

JOSEPH KINGHORN'S (1766–1832) EDUCATIONAL VISION

Baiyu Song

Research Assistant to the Director of Andrew Fuller Centre

Toronto Baptist Seminary

The significance of Canada Baptist College (1836–1849) has been well-recognised.¹ However, after the College's closure, many have forgotten its connection with an English Baptist minister, Joseph Kinghorn. Though the Norwich minister never saw the rise and fall of the Canadian academy, Kinghorn played significant roles in the life of the school's founders: Newton Bosworth (1778–1848),² John Gilmour (1792–1869), John Mockett Cramp (1796–1881),³ and even Benjamin Davies (1814–1875).⁴

When Bosworth, Gilmour, Cramp, and Davies moved to Upper and Lower Canada in the 1830s and 40s, they also brought the English Particular Baptist tradition to Central Canada. Thus, their efforts in Montreal were construed as an attempt to extend the denominational college movement from England and

¹On the formation and the fall of Canada Baptist College, see anonymous, "Canada Baptist College (1836–1849)," [http://web.ncf.ca/fm120/History/Bosworth/Canada_Baptist_College_\(1836-1849\).htm](http://web.ncf.ca/fm120/History/Bosworth/Canada_Baptist_College_(1836-1849).htm); Theo T. Gibson, *Robert Alexander Fyfe: His Contemporaries and His Influence* (Burlington, ON: Welch, 1988), 17–43; T. A. Higgins, *The Life of John Mockett Cramp, D.D. 1796–1881. Late President of Acadia College; Author of "The Council of Trent," "Baptist History," Etc.* (Montreal: W. Drysdale, 1887), 83–110; William H. Brackney, *Congregation and Campus: Baptists in Higher Education* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 135–136; Anonymous, "Canada," in *The Canada Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Register* 1 no. 1 (June 1837): 17–22; George W. Campbell, "Canada Baptist College, 1838–1849: The Generation and Demise of a Pioneering Dream in Canadian Theological Education" (ThM Thesis, Knox College, University of Toronto, 1974).

²For Bosworth, Kinghorn was the man who argued with his friend Robert Hall, Jr. (1763–1831) over the term of communion for more than a decade. Bosworth also worked with Kinghorn as a committee member of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), especially during the time of the Serampore controversy (1827). See Hall's letters to Bosworth, "XIX To Mr. Newton Bosworth, Cambridge [August 26, 1806]," and "XXXVII To Mr. Newton Bosworth, Cambridge [April 23, 1813]," in Olinthus Gregory, ed., *The Works of Robert Hall, A.M. With a Brief Memoir of His Life by Dr Gregory: And Observations on His Character as a Preacher, by John Foster*, 4th ed. (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1835), V: 447–450, 482–484. On Bosworth, see F. H. Armstrong, "The Rev. Newton Bosworth: Pioneer Settler on Young Street," *Ontario History* 58.3 (1966): 163–171; Glenn Tomlinson, *From Scotland to Canada: The Life of Pioneer Missionary Alexander Stewart* (Guelph, ON: Joshua, 2008), 221–224, 299. On the Serampore controversy, see "Narrative of the actions taken by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society in the Serampore controversy with Joshua Marshman in 1827," *New Baptist Miscellany, and Particular Baptist Magazine* 1 (April 1827): 161–165.

³When Gilmour was a student at Horton (1816–1820), and Cramp at Stepney (1814–1817), they heard sermons preached by Kinghorn, which were directly addressed to the 'young ministers.' In fact, Cramp's signature can also be found in the letters drawn by students who requested these sermons to be published (Martin Hood Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn, of Norwich* [Norwich: Fletcher and Alexander, 1855], 353). Further, Cramp had a personal relationship with Kinghorn, as he frequently wrote to the Norwich pastor asking for recommendations for books and opinions (Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn*, 397–398).

⁴Benjamin Davies studied at Bristol and later received a PhD from Leipzig in 1838. While at Bristol, he studied under Thomas Steffe Crisp (1788–1868), who was baptised by Kinghorn and accompanied Kinghorn on the missionary society's second expedition trip to Scotland. Wilkin wrote that Crisp was baptised by Kinghorn at Norwich in July 1817. In a letter, Crisp wrote, 'I gladly embrace the opportunity of thanking you for the Christian kindness and friendship with which the whole of your conduct towards me has been marked. I shall always be grateful for your readiness in affording me the aid I requested, and shall always think with pleasure of your deportment towards me, during my visit at Norwich' (Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn*, 365–366). On Kinghorn's second trip to Scotland, see Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn*, 383–388.

Wales overseas. This movement can be traced back to the formation of Bristol Academy in 1720.⁵ With the influence of the Evangelical Revival, a renewed interest in religious education can be found in the promotion of Sunday schools, as well as the founding of Horton (1806) and Stepney (1810) in England, and Abergavenny (1807), Pontypool (1836), and Haverfordwest (1839) in Wales.

