

THE AGES DIGITAL LIBRARY  
**BIOGRAPHY**

**LIFE SKETCH OF  
DR. ADAM CLARKE**

*by Douglass Gorrie*

**Books For The Ages**  
AGES Software • Albany, OR USA  
Version 2.0 © 1996, 1997

# LIFE SKETCH OF DR. ADAM CLARKE

From:

***THE LIVES***

*of*

***EMINENT METHODIST MINISTERS***

By

Douglass Gorrie

SAGE Software

Albany, Oregon

© 1996

## ADAM CLARKE, LL. D., F.A.S.

This extraordinary man was born in the village of Moybeg county of Londonderry, Ireland. The precise date of his birth is not known, as no registry of this event or of his baptism could ever be found in the records of the parish church, to which his father belonged. It was probable, however, that he was born in the spring of 1760, as the minister who baptized him died shortly after this date. Adam was the second son of John Clarke, M.A. of Trinity College, Dublin, whose hopes of preferment in the Established Church being blasted on account of his marriage, induced him to resolve on emigrating to America, which resolution he was only prevented from executing by the remonstrances of friends. After having changed his purpose he retired to the obscure village where Adam was born, and where the father gained a livelihood by teaching school an employment for which he was no doubt well qualified by inclination, as well as by learning.

At the age of five years, Adam was attacked severely with the small-pox. His medicine consisted mostly of spirituous liquors given for the purpose of driving out the pock, while the patient was covered over with a large quantity of clothes in a warm bed, and the curtains drawn so as to exclude every particle of external air! Against such fond yet foolish treatment young Adam rebelled, and as often as opportunity offered ran out of doors entirely naked; and although forewarned of consequences as dreadful as death itself for so doing, he persisted in exposing himself to the open air; and although covered with pustules from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, he mercifully recovered without having a single mark left upon his person.

At an early age, Adam was sent to the village school to learn the alphabet, etc., but so slow was he in acquiring a knowledge of the first rudiments of learning, that his teacher pronounced him to be a grievous dunce. Another teacher however, who happened to be present when the last remark was made, placing his hand on Adams head, encouragingly said, This lad will make a good scholar yet. After having acquired a knowledge of reading, his father put him to the study of the Latin grammar. Some portions of his textbook he committed to memory with great difficulty, but other portions were perfectly incomprehensible to his juvenile mind. In perfect despair he threw by his grammar, and taking

up an English testament he went into an English class, determined to study English only. His teacher perceiving his intentions, exclaimed in terrific tones, Sir, what brought you here? Where is your Latin grammar? Adam began to weep, and said, Sir, I cannot learn it. Go sirrah, said the teacher, and take up your grammar: if you do not speedily get that lesson, I shall pull your ears as long as Jowlers (a dog), and you shall be a beggar to the day of your death. Poor Adam went to his seat, and was accosted by one of his classmates with the words, What, have you not learned that lesson yet? O, what a stupid ass! This was too much for Adam to endure without making an effort to redeem his character. His mind was made up to show to the teachers and scholars that he was not a jackass. He seized his grammar, and in a few moments committed his lesson to memory and recited it without missing a word; and finally wearied his teacher with the frequency of his recitations. Thus, through the taunts and jeers of a school-fellow, was this hidden spark of genius in Adam Clarke suddenly brought to light, and gave tokens of the future greatness of the man.

Adam now became very fond of reading, and all the money he obtained as presents, he carefully expended for books. At first his means were small, and he was obliged to content himself with penny or two-penny books, such as Tom Thumb, Jack the Giant Killer, Babes in the Wood, etc. By reading such works his mind became some what attached to romance; and he even ventured on the study of magic, but his mind becoming somewhat enlightened on the subject of that art, he, from conscientious scruples, brought his studies in that bewitching department abruptly to an end.

Adams father, as before intimated, was a member of the Church of England. His mother, however, was a Presbyterian of the Puritan stamp, and early inculcated upon the minds of her children the importance of religion; but Adam was too much engaged in the pursuit of knowledge as well as in the amusements peculiar to youth, to pay much regard to religious counsels any farther than to obey his parents and lead a moral life, until he was about seventeen years of age. At this time, the neighborhood where he lived was visited by certain Methodist preachers. On one occasion, Adam was invited by a young man to attend the Methodist meeting for the purpose, as he expressed it, of having some fun. Such an object was a strange one in the opinion of Clarke. He had attended balls and parties for the sake of the fun; but although he had very little if any acquaintance with the Methodists, he knew that a

religious meeting of any kind was no place to seek for amusement. He, however, concluded to attend for the sake of information, and was so much edified with the discourse of Mr. Brettel (the gentleman who preached), that the next week he went to another neighborhood to hear him.

Mr. Brettel was succeeded on the circuit by Mr. Barber and under the labors of the latter gentleman, young Clarke and his mother became deeply interested in the subject of personal salvation; and having attended class-meeting became still more serious, until at length Mr. Barber enrolled Adams name as a member of a small class which had been formed. He shortly after, for the first time, received the sacrament at the hands of the parish minister, but still he was a stranger to pardoning mercy. He became about this time the subject of strong temptation in relation to the propriety of praying to Jesus Christ, which some of his Socinian friends alleged was an unscriptural and idolatrous practice. Giving way to the temptation, he ceased praying to the Son, and made his petitions to the Father without ever mentioning the name of Christ. Being under strong convictions for sin, he was led frequently to call upon God to have mercy upon him, but all his prayers seemed to be in vain. While one day in a field alone praying for pardon, he wrestled with God until his strength was exhausted, and he could no longer speak or pray. In this his hour of extreme agony, the Spirit whispered, Pray to Christ. He at once complied with the suggestion, and soon his whole soul was overwhelmed with a sense of the divine presence and approbation. But still he was ignorant of the fact that he was converted; and it was not until some time after, when being at the same spot in company with Mr. Barber, that he obtained the Witness of the Spirit, and became satisfied in regard to the nature of the work wrought in his heart.

