**THE LIFE AND TRAVELS**

**of**

**GEORGE WHITEFIELD, M.A.**

**BY**

JAMES PATERSON GLEDSTONE.

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**1871.**

To the Memory

**OF THE**

**SELF-SACRIFICING AND CATHOLIC EVANGELIST**

**WHO A HUNDRED YEARS AGO,**

**FINISHED IN A STRANGE LAND HIS TRAVELS  
 FOR THE GOSPEL’S SAKE,**

**AND**

**PREACHED THE LAST OF THOSE SERMONS**

**WHICH,**

**TOGETHER WITH THE TRUE WORDS OF MANY OF HIS BRETHREN,  
REANIMATED THE DYING RELIGION OF THE WHOLE BRITISH PEOPLE,**

**THIS BOOK**

**IS**

REVERENTLY DEDICATED

PREFACE.

Sir James Stephen has placed Whitefield at the head of  
what he calls ‘the Evangelical Succession.’ The position  
is correctly assigned; Whitefield is the Peter of the  
Evangelicals, so far as they are a distinct portion of the  
Church of England. It was he who, in modern days,  
first preached, with zeal and unexampled success, those  
doctrines which they regard with religious veneration; it  
was he who gave them much of the phraseology to which  
they still cling with steadfast loyalty. But it cannot be  
allowed that they, and only they, have the right to claim  
an inheritance in him. The wealth of a good heart is for  
the enriching of the world; and the triumphs of genius  
are a study for scholars of every school. I have there-  
fore placed Whitefield in the loftier position of a brother  
of all who, in every place and under any denomination,  
call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have  
striven to put the man, rather than his creed, upon the  
pages of this book,—or rather to put the man first, and  
his creed second. I have endeavoured to find out, and  
lay bare, the real fountain of his never-failing and ex-  
ultant joy; of his fiery but gentle zeal; of his universal

vii

viii Preface

charity, which, however, was associated with some forbid-  
ding and chilling beliefs. Whitefield’s love to God and  
love to man—one love—constitute the explanation of his  
personal character and of his life's labours. It is true  
that, for a time at least, he held the dark and terrible  
doctrine of reprobation; and some may think that he  
must therefore have been a bigot, and a harsh one too;  
but the truth is, that he was altogether without bigotry.  
He believed in the infinite love of God more firmly than  
in anything else; and this belief tinctured the whole of  
his religion.

I have not looked at him as a theologian, for such he  
cannot be called, but as a Christian; and in the following  
pages there will not be found any narrative of severe  
mental struggles with hard questions concerning God and  
‘His ways to men.’ They attempt to reveal a great  
heart, stirred with the purest emotion, ever desiring abso-  
lute perfection in goodness and unintermittingly seeking  
it, resolved to leave nothing undone by which others  
might become partakers with itself of the great salvation,  
and impatient of all impediments, whether ecclesiastical  
or social, that threatened the consummation of its hopes.

Where Whitefield was in conflict with others, I have  
tried to do justice to both sides; and though some things  
may seem to bear hardly upon the clergy of his day, I  
believe that in no instance have I wronged them to screen  
him. His excellences were too great to need adornment,  
and his faults too obvious to admit of misapprehension.

Preface ix

It may be felt, in the course of the narrative, that too  
much time has been spent in recounting his preaching  
labours, in telling how large were his congregations, how  
great the difficulties which he overcame, and how far he  
travelled; but I could not see how otherwise to give  
the same conception of the man and his work which is  
gained by perusing his journals and letters page by page.  
The frequent mention of thousands of hearers, though  
apparently savouring of the ostentatious, was necessary,  
as a simple statement of the truth.

The last twenty years of Whitefield’s life have received  
but slight notice, as compared with that which has been  
given to his earlier years; and the reason is, that they  
were almost entirely without new features of interest.  
They saw no fresh work attempted; they brought to  
light no fresh qualities of mind or heart; they simply  
witnessed the steady growth of enterprises previously  
begun, and of personal qualities previously displayed.

**J. P. GLEDSTONE.**

**CONTENTS**

**CHAPTER I.**

**1714-1735.**

**PAGE**

**His 'Parentage and Childhood—At Oxford—Among the**

**Methodists—His Conversion 1**

**CHAPTER II.**

**1736.**

**His Ordination as Deacon—Essays in Preaching 29**

**CHAPTER III**

**March, 1737—March, 1738.**

**Appointed Chaplain to the Georgian Colony—First Popu-  
larity—First Voyage 48**

**CHAPTER IV.**

**1738.**

**Six Months in Georgia—Second Voyage 84**

**CHAPTER V.**

**December and January, 1738-39.**

**Fetter Lane Meetings—Ordained Priest 98**

**xii CONTENTS.**

**CHAPTER VI. PAGE**

**February to April, 1739.  
 Expelled the Churches—Open-air Preaching 106**

**CHAPTER VII.**

**May to August, 1739.**

**In Moorfields; on Commons; at FAIRS and Races . 134**

**CHAPTER VΙΠ.  
 August, 1739, to March, 1741.**

**Third Voyage—Itinerating in America—Fourth Voyage—  
Breach with Wesley 169**

**CHAPTER IX.**

**March, 1741, to August, 1744.**

**Loss of Popularity—First Visit to Scotland—Conduct of  
the Dissenters 248**

**CHAPTER X.**

**August, 1744, to July, 1748.**

**Fifth Voyage—Adventures and Controversies—Wanderings  
in America—Invalided in Bermudas—Sixth Voyage 339**

**CHAPTER XI.**

**July, 1748-1752.**

**Appointed Chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon—A  
Slave Owner 377**

**CHAPTER XII.**

**1753-1770.**

**Chapel Building — Attacks by Enemies — Infirmities — His  
Death—The Results of his Work 441**

**Index 523**

**THE**

**LIFE AND TRAVELS**

**GEORGE WHITEFIELD, M.A.**

CHAPTER I.

**1714-1735.**

**HIS PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD—AT OXFORD—AMONG THE  
 METHODISTS—HIS CONVERSION.**

To give the genealogy of George Whitefield, so far as it  
can be traced, will not be a tedious task. There is not a  
cloud of ancestors to be acknowledged and honoured  
before attention can be directed to him whose labours  
and sacrifices may serve to kindle the emulation of the  
most saintly, and to provoke admiration wherever they  
are known.

The great-grandfather of George Whitefield was the  
Rev. Samuel Whitefield, of whom nothing more can be  
said than that he was a clergyman of the Church of  
England, and held successively the living of North  
Ledyard in Wiltshire and that of Rockhampton in  
Gloucestershire. Perhaps he was rich; for one of his  
sons, Andrew, is described as ‘a private gentleman.’ A  
family of fourteen children, with which the private  
gentleman was blessed, must have divided his estate into  
comparatively small portions; and that which fell to the  
eldest, a son named Thomas, established him as a wine

merchant in Bristol. Thomas Whitefield married Miss  
Elizabeth Edwards of Bristol, and afterwards removed to  
Gloucester, to keep the Bell Inn, apparently because  
he had failed in his first venture. Nothing more is  
known of the wine merchant and innkeeper than of the  
Wiltshire rector; but we can scarcely avoid the sup-  
position that his failure in trade was the result of in-  
aptitude, and that he was not without some of the gifts  
so freely lavished on his son George—youngest of seven,  
a daughter and six sons—who was born in the Bell Inn,  
on the 16th of December, 1714. Unwilling to believe  
that some children, like the favourites of fairies, are capri-  
ciously dowered with their splendid gifts, we look for the  
original of the son in the father or the mother, or in some  
combination of their respective qualities; and as the wife  
of the innkeeper seems to have had but little mental or  
moral likeness to her famous son, we are tempted to  
ascribe the higher worth to her husband. Yet the mother  
of Whitefield, if without the clear wisdom and the daunt-  
less piety of the mother of the Wesleys, had a tender,  
faithful heart, commendable prudence, a great desire for  
the welfare of her children, and much willingness to deny  
herself for their sakes. George always held her in reve-  
rent affection. With the fondness of a mother for her  
last-born, she used to tell him that, even when he was an  
infant, she always expected more comfort from him than  
from any other of her children.

One Christmas more came, and the father was still  
spared to watch over his children; but, sometime about  
the coming of the next, he died; and his child was left  
without one remembrance of him.

Only one event of Whitefield’s early childhood is on  
record. When he was about four years of age he had  
the measles, and through the ignorance or neglect of  
his nurse, the disease left one of his eyes—dark blue they  
were, and lively—with a squint, which, however, is said

not to have marred the extreme sweetness of his counte-  
nance, nor diminished the charm of his glance.

