



Wollstonecraft and Religion

By Brenda Ayres

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Ever since Godwin announced to the world in *Memoirs* that Wollstonecraft had had little use for religion, most biographers, scholars, historians and readers have regarded her as an apostate. Further, the existing scholarly texts fail to demonstrate the pervasiveness of biblical references in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. The true tally of scriptural references approaches over 1,100 as identified in this study. Wollstonecraft's biblical allusions, besides sheer volume, are noteworthy because they gave women a biblical basis upon which to contend for better education and occupational opportunities as well as for legal and political independence. That the arguments were couched in biblical rhetoric most likely contributed to their initial reception and tolerance of what were incendiary ideas and searing social criticism. The recognition and analysis of biblical underpinnings in *Wollstonecraft and Religion* not only of *Rights of Woman* but also of her other publications and letters propose new consideration regarding the Mother of Feminism and her work. The chapters that accompany the annotated text of *Rights of Woman* furnish biographical and historical context that offer fresh perspectives about Wollstonecraft's religious convictions and faith, many of which have not been published elsewhere.

Readership

The book is aimed at students who are learning about Wollstonecraft as well as scholars across the disciplines who study religion, feminism, women's studies, and more specifically, Wollstonecraft.

Key selling points

- Offers fresh perspective on Wollstonecraft's religious beliefs.
- Identifies over 1,100 scriptural references in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.
- Recognizes scriptural references in all Wollstonecraft's publications and in many of her letters.
- Presents biographical and historical contexts that assert her unbroken religious convictions and faith throughout her entire life.

About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Dr. Brenda Ayres has been teaching at Liberty University since 2003. To date, she has published 75 books mostly in Victorian and neo-Victorian literature.

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