As soon as Adam became convinced that he was a child of God, he returned home to tell what great things the Lord had done for his soul. He also, notwithstanding his youth, erected a family altar in his fathers house, and through his pious counsels and fervent prayers in their behalf, the most of the family finally became the subjects of converting grace, as did also some of his school-fellows.

In the above, and other ways, young Clarke began to render himself useful in the vineyard of Christ. He frequently went several miles from home, for the purpose of attending class-meeting, and giving the word of exhortation. He would even go from village to village, and entering into a

house, would say, Peace be to this house, and request them to call in their neighbors, which if they consented to do, he would pray for, and exhort them, and then repair to the next village for a like purpose. In this way, Adam Clarke, almost unconsciously to himself, became an itinerant preacher, while his extreme youth and interesting deportment, made him a favorite wherever he went.

As it was now time that Adam should engage in some employment by which he could in subsequent life gain a subsistence, and as neither he nor his parents, ever supposed that he would become a Methodist preacher, he was put as an apprentice to a linen-drafter, in Coleraine, by the name of Bennet, where he remained nearly a year, but without being indentured. While remaining at Mr. Bennets, young Clarks religious friends suggested to him their belief, that God intended him for the ministry, and becoming persuaded in his own mind that such indeed was the fact, he parted from his friend Mr. Bennet, with the kindest feelings, having been instrumental while there, in the conversion of one of his domestics.

After leaving Mr. Bennet, young Clarke not having received what he considered to be a satisfactory call as yet, to the regular work of the ministry, waited patiently for any indications that Providence might give him in relation to duty. Shortly after this, he was invited by Mr. Bredin, the circuit preacher, to visit him for a week or two. Adam accepted the invitation, and being requested by Mr. Bredin to go and fill his place the next evening, and to be sure and take a text, he reluctantly consented to go, and on the 10th of June, 1782, he preached his first sermon from 1 John v. 19. In the meantime, Mr. Bredin had written to Mr. Wesley in England, about Mr. Clarke, and the former having received an appointment in England, was requested to bring Adam with him, that he might be placed in Kingswood school the purpose of improving his classical knowledge. Adam having laid the matter before his parents, found them to be highly displeased with the proposal. His father was enraged, and his mother threatened him with Gods displeasure, and informed him that if he went, he should have a parents curse, and not her blessing to go with him. Under these circumstances, not daring to leave home with a mothers curse, he had recourse to prayer, and was surprised a few days afterward to find that his mother had changed her mind in relation to the matter, and that both parents were willing to submit to the indications of Providence.

In the course of a few days, he left the parental mansion, and being disappointed in not having the company of Mr. Bredin, he set sail from the port of Derry for Liverpool, having purchased, previously to embarking, a loaf of bread and a pound of cheese, as provision for the voyage. In two days, they arrived in Liverpool, but while ascending the river Mersey, they were boarded by a press-gang, who were raising supplies for the navy. Two young men who were on board, hid themselves, but Adam stood his ground, all the while lifting his heart to God in prayer. The press-gang searched the vessel, and finding one of the young men who had hidden himself, took him with them, but for some reason left Adam unmolested, saving the utterance of a horrid oath by the lieutenant of the gang, followed by the words you'll not do. Mr. Clarke ever after this, had an enduring hatred for the system of impressment as pursued in England; and well he might, for as he himself remarks in relation to it, What Britons bosom does not burn against this infringement of British liberty? This unconstitutional attack on the liberty of a free-born subject of the Sovereign of the British Isles? While the impress service is tolerated, in vain do we boast of our constitution. It is an attack upon its vitality ten thousand times worse than any suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. Let Britons know, that it is neither any part of the constitution, nor any law of the land, whatever some venal lawyers have said, in order to make it constructively such. Nothing can be a reason for it, but that which justifies a levee en masse, of the inhabitants of the nation. It is intolerable to hear those plead for it, who are not exposed to so great a calamity.

On Adams arrival in Liverpool, he was kindly entertained in the family of the captain of the vessel which had brought him over. The captains name was Cunningham, a Scotchman, and he and his excellent lady conspired to make his stay with them as pleasant as possible; and while enjoying their hospitality, Mr. Clarke endeavored to make himself as useful in a spiritual sense, as he could. When he left them, he expected, as a matter of course, to pay his bill like all other private boarders, but Mrs. C. informed him that he had nothing to pay, You owe nothing here; Captain C., myself, and all the family, are deeply in your debt. You have been a blessing to our house, and were you to stay longer, you would have no charges.

The distance from Liverpool to Bristol, near which Kingswood is situated, is about two hundred miles. This distance, Adam resolved to pursue on foot, as his finances were by no means very abundant. He

was, however, persuaded by a friend to relinquish this mode of traveling, and to procure an outside seat on a stagecoach to Birmingham. At the latter place, he met with a brother of his friend, Rev. Mr. Brettel, who showed him great kindness, but cautioned him against forming too high an opinion of Kingswood School, as he might there be doomed to suffer pain and discouragement. After remaining here a few days, he took his departure for Bristol, having no other refreshment on the road than a penny loaf, and a halfpenny worth of apples, during a journey of seventeen hours. Arriving at a late hour in the evening, he put up at the inn, and in the morning when his bill was paid, he had but three half-pence left to pay his expenses at Kingswood.

In the morning, he went to Kingswood, and having found Mr. Simpson, the head-master of the school, he presented to him a letter from Mr. Wesley, authorizing his admission as a student. Mr. S. informed him, that there was no room for him in the school, and that he must go back to Bristol, and wait for a fortnight, until Mr. Wesley himself should come. Adam told Mr. S. that he could not go back, as his money was all gone.