Circumstances were not very favourable to the forma-  
tion of a noble character in the boy. He says that he  
‘soon gave pregnant proofs of an impudent temper.’ He  
fell into some of the worst of juvenile sins; occasionally  
he transgressed in a more marked way. His child-  
hood was stained with lying, evil speaking, and petty  
thefts, which he perpetrated on his mother by taking  
money out of her pocket before she was up;1 this he  
thought, at the time, was no theft at all. He also says  
that he spent much money ‘in plays, and in the common  
entertainments of the age.’ Playing at cards and reading  
romances were his ‘heart’s delight.’ Sabbath-breaking  
was a common sin, and he generally behaved irreverently  
at public worship, when he was present. As might be  
expected, he was fond of playing wild, roguish tricks,  
such as running into the Dissenting meeting-house, and  
shouting the name of the worthy old minister—‘Old  
Cole! old Cole! old Cole!’ Being asked, one day, by  
one of Cole’s congregation, of what business he meant to  
be, he replied,’ A minister; but I would take care never  
to tell stories in the pulpit like the old Cole.’ A wild,  
merry, unkempt lad he was; with no restraint upon him,  
excepting a wise regulation of his mother, by which he  
was not allowed to take any part in the business, although  
he did sometimes sell odd quantities over the counter, and  
wrongfully keep the money; overflowing with animal  
spirits, which often led him into mischief, in the execution  
of which his power of concealment so signally failed him  
that he was always detected. ‘It would be endless,’ he  
says, ‘to recount the sins and offences of my younger

1 Augustine goes through a catalogue of similar faults in his ‘Confessions.’  
Tutor, masters, and parents were deceived with innumerable falsehoods, so  
that he might get off to shows and plays; he also committed thefts from  
his parents’ cellar and table, either to please a greedy appetite, of to give to  
other boys.

days.’ But why he should, in later years, have classed  
his ‘roguish tricks’ with graver faults, is not clear. They  
may really have been worse than simple fun, or his con-  
science may have become morbidly sensitive and in-  
tolerant, even of play, probably the latter. But there  
were other forces working in his impetuous, fiery spirit.  
Good thoughts struggled with sinful ones; conscience  
failed not to rebuke him for his faults, and smite him  
with heavy blows. A grotesque caricature of a saint  
sprung out of the contention. He would not be bad,  
neither would he be thoroughly good. He compromised;  
he tried to blend light and darkness; he feared God, and  
loved sin. Some of the money stolen from his mother  
was devoted to higher ends than buying tarts and fruit—  
it was given to the poor! His thefts were not confined  
to raids upon his mother’s pocket and till, but extended  
to property outside the Bell Inn; but then he stole  
books — afterwards restored fourfold — and they were  
books of devotion! The Bible was not unknown to him,  
any more than a romance; but it was as much the book  
of his curses as the book of his prayers. His quick  
temper—he was hasty-tempered to the last—sought ex-  
pression for itself in the imprecatory psalms, as well as in  
vulgar cursing. The burden of the 118th Psalm was  
familiar to him; and once, when he had been teased by  
some persons who took a constant pleasure in exaspera-  
ting him, he immediately retired to his room, and, kneel-  
ing down, with many tears, prayed the whole Psalm  
over, finding relief to his feelings in the terrible refrain  
of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses—‘But in the  
name of the Lord will I destroy them.’ Church might  
be a place for irreverence, and the service a thing to be  
mocked at; yet he was always fond of being a clergyman,  
and frequently imitated the minister’s reading prayers.

All the man can be traced in the boy—delight in the  
emotional and exciting, a ready power of appropriating

and applying to himself and to his enemies the words of  
Scripture, fondness for using his elocution, and aptness of  
imitation. And a strange contrast, as well as resemblance,  
is there between the man and the boy, when they are  
placed side by side in St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester. In  
the church where the infant was baptized and the boy of  
ten mocked, the deacon of twenty-one preached his first  
sermon to a crowded audience.

When he was ten years old his mother married a  
second time, her second husband being Mr. Longden, an  
ironmonger, of Gloucester. Whitefield says, that it was  
‘an unhappy match as for temporals, but God overruled it  
for good. It set my brethren upon thinking more than  
otherwise they would have done, and made an uncommon  
impression upon my own heart in particular.’

At the age of twelve he was placed at the school of  
St. Mary de Crypt, ‘the last grammar school,’ he says, ‘I  
ever went to;’ from which we may suppose that he had  
tried not a few schools before. The last school changed  
him not a whit in his earliest characteristics. Plays still  
fascinated him; and, if he did not read them in school,  
when he was there—and it is very probable that he did—  
he spent whole days away from school studying them,  
and preparing to act them. His enthusiasm for acting  
spread to his school-fellows; and the master, either be-  
cause he sympathised with his scholars’ tastes, or thought  
it useless to resist them, not only composed plays for the  
school, but had a theatrical entertainment for the corpo-  
ration on their annual visitation, young Whitefield' being,  
on one occasion, dressed in girls’ clothes, to act before  
them. The annual oration before these visitors was also  
commonly entrusted to the boy from ‘the Bell;’ and his  
good memory and fine elocution won him much notice.  
A lively school must St. Mary de Crypt have been while  
this vivacious scholar sat on its benches—the master  
writing plays, the boys learning them, and the worthy  
city aldermen seeing them acted.

Whitefield has given an opinion upon his education:  
he says, ‘I cannot but observe, with much concern of  
mind, how this training up of youth has a natural ten-  
dency to debauch the mind, to raise ill passions, and to  
stuff the memory with things as contrary to the gospel of  
Jesus Christ as light to darkness, heaven to hell. How-  
ever, though the first thing I had to repent of was my  
education in general, yet I must always acknowledge that  
my particular thanks are due to my master for the great  
pains he took with me and his other scholars in teaching  
us to write and speak correctly.’

The future saint and preacher was still indicated amid  
all this mirth. Part of the money received for his good  
acting and reciting was spent upon ‘Ken’s Manual for  
Winchester Scholars,’ a book which had affected him  
much when his brother used to read it in his mother’s  
troubles, and which, for some time after he bought it, was  
‘of great use to his soul.’

Before he was fifteen he longed to be free even from  
the mild discipline of his last grammar school; and by  
pressing his mother with the sage argument that, since she  
could not send him to the university, and as more learning  
might spoil him for a tradesman, it would be best for him  
to halt at his present attainments, he got his own way on  
all points but one—he must go to school every day for a  
writing lesson. Adverse circumstances soon compelled  
the discontinuance of the solitary lesson, and the lad of  
fifteen had to take—on his part, apparently with some  
little regret, but with commendable industry—to the dress  
and work of a common drawer in his mother’s inn. She  
who had hitherto been so jealous over her son’s asso-  
ciations must have been hard pressed with poverty before  
consenting to such a step. Nor was the boy unaffected  
by the family misfortunes. His honour prompted him to  
be of use, and to shun the greater contempt of being a  
burden, by enduring the lesser shame of wearing a blue

apron and washing mops and cleaning rooms. His reli-  
gious tendencies were strengthened by frequent reading  
of the Bible at the close of his day’s work; indeed, he  
would sit up to read it. Sometimes the care of the whole  
house came upon him; but still he found time to compose  
two or three sermons, one of which he dedicated to his  
elder brother. The first lessons of experience were being  
wrought into the heart of a quick learner, whose way-  
wardness was receiving its first stern rebuke. The work  
of the inn made him long for school again, but his  
sense of filial duty never suffered him to be idle, even in  
a calling which he disliked. The sight of the boys going  
to school often cut him to the heart; and to a companion,  
who frequently came entreating him to go to Oxford, his  
general answer was, ‘I wish I could.’

A year later his mother was obliged to leave the inn;  
then a married brother, ‘who had been bred up to the  
business,’ took it; and to him George became an assistant.  
The brothers agreed well enough; not so the brother-in-  
law and sister-in-law; for three weeks together George  
would not speak a word to her. He was wretched, and  
much to blame; and at length, thinking that his absence  
would make all things easy, and being advised so by his  
mother and brother, he went to Bristol, to see one of his  
brothers. This, he thinks, was God’s way of ‘forcing him  
out of the public business, and calling him from drawing  
wine for drunkards, to draw water out of the wells of  
salvation for the refreshment of His spiritual Israel.’

At Bristol he experienced the first of those rapturous  
feelings with which, a few years later, his soul became  
absolutely penetrated and possessed, then refined and  
gloriously illuminated, and in which it was finally sa-  
crificed to God his Saviour. From the first it was no  
weakness of his to feel with half his heart: ‘with all thy  
soul and mind and strength’ was to him an easy condition  
of religious feeling and activity. He now had much

‘sensible devotion,’ and was filled with ‘ unspeakable  
raptures,’ sometimes ‘ carried out beyond himself.’ He  
longed after the sacrament; he pondered the ‘Imitation of  
Christ,’ and delighted in it; he was all impatience to hear  
the church bell calling him to worship; his former employ-  
ment dissatisfied him, and he often wrote to his mother,  
telling her that he never would return to it. Yet, with all  
his fervour, his heart knew not ‘the peace of God which  
passeth all understanding;’ something secretly whispered,  
‘this will not last;’ and it is not from this time that he  
dates his conversion. He admits that God was in the  
tumult of devotion, but not as he afterwards knew Him  
—the God of peace and rest and love.

Two short months sufficed to end the spiritual fever.  
Probably it would have left him, had he continued at  
Bristol, but its decline he ascribes to his return home.  
Once among his old associations, his delight in church-  
going and in prayer ceased; the only remnant of good he  
retained was his resolution not to live in the inn; and no  
doubt his firmness on that point was mainly due to his  
antipathy to his sister-in-law, and to his love for his  
mother, who, with true motherly affection, welcomed him  
to the best she could give him—her own fare and a bed  
upon the floor. His old love for play-reading revived  
again; his vanity made him more careful to ‘adorn his  
body than deck and beautify his soul,’ his former school-  
fellows, whom he had done his share in misleading, now  
did theirs in misleading him.

‘But God,’ he says, speaking in harmony with those  
Calvinistic views which he afterwards adopted, ‘whose  
gifts and callings are without repentance, would let no-  
thing pluck me out of His hands, though I was continually  
doing despite to the Spirit of grace. He saw me with pity  
and compassion, when lying in my blood. He passed by  
me; He said unto me, “Live,” and even gave me some  
foresight of His providing for me. One morning, as I was

reading a play to my sister, said I, “Sister, God intends  
something for me which we know not of. As I have  
been diligent in business, I believe many would gladly  
have me for an apprentice; but every way seems to be  
barred up, so that I think God will provide for me some  
way or other that we cannot apprehend.” ’

The deterioration of character which must have re-  
sulted from his being without employment, and without  
any purposes for the future, was happily averted by an  
accidental visit paid to his mother by one of his former  
school-fellows, now a servitor at Pembroke College, Ox-  
ford. When it was incidentally mentioned in the conver-  
sation, that the visitor had paid his last quarter’s expenses,  
and received a penny, Mrs. Whitefield eagerly caught at  
the news, and cried out, ‘This will do for my son;’ and  
turning to George she said, ‘Will you go to Oxford,  
George?’ He replied, ‘With all my heart.’ Application  
was at once made for the help of the kind friends who  
had aided their visitor; and mother and son were soon  
rejoiced to know that interest would be used to procure  
George a servitor’s place in Pembroke College.