Compared to the beginning of the century, when the leading Baptist theologian John Gill (1697–1771) remarked that in general the English Calvinistic Baptists “were unhappily ignorant of the importance of learning,” the change was remarkable.⁶ D. M. Himbury rightfully noted that “it was the ‘Evangelical awakening and the rise of Fullerism’ and the subsequent revitalisation of the English Baptist community that provided a critical impetus for the development of the Baptist academies.”⁷ Himbury was not alone, as such a thesis was further expanded by R. Philip Roberts, Nigel Wheeler, Keith S. Grant, and Anthony R. Cross.⁸

Joseph Kinghorn lived in this time of transition. Furthermore, according to John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825), Kinghorn was “one of the most learned men in our denomination, and a very excellent, godly man.”⁹ The fact that Kinghorn preached sermons at all three Baptist academies in England was uncommon and significant. Yet, how representative Kinghorn’s educational vision was among the Particular Baptists, will be the subject of further investigation. Following a brief biographical sketch of Joseph Kinghorn, the remainder of this essay focuses on Kinghorn’s understanding of theological education, as expressed particularly in his three published sermons and private correspondence.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joseph Kinghorn was born to David (1737–1822) and his second wife Elizabeth Jopling Kinghorn (1737/8–1810) on January 17, 1766 at Gateshead-on-Tyne, which is on the southern bank of the River Tyne opposite Newcastle-upon-Tyne. David came from a Scottish Presbyterian family, and Elizabeth an English Baptist

⁵See Norman S. Moon, *Education for Ministry: Bristol Baptist College 1679–1979* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1979); Michael A. G. Haykin, “‘With light, beauty, and power’: Educating English Baptists in the Long Eighteenth Century,” in *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Stephen L. Copson and Peter J. Morden (Didcot, Oxon: The Baptist Historical Society, 2017), 177–203; Anthony R. Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival Among English Particular Baptists* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017); Brackney, *Congregation and Campus*, 103–139; John H. Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (Didcot, Oxon: The Baptist Historical Society, 1994), 340–368.

⁶Samuel Davies, *The Reverend Samuel Davies Abroad: The Diary of a Journey to England and Scotland, 1753–55*, edited by George William Pilcher (Urbana/Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 65, as quoted by Haykin in “‘With light, beauty, and power,’” 177. Another example of this early disinterest in formal theological education is Robert Parsons, a Baptist leader and stonemason in Bath. See Robert Parsons, *Abilities for the Ministry of the Gospel from God Alone. A Discourse on 2 Corinthians iii.6* (Bath, 1774). Also see Kerry J. Birch, *Waters of the Son: Baptists in Georgian Bath* ([s.l.] Kappa Beta, 2009).

⁷Haykin, “‘With light, beauty, and power,’” 202.

⁸R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1989); Cross, *Useful Learning*; Keith S. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013); Nigel David Wheeler, “Eminent Spirituality and Eminent Usefulness: Andrew Fuller’s (1754–1815) Pastoral Theology in his Ordination Sermons” (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2009).

⁹Anonymous, “Original Letter of Dr. Ryland,” *The Spirit of the Pilgrim* 2.6 (June 1829): 343.

family.¹⁰ Soon after they were married, David's study of the Bible led him to credobaptist convictions and he joined the Baptist chapel at Tuthill Stairs, Newcastle. Three months later, after Joseph was born, David Kinghorn preached his first sermon. After a period of convictional struggles, David affirmed his pastoral calling and became an assistant pastor at his church. In 1770, David received an invitation from the Baptist church in Bishop Burton, Yorkshire, "to preach there, with a view to the pastoral office."¹¹ From 1771 until 1799, David Kinghorn laboured as a Baptist village minister.

Joseph Kinghorn enjoyed his childhood in Bishop Burton, and was sent to school on March 6, 1775.¹² In December 1779, David Kinghorn was informed that a Mr. Cliffe at Hull, "a clock and watch-maker ... was willing to take Joseph, then nearly fourteen, as an apprentice."¹³ Though the apprenticeship did not last long, as Joseph later moved to work with Joseph Denton, another clock-maker in Hull, Joseph's removal from home was significant for his parents. No matter where Joseph was, either in Hull, Newcastle, or Norwich, David and Elizabeth expressed their concerns and love for their boy in letters. This two-decade-long practice of letter-writing is significant, as it provides contemporary readers with a glimpse of Dissenting family life in the eighteenth century.

Unlike many later evangelicals in the nineteenth century, Joseph Kinghorn did not have a dramatic experience of conversion. Growing up in a genuine Christian family, Joseph was deeply influenced by the teaching and examples of his parents.¹⁴ David baptized his son on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1783. A year later, Joseph was sent to Bristol to study with Caleb Evans (1737–1791), and it was there that Kinghorn met and developed friendships with Samuel Pearce (1766–1799), James Hinton (1761–1823) and Anthony Robinson (1762–1827). With financial support from the Baptist Education Fund, Joseph completed his

¹⁰On the importance of the Jopling family among the English Baptists, see David Douglas, *History of the Baptists in the North of England from 1648 to 1845* (London, 1846).

¹¹Terry Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1995), I:16.

¹²Wilkin recorded an account of Elizabeth Kinghorn's journey to Bishop Burton in a letter written to one of her friends, "I like the place very well, and the people, and let me not forget to tell you that my husband had never such good health since I knew him, and is much fresher coloured of his face; Joseph [then 4 years old] thrives very well, and grows till you would scarce know him, he will be nothing but a farmer, he is so busy every day with loading corn, and one thing or another, till he goes as weary to bed as a little thresher, but whenever he meets with a little offence, he is for coming back to Newcastle again. Dear friend, we are very comfortably situated as to the world; my life was far happier than when I was at Newcastle, as the Lord is pleased to bless our family with health, which is the greatest blessing we can enjoy in this life: oh! may we walk worthy of this, and every other mercy we enjoy." Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I:18–19.

