughter's birthdate, this writer ventures to claim that the article was not written in 1860, as is claimed by Dwight E. Stevenson, the author of the definitive biography, *Walter Scott, Voice of the Golden Oracle*, p. 225, but early in the year 1861, perhaps only a few weeks, or days, before Scott died—let us charitably hope so at any rate.

The *Biography* which now immediately follows was recorded as faithfully as possible. All of the vagaries of Scott's style are dutifully copied. There have been no corrections of misspelled words; punctuation, abbreviations and other details, with the exception of words and phrases blacked out, are given as faithfully as practical for this edition.

BIOGRAPHY

The writer descended of religious ancestors, was of the [p. 301] family of "The Scotts of Thirstane," Scottsby-Gordon, now in the possession of Lord Napier by his marriage with Miss Scott. Being invited hither by his Uncle George Innes, who had been thirty years in the service of the United States, he arrived in N York, Ship Glenthorn, Stilman Captain, from Greenock 7th July 1818.

In the same year acted as first English Teacher with the Rudiments of Greek & Latin in Union Academy, Jamaica, Long Island, and after six months returned to the city.

Arrived in Pittsburgh the following year 7th May 1819 where, in the Family of George Forester, he was converted to Christianity. In the same year Mr F perished in the Alleghenny river, leaving a widow and four children to deplore his loss:—

Before his death he and the writer had organized a Church on the plan of Mr Haldane, which was that of meeting on the first day of the week to break bread, &c &c. At his death the care of this little assembly fell on my hands; and no mortal care can excise the joy I felt in waiting upon it; for the gospel had come to me in great passels of love and glory of soul. I was transported with the grandeur of the Redemption and loved the Lord Jesus with all my heart & strength mind and spirit. I studied the

Scriptures day & night, repeated whole books to Sister Forrester and prayed God continually that he would give me just and comprehensive views of holy write promising, if he would, that I would devote my life | and attainments [p. 302] to the service of his son:

Having learned from a pamphlet by Mr Errette that there were several churches in the East conducted like my own in Pitt, and being anxious to improve my Christian learning I determined to visit them, and accordingly did so.

After hearing all that the Brethren in N York and other places had to say to a stranger on the subject of original Christianity I returned in three months to Pittsburgh:

The common defect of these and mine in Pittsburgh was a lack of power of Expansion—the aggressive element of the Gospel: Ecclesiastically they were reformed, Evangelically they were not. They had not taken the distinction between the original Gospel and the original order of the church: Not growing they were suffocated, or made their escape from suffocation by joining other bodies.

In Jany. 3d 1823 married Miss Sarah Whitsette daughter of a once wealthy farmer, five miles from Pitt. There taught the chief Academy until October 1826: when tired of the unproductiveness of the little church, removed to Steubenville, whence in 1827 was invited by the Baptists of Trumbul Co. Ohio to preach the gospel.

An error picked up in the N York Church, led the writer to a serious consideration of the Evangelical past of

the Christian religion, and he was finally conducted [convicted?] by the divine providence to arrange the first principles of the gospel in that admirable scripture method which since its first publication presentation in 1827 has stood, defiant of confutation. |

My Son John P Scott, was born in Pittsburgh Nov [p. 303] 19, 1823. P the initial of his middle name stands for Passmore the name of a Lieutenant of the British Navy who at his death aboard a ship gave his gold ring to my Uncle Thomas who was a midshipman in the same vessel. My Uncle Thomas was dismissed the navy, and this was the cause: Grand-father Innes was a Whig in his political views and during the struggle for independence in this country espoused the cause of the Colonies. The Torries soon understood this, and my Uncle though a man of consideration in the city of Edinburgh had to suffer the mortification of seeing dismissed the Navy his Son Thomas.

2 Daughter Emily was born in Pitt. 24th Sept 1825

3 Wm. Adolphus in Steubenville 6 Dec 1826

4 Sarah Jane deceased Steubenville 31 Dec 1828

5 Samuel C. Scott in Steubenville 20 Dec 1830

Returned to Pittsburgh in the Spring of 1831. There my darling Sarah Jane died and was buried leaving me with a broken heart. In May visited Cincinnati remaining with the Brethren there three months. In 32 removed to Cin-

cinnati and afterwards to Carthage in Ohio 6 miles from the city. There I remained thirteen years. At the end of this period I returned to Fort Pitt—returned to Carthage—again to Cin. Afterward to Mayslick when I married again N[ancy B.] Allen [August 13, 1850] a most blessed woman, but inclined to consumption of which she died [November 18, 1854] soon after our Marriage but not until she gave me a sweet daughter Carrie Allen Scott now ten years of age.* My Son Walter Harden Scott was born in Carthage Ohio [in 1833]. Harden his middle name is the name of one of the three houses in the Scott Clan. Sir Walter Scott was of this house. The three houses are the Dukal house (The Duke of Becleugh | is named Walter Scott) the Har- [p. 304] den house and the house of Thirstane which is the oldest of the three, and possessed, as I have said by Lord Napier the recent English ambassador to the U States. Since my advent to this country I have not been permitted to settle on my lees but like Israel of old have been emptied from barrel to barrel. And with all this shifting of residence I unceasingly preached the gospel for 23 years summer and winter and all kinds of weather I held forth wherever I went the uniform views of the gospel to which through the grace of God I had attained. During all that time I was crushed to the Earth with *dispepsia*: but it is in difficult enterprises in poverty, distress, cold and nakedness, evil report and other things adverse to success that the hero of

*Only evidence of the date of this biography, see foreword.

our undertakings reaches that at which he aims. 1000 converts were made by my views of the gospel the first year. In 30 I took out of the bosom of the Baptists, the whole association whose numbers had swelled from 4 or 5 hundred to upward of 2,000. This was done by a vote which I had put by one of the converts—John Henry. The converts I named Disciples—which name they bore for some years afterwards.