His learning, such as it was, had not been kept bright  
during his service in the inn, his visit to Bristol, and his  
idle time under his mother’s roof; and so the genial  
schoolmaster had to be applied to again, to take back his  
former pupil. He gladly consented; and, this time, the  
pupil, animated by the hope of gaining an honourable  
object, worked diligently and successfully. At first his  
morality and religion were not improved equally with his  
learning. A knot of debauched and atheistical youths,  
their atheism probably founded on their immorality,  
which did not like to retain the knowledge of God, suc-  
ceeded in inveigling him. His thoughts about religion  
grew more and more like theirs; he reasoned that if God  
had given him passions, it must be to gratify them. He  
affected to look rakish; and when he went to public ser-

vice, it was only to make sport and walk about. Twice  
or thrice he got drunk.

Then a reforming impulse came upon him; and upon  
information given by him to his master of the principles  
and practices of his companions, their proceedings were  
stopped. Efforts after a better life, relapses into sin, me-  
ditations upon serious books,[[1]](#footnote-1) dutiful service done for his  
mother, and, finally, a firm resolution to prepare for  
taking the sacrament on his seventeenth birthday, marked  
his moral history at school for the first twelvemonths.

Strange fancies now began to flit through his mind.  
Once he dreamt that he was to see God on Mount Sinai,  
and was afraid to meet Him—a circumstance which im-  
pressed him deeply; and when he told it to a ‘gentle-  
woman,’ she said, ‘George, this is a call from God.’ He  
grew more serious, and his looks—such, he says, was his  
‘hypocrisy ’—were more grave than the feelings behind  
them. The gentlewoman’s words also helped to increase  
his impressionableness; and it is not surprising to learn  
that ‘one night, as he was going on an errand for his  
mother, an unaccountable but very strong impression was  
made upon his heart, that he should preach quickly.’ It

is as little surprising that his mother, upon hearing from  
him what had come into his mind, should have turned  
short upon him, crying out—‘ What does the boy mean?  
Prithee, hold thy tongue.’

He resumed, though in a much more sober way, the  
religious practices of his Bristol life. A rebuke adminis-  
tered to him by one of his brothers, who had begun to  
regard his alternations from saint to sinner and sinner to  
saint as painfully regular, did him much good, by check-  
ing his spiritual pride and by increasing his self-distrust  
and watchfulness. His brother told him plainly—the  
Whitefields were an outspoken family—that he feared  
the new zeal would not last long, not through the temp-  
tations of Oxford. Perhaps his prophecy might have been  
fulfilled had he not spoken it.

Whitefield went to Oxford in 1732 when he was  
nearly eighteen years old. Some of his friends used their  
influence with the master of Pembroke College; another  
friend lent him ten pounds upon a bond, to defray the  
expense of entering, while the master admitted him as a  
servitor immediately. Once within the college walls he  
was not the lad to play with his chance of success. His  
humble station had no thorns for his pride. To be a ser-  
vitor was no new thing; perhaps he felt himself advanced  
by having his fellow-students to wait upon, instead of  
boors and drunkards. Pembroke College was far before  
the Bell Inn, both for reputation and society; and then,  
was there not before the eye of the young student the  
prospect of an honourable and useful station in life?  
Might he not, at the least, become an ordinary clergyman  
in his church? Might he not pass beyond that, and  
attain to the dignity of a very reverend, or perhaps of a  
right reverend? There might be present indignity in his  
position, as there certainly was nothing ennobling in it;  
yet he would not impatiently and with silly haughtiness  
throw away future honour by discarding humble work.

He may have been rather too destitute of that high-  
spiritedness which made Johnson, not many weeks before  
Whitefield’s coming to Pembroke,1 throw away a pair of  
shoes which gentle kindness had placed at his door; in-deed, an equal division of them respective qualities of  
pride and humbleness between the two students might  
have been an advantage to both. A little more of John-  
son’s spiritedness might have saved Whitefield from the  
reproach of sycophancy, while not injuring his humility  
and gratefulness of heart; and a little more of White-  
field’s diligence and ready attention to the wants of the  
gentlemen might have rescued Johnson from years of  
hardship and of ignominious drudgery, while not sapping  
his independence. When Whitefield rejoices in his humble  
lot, because it offers many advantages above the position  
in which he was born, and wins for himself general esteem  
by his quickness and readiness to serve, he is greater than  
the suspicious Johnson, who can see nothing but an insult  
in as delicate a kindness as ever was offered to a poor  
scholar; but when Johnson rebukes the cold neglect, and  
afterwards the officious help of Chesterfield, he is nobler  
than Whitefield, who uses obsequious language to the  
lords and ladies of his congregation, not indeed in preach-  
ing to them, but in his private correspondence with them.

The young servitor lightened the burden of friends  
who stood as his money-securities, toiled at his classics,  
adhered to his late religious practices at the grammar  
school, and thus laid a good foundation for a manly fife.  
Law’s ‘Serious Call to a Devout Life,’ which had already  
‘overmatched’ Johnson, and made him ‘think in earnest  
of religion,’ and his treatise on ‘Christian Perfection,’  
were the means of stirring still more profoundly the  
already excited mind of Whitefield. Standing aloof from  
the general body of students, resisting the solicitations of  
many who lay in the same room with him, and who

1 I am following Boswell’s dates.

‘would have drawn him into excess of riot,’ and prac-  
tising daily devotions with the regularity of a monk, what  
wonder that he was soon thrown amongst the ‘Metho-  
dists,’ who were beginning their new life, and whom he  
had always defended, even before he came to Oxford, or  
knew them. If there was spiritual life in the university,  
how could one who had so strangely, though ofttimes so  
inconsistently, followed prayer, meditation, sermon-writ-  
ing, almsgiving, and public worship, fail to feel its touch,  
and answer to its call! It was inevitable that the servitor,  
who had come to be looked upon as a ‘singular odd  
fellow,’ notwithstanding all his merits, should turn  
Methodist; and accordingly he joined the band of devout  
young men sometime between his nineteenth and twen-  
tieth year, after his ‘soul had longed for above a twelve-  
month to be acquainted with them.’

The first Methodists were John and Charles Wesley,  
Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ Church, and Mr. Kirk-  
ham, of Merton College; but the nickname was fastened  
on the little company while John was in Lincolnshire  
assisting his father, the rector of Epworth. When he  
returned to Oxford, in 1730, he took his brother Charles’s  
place at the head of the band, and became for ever after  
the chief figure of Methodism. His age—he was now  
twenty-seven years old, Charles twenty-two, and White-  
field sixteen—his ability, his position, and his piety, fitted  
him to become the guide and stay of his friends; and  
soon were the effects of his presence seen in an increased  
attendance at the students’ devotional meetings, and in  
the manner in which the meetings were conducted. Uni-  
versity wits called him ‘The Father of the Holy Club.’  
When Whitefield joined the Methodists, which was about  
the end of 1734, or early in 1735, they were fifteen in  
number, and included Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Queen’s  
College; Mr. T. Broughton, of Exeter; and Mr. James  
Hervey, of Lincoln College; and it was in this wise he

joined them. Wesley and his associates were marked  
men. Their austerities, their devoutness, and their chari-  
table labours among the poor, attracted general attention;  
and on their way to St. Mary’s, every week, to receive the  
sacrament, they had to pass through a crowd of ridiculing  
students, congregated to insult them. The sight of this  
shameful insolence did not operate upon one beholder  
at least as a hindrance to godly living; on the contrary,  
it awakened his sympathy, nerved his courage, and pre-  
pared him to take up his cross. Whitefield often saw the  
persecution endured by the few, and never without wish-  
ing to follow their brave example. An opportunity of  
becoming acquainted with them soon offered itself. A  
poor woman, in one of the workhouses, made an unsuc-  
cessful attempt to commit suicide; and Whitefield, aware  
of Charles Wesley’s readiness for every good work, sent  
a message to him by an apple woman of Pembroke, ask-  
ing him to visit her. The messenger was, for some  
unaccountable reason, charged not to tell Wesley who  
had sent her; that charge she broke; and Wesley, who  
had often met Whitefield walking by himself, pondering  
the ‘deep things of God,’ and was aware of his pious  
habits, sent him an invitation to come and breakfast with  
him the next morning. Whitefield gladly went; and that  
morning the two students formed a life-long, honourable  
friendship. Forty years afterwards Charles wrote of their  
meeting with much tenderness and warmth:—

‘Can I the memorable day forget,

When first we by divine appointment met?

Where undisturbed the thoughtful student roves,

In search of truth, through academic groves;

A modest, pensive youth, who mused alone,

Industrious the frequented path to shun,

An Israelite, without disguise or art,

I saw, I loved, and clasped him to my heart,

A stranger as my bosom-friend caressed,

And unawares received an angel-guest.’

Charles Wesley put into the hands of his guest, Professor  
Franck’s treatise against the ‘Fear of Man’ and the  
‘Country Parson’s Advice to his Parishioners.’ White-  
field then took his departure.