¹³Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I: 27. In this process, John Beatson (1743–1798), minister of the Baptist congregation at Salt-house Lane, Hull, was instrumental.

¹⁴As early as 1781, Joseph had expressed his Christian affections, which was possibly a consequence of his studying of the Bible. In his letter to David and Elizabeth on May 9, 1781, Joseph wrote "beautifully": "I have reason to thank God for protecting and preserving me from evil, he only can protect us and guide us in the right way. It is a great blessing when our hearts' desire is after the Lord, and then all sublunary things are felt to be in subjection to him; then we find most peace in our minds—real, not imaginary peace." (Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I:31) Or in a letter on July 18, 1781 to his parents, Joseph wrote, "...happy are we, happy am I, when I find the light of God's countenance; he has never deceived me in withholding his blessing: no, nor ever will, so long as I can earnestly seek him, I hope I may truly say, I have found the above true. Who then, for the perishing joys of earth, would part with the eternal joys if heaven? I hope the Lord, of his great goodness, will keep me from doing this..." (Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I:32) On evangelical conversion in general, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Miyon Chung, "Conversion and Sanctification," in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, ed. Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109–24.

training in 1788 and immediately entered the ministry. From May 1788 to March 1789, Joseph preached regularly at Milton Street Baptist church at Fairford, Gloucestershire. However, due to theological differences (i.e. Antinomianism and Hyper-Calvinism), Joseph left the church. He received a call from St. Mary's Baptist Church at Norwich on March 28, 1789.¹⁵ On January 17, 1790, Kinghorn accepted the call, and he was received as a member on February 14, 1790. At Joseph's ordination which took place on May 20, 1790, his father delivered the pastoral charge from 1 Timothy 4:16.

Though the Norwich pastor was called twice to leave his pastorate for the principalship at the newly-founded Baptist academies—Northern (1804) and Stepney (1809)—Joseph turned them down with the conviction that his primary calling was that of a pastor.¹⁶ For forty-three years, Joseph Kinghorn faithfully laboured in the gospel ministry, particularly in preaching. As his hearers observed: "His sermons were the result primarily of his diligent and prayerful attention to the subject; and more remotely, of the immense amount of reading and study, to which he had devoted himself."¹⁷

Contrary to his father, Joseph Kinghorn was remembered as both a pastor and a scholar. During his lifetime, he learned various languages, including Hebrew, Greek, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Latin, and German. With his linguistic abilities and rabbinic knowledge, Kinghorn edited and reprinted Scottish scholar Rev. Prof. James Robertson's (1714–1795) *Clavis Pentateuchi* (1770) in 1824.¹⁸ Kinghorn's dedication to learning earned him a reputation "in his own denomination ... inferior only to Dr. Gill in an intimate acquaintance with Rabbinical literature."¹⁹

Supplementing his domestic ministry and studies, Kinghorn was also actively involved in the Baptist Missionary Society (including his two expeditions to Scotland on behalf of the BMS in 1818 and 1822), the London Society for Promoting Christianity among Jews (two of his sermons at the Jewish chapel in London were printed), as well as in local church plantings. He was also a member of the Norwich Speculative Society, where he defended the Christian faith and presented the gospel to local intellectuals.

As an apologist, Kinghorn defended Christian orthodoxy—in particular, the doctrine of the Trinity and divinity of Christ—as well as Baptist ecclesiology. With conviction and love, Kinghorn "fit to live, was greatly fit to die!"²⁰

¹⁵The church originally wished to call Thomas Dunn (d. 1833), who was Kinghorn's classmate at Bristol. Dunn visited and supplied the pulpit at St. Mary's after Rees David's (1749–1788) sudden death until Lady Day, March 25, 1789. According to the church minute book, Dunn suggested to call Kinghorn instead. At the time, St. Mary's has 700–800 regular attendants and 120 members. The church minute book records that Kinghorn received an invitation to stay for six months on May 10, 1789. It was agreed that Kinghorn could visit Yorkshire from May 19 to July 17, during which time Dan Williams of London supplied the pulpit. The church then decided to invite Kinghorn for pastoral charged on December 3, 1789. Special note is indicated that at this occasion woman members were allowed to vote.

¹⁶See his correspondence with Joseph Gutteridge, which was transcribed and recorded by Edward Steane, in his *Memoir of the Life of Joseph Gutteridge, Esq. of Denmark Hill, Surrey* (London: Jackson and Walford, 1850), 78–107.

¹⁷Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I:444.

¹⁸Noticeably, Robertson's book was originally written in Latin with Hebrew and Arabic, and Kinghorn was able to edit the work and published it with a preface written in Latin.

¹⁹Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I:449.

²⁰Amelia Alderson Opie (1769–1853), "'Lines' on Hearing it said continually, that our late Reverend friend, J. Kinghorn, was 'fit to die,'" in Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, *Memoir of Amelia Opie* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1855), 99; also see Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I:457.