After some farther conversation, Mr. S. gave Adam permission to remain, provided that he would occupy a small room at the end of the chapel, and that he would stay in that room, and not come into the house. He was also informed, that his food would be brought to him daily by one of the servants. Adam felt, indeed, as though this was rather ungenerous treatment of a stranger in a strange land. He, however, found out during the day, that as he was an Irishman, he was suspected of having the itch, and that on this account, Mrs. S. could not allow him to mingle with the family. Adam resented the imputation by opening his vest and shirt bosom, and showing Mr. S. as white a skin as ever crossed the Tweed Mr. S. was a Scotchman but all to no purpose, the itch might be cleaving somewhere to his person, and nothing would satisfy them until he had rubbed himself from head to foot, with a box of Jacksons Itch Ointment.

It is proper here to remark, that Kingswood School at this time, was under the supervision of very improper persons. Mr. Simpson and his wife were illiberal, tyrannical, and parsimonious; and although frequent complaints had been made to Mr. Wesley, of their treatment of the students, yet as he [Wesley] was in his 80th year, and was disposed to believe evil of no one, he had suffered them to remain at the head of the institution. That the reader may know how to sympathize with the



young Irish stranger, we will give a few paragraphs from his life in his own words. It was only my strong hold of God, that kept me from distraction. But to whom could I make my complaint? Earthly refuge I had none. It is utterly impossible for me to describe the feelings, I may justly say, the agony of my mind. I surveyed my apartment; there was a wretched old bureau, wainscot-bedstead, not worth ten shillings, and a bed and bed-clothes, not worth much more; but the worst was, they were very scanty, and the weather was cold and wet. There was one rush-bottomed chair in the place, and besides these, neither carpet on the floor, nor at the bedstead, nor any other kind of furniture. There was no book, not even a Bible in the place; and my own box, with my clothes, and a few books was behind at the Lamb Inn, in Bristol; and I had not even a change of linen. Of this I informed them, and begged them to let the man (as I found he went in with a horse and small cart three times a week) bring out my box to me. To this request often and earnestly repeated, I got no definite answer, but no box was brought.

Jacksons Ointment was brought, it is true; and with this unguent, I was obliged to anoint myself, before a large fire (the first and last I saw while I remained there) which they had ordered to be lighted for the purpose. In this state smelling worse than a pole-cat, I tumbled with a heavy heart and streaming eyes into my worthless bed. The next morning, the sheets had taken from my body as far as they came in contact with it, the unabsorbed parts of this tartareous compound: and the smell of them and myself, was almost insupportable. I begged the woman that brought my bread and milk for breakfast, for dinner, and for supper for generally I had nothing else, and not enough of that to let me have a pair of clean sheets. It was in vain: no clean clothes of any kind were afforded me; I was left to make my own bed, sweep my own room, etc. etc. as I pleased! For more than three weeks no soul performed any kind act for me. And as they did not give orders to the man to bring out my box, I was left without a change of any kind, till the Thursday of the second week; when I asked permission to go out of my prison house, to Bristol for my box, which being granted I walked to Bristol and carried my box on my head more than four miles, without any kind of assistance. It was then no loss that my wardrobe was not extensive. As for books, I brought none with me but a small 18mo. Bible, a 12mo. edition of Youngs Night Thoughts, Prideaux Connections, and Bucks 8vo. Greek Testament.

As both the days and nights were very cold, the season then being unnaturally so, I begged to have a little fire. This was denied me, though coals were very cheap; and had it been otherwise, they were not at their expense; they were paid for out of the public collections made for that school, to which many of my friends made an annual offering.

One day having seen Mr. Simpson walking in the garden, I went to him and showed him my fingers, then bloodless through cold! He took me to the hall, showed me a cord which hung from the roof, to the end of which was fixed a cross stick; and told me to jump up and catch hold of the stick, and swing by my hands, and that would help to restore the circulation. I did so: and had been at the exercise only a few minutes, when Mrs. S. came and drove both him and myself away, under the pretense that we should dirty the floor! From this woman I received no kindness. When nearly crippled with cold, and I had stolen in the kitchen to warm myself for a few moments, if I heard her voice in the hall, I have run as a man would who is pursued in the jungles of Bengal, by a royal tiger.

This woman was equally saving of the candles, as of the coals; if my candle was not extinguished by nine o'clock, I was called to account for it. My bed not being comfortable, I did not like to be much in it, and therefore kept out of it as late, and rose from it as early as possible. To prevent Mrs. S. from seeing the reflection of the light through my window (for my prison house was opposite the school over the way), I was accustomed to set my candle on the floor behind my bureau-bed, take off my coat, and hang it on my chair-back, bring that close on the other angle, and then sit down on the floor and read!

We might enlarge these extracts for the purpose of showing the wretched situation in which Adam found himself when he first became an inmate of Kingswood, but these must suffice. Should the reader wonder at the tameness of his spirit, and be led to inquire why he submitted to such treatment, the answer is very easy. He was a youth, a stranger, without money, and without friends; he lived in expectation of soon seeing Mr. Wesley, when he expected an improvement in his situation; and for these and other reasons, he preferred suffering for awhile, rather than leave the institution and be foiled in his attempts to secure an education. Besides, he soon became acquainted with Mr. Rankin, the Superintendent of the circuit, who became his friend, and invited him to preach in a distant

neighborhood, and from this period his condition was somewhat improved.