The most interesting part of the spiritual life of White-  
field begins at this point, up to which there has been an  
uncertain, varying war carried on against sin, coupled  
with many defeated attempts to attain to a severe form  
of external piety. After the period just to be opened to  
our view, he never becomes entangled in doubts con-  
cerning the divine method of saving sinners, and never  
hesitates between rival plans of practical living. He tried  
all the three great plans of being a Christian and of  
serving God which have gained favour with large sections  
of mankind; and finding satisfaction in the one which he  
ultimately adopted, he felt no temptation ever afterwards  
to leave it. Already, as we have seen, he has had large  
experience of the effects upon conscience and heart of  
the method which theologians call, ‘salvation by works;’  
and yet he is neither at peace with God, nor established  
in a godly life. He is more satisfied that he is on the  
right track, and his resolutions to be outwardly holy have  
stood a good trial; but he is still asking and seeking.

While in this state of mind, Charles Wesley both  
helped and hindered him—helped him with his books,  
and hindered him by his example, which was that of an  
honest, anxious mind, ignorant of the salvation which  
comes by faith in the Son of God. The great Methodist,  
his ‘never-to-be-forgotten friend,’ as Whitefield affection-  
ately calls him, brought him within sight of the ‘fulness  
of the blessing of the gospel of Christ,’ and then led him  
down a by-path, which brought him to the low levels of  
Quietism, where he nearly perished. Charles Wesley did  
not conduct him thus far, and never intended to set  
him in that direction; it was ‘the blind leading the  
blind.’ The pupil, as we shall presently see, was the first

to become a safe teacher; he knew ‘the liberty of the sons  
of God,’ while the Wesleys were struggling in chains he  
had broken.

Shortly after the memorable breakfast, Charles lent  
him a book, entitled ‘The Life of God in the Soul of  
Man;’ and no small wonder did it create within him. It  
was a new doctrine to be told, ‘that some falsely placed  
religion in going to church, doing hurt to no one, being  
constant in the duties of the closet, and now and then  
reaching out their hands to give alms to their poor  
neighbours.’ But if the book’s negative teaching alarmed  
him, by shaking to the ground the temple he was so  
diligently building, its positive teaching filled him with  
unspeakable joy. When he read that ‘true religion is  
an union of the soul with God, or Christ formed within  
us, a ray of divine light instantaneously darted in upon  
his soul, and from that moment, but not till then, did he  
know that he must be a new creature.’

Then, with characteristic ardour, he wrote to his rela-  
tions about this new birth (afterwards to be the main  
doctrine of his preaching to multitudes of people), think-  
ing that the news of it would be as welcome to them as  
it had been to himself; but they charitably supposed him  
to be insane. Their letters determined him to forego an  
intended visit to his native town, lest going among them  
they might impede the progress of his soul in grace.  
Charles Wesley now introduced him ‘by degrees to the  
rest of the Methodists;’ and of course the introduction  
led him to adopt the whole of their plan of living. To  
live by rule was the fundamental principle of their theo-.  
logy; as yet they knew nothing of the mighty power of  
joy and peace which come through believing upon the  
name of Jesus. To live according to ‘the law of the  
spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ was an unthought-of privi-  
lege in their fixed and lifeless code. Thus Whitefield  
was led astray from the scriptural truth which had poured

light into his understanding, and gladness into his heart,  
and once more tried, though this time more inflexibly  
and more thoroughly, his old scheme of salvation by  
works. It seemed as if, like Luther, he must know all  
that he could do, and all that he could not do, before he  
could ‘count all things but loss for the excellency of the  
knowledge of Christ Jesus.’ The redemption of time  
became, according to the new teachers, a primary virtue,  
and he hoarded his moments as if they were years.  
Whether he ate, or drank, or whatever he did, he endea-  
voured to do all to the glory of God. The sacrament  
was received every Sunday at Christ Church. Lasting  
was practised on Wednesday and Friday. Sick persons  
and prisoners were visited, and poor people were read  
to. An hour every day was spent in acts of charity.

His studies were soon affected by his morbid state of  
mind, for such a system as he was living under allowed  
its faithful disciple no room for change or diversion.  
Every hour brought round a weary step of the moral  
treadmill which must be taken, or conscience would be  
bruised and wounded; and Whitefield had suffered  
enough from conscience to feel a quivering fear of its  
pains. No books would now please his disordered taste  
but such as ‘entered into the heart of religion, and led him  
directly into an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ  
and Him crucified.’ How he came to write these words,  
which are quoted from his journal, it would be hard to  
say. When he wrote them, he must have known that it  
was the lack of the knowledge of Jesus which had made  
him a slave.

Once fully and openly Connected with the ‘Holy Club,’  
he had soon to share in its troubles. ‘Polite students’  
shot barbed words at him, mean ones withdrew their pay  
from him, and brutal ones threw dirt at him. Friends  
became shy. The master of the college rebuked him,  
and threatened to expel him. Daily contempt was poured

upon him. His tutor alone forbore to torment him. At  
first he did not accept his reproach calmly; it shook his  
feeble strength. When he went to St. Mary’s, for the  
first time, to receive the sacrament publicly on a week-  
day—sure sign to all the University that he had ‘com-  
menced Methodist’ — ‘Mr. Charles Wesley,’ he says,  
‘whom I must always mention with the greatest de-  
ference and respect, walked with me from the church  
even to the college. I confess to my shame I would  
gladly have excused him; and the next day, going to his  
room, one of our fellows passing by, I was ashamed to  
be seen to knock at his door.’ The displeasure of the  
master of his college, and the master’s threat to expel  
him if ever he visited the poor again, surprised him, as  
well it might. A shameful state of feeling must have  
prevailed when a master could think of inflicting final  
disgrace upon a student for the sin, not of attending  
Methodist meetings, but of visiting the poor. ‘Over-  
awed,’ he says, ‘by the master’s authority, I spoke un-  
advisedly with my lips, and said, if it displeased him, I  
would not. My conscience soon pricked me for this sin-  
ful compliance. I immediately repented, and visited the  
poor the first opportunity, and told my companions, if  
ever I was called to a stake for Christ’s sake, I would  
serve my tongue as Archbishop Cranmer served his hand,  
viz. make that burn first.’ His fear of man gradually  
wore off; and he ‘confessed the Methodists more and  
more publicly every day,’ walking openly with them, and  
choosing rather to bear contempt with them than ‘to enjoy  
the applause of almost-Christians for a season.’

The advantage of his trials was, that they inured him  
to contempt, of which he was destined to get a full share,  
and lessened his self-love. His inward sufferings were  
also of an uncommon kind, Satan seeming to desire to sift  
him like wheat; and the reason for this, Whitefield thinks,  
was to prevent his future blessings from proving his ruin.

All along he had an earnest desire, a Hungering and  
thirsting after the Humility of Jesus Christ. Imagining  
that it would be instantaneously infused into His soul,  
He prayed night and day to receive it. ‘But as Gideon,’  
He says, ‘taught the men of Succoth with thorns, so God  
—if I am yet in any measure blessed with poverty of  
spirit—taught it me by the exercise of true, strong temp-  
tations.’ The strong temptations came in reality from  
His mistaken, though eagerly-accepted, views of religion,  
his incessant self-inspection, His moral police regulations,  
His abstinence from all change in reading, and His daily  
persecutions, the combined influence of which brought  
him into a terrible condition. A horrible fearfulness and  
dread overwhelmed his soul. He felt ‘an unusual weight  
and impression, attended with inward darkness,’ lie upon  
his breast; and the load increased until he was convinced  
that Satan had real possession of him, and that his body,  
like Job’s, was given over to the power of the evil one.  
All power of meditating, or even thinking, was taken from  
him. But let him tell his own tale:—‘My memory quite  
failed me. My whole soul was barren and dry, and I  
could fancy myself to be like nothing so much as a man  
locked up in iron armour. Whenever I kneeled down,  
I felt great heavings in my body, and have often prayed  
under the weight of them till the sweat came through  
me. At this time Satan used to terrify me much, and  
threatened to punish me, if I discovered his wiles. It  
being my duty, as servitor, in my turn to knock at the  
gentlemen’s rooms by ten at night, to see who were in  
their rooms, I thought the devil would appear to me every  
stair I went up. And he so troubled me when I lay down  
to rest, that, for some weeks, I scarce slept above three  
hours at a time.

‘God only knows how many nights I have lain upon  
my bed groaning under the weight I felt, and bidding  
Satan depart from me in the name of Jesus. Whole days

and weeks have I spent in lying prostrate on the ground,  
and begging freedom from those proud, hellish thoughts  
that used to crowd in upon and distract my soul. But  
God made Satan drive out Satan. For these thoughts  
and suggestions created such a self-abhorrence within me,  
that I never ceased wrestling with God till He blessed me  
with a victory over them. Self-love, self-will, pride, and  
envy buffeted me in their turns, that I was resolved  
either to die or conquer. I wanted to see sin as it was,  
but feared, at the same time, lest the sight of it should  
terrify me to death.

‘Having nobody to show me a better way, I thought  
to get peace and purity by outward austerities. Accord-  
ingly, by degrees, I began to leave off eating fruits, and  
such like, and gave the money I usually spent in that  
way to the poor. Afterwards I always chose the worst  
sort of food, though my place furnished me with variety.  
I fasted twice a week. My apparel was mean. I thought  
it unbecoming a penitent to have his hair powdered. I  
wore woollen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes,  
and therefore looked upon myself as very humble.’