JOSEPH KINGHORN'S EDUCATIONAL VISION

Instead of examining Kinghorn's sermons to the students of Stepney (June 23, 1814), Bristol (August 3, 1814), and Horton (August 27, 1817) individually, we shall pay attention to the major elements that constructed his understanding of pastoral education.²¹ Like Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), who famously declared that “eminent spirituality in a minister is usually attended with eminent usefulness,” Kinghorn understood the quintessential connection between human learning, personal piety, and public ministry.²² As Kinghorn pointed out, students need to “cultivate that Christian character which was the first great reason why you were encouraged to turn your attention to the ministry.”²³ Thus, the goal of formal theological education is the cultivation of character. Regarding the relationship between learning and piety, Kinghorn explained that “piety will neither confer learning, nor powers of reasoning acutely; but other things being equal, that man is likely to discern the will of God with the most correctness, who imbibes the largest portion of the spirit of the gospel.”²⁴ Significantly, “the spirit of the gospel” or Scripture is critical for Kinghorn, as it distinguishes an evangelical Bible reader from a Socinian. As we shall see, Kinghorn's three educational sermons are also polemical in nature, as he defends the value of “useful learning.”

Scripture

In his Stepney sermon, Kinghorn emphasized that

Ministers should read the scriptures as *Christians*, that their own souls may be nourished by the word of life; and as the servants of the church of Christ, they should read them carefully and diligently, that they may learn the truth in its simplicity, and have it engraven on their hearts, in the words taught by the Holy Ghost. It is an important thing to have a taste for the language and representations of the Bible, so that the faith which we profess, may be the evident impression of the words of inspiration; and the track of our thought, be the same with that in the sacred volume.²⁵

Significantly, Kinghorn explicitly linked one's “usefulness” with his study and use of the Scriptures.

To reach this educational goal, students were to read the Scriptures “in their original language,” and in so doing to “depend on no man's learning and authority, but go to the fountain head of the stream, which

²¹Notice that in the following part, I liberally use “pastoral education” and “theological education” as synonymous.

²²Andrew Fuller, *The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister Illustrated by the Character and Success of Barnabas*, in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller: With a Memoir of His Life, by Andrew Gunton Fuller*, edited by Joseph Belcher (Reprint, Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1988), I: 143.

²³Joseph Kinghorn, *Practical Cautions to Students and Young Ministers. The Substance of a Sermon Preached at Bradford, in the County of York; At the Annual Meeting of the Northern Baptist Education Society, August 27, 1817* (Norwich, 1817), 8–9.

²⁴Joseph Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers. Two Sermons, Addressed Principally to the Students of the Two Baptist Academies, at Stepney and at Bristol. The First Preached June 23, 1814, at the Rev. Dr. Rippon's Meeting, Carter-lane, Southwark; The Second, August 3, 1814, at the Rev. Dr. Ryland's. Broad Mead, Bristol* (Norwich, 1814), 38.

²⁵Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 8–9.

makes glad the city of our God.”²⁶ In his Bristol sermon, Kinghorn referred to this exercise as “scriptural criticism.”²⁷ By understanding the importance of language study for independent thought, Kinghorn urged students to begin their study early and persevere with diligence. Kinghorn provides reasons for such a labour, as reading the Scriptures in original languages can illuminate the mind, and it is an advantage to read “the displays of the glory of God as he himself made them known, and of beholding them without a veil.”²⁸ He continued, “we behold them stript of the garment in which modern expression [i.e., translations] has clothed them, and standing in that native simplicity, in which they were first exhibited by *holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.”²⁹

In this address, Kinghorn is probably dealing with the objection raised by many Particular Baptists. Since the seventeenth century, many cited 1 John 2:27, and other similar texts, to argue that since the apostle stated “you have no need that anyone should teach you,” “any attempt to produce an educational ministry as fundamentally dishonouring to the Holy Spirit; for ... it implied that the ministerial gifts of the Spirit were not sufficient for the task.”³⁰ Such a charismatic view was further developed as a reaction against the perceived association between education and heterodoxy. Earlier responses, such as those generated by Hugh (1713–1781) and Caleb Evans (1712–1781), asserted that there was “no dichotomy between the devotional and the academic. Learning and personal faith go together.”³¹ Thus, “no education is a substitute for a living Christian faith.”³² Nevertheless, God the Spirit uses ordinary educational means in the post-apostolic age to equip ministers. To believe otherwise is to seek miraculous ministerial endowments that were given temporarily and exclusively to the apostles.³³

Kinghorn thus built upon Evans’ premises (or the Bristol Tradition) and specifically understood Scripture as a means of grace. When Christians come to the inspired text, the Holy Spirit teaches and illuminates them through their careful reading, study, and the meditation of the biblical texts.³⁴ Biblical criticism and exegesis enable readers to be further exposed to the meaning of the texts in their contexts, which modern translations cannot facilitate.

²⁶Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 10.

²⁷Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 28. A similar term, “biblical criticism” was also used in Kinghorn, *Practical Cautions to Students and Young Ministers*, 16.

²⁸Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 10.

²⁹Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 10.

³⁰Michael A. G. Haykin, “John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825) and Theological Education,” *NAKG/DRCH* 70 (1990): 174. In the seventeenth century, William Kiffin (1616–1710) was the major advocate for an educated ministry, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage* (Leeds: Reformation Today Trust, 1996), 43, 111 n8.

³¹Norman S. Moon, “Caleb Evans, Founder of the Bristol Education Society,” *BQ* 24 no. 4 (1971): 182.

³²Moon, “Caleb Evans, Founder of the Bristol Education Society,” 182. In an ordination charge to Thomas Dunscombe, Caleb Evans addresses the minister to be a preacher of the word, of which requires him to “study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (Caleb Evans, *A Charge and Sermon, Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Thomas Dunscombe, at Coate, Oxon, August 4th, 1773* [Bristol, 1773], 5). As it was demonstrated in Caleb Evans’ *Advice to Students Having in View Christian Ministry*, theological education for Evans is “a time of deep spiritual growth where learning plays significant role,” of which is a matter of both mind and heart (Kody Gibson, “Caleb Evans’ Spirituality of Theological Education,” *Andrew Fuller Center Review* 4 [2012]: 17, 18).

