

**THE CHRISTIAN MANUAL;
OR, OF THE
LIFE AND MANNERS
OF TRUE CHRISTIANS**

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The Christian Manual; Or, Of the Life and Manners of True Christians by John Woolton

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JOHN WOOLTON

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CHRISTIAN MANUAL;
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OF THE LIFE AND MANNERS OF
TRUE CHRISTIANS.

BY
JOHN WOOLTON, D.D.,
BISHOP OF KENT.

EDITED FOR
The Parker Society,
FOR THE PUBLICATION
OF THE
WORKS OF THE FATHERS AND EARLY WRITERS OF THE
REFORMED ENGLISH CHURCH.



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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

JOHN WOOLTON, or (as it is sometimes written) Wolton, was born at Wigan in Lancashire in the year 1535, *parentibus honestis, sed nobiliori matre*¹. It seems to have been by his mother's side that he was a nephew of the justly celebrated Dean Nowel²; and with him, after spending some years at Oxford, as a student of Brasenose College, apparently without proceeding to any degree, he travelled in Germany during the persecutions of Mary's reign. After his return to England on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, little is heard of him till the year 1578; in which year, through the influence of Dean Nowel, a new charter was granted to the collegiate Church of Manchester, and Woolton was named the first Warden. This post however he occupied less than two years, as he was preferred to the bishoprick of Exeter in 1579, and consecrated by Archbishop Grindal at the beginning of August in that year. At the time

¹ Godwin, de Præsul. Angl. Comment.

² *Avunculum suum*, Godwin, *ibid.* who, being his son-in-law, is no doubt strictly accurate.

of his advancement to the episcopate he was a canon residentiary of the same church³; and in Vowel's or Hooker's catalogue of the bishops of Exeter, published in that year, he is spoken of as "a Professor of Divinity, and a preacher of the Gospel, and universally seen in all good letters⁴." He appears to have been a strenuous opponent of the Puritans in the unhappy disputes which were then harassing the Church of England; but, apart from the unpopularity which this circumstance occasioned him with many, it seems that he was much respected for his conscientious zeal and diligence in his high office.

The account of his death (March 13, 1598⁵) furnishes an interesting illustration of his character. His complaint was asthma; and two hours before his departure he was dictating a letter on important business, when being admonished to be careful of his health, he replied with an adaptation of the well-known words of the emperor Vespasian, that a bishop "ought to die standing⁶:" soon after which, as he was walking in his chamber, he suddenly fell, and expired in the arms of those who hastened to his support, at the age of 58.

³ Antony Wood (*Athen. Oxon.* Vol. i. p. 230) states that he was admitted to the church of Spaxton in the diocese of Wells, in 1563, "being about that time canon of Exeter," and that he was consecrated Bishop in 1576: but in p. 609 he gives the date of 1574 for this latter event, and again in the *Facts*, p. 746, assigns it to 1579.

⁴ Strype, *Annals of Reformation*. Fol. 1725. Book II. chap. 19. Vol. II. p. 611.

⁵ See Suetonius, *Vespasian*, cap. 24.

The following is the list of his works, as given by Watt in his *Bibliotheca Britannica* :—

1. The Christian Manuell, or of the life and maners of true Christians. London. 1576. (See the full title *infra*, p. 2.)

2. An Armour of Proufe; very profitable as well for princes, noblemen and gentlemen, as all other in authoritie, shewing the firm fortress of defence and haven of rest in these troblesome times and perilous dayes. Lond. 1576. 8vo.

3. A Treatise of the Immortalitie of the Soule; wherein is declared the origine, nature and powers of the same, together with the state and condition thereof, both as it is conioyned and dissolved from the bodie. Lond. 1576. 16mo.

4. A Newe Anatomie of the whole Man, as well of his Bodie as of his Soule, declaring the condition and constitution of the same in his first creation, corruption, regeneration and glorification. Lond. 1576. 8vo.

5. The Castell of Christians and Fortress of the Faithfull besieged, and defended now almost six thousand yeares. Lond. 1577. 8vo.

To these Wood (Athen. Oxon.) adds :

6. Discourse of the Conscience. 8vo. 1576.

As the operations of the Parker Society are now drawing to a close, the present is intended to be the con-

cluding volume of the 12mo series. In this series of smaller books it has been designed to exhibit the spirit and principles of the Reformation in their various forms of developement, as they influenced the literature and character of the age. The first of these publications was an illustration of its devotional character; the second, of the poetical, as poetry lent its aid in furtherance of the great struggle for spiritual and intellectual emancipation; the third, of the directly spiritual and experimental working of religion; the fourth, of its controversial phase on a smaller scale; and the fifth and last, of the application of its principles to the practical duties of individual and social life. In all these different aspects they present a combined testimony to the power and value of the blessed Reformation.

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