He was exhausting what he calls ‘the legal system’—-  
salvation by works. He felt pride creeping in, in spite  
of him, behind every thought, word, and action; and he  
was too sincere not to admit that all his labours must  
prove fruitless while that remained unbroken. Here  
Quietism offered him its aid. Whitefield a Quietist!  
As easily change a comet into a fixed star. The power  
was not in him to dream sweet dreams of heaven, nor to  
swoon away in the ecstasy of a mediaeval saint, his ‘soul  
and spirit divided asunder as by the sword of the Spirit  
of God.’ He was quite capable of a fiery rapture; indeed  
his life, when he got fairly engaged in his mighty labours,  
was nothing else; but his feelings depended much upon  
active effort. His practical mind could not tolerate the  
spiritual subtleties of the mystical mind, and in the school

of Richard of St. Victor he would not have learned the  
alphabet of the spirit-lore. It would have plunged him  
into a horrible pit had he been assured, that within his  
own soul he might find ‘a threefold heaven—the imagi-  
national, the rational, and the intellectual.’ Fenelon’s  
doctrine of disinterested love, though substantially the  
same as that of a theologian whom he learned profoundly  
to revere, Jonathan Edwards, would have driven him dis-  
tracted. The definitions, stages, and depths of Quietism  
were not what attracted him to his new system; these  
were an esoteric doctrine to him. All that he wanted  
was some ready and satisfactory method of relieving his  
conscience of an intolerable burden, and of attaining to a  
truly religious life; and reading one day in Castaniza’s  
‘Spiritual Combat,’ ‘that he that is employed in morti-  
fying his will is as well employed as though he were con-  
verting Indians,’ he set himself rudely to the task of  
mortifying his will. He began as an Englishman, with a  
rough unsparing hand and an honest heart. He sighed  
for no canonisation; he coveted no marvellous revelations.  
To mortify his will was all that he had to do; and how  
else could it be done but by mortification? So he shut  
himself up in his study for five or six weeks (only attend-  
ing to necessary college business), and fought his cor-  
ruptions by almost incessant prayer. Extravagance was  
added to extravagance. The narrative of our Lord’s  
temptation among wild beasts made him think that he  
ought to expose himself to the cold; and at night, after  
supper, he went into Christ Church Walk, knelt under a  
tree, and continued in silent prayer until the great bell  
rang and called him to his college. Mortification next  
required the discontinuance of a diary which he kept, and  
also abstinence from the use of forms and even of audible  
speech in prayer, and cessation from works of mercy.  
Its inexorable logic next required that he should forsake  
all his friends; for is it not written that we are ‘to leave

all,’ if we would follow Christ and accordingly, instead of  
meeting with his beloved brethren on one of their weekly  
fast days, Wednesday, he went into the fields for silent  
prayer. The evening meeting also was neglected; and  
on Thursday morning he did not make his usual appear-  
ance at Charles Wesley’s breakfast-table. This made

Charles call upon him to see what was the matter, and  
finding that it was morbid anxiety, he counselled White-  
field to seek spiritual direction from his brother John,  
whose skill he thoroughly trusted.

The spell of Quietism was broken; it was not potent  
enough to hold such a spirit as Whitefield’s long in  
bondage; and silence was impossible under the interroga-  
tions of a loving, anxious friend. With wonderful humi-  
lity Whitefield sought the aid of John Wesley, who told  
him that he must resume all his external religious exer-  
cises, but not depend upon them,—advice which might  
have driven him mad, not a ray of comfort in it, not a  
drop of the love of God. And still the bewildered in-  
quirer, burdened with his great sorrow, which no man  
could remove, attended diligently upon his teacher; and  
the teacher, as was natural to him, confidently undertook  
to guide him. As they stand here before our eye, one  
side of each character, unconsciously displayed by that  
luminous sincerity which distinguished equally both these  
remarkable men, comes clearly and boldly into relief.  
The elder, while abounding in some of the divinest gifts  
which can adorn humanity—readiness to forgive, patience,  
justice—is confident, assuming, and gratified in being  
above his fellows; the younger, while restless with im-  
petuosity, impatient, quick to engage in conflict if not first  
to provoke it, is teachable, reverent, and generous to  
rivals. The thought of rivalry between them is yet un-  
born; ‘the Father of the Holy Club’ is instructing its  
youngest member.

Wesley meant to do Whitefield good service, and par-

tially succeeded when he urged him to return to ‘exter-  
nals,’ as Methodists called acts of devotion and charity.  
Only a few days after returning to his duty among the  
poor, Whitefield added to the one convert, James  
Hervey, whom he had won, two more, while his own  
soul was tormented and afflicted. The story of their con-  
version well illustrates the reputation of the Methodists  
in Oxford at this time. ‘As I was walking along,’  
Whitefield says, ‘I met with a poor woman, whose hus-  
band was then in Bocardo, or Oxford town gaol, which I  
constantly visited. Seeing her much discomposed, I in-  
quired the cause. She told me, not being able to bear the  
crying of her children, ready to perish with hunger, and  
having nothing to relieve them, she had been to drown  
herself, but was mercifully prevented, and said she was  
coming to my room to inform me of it. I gave her some  
immediate relief, and desired her to meet me at the prison  
with her husband in the afternoon. She came, and there  
God visited them both by His free grace; she was power-  
fully quickened from above; and, when I had done read-  
ing, he came to me like the trembling jailor, and, grasp-  
ing my hand, cried out, “I am upon the brink of hell!”  
From this time forward both of them grew in grace.  
God, by His providence, soon delivered him from his  
confinement. Though notorious offenders against God  
and one another before, yet now they became helpsmeet  
for each other in the great work of their salvation. They  
are both now living, and I trust will be my joy and crown  
of rejoicing in the great day of our Lord Jesus.’

Lent soon came, and its fastings and hardships brought  
Whitefield’s spiritual conflicts to their fiercest vigour, and  
then to their joyful cessation. The externals of the  
Methodist rule for this season were duly observed. No  
meat was eaten by the brethren except on the Saturday  
and the Sunday; but Whitefield surpassed them, and often  
abstained on the Saturday; and on other days, Sunday

alone excepted, he lived on sage tea without sugar, and  
coarse bread. In the cold mornings, the biting east wind  
blowing, he walked out, until part of one of his hands  
became quite black. When Passion Week came he could  
scarce creep upstairs for weakness; and it then seemed  
to be time to send for his tutor, a kind, considerate man,  
who immediately took the common-sense plan of calling  
in a doctor.

‘Salvation by works’ had nearly killed him; Quietism  
had nearly driven him mad. Was there not another way,  
which, combining the excellences of the two plans, might  
bring him out of darkness into God’s marvellous light?  
Might he not render his soul into the hands of God as  
into ‘the hands of a faithful Creator,’ and still devote  
himself with diligence to ‘every good word and work;’  
thus getting the repose combined with the activity which  
his nature in a special degree needed? Both sides of the  
spiritual life of man are fully recognised in Holy Scrip-  
ture. Expressions of supreme delight in the knowledge  
and fellowship of the Almighty crowd the pages both of  
the Old and New Testament; and not less numerous are  
the passages which declare the joy and worth of humble  
toil for each other and for the glory of God. Our great  
example, Christ Jesus, had His own hidden, sweet delights  
in communing wiith His father, and His feet were swift  
to do ‘His father’s business.’ Might not the disciple be  
as his Lord? It is not to be objected here, that the  
disciple had not received the very first gift of God to man,  
at least the first gift which affords man sensible relief, and  
a vivid conception of the divine mercy, pardon; and  
that it is idle to speak of the after stages of grace before  
the first step in it has been taken. The effect of the book,  
‘The Life of God in the Soul of Man,’ must be remem-  
bered, and then it will be seen that all Whitefield’s  
misery arose from forgetting, through the deference which  
he paid to the judgment of the Wesleys, the truth declared

in that book. ‘The Life of God ’ was undoubtedly in  
his soul, and would have expanded rapidly, imparting to  
him daily joy had he not been told that it must grow in  
certain stunted forms, or it was not of God at all; and the  
attempt to cripple it produced an inevitable agony. No  
life, least of all the divine life of the soul, will quietly  
suffer its laws to be violated. The poor servitor was  
taught that truth in a way never to be forgotten. Ever  
afterwards he was careful to go whither the Spirit might  
lead him; and hence his life was free from the deformities  
of a forced asceticism and the vagaries of a wild spiritual-  
ism. Not that he did not sternly, sometimes almost  
cruelly, deny his body rest and comfort, and urge it on  
to work; not that he was without ‘experiences’ of  
spiritual things so rapturous, so excited, so absorbing,  
that, compared with them, the feelings and devotional  
exercises of most saints appear tame and flat; but there  
was health, there was naturalness in it all. His abound-  
ing labours, his ‘weariness and painfulness,’ were always  
for the salvation of others, never for his own; his agonies  
of soul were like those which the Apostle declared that  
he felt for his brethren—a ‘travailing in birth until Christ  
should be formed in their hearts.’

Left alone in his sick-room he felt again the blessed-  
ness of which he had tasted one memorable draught.  
What book he had been reading, or what devotional  
exercises he had been engaged in when he felt himself  
free again, does not appear. He simply says, ‘About  
the end of the seventh week, after having undergone  
innumerable bufferings of Satan, and many months’ in-  
expressible trials by night and day under the spirit of  
bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the  
heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on His dear Son by  
a living faith, and by giving me the Spirit of adoption,  
to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of ever-  
lasting redemption.’ Then catching fire at the remem-

brance of what he had felt, he exclaims in his journal:—

‘But oh! with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that  
was full of, and big with, glory, was my soul filled, when  
the weight of sin went off; and an abiding sense of the  
pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith broke  
in upon my disconsolate soul! Surely it was the day of  
my espousals, a day to be had in everlasting remem-  
brance. At first my joys were like a spring-tide, and, as  
it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would, I  
could not avoid singing of psalms almost aloud; after-  
wards it became more settled, and, blessed be God! saving  
a few casual intervals, has abode and increased in my  
soul ever since.’