³³Bristol Education Society, “The Care for An Educated Ministry (1770),” cited by Moon, *Education for Ministry*, 130; Haykin, “John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825) and Theological Education,” 175.

³⁴Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 11.

Therefore, Kinghorn urged students to remember: “Patient diligence will do much towards the attainment of the end,” to obtain “a familiar acquaintance with the Bible in its original languages ... in less time than you would suppose.”³⁵ Understanding the difficulty of linguistic learning, Kinghorn suggested: “if only you daily and steadily persevere, you may, with the assistance of very few books, acquire a highly respectable knowledge of the languages in which the bible was written, and of the style peculiar to the sacred writers.”³⁶ Such suggestions came from Kinghorn’s own experience. Since his arrival in Norwich, Kinghorn disciplined himself to read the scriptures in Hebrew and Greek daily. Such determined exercises drew his father’s concern. In May 1795, David Kinghorn wrote to his son and told him about his potential labour in the garden. He said,

Perhaps you’ll say, I shall be no partaker with you in your pleasure, as I shall neither see nor enjoy any of the fruits of your labour this season. No, you’ll stay at home cracking your brain with heaps of Latin books, till every philament [*sic*] and fibre is steached [*sic*] to the state of a fiddle strong, and sounds Latin, Latin at every touch.³⁷

In response to his father’s ridicule, Kinghorn wrote, “tho[ugh] I cannot have a share either in the labor nor probably in the fruit of your labor in cultivating your Garden I can wish you much pleasure & success which I may garden a little in a different way by planting & watering Hebrew Roots.”³⁸

Anthony Cross points out that the Bible’s central role in theological education is one of the trademarks of the Bristol Tradition.³⁹ As an alumnus of Bristol, Kinghorn inherited such a tradition, which is “summed up in the preparation of ‘able and evangelical ministers,’ but the form of this most remembered is ‘able, evangelical, lively, zealous ministers of the gospel,’ first coined ... by Caleb Evans in 1781 in his funeral sermon for his father.”⁴⁰ “Biblical criticism,” as Kinghorn called it, is a skill that makes one an able and effective minister. However, by the early nineteenth century, such a tradition began to lose its place in the new academies. Deryck W. Lovegrove indicates that

Theologically grounded in moderate, evangelical Calvinism and in consequence displaying a strongly practical bias, the new seminaries (the term itself indicates their divergence from the earlier pattern) afforded regular opportunities for practice in evangelistic preaching and encouraged the growth of personal devotion. Their early development was marked by a fairly relaxed attitude towards intellectual attainment.⁴¹

³⁵Kinghorn, *Practical Cautions to Students and Young Ministers*, 15.

³⁶Kinghorn, *Practical Cautions to Students and Young Ministers*, 15–16.

³⁷D/KIN 2/1795 no. 832, DK to JK, May 2, 1795, Kinghorn Papers (Angus Library and Archive, Regent’s Park College, Oxford), 1.

³⁸D/KIN 2/1795 no. 833, JK to DK, May 19, 1795, Kinghorn Papers (Angus Library and Archive, Regent’s Park College, Oxford), 3. In Wilkin’s biography, the author omitted “watering” in Kinghorn’s letter (see Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I: 250).

³⁹Cross, *Useful Learning*, 96–99.

⁴⁰Cross, *Useful Learning*, 102.

⁴¹Deryck W. Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People: Itinerancy and the Transformation of English Dissent, 1780–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 68.

Consequentially, “students at the new academies were put to work as evangelists and church planters, making the college not just a place of training but an immediate ministerial resource effective in the life of the churches.”⁴² Furthermore, as Briggs understands it, “part of the problem was constituency demand, still suspicious of the intellectualism of the old academies and its associated heterodoxy, and still opposed to the concept of ‘man-made’ ministers.”⁴³

Within such contexts, Kinghorn reminded students the source of their effectiveness. As ministers are called to be good workmen, they, therefore, need “to make such improvement of God’s gift as [it] will enable us to apply it to the best purpose, we must study with all that sedulous care which is included in the apostle’s precept, *meditate upon these things*.”⁴⁴

Theological Subjects

Beside the Scriptures, Kinghorn also pointed out the need of studying “systematic divinity,” “the History of the Church,” and “our own denomination.”⁴⁵ Reasons are provided:

The gospel is formed on a grand and beautiful theory: its doctrines demand your attention: they are the pillars of God’s revealed truth: they are supported by the strongest evidence, and if we properly understand them, we shall clearly see their practical tendency. In a well constructed machine, not a single lever or wheel is useless; all are needed in their places, and the defect would instantly be perceived were any one of them taken away. So in the system of the gospel, not a single part is redundant: each has its peculiar and important use: the whole, therefore, should be studied that it may be *understood* and *familiarized* to the mind; and God grant that it may also be *felt*.⁴⁶

Furthermore, as “the doctrines of the gospel are facts,” it is

necessary that we should know the nature, evidence, and bearings of these facts, both in relation to each other, and as they are all united in the grand scheme, which secures the happiness of man and the glory of God.⁴⁷

Kinghorn understood the necessity of keeping a scripture-based confessional faith. A clearer statement can be found in a letter to his father in 1781. After thanking his father for sharing Robert Hall, Sr.’s (1728–1791) circular letter, “The Doctrine of Repentance” (1780), Kinghorn commented,

I think the arguments in it are strongly founded indeed[,] tho that Doctrine is one of the Vitals in Religion[,] yet it is a tender point & ought to be treated with great caution[,] lest we therein err to the

⁴²Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century*, 76.