For the sake of exercise, Adam sought and obtained permission to work in the garden connected with the School. While thus employed, one day he found a half-guinea, embedded in a clod, which he was breaking with a spade. He took the piece of money to Mr. Simpson, who stated it might be his, but did not recollect having lost any, and advised Adam to keep it until an owner was found Adam did so with reluctance. The next day learning that a Mr. Bayley had lost a half-guinea, he gave it to him, but in three days after, Mr. Bayley restored to Adam the possession of the piece, saying, Mr. Clarke, it is true that I lost half a guinea, but I am not sure that this is the half-guinea I lost; unless I was so, I could not conscientiously keep it; therefore, you must take it again. Adam replied, It is not mine; probably it is yours, therefore I cannot take it. Mr. B. replied, I cannot keep it. I have been uneasy in my mind ever since it came into my possession, and while saying this, he forced the gold into Adams hand. So the latter was obliged to keep it, and as no owner could be found for it, it formed quite an addition to the purse, that contained but three halfpence.

After having been at Kingswood about five weeks, Mr. Wesley arrived in Bristol, and Adam hastened to pay his respects to him. The old gentleman received him kindly, and asked him if he wished to devote himself to the work of the Lord. His reply was, Sir, I wish to be, and do, what God pleases. Mr. Wesley accordingly requested him to hold himself in readiness to go to Bradford circuit, where there was a vacancy, after which he laid his hands upon his head, and blessed him in the name of the Lord.

On the 27th day of September, 1782, Adam Clarke began his labors as an itinerant Methodist preacher. At one place where an appointment had been given out for him, there was a large assemblage of young persons brought together from motives of curiosity, to hear the youthful preacher. After having preached, he gave out the well-known hymn, beginning with the words, Vain delusive world adieu, etc. After singing, in which the audience all joined, Mr. Clarke addressed himself to their consciences, by reminding them of what they had sung, and inquiring whether they intended to keep the vows they had verbally made while singing the hymn. Such was the effect of this appeal to them, that during that evening and next morning thirteen young persons came to him,

desiring to know what they must do to be saved? A revival of religion immediately took place, and Methodism was thenceforth established in that village.

A circumstance shortly after this, occurred, which came very near putting an end to Mr. Clarkes classical pursuits. At one appointment where he was in the habit of preaching, he observed a Latin sentence penciled on the wall of the room where his lodgings were. Admiring the sentence, he subjoined an appropriate Latin quotation from the Aeneid of Virgil. Shortly after this, one of his colleagues on the circuit being in the same place, and also in the same room, observed the quotation, and without being able to read it, he judged it was Latin, and that Mr. Clarke had written it. Not being able to bear an equal, much less a superior in knowledge, he wrote under Mr. Clarkes quotation, the following words:

Did you write the above  
to show us you could write Latin?  
For shame! do send pride  
to hell, from whence it came.  
O, young man, improve your  
time eternitys at hand.

On Mr. Clarkes return to that place, he noticed the reproachful effusion, and in a moment of temptation, he knelt down and solemnly promised his Maker never more to meddle with Latin or Greek! The next time he saw the ignorant and conceited author of the reproof, he ventured to inquire why the latter had not reproved him privately, instead of publishing it in a manner whereby many persons might see and read it! The preacher replied, that he thought he pursued the best mode to produce a cure. Mr. Clarke then told him of the vow he had made, and was warmly applauded for so doing, by this mistaken man. For nearly four years he abandoned the study of Latin and Greek, and continued his attention principally to French and Hebrew. At length he received a letter from Mr. Wesley, in which he was charged to cultivate his mind as far as possible, and not to forget anything he had ever learned, This timely advice, broke the spell by which Mr. Clarke had been bound, and he concluded that his vow was not only rash, but wicked, and that it would be more acceptable to God to break the same, however solemnly made, than to persist in keeping it. He accordingly resumed his Greek and Latin, and neither himself nor the Church have had reason to repent his change of purpose in this respect.

After having traveled as a preacher for nearly a year, he was received into the connection by Mr. Wesley, at the Conference in Bristol, in 1783. A circumstance occurred at his examination, which shows his strict regard for truth. One of the questions asked by Mr. Wesley and indeed by all his successors, whether presidents or bishops of every preacher eligible to full connection in the Conference, was, Are you in debt? The day before Mr. Clarke's examination, he had borrowed a half-penny of a brother preacher, for the purpose of bestowing it upon a poor man. During the day, the preacher had left town before Mr. Clarke had an opportunity of paying him back the halfpenny. Knowing the question would be asked him as usual, Are you in debt? he was at a loss to know what answer to give. If he should reply negatively, it would not be strictly true; if he replied that he was, and should be asked the amount, he feared His brethren might think him a fool. He, however, relieved himself from the dilemma by replying, Not one penny.

During the eleven months he was on Bradford circuit, he preached five hundred and six times, besides delivering a large number of exhortations, etc., which shows to some extent the arduous labors of the early Methodist preachers. At the Bristol Conference, Mr. Clarke was appointed to Norwich circuit, having the venerable Richard Whatcoat, afterwards Bishop Whatcoat, for his colleague. The circuit was poor, and could not afford Mr. Clarke a horse. He consequently was often obliged to walk to his appointments, and carry his own saddle-bags. The next year he was appointed to St. Austell circuit, in Cornwall, a distance of about four hundred miles from Norwich. He had but a guinea and a half-crown, to bear his expenses to that distant field of labor, but he set out trusting in the Lord. Soon after his arrival on his circuit, he went to one of his appointments, and as directed, called at the house of a farmer P. for entertainment. When he entered, he found only the good woman within, who gave him for his dinner cold apple-pie and cream, this being the best the house afforded. After satisfying himself, he went to the stable to clean his horse, and waited till the farmer came in from the field. The following dialogue then took place: Who art thou? I am a Methodist preacher; my name is Adam Clarke. And what is thee coming here for? To preach to yourself, your family, and your neighbors. Who sent thee here? I received the plan from Mr. W. (the superintendent of the circuit,) and your place stands for tonight and tomorrow morning. I expect other friends tomorrow, and thou shalt not stay here. Why, will you not have the preaching? No, I will have none of thy preaching, nor any of thy brethren. But will it not be wrong to deprive your family and neighbors