Oxford had by this time become a ‘sweet retirement.’  
There he had become a new man; there the scales had  
fallen from his eyes, and he had beheld the glories of the  
Son of God; there he had found rest to his soul; there he  
had united himself to one of the most remarkable bands  
of young men our country has seen; and it was with  
much reluctance that, on a partial recovery, he yielded to  
the advice of his physician to go to Gloucester till he  
should be quite restored. Oxford was associated with  
his better life; Gloucester with his baser life. However,  
he determined ‘either to make or find a friend,’ a person  
of like mind with himself; and, as soon as he reached  
home, he resolved, after importunate prayer, to go and  
see an acquaintance, evidently a woman of literary tastes  
(to whom he had formerly read ‘Plays, Spectators,  
Pope’s Homer, and such like books’), with the intention  
of winning her for Christ . ‘She received the Word gladly,

and soon became a fool for Christ’s sake,’ is his record  
in his journal. One friend was not enough. Others, young  
persons, were brought under the power of this new  
teaching; and the Methodist Oxonian soon repeated the  
Oxford experiment, and gathered his converts into a  
society. All had the honour of being despised. Similar

success was not attained at Bristol, to which he went for  
three weeks; his way was hindered by prejudices against  
himself, and only one young woman became ‘obedient to  
the faith.’

At Gloucester friends were lost and won. Some who  
were expected to give him pecuniary help—he was still  
a servitor—turned their backs on him, and disappointed  
him; but others, whom he had accounted enemies, though  
he had never spoken to them, became generous friends.  
It was the time of his learning first lessons of trust in that  
Almighty Friend upon whose bountiful and loving care  
he cast himself throughout the whole of a poverty-stricken  
life; and to whom he committed many orphan children,  
the foundlings of his own loving heart.

The good Oxford physician had hoped, by getting his  
patient away from the University, to divert him from  
a too intense application to religion. Vain hope! The  
patient simply pursued, in the spirit of joyous liberty,  
duties and engagements which had previously been an  
anxious burden. He cast aside all other books, and, on  
his bended knees, read and prayed over the Holy Scrip-  
tures. ‘Light, life, and power’ came upon him, stimula-  
ting him still to search; every search brought treasure;  
all fresh treasure caused fresh searching. There never  
was a mind more capable of deriving unfailing pleasure  
from one pursuit, nor more independent of the changes  
which most of us must have, if we are to keep out of the  
grave and out of the asylum. From the first effort he  
put forth to the last (and he laboured without respite for  
more than thirty years), he never flagged in his ardent  
attachment to the same truth, expressed in the same  
words, looked at from the same standpoint. His latest  
letters contain the self-same phrases as his earliest; and  
they are given with as much feeling as if they were quite  
new. This perpetual, never withering freshness will often  
strike us as we follow him to the end.

Besides laborious and prayerful study of the Bible, work  
was undertaken for poor people; leave was also obtained  
to visit the prisoners in the county-gaol, and they were  
seen every day. He was also permitted to give a public  
testimony of his repentance as to seeing and acting plays.  
Hearing that the strollers were coming to town, and  
knowing what an offender he had been, he prayed that  
he might be put ‘in a way to manifest his abhorrence of  
his former sin and folly.’ He was stirred up to make  
extracts from Law’s treatise, entitled ‘The Absolute Un-  
lawfulness of the Stage Entertainment.’ ‘God,’ he says,

‘gave me favour in the printer’s sight; and at my request  
he put a little of it in the news for six weeks succes-  
sively; and God was pleased to give it His blessing.’

At the end of nine months he returned to Oxford, to  
the joy and comfort of his friends.

CHAPTER II.

**1736.**

HIS ORDINATION AS DEACON—ESSAYS IN PREACHING.

It was time for the irregular soldier to become a captain  
of the Lord’s host;—time, if a good understanding of the  
word of God, an intense delight in its spirit, and a fer-  
vent desire to preach it, together with abundant scope for  
the exercise of his talents and the concurrent favourable  
judgment of good men, could mark any day of a man’s  
life as the time for him to go to the front. The homes  
of the poor and the gaols of Oxford and Gloucester had  
been, along with the halls of Oxford, the finest training  
schools for the coming leader. What progress he had  
made in learning, I cannot say; for all other considera-  
tions were lost in his supreme pleasure in religion. All  
learning was nothing in comparison of the knowledge of  
God and of His Son Jesus Christ, and in that knowledge  
he was well instructed; nor was he ignorant of his own  
heart, of its weakness and sinfulness. What natural  
fitness he had for speaking none could fail to perceive,  
when once they heard his rich, sweet voice, and saw the  
artless grace of all his movements. He had not waited  
for a bishop’s ordination and license to preach the gospel  
to the poor, any more than Saul of Tarsus waited for  
apostolical recognition before preaching that ‘Jesus is  
the Son of God; ’ but a license was ready so soon as  
he found ‘peace with God through our Lord Jesus  
Christ.’

Whitefield was not in a hurry to be publicly ordained.

He was well pleased to toil among the lowest; and  
only at the suggestion of friends did the question of  
his receiving orders come into his mind. It imme-  
diately recalled to him the solemn words of St. Paul to  
Timothy: ‘Not a novice, lest, being puffed up with  
pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.’ A  
question which he must answer on ordination-day,’ ‘Do  
you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy  
Ghost to take upon you this office and administration?’  
filled him with trembling. With strong crying and tears  
he often said, ‘Lord, I am a youth of uncircumcised lips;  
Lord, send me not into the vineyard yet.’ He even went  
so far as to ask the prayers of his Oxford friends, that  
God would confound the designs of his Gloucester friends  
to have him at once in orders; but they, as might have  
been expected, replied, ‘Pray we the Lord of the harvest  
to send thee and many more labourers into His harvest.’  
Timidity still held its ground; he continued to pray  
against becoming a keeper of souls so soon.

As he had longed to be with the Methodists when he  
saw them insulted, but was staggered when the first ex-  
perience of their daily shame came to his lot, so he was  
‘desiring the office of a bishop ’ while fearing to enter upon  
it. His sensitive nature was quick to feel the presence of  
difficulties, and frank to acknowledge them; and hence  
his course was fashioned, not by blindness to objections  
and insensibility to criticism, but by the commanding in-  
fluence of ‘the things of God.’ Wesley said of him, that,

‘in whatever concerned himself, he was pliant and flexible;  
in this case he was easy to be entreated, easy to be either  
convinced or persuaded; but he was immovable in the  
things of God, or wherever his conscience was con-  
cerned. None could persuade, any more than affright,  
him to vary in the least point from that integrity which  
was inseparable from his whole character, and regulated  
all his words and actions.’ When friends were urging

him to be ordained, and he was partially engaged in the  
very work to which ordination officially conducts the  
minister of the Gospel, he was pleasing himself with  
the persuasion that he could not enter holy orders for  
two more years, because Bishop Benson had expressed  
his resolution not to lay hands on any one who was  
under twenty-three years of age. That he strongly  
desired to do what yet he would not do, because his  
judgment and his conscience were not fully convinced,  
is evident from the way in which his mind ran in his  
dreams; for though he calls the dream spoken of in the  
next sentence ‘a notice from God,’ it was undoubtedly  
the consequence of his state of mind about the ministry.  
He says, ‘Long ere I had the least prospect of being  
called before the bishop, I dreamed one night I was  
talking with him in his palace, and that he gave me some  
gold, which seemed to sound again in my hand. After-  
ward this dream would often come into my mind; and,  
whenever I saw the bishop at church, a strong persuasion  
would arise in my mind, that I should very shortly go to  
him. I always checked it, and prayed to God to pre-  
serve me from ever desiring that honour which cometh  
of man. One afternoon it happened that the bishop  
took a solitary walk—as I was afterwards told—to Lady  
Selwyn’s, near Gloucester, who, not long before, had  
made me a present of a piece of gold. She, I found,  
recommended me to the bishop; and, a few days after,  
as I was coming from the cathedral prayers, thinking of  
no such thing, one of the vergers called after me, and  
said the bishop desired to speak with me. I—forgetful  
at that time of my dream—immediately turned back,  
considering what I had done to deserve his lordship’s  
displeasure. When I came to the top of the palace  
stairs, the bishop took me by the hand, told me he was  
glad to see me, and bid me wait a little till he had put  
off his habit, and he would return to me again. This

gave me opportunity of praying to God for His assist-  
ance, and for His providence over me.

‘At his coming again into the room, the bishop told  
me he had heard of my character, liked my behaviour at  
church, and inquiring my age, “Notwithstanding,” says  
he, “I have declared I would not ordain any one under  
three and twenty, yet I shall think it my duty to ordain  
you whenever you come for holy orders.” He then  
made me a present of five guineas, to buy me a book;  
which, sounding again in my hand, put me in mind of  
my dream; whereupon my heart was filled with a sense  
of God’s love.’

Eager friends knew of the interview before Whitefield  
got home, and were full of anxiety to learn what his  
lordship had said; and, on hearing it, they at once  
judged that he who should neglect such a plain leading  
of providence would be going against God. It was time  
to yield; Whitefield determined to offer himself for ordi-  
nation the next Ember-days.

That determination made, the next question was as to  
his place of labour; and here contending interests dis-  
turbed him. At Gloucester he had been useful, and his  
friends wished to have him with them. But when he  
went up to Oxford, his old friends there made out a still  
more urgent case on behalf of his staying with them:  
John and Charles Wesley had sailed to Savannah to act  
as chaplains to a new colony there, and to attempt the  
conversion of the Creek Indians: the prisoners in the  
gaol needed some one to supply their lack of service:  
Whitefield had been as useful at Oxford as at Gloucester:  
Oxford was one of the schools of the prophets, and every  
student converted was a parish gained. To remove any  
objection of a pecuniary nature which might have been  
urged, application for money aid was made to Sir John  
Philips, who was a great friend of Methodists, and who  
at once said that Whitefield should have twenty pounds

a year from him, even if he did not stay at Oxford, but  
thirty pounds if he did. Oxford prevailed over Gloucester,  
but its triumph was not for long; all English-speaking  
countries came and claimed their right in him; and his  
large, brave heart was not slow to respond. Wesley  
uttered the fine saying — ‘The world is my parish;’  
Whitefield, the most nearly of any man, made the saying  
a simple statement of fact.