⁴³Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century*, 75.

⁴⁴Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 14.

⁴⁵Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 30, 31.

⁴⁶Kinghorn, *Practical Cautions to Students and Young Ministers*, 16.

⁴⁷Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 11, 12.

hurt of our souls[.] the best way is to take & believe the thing just as it[']s revealed in Scripture & just let it rest there without applying our reason to it at all.⁴⁸

The last sentence places Kinghorn in clear contrast to Socinians like Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) and Isaac Perry (1777–1837). Just a year before his addresses to students at Stepney and Bristol, Kinghorn found himself amid a controversy with the Socinians (or Unitarians). In response to Thomas Belsham (1750–1829), Kinghorn published his *Scripture Arguments for the Divinity of Christ* (1813).⁴⁹ By applying the above-mentioned principle, taking the text as it was revealed, Kinghorn exposed Belsham's hermeneutical weaknesses. Kinghorn then disparaged the Socinians' attempt to justify their system by editing their own version of the Bible. He concluded that the fault of Socinianism was their attempt to "strip Christianity of many sentiments."⁵⁰ If gospel doctrines are revealed in the scriptures as interwoven facts, biblical criticism by itself is not enough. Ministers need to read the scriptures in relation to systematic divinity (or sentiments of Christianity), and examine doctrines by Scripture, not human reason.

Furthermore, Kinghorn also understood the significance of church history in pastoral education. He explains that,

by this means you will be led to mark the providence of God... you will see what was the faith and practice of good men in different periods. You will thus be able to trace back the common sentiment and feeling of those who most eminently served God. You will observe their mode of reasoning, and the source of their mistakes. You will, in some instance, be charmed with their sincerity and ardour of mind;—and you will, in others, be surprized at their flexibility to the prevailing fashion of the day. You will be led to mark both the weakness and the strength of the human mind in different circumstances. You will learn to estimate the wright of the testimonies which antiquity affords, both to the doctrine and practice of the apostles; and you will thus, by historical deduction, revert with increasing satisfaction and confidence, to the pure records of the faith once delivered to the saints.⁵¹

For Kinghorn, church history is valuable for pastoral formation, as it provides both positive and negative examples. More importantly, church history details a mega-narrative, in which Christians can claim existential affirmation, "satisfaction and confidence."

Kinghorn does reveal a proclivity for some historical eras over others. For Kinghorn, the church fathers of "the first three centuries after the birth of Christ" are helpful and refreshing.⁵² From his library catalogue, we know Kinghorn possessed works by Justin Martyr (c. 100–165), Tertullian (c. 155–c. 240), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), Origen (c. 184–c. 253), Cyprian (c. 200/210–258), Lactantius (c.

⁴⁸D/KIN 2/1781 no. 172, JK to DK, November 7, 1781, Kinghorn Papers (Angus Library and Archive, Regent's Park College, Oxford), 1.

⁴⁹Thomas Belsham, *A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine Concerning the Person of Christ; Including a Brief Review of the Controversy Between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley, and a Summary of the Various Opinions Entertained by Christians upon this Subject* (London, 1811).

⁵⁰Joseph Kinghorn, *Scriptural Arguments for the Divinity of Christ, Addressed to the Serious Professors of Christianity* (Norwich, 1811), 24.

⁵¹Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 29.

⁵²Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 29.

250–c. 325), Eusebius (260/265–339/340), Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373), Epiphanius of Salamis (c.310/320–403), Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386), and Augustine (354–430).⁵³ The time he dedicated to this task was noticed by others. Martin Hood Wilkin recalled that Kinghorn read “a ponderous tome” written by the Greek and Latin Fathers, “from end to end.”⁵⁴

When being asked the benefits of reading the fathers, Kinghorn pointed out that it was “merely because Dr. Priestley takes a good deal of notice of it, and says, amidst all, there are several traces of the opinions of the ancient Christians.”⁵⁵ By engaging with the fathers directly, Kinghorn found that “it is like meeting with an honest man in bad company, where one is ready to suppose all are rogues alike.”⁵⁶ We can observe that Kinghorn’s hermeneutic was consistent, as he was not satisfied with interpretations; instead, he sought to engage with the texts directly and to read them in the languages they were written.

Bypassing the Middle Ages without mention, Kinghorn told students to pay close attention to the Reformation, where the Dissenters found their origin.⁵⁷ For Kinghorn, the Reformation was a spiritual movement and needed to be chronicled by its effects. Thus, Puritanism was regarded as part of the Reformation. Historically, since the Great Ejection of 1662, the religious situation in England was divided by ecclesial politics—the Church of England and the Dissenting Body existed as two hostile religious entities. The Act of Toleration granted only limited religious freedom since the Test Act of 1678 was not repealed until 1828. This left Dissenters subject to restrictions on their civil liberties.⁵⁸ Politically, the Tory party stood with the established church; thus even in 1811, Henry Addington (1757–1844), then Lord President of the Council, presented the Protestant Dissenting Ministers Bill to the House of Lords.⁵⁹ In

⁵³*Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Late Rev. Joseph Kinghorn, of Norwich; Comprising a Very Valuable Collection of English and Foreign Theology and Biblical Criticism, Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature, Fathers of the Church, and Ecclesiastical History, Now Selling for Ready Money Only. At the Prices Affixed to Each Article, by Wilken & Fletcher, Booksellers, Upper Haymarket, Norwich* (Norwich, 1833).

