



Lessons from the Life of Isaac Watts

Life (1674-1748)

1683: my father Persecuted & imprisoned
for Nonconformity 6 months. after that forced
to leave his family & live privately in London for
2 years

Life (1674-1748)

" " " " Acrostick petitions " " "

I mortall god in persons three
Sweetly convey thy grace to mee
Aid mee with wisdom from above
And compasse mee about with love
Cover my failings Blest Jehoue

Wash off my sins make cleare my ha
And righteousness to mee impart
Teach mee to understand aright
Thy sacred word and with delight
Shall I peruse it day and night

Life (1674-1748)

Life
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PO
Chiefly of the
In Three
I. Sacred to Devotion
II. To Virtue, Honour
III. To the Muses
By I. J.
The Second Edition, A
Seven Years
Celebration, and
Humane regard
'Abide ye with the
Time, to ride as if
Till to the
L O N
Printed by T. Massey,
Candlestick, the Low
Alders-Gate, 1709

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The Causes of the Dece
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of Moral Good and Evi
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The Sin and Fall of M
Grace of GOD;
The Rewardableness of E
and the criminal Natio
A VARIETY OF RULES
IN THE AFFAIRS
MAN LIFE, A
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BY ISAAC

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Printed by I. Massey, at
the Angel in the P
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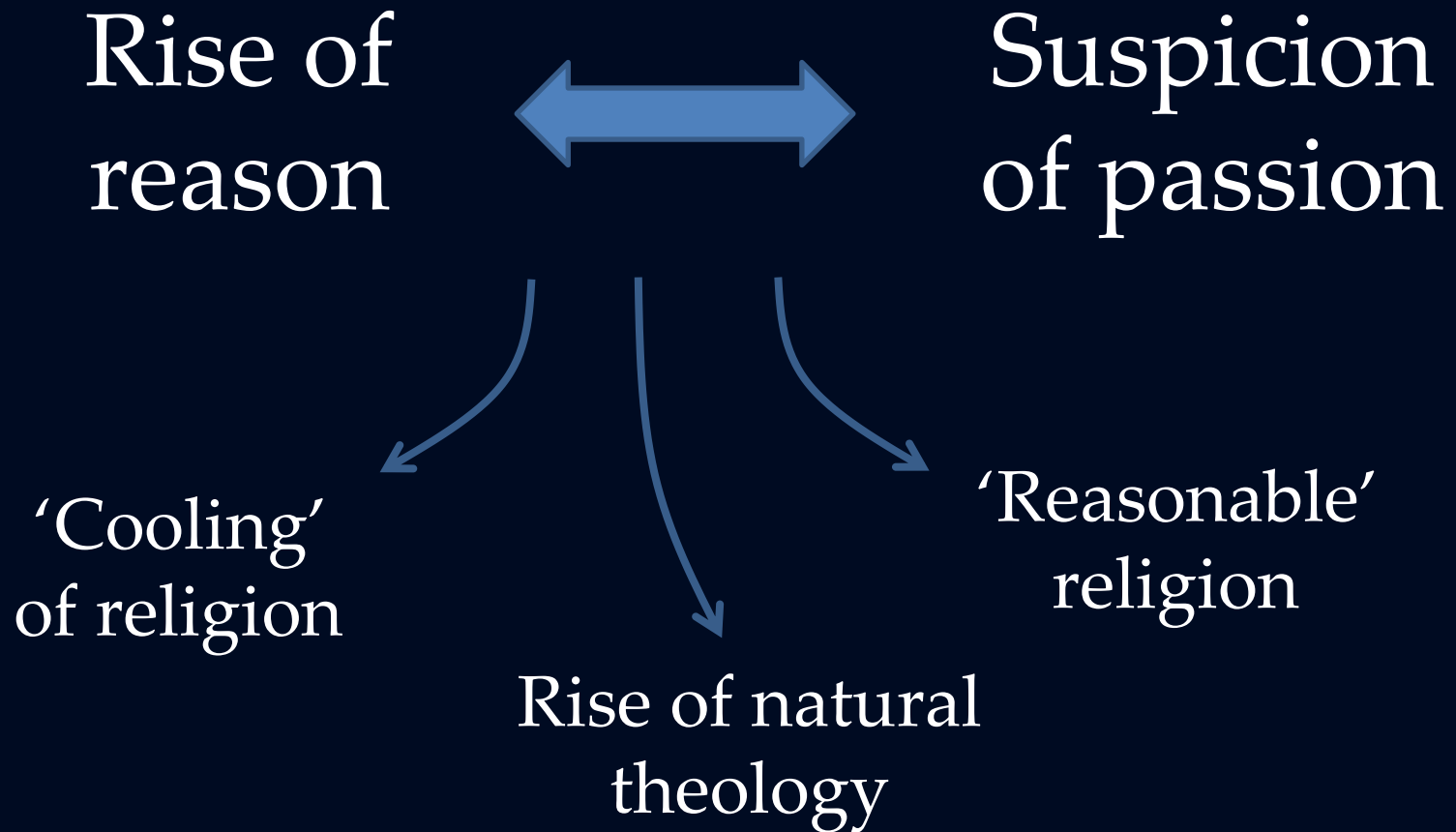
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II. Compos'd on Div
III. Prepared for the
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Towards the Improv
sian Psalmody, by
vangelical Hymns
well as the Psalm
By I. W
And they sang a new Song
worthy, &c. for those w
dressed as, Rev. S
Solia vident (i. e. Christo
manque Christo quati
in 1709.
L O N D O N
Printed by J. Massey,
at the Angel in the P

DIVINE
Ch. 760/47
S O N G S
Attempted in
EASY LANGUAGE,
For the USE of
CHILDREN.
By I. WATTS, D. D.
*Out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou
hast perfected Praise. Matt. xxi. 16.*
The TWENTY-FIFTH EDITION.
L O N D O N:
Printed for T. LONGMAN, J. BUCKLAND,
and W. FENNER, in Pater-noster-row;
J. WAUGH, in Lombard-street; E. DILLY,
in the Poultry; and T. FIELD, in Cheap-
side. M.DCC.LXI.