Meanwhile devout and conscientious preparation was  
made for the approaching ordination, three days before  
which the candidate waited on the fatherly bishop who  
had shown him such marked kindness, and who now  
expressed his satisfaction both with the candidate’s pre-  
paration and the provision of Sir John Philips; and  
further said, that, but for the intention concerning Ox-  
ford, with which he was well pleased, there were two  
little parishes which he had purposed to offer White-  
field. The ordination was to be on Trinity Sunday. The  
preceding day was spent by Whitefield in abstinence and  
prayer; ‘in the evening,’ he says, ‘I retired to a hill  
near the town, and prayed fervently for about two hours,  
in behalf of myself and those who were to be ordained  
with me. On Sunday morning I rose early, and prayed  
over St. Paul’s epistle to Timothy, and more particularly  
over that precept, ‘Let no one despise thy youth;’ and  
when the bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my vile  
heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit,  
soul, and body to the service of God’s sanctuary; and  
afterwards sealed the good confession I had made before  
many witnesses, by partaking of the holy sacrament of  
our Lord’s most blessed body and blood.’ Elsewhere he  
says, ‘this is a day’ (June 20, 1736) ‘much to be re-  
membered, 0 my soul! for, about noon, I was solemnly  
admitted by good Bishop Benson, before many witnesses,  
into holy orders, and was, blessed be God! kept com-  
posed both before and after imposition of hands. I

endeavoured to behave with unaffected devotion, but not  
suitable enough to the greatness of the office I was to  
undertake. At the same time, I trust I answered to  
every question from the bottom of my heart, and heartily  
prayed that God might say Amen. I hope the good of  
souls will be my only principle of action. Let come  
what will, life or death, depth or height, I shall hence-  
forward live like one who this day, in the presence of  
men and angels, took the holy sacrament, upon the pro-  
fession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to  
take upon me that ministration in the church. This I  
began with reading prayers to the prisoners in the  
county gaol. Whether I myself shall ever have the  
honour of styling myself a prisoner of the Lord, I know  
not; but, indeed, I can call heaven and earth to witness,  
that when the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave  
myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the  
cross for me.’

Who his fellow-candidates were, he nowhere says;  
and probably not one of them emerged from the ob-  
scurity of their humble parishes. There was not another  
Methodist among them beside Whitefield, or we should  
surely have heard of him.

A pleasant picture comes before us in the ordination  
of the young deacon in his native city on a Midsummer  
Sunday. No doubt a goodly company of Gloucester  
folk attended the ceremony, and among them the mother  
of the candidate; her heart big with joy for the early  
honour that had come to him—to him from whom she  
had always expected much comfort; but little dreaming  
of the greater honour of the future in his world-wide  
usefulness, and in a loving remembrance of him, cherished  
among all who shall ever appreciate disinterested re-  
ligious zeal, or admire genius; and when, at his bishop’s  
command, he read the Gospel, and his manly voice,  
distinct and clear in every note, swept round the cathe-

dral, it may have come to her mind how he once told  
her that God had called him to be a minister, and how  
she had sharply silenced him, because he seemed too  
graceless for the holy calling. The sweet light of all is  
the benignant countenance of ‘good Bishop Benson,’ as it  
is turned in fatherly kindness upon the kneeling candi-  
dates, or lifted up to meet the gaze of the interested con-  
gregation. Such a bishop could not but enhance, with  
great spiritual beauty, an ordinance which can fail to be  
solemn and tender only when its celebrants are sordid  
souls, without the love of God or man.

Many of Whitefield’s friends pressed him to preach in  
the afternoon after his ordination, but he could not. He  
had been in Gloucester a fortnight, partly with the inten-  
tion of composing some sermons. He wanted ‘a hundred  
at least,’ so that he might not be altogether without  
ministerial resources, compelled always to go from the  
study to the pulpit with a newly forged weapon; but,  
alas! he found, like many other beginners who have  
attempted the same thing, that sermons cannot easily be  
made without the helping excitement of expected and  
appointed work. He had matter enough in his heart,  
but nothing would flow from his pen. He strove and  
prayed, but all to no purpose. He mentioned his case  
to a clergyman; but that gentleman showed his refine-  
ment of feeling and his sympathy with a young man’s  
anxiety and fear on the threshold of public life, by tell-  
ing Whitefield that he was an enthusiast. He wrote to  
another, and this time the response was kind, assuring  
him of the writer’s prayers, and explaining to him why  
God might be dealing with him in this manner. At last  
he thought he found the cause of his inability explained  
by these words: ‘We assayed to go into Bithynia, but  
the Spirit suffered us not;’ and by the words spoken to  
Ezekiel—‘Thou shalt be dumb; but when I speak unto  
thee, then shalt thou speak.’ This made him quite

easy; he did ‘not doubt but that He who increased a  
little lad’s loaves and fishes for the feeding of a great  
multitude would, from time to time, supply him with  
spiritual food for whatever congregation he should be  
called to.’ The morning after his ordination, while he  
was praying, came these words into his mind—‘Speak  
out.’ How he used that permission, and how his one  
sermon grew till he had preached eighteen thousand  
times, or ten times a week for four-and-thirty years, and  
fed multitudes beyond computation, it will be our next  
duty to trace.

On the Sunday after his ordination, that is, on June  
27, 1736, Whitefield preached his first sermon. It was  
delivered in the old familiar church to a large congrega-  
tion, which had assembled out of curiosity to hear a  
townsman; its subject was ‘The Necessity and Benefit of  
Religious Society.’ A feeling of awe crept over him as  
he looked upon the crowd of faces, many of which had  
been familiar to him from his infancy. Former efforts  
in public speaking, when a boy, and his labours in  
exhorting the poor, proved of immense service to him,  
removing—what has often overwhelmed bold and capable  
speakers on their first appearance—the sense of utter  
strangeness to the work; his soul felt comforted with the  
presence of the Almighty; and as he proceeded the fire  
kindled, fear forsook him, and he spoke with ‘gospel  
authority.’ A few mocked; but there could be no doubt  
about the power of the new preacher. A complaint was  
soon made to the bishop that fifteen persons had been  
driven mad by his sermon. The bishop only replied,  
that he hoped the madness might not be forgotten before  
another Sunday. Nor is that first sermon without another  
touch of interest. It was not prepared, in the first in-  
stance, for St. Mary de Crypt, but for a ‘small Christian  
society;’ a fact which accounts for its being on such an  
unusual topic for beginners, and for the thoroughly

Methodistical thoughts found at its close. Just as it had  
been preached to the society was it sent by its author to  
a neighbouring clergyman, to show him how unfit the  
author was to preach; he kept it a fortnight, and then  
sent it back with a guinea for the loan of it, saying that  
he had divided it into two, and preached it to his people  
morning and evening.

There is nothing remarkable about it excepting its  
evident juvenile authorship; its advocacy of religious  
intercourse more close than was then known, either  
within or without the pale of the established church,  
and which still is peculiar to Methodism in its several  
branches; and its bold attack on ‘those seemingly inno-  
cent entertainments and meetings, which the politer part  
of the world are so very fond of, and spend so much  
time in, but which, notwithstanding, keep as many  
persons from a sense of true religion, as doth intem-  
perance, debauchery, or any other crime whatever.’ It  
would have made a suitable sermon for inaugurating class  
meetings, or for celebrating an anniversary on their behalf.  
Still, the idea of a class meeting is not to be ascribed  
to Whitefield; it is Wesley’s, through a happy acci-  
dent.

On Tuesday he preached again, and repeated his  
attacks upon polite sinners. Before he returned to  
Oxford on the Wednesday, Bishop Benson added to all  
his past kindnesses one more,—a present of five guineas,  
which, with a quarter’s allowance now due from Sir John  
Philips, enabled him to pay his ordination expenses, and  
take his bachelor’s degree.

For another week he wore the servitor’s habit, and  
then assumed the gown of a bachelor of arts. The  
Methodists, who had received him with great joy on his  
return to Oxford, installed him as their chief, and com-  
mitted to his charge the religious oversight of their work,  
and the charity-money which they collected and used for

poor prisoners. A sweet repose rests upon this part of  
his life. Heart and mind were at peace; studies were  
pursued with satisfaction; intercourse with religious  
friends was free and congenial; private Christian duties,  
prayer, praise, and meditation, charmed him to his room;  
work was to be done for the defence and spread of truth.  
One would fain stay with him here, and watch his  
growth of thought and preparation for coming toil; but  
there was no pause or break in this life; and we must  
presently start with him on his first preaching tour,  
which, unconsciously to himself, really began his circuit  
of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and North America,  
a circuit which he never ceased to travel until death  
smote him down. Our last glimpse of him in his ‘sweet  
retirement ’ sees him poring over Matthew Henry’s Com-  
mentary; and then writing to a friend down at Gloucester  
—‘Herewith I have sent you seven pounds to pay for  
Mr. Henry’s Commentary: Hear Squire Thorold lately

made me a present of ten guineas, so that now (for ever  
blessed be the Divine goodness!) I can send you more than  
I thought for. In time I hope to pay the apothecary’s  
bill. If I forget your favours, I shall also forget my God.  
Say nothing of your receiving this money; only give  
thanks, give hearty thanks to our good and gracious God  
for his infinite, unmerited mercy to me, the vilest of the  
sons of men.’