⁵⁴Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn, of Norwich*, 450.

⁵⁵D/KIN 2/1791 no. 694, JK to DK, November 15, 1791, Kinghorn Papers (Angus Library and Archive, Regent’s Park College, Oxford), 2.

⁵⁶D/KIN 2/1791 no. 694, JK to DK, November 15, 1791, Kinghorn Papers (Angus Library and Archive, Regent’s Park College, Oxford), 2.

⁵⁷Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 30.

⁵⁸For a summary of legal acts relate to the Dissenters, see Joseph Beldam, *A Summary of the Laws Peculiarly Affecting Protestant Dissenters. An Appendix, Containing Acts of Parliaments, Trust Deeds, and Legal Forms* (London: Joseph Butterworth and Son, 1827).

The Act of Toleration was published on Mary 24, 1689 by the Parliament, which abandoned the idea of a “comprehensive” Church of England, and it “allowed Nonconformists their own places of worship and their own teachers and preachers, subject to acceptance of certain oaths of allegiance. Social and political disabilities remained, however, and Nonconformists were still denied political office” (Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Toleration Act,” Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Toleration-Act-Great-Britain-1689>).

The Test Act was a law that “made a person’s eligibility for public office depend upon his profession of the established religion...The form that the test took in England was to make the receiving of Holy Communion according to the rites of the Church of England a condition precedent to the acceptance of office. It was first embodied in legislation in 1661 as a requisite for membership of a town corporation and was extended to cover all public offices by the Test Act of 1673” (Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Test Act,” Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/test-act>).

⁵⁹A copy of the bill is made available to access by UK Parliament, and it was summarized as “the bill was an attempt to provide exemption from military service only to dissenting ministers who were able to be vouched for by six householders, which meant that ministers were unable to speak for their own status” (UK Parliament, “Copy of Lord Sidmouth’s Bill Relating to Protestant Dissenting Ministers,” HL Deb 09 May 1811 vol 19 cc1133–40, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1811/may/09/copy-of-lord-sidmouths-bill-relating-to> [accessed

response, ministers including Kinghorn brought petitions to protest against it.⁶⁰ On the social scale, mobs insulted and attacked dissenting ministers for their Whiggism and attitudes toward the Revolutions.⁶¹ Even among the Dissenters, questions were raised regarding their relationship with the Puritans, and as Baptist minister Richard Hutchings (d. 1804) pointed out, the rational Dissenters were from an illegitimate line as they abandoned “their traditional Calvinism, both as a set of doctrines and as an ascetic moral code.”⁶² Existentially, as “communities of memory,” one’s “continuing loyalty to Dissent was a commitment to a founding historical moment—a commitment that needed renewing.”⁶³ Young ministers at Kinghorn’s time needed to commit to their theological and spiritual heritage.

In a similar manner, Kinghorn also urged students to study Baptist history and theology. They are reminded that:

We have a ground of our own, distinct from that of other dissenters. Our views of Christian baptism, not only present a subject of discussion with our brethren all around, but have a most intimate relation to the question of our separation from the establishment. If, as we firmly believe, we are right, and if our opponents cannot prove that the one principle on which we must separate from the establishment is decided; and the *nature* and *dimensions* of the Christian church are determined at once.⁶⁴

Kinghorn understood the urgency for the new generation of ministers to learn and maintain their unique denominational heritage. When the Evangelical Revival led by George Whitefield (1714–1770), John Wesley (1703–1791), and Howell Harris (1714–1773) occurred in the early 1700s, “the British movement and its

on February 12, 2019]). Also see Anonymous, *Remarks on the Failure of Lord Sidmouth’s Bill, Relating to Protestant Dissenters* (London, 1811); Charles F. Mullett, “The Legal Position of the English Protestant Dissenters, 1767–1812,” *Virginia Law Review* 25.6 (1939): 671–697; Peter Walker, “‘A Free and Protestant People’? The Campaign for the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1786–1828” (Master’s thesis, Oxford University, 2010); Michael A. Rutz, “The Problem of Church and State: Dissenting Politics and the London Missionary Society in 1830s Britain,” *Journal of Church and State* 48.2 (2006): 379–398; James E. Bradeley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism: Non-conformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 347–452. Also see Antonia Fraser, *The King and the Catholics: England, Ireland, and the Fight for Religious Freedom, 1780–1829* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2018).

⁶⁰See Wolever, ed., *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*, I: 339–341.

⁶¹The most infamous attack was the Priestley Riots or the Birmingham Riots of 1791 (July 14 to 17, 1791). As the mob attacked Joseph Priestley and burned down his church and house, the famous Socinian Dissenter migrated to the United States. Other instances include the Woodstock Riot (1794), in which Baptist minister James Hinton was attacked (see Michael A. G. Haykin, “Accounted Worthy to Bear in My Body the Marks of the Lord Jesus”: *James Hinton, the Persecution of English Dissent, and the Woodstock Riot* [Louisville, KY: The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, 2018]; on the account of the riot, see Haykin, “Accounted Worthy to Bear in My Body the Marks of the Lord Jesus”, 25 n61); and the Aylsham riot (1808), in which on a Sunday evening local mobs “behaved in a very disorderly manner in the chapel, and carried off the minister by force to the Dog Inn” (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals: A Chronological Record of Remarkable Events in the Nineteenth Century 1801–1805* [Norwich: Office of the Norfolk Chronicle, 1901], I:74).