of what may be profitable to them, though you may not desire it? Thee shalt not stay here, I will have no more Methodist preaching. Well, I will inform Mr. W. of it, and I dare say he will not send any more, if you desire it not; but as I am a stranger in the country, and know not my way, and it is now toward evening, I hope you will give me a nights lodging, and I will, please God, set off tomorrow morning. I tell thee thou shalt not stay here. What, would you turn a stranger out into a strange country, of which he knows nothing, and so late in the evening, too? Where was thee last night? I was at Palperr. Then go there. It is out of my reach; besides I have to preach at Bodmin tomorrow evening. Then go to Bodmin. I have never yet been there; am not expected there tonight; and know no person in the place: pray give me the shelter of your roof for the night. I tell thee thou shalt not stay here. Are you really in earnest? I am. Well, then, if I must go, you can direct me the way to Ruthernbridge; I was there on Thursday, and am sure I shall be welcome again. Thou must inquire the road to Bodmin. How far is Ruthernbridge hence? Almost fifteen or sixteen miles, so thou hadst best be getting off. I will set off immediately.

On being thus denied a nights lodging, Mr. Clarke repacked his loose articles and saddled his horse, the farmer all the while looking on, but offering to lend no assistance. Having mounted his horse Mr. Clarke said, Now sir, I am a stranger, and you have refused me the common rites of hospitality; I am a messenger of the Lord Jesus, coming to you, your family and your neighbors with the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and you have refused to receive me: for this, you must account at the bar of God. In the meantime I must act as my Lord has commanded me. Remember a messenger of peace came to your house with the Gospel, and you have rejected both him and his message! So saying, he shook off the dust from the soles of both feet as a testimony against the inhospitable farmer. The result off his conduct was the withdrawal of Methodist preaching from the neighborhood, ruin came upon the man, his family became corrupt, and he himself soon died.

Mr. Clarke, while on this circuit, met with a severe accident by the stumbling of his horse which nearly deprived him of life, and the effects of which he felt for several years after; although, by the goodness of God, he was not prevented thereby from attending to his work. At the Conference of 1785, held in London, Mr. Clarke was appointed to Plymouth Dock circuit, where a secession of some fifty members had taken place from the Society. Such was Mr. Clarkes influence, that most

of the seceders returned in the course of the year: and at the close thereof, the Society was found to have doubled its number. In the meanwhile, Mr. Clarke was improving every leisure moment in pursuing his classical studies. He also through the kindness of friends who appreciated his thirst for knowledge, became the owner of a few valuable classical works, which greatly assisted him in his researches. At this time, his salary as a preacher was only twelve pounds (about \$50) per annum, so that he could not from his own resources purchase such books as were necessary; but Providence furnished the means through the liberality of friends, and frequently in the most unexpected manner. In consequence of Mr. Clarke's knowledge of the French language, he was, at the Conference of 1786, appointed by Mr. Wesley to the Island of Jersey, one of the Norman Isles, where he was most hospitably received and entertained in the family of Henry De Jersey, Esq. The next year, Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke visited these islands, and on their return were accompanied by Mr. Clarke. He was, however, reappointed to the same field of labor, and remained there until 1789, when he was appointed to Bristol. In 1788, Mr. Clarke was united in marriage to Miss Mary Cooke, of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, a young lady of fervent piety, a highly intellectual mind, and withal, a strict Methodist. This union was followed by the best possible consequences to both parties; and was attended with no loss of honor to the lady or her friends, although some of the latter opposed the marriage, and in fact delayed it for a year, because they imagined that she would be degraded by an alliance with a poor Methodist preacher.

In 1790, Mr. Clarke was appointed to Dublin. This was an important appointment, inasmuch as the preacher in Dublin was considered Mr. Wesley's representative in Ireland, and had charge of all the circuits and stations in the kingdom. While in Dublin, he heard of the death of his father and friend, Mr. Wesley. The news, though not entirely unexpected, was so affecting to the sensitive mind of Mr. Clarke, that he could scarcely read the account of his death. After remaining in Dublin one year he was appointed to Manchester circuit, and while in the latter place he formed the well-known Strangers Friend Society, which as it became known was introduced into many of the cities and large towns of England.

Mr. Clarke remained in Manchester two years, and in 1793, was appointed to Liverpool. While in this place and while returning from an evening appointment in the country, he was attacked by several Roman

Catholic ruffians who had waylaid him. He was in company with his brother and another friend at the time. As they passed the place where the ruffians lay concealed, Mr. Clarke was struck by a large stone on the head which caused a deep wound. He was immediately carried to a neighboring house and was left in charge of the friend, while his brother ran back to pursue the assailants. He found them and charged them with the act. He had them arrested, and then returned to attend to his wounded brother. The inhabitants of the house on hearing that Mr. Clarke was a Methodist preacher, and that the men who had assailed him were Roman Catholics, and being Roman Catholics themselves declared that he was well served, and that it was a pity they had not killed him. His friends seeing how matters stood, had him carried to his own house in Liverpool, where he was laid up for a month in consequence of his wound. The ruffians were at last released from confinement through the merciful disposition of Mr. Clarke, who refused to prosecute them for the assault. They both, however, soon came to an untimely and tragical end.

In 1795, Mr. Clarke was appointed to the London circuit, where he continued three years; and while here he commenced taking notes for his Commentary, which may, in fact, be considered as the beginning of that literary career, which afterwards made him so famous as a scholar and as an author. We are not, however, to suppose that Mr. Clarke's literary pursuits rendered him less diligent as a pastor. It has been computed that during his three years stay in London, he walked at least seven thousand miles in attending upon his pastoral duties. After his three years in London had expired he was appointed to Bristol, and while here he had the misfortune to lose his beloved father by death. Mr. Clarke senior, had remained a few years previously with the younger members of his family from Ireland to Manchester, at which place he died, and where his remains lie interred. As an instance of filial affection, it is recorded that ever after when Mr. Adam Clarke was passing the burying ground where his father lay interred, whether riding or walking, he would reverently uncover his head, and keep it uncovered while passing by.

