

**CLAVIS UNIVERSALIS:
OR A NEW ENQUIRY
AFTER TRUTH**

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Clavis Universalis: Or a New Enquiry After Truth by Arthur Collier

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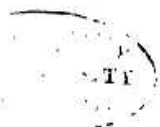
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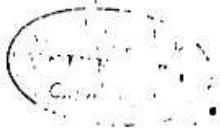
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NOTICE.



ARTHUR COLLIER, author of the very remarkable Metaphysical Piece, entitled *Clavis Universalis*, was descended of a respectable family, originally from Bristol, which settled in Wiltshire early in the seventeenth century. An autobiographical sketch of the earlier part of his life,¹ has been preserved, from which it appears that his education commenced at the schools of Chitterne and Salisbury, and was completed at the University of Oxford. From his youth

¹ See P. xxiii. inf.

upwards, although of a very delicate constitution, he was an industrious and successful student in Metaphysics and Theology—his great object being, as he has himself expressed it, “so to read as to fit him for Holy Orders.” He was ordained by the Bishop of Salisbury in 1705, and immediately entered to the cure of Langford Magna, a parish of which the Advowson had belonged to his family for a century, and of which his immediate ancestors had been rectors for several generations. For the first five years of his ministry Collier also served the cures of Broad Chalk and Bower Chalk; upon resigning which, in 1711, he undertook the cure of Bishop’s Cleer during 1712 and 1713. In 1714 he was appointed to Baverstock, and in 1721 to Compton Chamberlain; and he continued in the pastoral superintendence of these two parishes, in conjunction with that of Langford Magna, till his death.

Collier appears to have commenced his clerical career, with very exalted notions of the importance of the duties he was about to undertake. The following striking estimate of the functions of a clergyman, is extracted from one of his note books:—
“ He is dedicated to the service of God and the Church. He wears the habit of a mourner and an intercessor. He must be separated from the concerns and cares of this world. He must be dedicated to the study and meditation of divine matters. His conversation must be a pattern and a sermon to others. He offers up prayers to God as the mouth of the people. He must pray and intercede for them in private as in public. He must distribute to them the bread of life, and the word, and sacraments. He must attend upon them not only in public, but from house to house. He is to watch for their souls, to keep them from sin and error. He must visit the sick,

and prepare them for the life to come. He must endeavour to raise his own reputation and that of his function. He must convince his people that he has a true design to save their souls. His course of life must combine public function and secret labours. He will for these be more severely accounted with than any others. He must not only abstain from evils, but from the appearance of them. His friend and his garden ought to be his chief diversion—his study and his parish his chief employments. He must employ great part of his time in sin-searching and error. He must have a lively sense and impression of divine matters. He takes upon him a trust for which an account must be given. He must endeavour to act above man, more like the angels. He is a fellow-worker with God, an ambassador of Christ. He is a saviour of life unto life, of death unto death.”