Life (1674-1748)



Watts' Times



Watts' theology of reason and passion



Created → Fallen → Restored

Watts' theology of reason and passion

“... to reform our natures, to put all our misplaced and disjointed powers into their proper order again, and to maintain this divine harmony and peace. It is the blessed Spirit that inclines reason to submit to faith, and makes the lower faculties submit to reason, and obey the will of our maker, and then gives us the pleasure of it.”

Watts defending the faith

The limitations of reason:

“The eye of the understanding is strangely blinded, and the judgment strangely perverted by the fall of man; we are led into false judgments of things by the corruptions of our minds, by the unhappy influence that present sensible things have over our whole nature.”

Watts defending the faith

The limitations of reason:

“The revelation of God in an illustrious manner supplies the deficiencies of our reason, and enlightens our natural darkness in the knowledge of divine things.”

Watts defending the faith

Nature with open volume stands,
To spread her Maker's praise abroad,
And ev'ry labour of his hands,
Shows something worthy of a God:

But in the grace that rescued man,
His brightest form of glory shines;
Here, on the cross, 'tis fairest drawn
In precious blood and crimson lines.

Watts defending the faith

Here His whole name appears complete;
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,
Which of the letters best is writ,
The power, the wisdom, or the love.

Watts defending the faith

The reasonability of the faith:

Ruin and Recovery (1740):

An Attempt to vindicate the SCRIPTURAL
ACCOUNT of these great events upon the
plain principles of REASON

Watts defending the faith

The reasonability of the faith:

Dissertations on the Trinity (1724):

“It seems proper therefore, for some persons to endeavour to make it appear, that there is a possibility in the reason and nature of things, for true and eternal deity to be attributed to the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, without danger of those absurdities and inconsistencies which are pretended to arise thence.”

Watts defending the faith

Standing up for the gospel:

“Now, perhaps, some may think it the duty and business of the day to temporise, and by preaching the gospel a little more conformably to natural religion, in a mere rational or legal form, to bring it down as near as may be to their scheme, that we may gain them to hear and approve it, or at least, that we may not offend them...

Watts defending the faith

Standing up for the gospel:

...But I am rather of the opinion, that we should in such a day stand up for the defence of the gospel in the full glory of its most important doctrines ...that we should preach it in its most divine and most evangelical form, that the cross of Christ, by the promised power of the Spirit, may vanquish the vain reasoning of men, and that this despised doctrine triumphing in the conversion of souls, may confound the wise and the mighty, and silence the disputers of this world.”

Watts promoting the passions

Encouraging 'passionate' faith:

“Has he formed my soul to delight and love and has he confined these sweet and pleasurable capacities only to be employed about creatures, when the Creator himself is supreme in loveliness? Will not this most amiable of beings expect that I should love himself, and give me leave to make him my delight?”

Watts promoting the passions

Encouraging 'passionate' faith:

“It is not enough for the eye to be lifted up to him, or the knee to bow before him; it is not enough for the tongue to speak of him, or the hand to act for his interest in the world; all this may be done by painted hypocrites whose religion is all disguise and vanity...

Watts promoting the passions

Encouraging 'passionate' faith:

... But the heart with all the inward powers and passions must be devoted to him in the first place: This is religion indeed. The great God values not the service of men, if the heart not be in it."

Watts promoting the passions

Encouraging 'passionate' faith:

“Where the love of God reigns in the affections...the eye will often look up to God in a way of faith and humble dependence; the ear will be attentive to his holy word; the hand will be lifted up to heaven in daily requests; the knee will be bended in humble worship; all the outward powers will be busy in doing the will of God and promoting his glory.”

Watts on preaching

“Who taught us any of this lazy and drowsy practice? Did God or his prophets, did Christ or his apostles, instruct in this modish art of still life, this lethargy of preaching...? Did the great God ever appoint statues for his ambassadors, to invite sinners to his mercy? Where the preachers become stone, no wonder if the hearers are motionless.”

Watts on preaching

“Contrive all lively, forcible and penetrating forms of speech, to make your words powerful and impressive on the hearts of your hearers, when light is first let into the mind. Practice all the awful and solemn ways of address to the conscience, all the soft and tender influences on the heart.”

Watts on preaching

“When the words freeze upon his lips, the hearts of his hearers are freezing also: But where we find devout affection mingled with solid argument in the discourse, there the lips of the preacher seem to speak light and life at once, and he helps to communicate the holy passion all around him, by feeling it first himself.”

Watts on praise

“Thus by keeping too close to David in the house of God, the veil of Moses is thrown over our hearts.”

Watts on praise

“Let us remember, that the very power of singing was given to human nature chiefly for this purpose, that our own warmest affections of soul might break out into natural or divine melody, and that the tongue of the worshipper might express his own heart.”

Watts on praise

Now shall my inward joys arise,
And burst into a song;
Almighty love inspires my heart,
And pleasure tunes my tongue.

Thus might I hide my blushing face
While His dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt my eyes to tears.

Watts on praise

In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies.

Come Holy Spirit, heav'nly Dove,
With all thy quick'ning powers;
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours



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