The greatest difficulty Mr. Clarke had to contend with while writing his Commentary and other valuable works, was the want of books. At this period he was greatly in want of an Arabic Dictionary. There was but one work which he could obtain to supply this deficiency in this respect, but to obtain it he must pay forty pounds sterling (nearly \$200). Not having the money he tried to borrow it of a friend, but the latter



considering him almost insane to pay so much money for a single book, refused to lend him the desired sum. He was, however, more successful in another direction, and the book was obtained.

Mr. Clarke now became an author on an extensive scale. In 1800, he translated and published *Sturms Reflections*, a very valuable work. In 1802, he published a *Bibliographical Dictionary* in six volumes. About the same time he published *A Succinct Account of Polyglott Bibles*, and also *A Succinct Account of the Principal Editions of the Greek Testament*. All these works demanded great labor and research, and for this no man was better fitted by nature and education than Mr. Clarke. After remaining in Bristol three years, Mr. Clarke was appointed again to Liverpool, and while here he projected the formation of the *Philological Society*; but his arduous labors were undermining his constitution. Hence, in 1802, he was obliged to repair to London to seek medical advice. His physician plainly told him that unless he would abstain totally from reading, writing, preaching, etc., in less than a year he would be a dead man. God, however, saw fit to spare him to a good old age. To add to his afflictions while in Liverpool, he lost his brother by death; but God was his supporter and his strength amidst all his troubles and afflictions.

After leaving Liverpool, Mr. Clarke went to Manchester, where he met his daughter Agnes, and while here in 1804, he published *Memoirs of the Ancient Israelites*, and in the following year, he issued a new edition of the same work. On leaving Manchester he was again stationed in London, and in 1806, was elected President of the Conference, contrary to his expressed wishes. The *British and Foreign Bible Society* also, elected him a member of its executive committee, a station for which he was well qualified by his extensive knowledge of the ancient languages. His duties in this department were principally confined to the printing of the Bible in the Arabic tongue; and so well were his labors appreciated in this direction, that the committee requested his acceptance of fifty pounds, which they sent to him in the most handsome manner, but which he peremptorily declined to accept, and which he immediately returned with great respect! During the year of his Presidency of the connection, he visited his first circuit, and preached in the same chapel where he preached his first sermon, as an itinerant, about twenty-four years previously. Old scenes were of course presented afresh to his memory, and he distinctly remembered hearing a man say when he first

presented himself, as the youthful and diffident itinerant, Tut, tut, what will Mr. Wesley send us next?

On the 31st of January, 1807, Mr. Clarke received in the most flattering manner, the degree of Master of Arts, from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, and in a year front that time, the same College as a further testimonial of esteem, and appreciation of his merits, bestowed on him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. The diplomas were sent to him, the College refusing to accept the customary fee given on such occasions.

In 1808, Dr. Clarke received an invitation from the British government, to undertake the completion of a collection of State Papers, embracing all the leagues, treaties, alliances, capitulations, and confederacies, which had been entered into by the British Crown and other States, or princes. This voluminous work had been commenced in 1693, and had been published from time to time, down to the year 1717, since which time, little appears to have been done toward its completion. As this was a work of great importance, it became necessary for the government to select one of the ablest men in the nation to make the completion. The selection fell on Dr. Clarke, who was requested by the secretary of the Commission, to accept the appointment. The Doctor refused on the ground that his researches had always been directed to other and totally different subjects. The Secretary smiled, and requested him to have the goodness to try. Before coming to a conclusion in reference to the matter, he resolved to ask the advice of the London Wesleyan preachers at their meeting at City Road Chapel. Some objected that it would interfere with his ministerial duties; others, that it was a trick of the devil to prevent his usefulness; others, that it was a call of Providence to greater usefulness, and advising him to accept the appointment by all means. As the most of his brethren were of the latter opinion, he reluctantly concluded to accept the appointment. He was immediately appointed Sub-commissioner, with authority to employ all the assistants necessary to the completion of the work, and with liberty to examine all the public records necessary to the undertaking. This work in which Doctor Clarke engaged was completed by him in ten years, to the entire satisfaction of the government.

While thus rendering his valuable services to the government, he by no means neglected his duties as a Methodist preacher. He attended all his appointments, visited all the classes and proceeded with the preparation of his Commentary, as time and circumstances would allow. In 1810, the

first part of the work was published, and the receipt of a copy thereof acknowledged in the most flattering terms by the Right Honorable the Speaker of the House of Commons.

In 1811, Dr. Clarke and son visited Ireland. He went to the house where his father lived, when the Methodists first came into the place, and where Adam lived when he was converted. The house had now become old and dilapidated. Dr. Clarke asked permission of the woman to enter. She replied, It is too mean a place for such a gentleman as you to enter. Good woman, replied the doctor, do not say so; I have spent several years in this very house. The woman was astonished! He entered, and before taking his leave gave each of the children a piece of silver.

The first part of his Commentary, was generally received by a discerning public according to its real merits. There were, however, a few who took exception to the Doctors interpretations, especially to his rendering of the term serpent in Gen. iii. 1, by another word, which he thought more significant a monkey. The objections of these critics, called forth from the Rev. Richard Reece, who was a great admirer of Dr. Clarke, the following ingenious lines:

The Rev. Doctor Adam Clarke asserts,  
It could not be a serpent tempted Eve,  
But a gay monkey, whose fine mimic arts  
And fopperies, were most likely to deceive.  
Dogmatic commentators still hold out,  
A serpent, not a monkey, tempted madam;  
And which shall we believe? Without a doubt  
None knows so well who tempted Eve as Adam.