⁶²John Seed, *Dissenting Histories: Religious Division and the Politics of Memory in Eighteenth-Century England* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 131. See Richard Hutchings, *Gospel Truths Displayed, and Gospel Ministers Duty, in a Day of Great Defection Proved, in a Sermon Preached Before the Society of Protestant Dissenters, Meeting at the New-York Coffee-House: Occasioned by the Rejection of the Dissenters Bill. Delivered at the Rev. Mr. Dowars’ Meeting-House, in Little Ayliffe-Street, Goodman’s-Fields, April 13, 1773. With an Address to the Orthodox Party Who Joined in the Late Application* (London, 1773).

⁶³Seed, *Dissenting Histories*, 132.

⁶⁴Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 31.

expression in England, *ab initio*, mainly occurred outside the ranks of Dissent.”⁶⁵ Congregationalists like Isaac Watts (1674–1748) and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751) were the first among the Dissenters to welcome the revival.⁶⁶ Baptists, in general, were not impacted by the revival until the 1770s and 1780s, despite attributing their later participation in this phenomena to the influence of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) upon their change.⁶⁷ Since Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) defined the word “evangelical” as “Agreeable to gospel; consonant to the Christian law revealed in the holy gospel; contained in the gospel,” W. R. Ward (1925–2010) pointed out that the word was used synonymously to mean “renewal and improvement.”⁶⁸ Thus, the Evangelical Revival diminished (or at least weakened) the Conformity-vs-Nonconformity division. Instead, it drew lines between “evangelical” (or ardent) and nominal Christians. Consequently, evangelical-piety-based catholicity can be achieved in a divided religious world.⁶⁹ Baptists once again found themselves in a crisis, as debates over the sacraments and church membership were rekindled. At the core, questions were raised over the Baptist identity and their relationship with broader evangelicals, who were Paedobaptists.

This denominational concern was escalated to a full-blown controversy as Kinghorn entered the decade-long debate with his friend and fellow Baptist minister Robert Hall, Jr. over the term of communion which had been in place since 1816. The doctrinal differences were not solved, even though the majority of English Baptists favoured Hall’s position by the 1830s. Less than ten years later, different positions over the term of communion directly caused the collapse of the Canada Baptist College in Montreal.⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

Having examined the major elements in Kinghorn’s addresses to the students at Stepney, Bristol, and Horton, the Norwich pastor’s stance on theological education reaffirms the necessity of “an educated ministry.” Kinghorn’s reason was pastoral, as he stated, “we do need men whose plain but impressive

⁶⁵R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1989), 46. W. R. Ward traced the trans-Atlantic movement to its continental origin, see Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶⁶On Watts and evangelicalism, see Graham Beynon, *Isaac Watts: Reason, Passion and the Revival of Religion* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); On Doddridge and evangelicalism, Robert Strivens, *Philip Doddridge and the Shaping of Evangelical Dissent* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016).

⁶⁷On how London Baptists welcomed the Evangelical Revival, see Roberts, *Continuity and Change*, 87–162. Also see Anthony Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival among English Particular Baptists* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017). Also see Michael A. G. Haykin, “Great Admirers of the Transatlantic Divinity: Some Chapters in the Story of Baptist Edwardsianism,” in *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, edited by Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 197–207; Peter J. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life* (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2003).

⁶⁸Samuel Johnson, “Evangelical,” in *A Dictionary of the English Language: In Which the Words are Deduced from Their Originals, and Illustrated in Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers. To Which are Prefixed, a History of the Language and an English Grammar* (London, 1832), I: 646–647. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*, 345.

⁶⁹See Roger H. Martin, *Evangelicals United: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795–1830* (Metuchen, NJ; London: Scarecrow, 1983).

⁷⁰See Campbell, “Canada Baptist College,” 70–101; Gibson, *Robert Alexander Fyfe*, 72, 182, 187.

statements, may be above the contempt of the world, while they are suited for the edification of the church.”⁷¹

Standing within the Bristol Tradition, Kinghorn’s educational vision is piety-based, bible-centric, and future-directed. Furthermore, as Kinghorn’s teaching on biblical criticism serves as a response to certain degrees of Baptist anti-intellectualism, his understanding of the theological subjects is equally polemic. To abandon formal education in the name of orthodoxy is ineffective. Instead, education and spirituality go hand in hand in the pastor’s character formation.

Furthermore, Kinghorn denied the position of *solo* Scripture, which many Socinians affirmed. By affirming the value of “systematic divinity,” church history, and Baptist theology, Kinghorn provided a twofold model for his audience. On the one hand, confessional fences regulate orthodoxy; on the other hand, students need to understand and improve their theological framework, by which they can become

entirely dependent ... on the rich grace of God, in the gospel...and strongly feeling your own need of this salvation by grace;—viewing the ability of the Redeemer to save;—and trusting in him alone for yourselves; your hearts will expand with holy fervour; and this will give you the real eloquence, which will most affect the hearts of your hearers.⁷²

Through its connections, Canada Baptist College participated in the Bristol Tradition.

⁷¹Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 24.

⁷²Kinghorn, *Advice and Encouragement to Young Ministers*, 39.