In 1813, Dr. Clarke was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians, an honor which was richly deserved, and greatly appreciated by the Doctor himself. In 1815, the state of his health rendered it necessary for him to leave London, and retire into the country in the neighborhood of Liverpool, where he had purchased an estate, and which he called Millbrook. At this place he built a Methodist chapel at his own expense, and as the winter of 1816 was very severe, hundreds of sailors in Liverpool were without means of support. Dr. Clarke immediately on hearing of the distress of this neglected class of men, prepared some untenanted cottages on his estate, for the reception of twenty of them, and provided them with regular meals in his kitchen every day during the winter. He gave them also some slight employment to keep them from idleness.

In the summer of 1816, the Doctor made another visit to Ireland, as also to Scotland, and on his return was warmly greeted by his family and dependents. In 1817, he was elected member of the American Antiquarian Society. In 1818, he took under his charge and tuition two young heathen priests, who had just been brought over from the island of Ceylon, for the purpose of being instructed in the theology and science of Christendom. Many anecdotes are related of these youths, while under Dr. Clarke's care. One or two we will give: They had been instructed in the Doctor's family, that in winter the ground would be covered with snow, and that water would be frozen, so that it would bear a person to walk on its surface. They were, however, incredulous about these matters, until one morning in the beginning of winter, they arose from their beds, and to their utter astonishment, the world was white before and around them! Surprised and fearful, they ran for the Doctor, who soon allayed their fears by going out with them into the garden, and taking some of the snow in his hands, taught them its nature and properties. Soon after, the fish-pond was frozen over, and this also was a matter of astonishment. They could not be prevailed to venture upon it, until the Doctor and the ladies of the family had set the example. These priests remained for two years in the family of Dr. Clarke, and during that period had been soundly converted to the Christian faith, and received at the hands of the Doctor, in Richmond Chapel, Liverpool, the rite of Christian baptism, in the presence of a large congregation. As these youths had been committed to his care by Sir A. Johnstone, Chief Justice of the island of Ceylon, it became necessary on the appointment of his successor, Sir Richard Ottley, to the same distinguished office, to allow these Cingalese converts to return to their own land, which they did after shedding many tears of sorrow, at being obliged to leave the kind-hearted Doctor and his family.

In July, 1821, Dr. Clarke was elected member of the Royal Irish Academy, an institution on whose list of members were enrolled some of the most honorable and distinguished names in the land. In July of 1822, he was for the third time elected President of the Wesleyan Conference, a mark of honor which he esteemed more highly than all the literary degrees which had been conferred upon him. In 1823, he was elected Member of the Geological Society of London, and during the same year, became an original member of the Royal Asiatic Society. To pass over a portion of Dr. Clarke's history, we find him in 1825, the honored guest of his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. This nobleman was ever the

patron of sound learning, and a great admirer of Dr. Clarke. On the occasion just referred to, he had been invited by the Duke to meet another distinguished nobleman, the Duke of Hamilton, at the palace of the former, for the purpose of a mutual introduction; and without entering into details in reference to the honor shown him at this visit, we cannot avoid contrasting his present position in society, flattered and honored by royalty itself, with the condition in which he found himself when he first arrived in England, and especially on his arrival at Kingswood School, where he had literally to beg for a place to stay, and for a bed whereon to rest his wearied limbs.

Previous to this, he had sold his estate at Millbrook, and had purchased another in the vicinity of London, which he called Haydon Hall; and at this latter place in 1826, he finished his Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, a work on which he had been engaged forty years of his precious life. The last sentence of that work was written upon his knees, and when completed he returned fervent thanks to God, that his life had been spared to see the completion of a work which had cost him so many wearisome hours of labor and research, without aid from any person, not even an amanuensis. On the completion of his Commentary, he was invited by his children to a family dinner, at the house of one of his sons. After dinner a splendid silver vase was brought in, and placed at the head of the table. This vase had been prepared by his children as a solemn offering upon the occasion, without the Doctors knowledge. The Doctors eldest son arose, and uncovered the vase, and with an appropriate and affectionate address, he in the name of each child in the family, offered it to their revered parent. The good Doctor was taken by surprise; for a few moments he sat incapable of utterance; then regarding them all, he rose, and spreading out his hands, pronounced a fathers blessing upon them, individually and collectively. Such a scene would be worthy the attention of the artist.

In June, 1826, the Doctor, accompanied by one of his sons, started on a visit to the Shetland Isles, for the purpose of promoting the good of the Wesleyan Missions in that much neglected portion of the British Isles, On the voyage, they experienced a tremendous storm; to add to their danger, they were pursued by a royal revenue cutter, who supposed them to be, engaged in the smuggling trade. The cutter made a signal, which the other vessel, on account of the derangement of its rigging, was unable to answer. Finding the signal unanswered, the cutter fired a blank cartridge; still the flag was entangled in the shrouds. The cutter was on

the point of firing into her, when discovering the cause of her failure to reply to the signal, and also that she was engaged in the Shetland Island service, suffered her to proceed. After reaching the port of his destination, and spending a short time with the simple, yet hospitable inhabitants of those Islands, he returned again to England, by way of Scotland. Having acquired by his visit to Shetland a much better knowledge of the wants of the people, he exerted himself to awaken an interest in the bosoms of Christians at home, for the spiritual welfare of those distant sheep; and during the next summer, accompanied by several ministers, and other gentlemen, he made a second visit to the islands. During this second visit, he laid the corner-stone of a new Wesleyan chapel, and after remaining nearly a month, returned with his company to England.

In 1830, Dr. Clarke was elected a Fellow of the Eclectic Society of London, an honor conferred only on the most eminent of scientific men. In April of this year, he visited Ireland again, and towards the close of this year we find him exerting himself to establish schools among the peasantry of his native island, which he subsequently succeeded in doing, and which he fostered with a parent's care.

During the year 1831, and until the close of his life, Dr. Clarke sustained a supernumerary relation to the Conference. This relation was not sought by him; indeed, it was given him in opposition to his own feelings and judgment in the matter, a circumstance which somewhat afflicted him. It however gave him a little more liberty to travel where he chose. In the latter part of the year, he received an affectionate letter from the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, inviting him to visit America. To this invitation he was obliged, through the multiplicity of engagements, to return a negative answer, but assuring the worthy brethren who extended the invitation, that he loved the Church they represented, and respected and wished well to the State of which they were citizens, and asserting his belief that their nation is destined to be the mightiest and happiest nation of the globe, and their Church the most extensive and pure in the universe.

In the spring of 1832, Dr. Clarke again visited Ireland, for the purpose of seeing to his Irish schools, but while here he became seriously indisposed, so much so, as to unfit him for active employment. After a partial recovery from his attack of rheumatism, he proceeded to visit

several places, but learning that his son, who had started from home to attend to the Doctor during his illness and accompany him home, had met with a serious accident on the way, by the upsetting of the stage-coach he hastened to Belfast, where he took passage in a steamer for Liverpool; but such was his weakness that he did not reach his home, until the 2d of July. At this time, the cholera was raging in Liverpool, and the session of the Conference was to be held in that town during this year. Dr. Clarke, notwithstanding his bodily infirmities, had a great desire to attend the Conference. Strong objections were interposed by his family to his going to Liverpool. Believing, however, that duty required his presence, he went there, and found that many of his dear friends were falling victims to the pestilence. He preached the annual sermon at the request of the Conference, and received as a supernumerary, an appointment to Windsor with a note appended to his name, that he was not bound to that circuit, but was respectfully requested to visit all parts of the Connection, and labor as strength and convenience would permit.

On the 25th of August, having promised to preach at a place called Bayswater, a few miles from Haydon Hall, on the next day, Sabbath, he rode out in a chaise with his friend Mr. Hobbs, who called for him. On his way to Bayswater, he was quite cheerful, but on his arrival, he appeared quite languid and wearied. During the night, his indisposition increased so that he passed a painful night. On Sunday morning he arose early, and at six o'clock sent for Mr. Hobbs, who found him with his great-coat on, and his traveling bag in his hand. Dr. Clarke informed Mr. Hobbs, that he wanted to go home immediately, as he could not possibly preach that day. Mr. Hobbs went to procure an easy carriage, but while absent the Doctor became quite cold and distressed, so that his removal was out of the question. Physicians were called in, who pronounced it a case of cholera. Mrs. Clarke was sent for, and all that love and affection could do to retain the spirit, was done, but all in vain; a little before midnight he closed his eyes in death. And thus ended the mortal career of Adam Clarke, on the 26th of August, 1832, in the seventieth year [or seventy-second year if born in 1760] of his age, and fiftieth of his ministry as a Wesleyan preacher. His remains were interred in the burying-ground of City Road Chapel, near those of the Rev. John Wesley.

Thus fell a man, who from the most obscure and humble station in life, pressed his way onward and upward to a position in society, where he could literally claim to be the companion of princes and nobles; of the

wise, the great and the good among men. His best eulogy may be found in the words of his eldest son, the Rev. J. B. B. Clarke: My God, I bless thee, that I had such a father.



## **PUBLISHERS NOTES**

### **CONTACTING AGES SOFTWARE**

For more information regarding the AGES Digital Library, whether it be about pricing structure, trades for labor or books, current listings, policies — or if you wish to offer suggestions — please write us at...

AGES SOFTWARE • PO BOX 1926 • ALBANY OR 97321-0509

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE DIGITAL LIBRARY?**

The Library consists of books and other literature of enduring value to the Christian community. Our goal since the beginning has been to “make the words of the wise available to all —inexpensively.” We have had in mind the student, teacher, pastor, missionary, evangelist and church worker who needs a high quality reference library, one that is portable, practical and low in cost.

### **ON WHAT BASIS WERE THEY SELECTED?**

Volumes in the Library have been added based on several criteria: usefulness, user request, breadth of content or reputation. This has meant that the collection is eclectic and may include works that contain positions with which we at AGES Software do not agree. This paradox is consistent with our design, however: any useful library consists of books on a wide variety of subjects and sometimes includes information for reference purposes only. The AGES Digital Library hopefully will reflect — as its components are released — the necessary breadth and depth for a solid personal library.

### **HOW WERE THESE VOLUMES PREPARED?**

Most of the books and documents have been scanned or typed from works that have entered the public domain. Some have been reproduced by special arrangement with the current publisher or holder of the copyright. They have been put in a format that can be readily used by computer users everywhere.

### **ARE THESE EXACT COPIES OF THE ORIGINAL WORKS?**

Usually not. In the process of preparing the Library, we at AGES Software have taken the liberty to make certain edits to the text. As we discovered errors in spelling, certain archaic forms, typographical mistakes or omissions in the original we have done our best to correct them. Our intention has been to remove anything that might obscure the meaning or otherwise detract from the usefulness of a book for the modern reader. We

have, however, attempted to retain the essential content and thoughts of the original — even when we found ourselves in disagreement.

### **WHY IS THE DIGITAL LIBRARY COPYRIGHTED?**

While much of the content is in the public domain, the transcription, form and edits of these works took many people many hours to accomplish. We ask each purchaser to respect this labor and refrain from giving away copies of this or any volume of the Library without written permission from AGES Software. Our policy, however, is to work with each individual or organization to see that the price of Digital Library volumes not be a hindrance in their reaching the hands of those who need them. If price is an obstacle, please contact us at the address above and present your situation.