Humble, yet far advanced in the favour of God;  
obscure, yet within a step of dazzling popularity; poor,  
yet soon to ‘make many richfrail, yet just putting  
out an unwitting hand to labours rivalling in danger,  
in suffering, in shame, and in toilsomeness those of St.  
Paul, he stepped forth from his study before he was  
twenty-two years old.

A trivial circumstance called him forth. The curate of  
the Tower chapel, London, who was an intimate friend,  
having to go into Hampshire to officiate there for a short

time, asked him to fill his place during his absence from  
home. Whitefield complied with the request, and took  
coach for London on Wednesday, August 4, 1736, with  
much fear and trembling. His first sermon in the metro-  
polis was preached on the following Sunday afternoon, in  
Bishopsgate church. His youthful appearance as he went  
up the pulpit stairs provoked, as he in his sensitive state  
of mind thought, a general sneer, which, however, was  
exchanged for solemn seriousness when he got into his  
sermon. He again conquered himself and his congre-  
gation; and the people, on his coming down from the  
pulpit, showed him every respect, and blessed him as he  
passed along. No one could answer the question which  
was now on every one’s lips—‘Who was the preacher  
to-day?’ Attention had been gained, and the two short  
months of the London visit were quite long enough to  
secure a crowded chapel every Sunday. Any ordinary  
man might have been sure of perfect quietness in such a  
place as the Tower chapel, and of returning home as  
unknown as when he entered the city; and no doubt  
such would have been Whitefield’s case but for his  
wonderful powers and for that blessing from above  
which went whithersoever he went. The usual weari-  
some time which ability and worth spend in self-  
culture, in striving with self till it is well mastered, in  
grappling with prejudices, and, not improbably, with  
positive injustice, was a time that never came to White-  
field. Edward Irving preached to an audience which  
cared little for him, though much for his great master,  
Dr. Chalmers; and worked on hopefully and bravely  
under the shadow of a universal favourite, until the  
little congregation at Hatton Garden ‘gave him a call.’  
Robert Hall was cramped and galled by the prejudices of  
insignificant men, who compassed him in his early days  
like bees, and had to wait for the approving verdict of  
nobler and better minds. And the discipline was needed;

it made the after-life all the purer. But Whitefield came  
to manhood in youth; his sun rose to its zenith at early  
morn. For him to preach was at once to spread ex-  
citement, and draw together masses of people; and,  
when they came, he never lost his hold upon them.  
His manner always charmed, never offended; whereas  
the utmost mental ability and personal worth of many  
preachers can hardly sustain the patience of their hearers  
through a beggarly half-hour’s sermon. His thought  
was always marked by good sense; no one could be  
disgusted with inanity. His emotion was always fresh,  
streaming from his heart as from a perennial fountain;  
and, unless the hearer could not feel, could not be touched  
by tenderness or awe, he was sure to find his soul made  
more sensitive. The hearts of most were melted in the  
intense heat of the preacher’s fervour, like silver in a  
refiner’s furnace.

During his stay at the Tower he preached and cate-  
chised once a week, and visited the soldiers in the  
barracks and in the infirmary daily; every morning and  
evening he read prayers at Wapping chapel; and on  
the Tuesday he preached at Ludgate prison. ‘Religious  
friends from divers parts of the town,’ he says, ‘attended  
the word, and several young men came on Lord’s day  
morning under serious impressions, to hear me discourse  
about the new birth. The chapel was crowded on Lord’s  
days.’

Here a letter reached him from his old friends the Wes-  
leys, which told all that they were doing in Georgia, and  
made him long to go and join them. But difficulties  
stood in the way. He had no ‘outward call,’ and his  
health was supposed to be unequal to a sea voyage. He  
strove to throw off the new thoughts and feelings; prayed  
that the Lord would not suffer him to be deluded; and  
asked the counsel of his friends. His friends were not  
less sensible in advising, than he had been in asking for

advice. They, too, laid emphasis on the absence of a  
definite call from abroad; they urged the need of  
labourers at home, and begged their friend to avoid  
rashness, and wait further for an intimation of the will  
of God. Their counsel was received with all respect;  
and Whitefield, agreeing that it was best to do so,  
banished Georgia from his mind for the present, and  
went on heartily with his preaching and visiting, until  
the return of his friend from the country.

Then he went back to his delightful life at Oxford for  
a few weeks more; and, for the last time, his quiet duties  
were resumed. His state of mind seemed to presage the  
wonders of his ministry; his heart burned with even  
more than its former fervour; and other students having  
received a similar impulse to their spiritual life, White-  
field’s room was daily the scene of such religious services  
as distinguished the Church immediately after the descent  
of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, when little bands of  
devout disciples met to pray and to encourage each other  
in the profession of the name of .Jesus Christ.

Kindness waited on him during these few weeks, as it  
did during the rest of his life. His power to win the  
hearts of rich and poor, which, as Doctor Johnson would  
have said, always kept his friendships in repair, had  
constrained the heart of a gentleman in London, who,  
without the least solicitation, sent him money for the  
poor, and also as much for himself as sufficed to dis-  
charge a small debt contracted for books before he took  
his degree. Lady Betty Hastings, sister of the Earl of  
Huntingdon, also assisted both him and some of his  
Methodist friends, thus beginning an intimacy between  
him and her family which lasted as long as he lived, and  
grew deeper towards the end.

Things were beginning to give promise of the future;  
the dim outline of his career was distinguishable. College  
quietness had been broken; a first attempt at public  
work had been successfully made. Georgia had come  
before his mind; and, although banished for a while, it  
was soon to return, and the next time with an imperative  
message.

In November, another call to preach came to him;  
and it was sent upon a principle which has been so ex-  
tensively put in practice by a large section of clergymen  
in the Church of England, as to demand more than pass-  
ing mention. The early Methodist preachers, who were  
the true predecessors, in a spiritual line, of the later  
‘Evangelical School’ of the Church of England, were the  
first to set the example, which the Evangelicals have  
largely copied, of always seeking men of their own reli-  
gious views to fill their pulpits when they had occasion  
to be from home. It was not enough simply to seek the  
aid of any brother clergyman. Their clear persuasion  
that they held the saving doctrines of the gospel; that  
they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and that through  
such channels the largest supplies of the grace of life  
were likely to come—not to say could alone come—upon  
the hearers, compelled them to hold fast to each other,  
and to keep away from their pulpits and from their  
parishes every man who did not avow himself one of  
their faith. There was nothing to condemn in such  
exclusiveness generally; for most men would prefer to  
have their teaching substantiated and confirmed by  
others, rather than condemned and assailed, even should  
they not attach to it the vital importance which Metho-  
dists attached to their doctrines. That a touch of spi-  
ritual pride may not have been felt when they practically  
constituted themselves into a spiritual priesthood which  
was alone fit to minister the ‘word of life when they  
established a spiritual church within a church; when  
they repudiated the right, because questioning the fitness,  
of any other clergyman to preach, it would be hazardous  
to affirm. But, on the other hand, it would be an un-

charitable, an unjust charge against them, were they chal-  
lenged with ecclesiastical or church pride, in addition to  
a fault of which they may, or may not, have been guilty.  
All their anxiety was, that the truth of God should  
be spoken by men of God; and they elected to have a  
judgment as to who was a man of God, without being  
bound by any previous church action in regard to him.  
That he had been ordained was to them no proof of his  
investiture by Heaven of authority to fill his office and  
ministry; indeed, they quickly came to the conclusion,  
that, with or without ordination, any one who was a  
believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and full of the Holy  
Ghost, was fit to preach, and ought to have the counte-  
nance of all true Christians in the fulfilment of his duty.  
They would not have accounted a surgeon fit for his pro-  
fession merely because he was in it; and although the  
Church might, upon certain required declarations, have  
made a man a priest, yet they still contended that they  
had a right to judge whether he was a good priest or a bad  
one; and, in case he showed himself to be a bad one, to  
treat him according to his character. It was not less than  
sincere men could have done; it is not less than is daily  
done now, none finding fault. Thus it was that the Metho-  
dist clergyman of Hummer, in Hampshire, ‘being likely  
to be chosen dean of Corpus Christi College,’ sent for the  
Methodist deacon of Pembroke to preach for him, while  
he himself went to Oxford to attend to the pending pro-  
motion. The young deacon asked, as usual, the advice  
of his friends; and the two friends exchanged places.

Trouble now arose from an unexpected quarter. He  
who had felt himself to be the vilest of men could not  
‘brook’ having intercourse with the poor, illiterate people  
of the would-be Dean of Corpus Christi! Amidst the  
moral and intellectual barrenness of his new charge,  
Whitefield would have given all the world for one of his  
Oxford friends, and ‘mourned for lack of them like a

dove.’ To overcome his unholy aversion he gave him-  
self to prayer, and to the study of a fictitious character,

‘Ourania,’ which William Law has sketched in his ‘Serious  
Call to a Devout Life,’ as a pattern of humility. The  
unlovely rustics became more pleasant to his eye, and he  
found, what everybody finds who goes amongst the poor  
with a warm heart, that their conversation, artless,  
honest, and fresh, was full of instruction and stimulus;  
his new friends successfully contended for his heart  
against the old ones. It became no unpalatable duty to  
go and visit them, seeing they often taught him as much  
in an afternoon as he could learn by a week’s private  
study. He imbibed the spirit of the Apostle, who was  
ready ‘to become all things to all men, if by any means  
he might save some;’ the spirit, too, of a greater than St.  
Paul, whom ‘the common people heard gladly.’

His friend had also set him a good example of method  
in his work, which he wisely followed. Public prayers  
were read twice a day—in the morning before the people  
went out to work, and in the evening after they returned;  
children were also catechised daily, and the people  
visited from house to house. His day was divided into  
three parts; eight hours for study and retirement; eight  
for sleep and meals; and eight for reading prayers, cate-  
chising, and visiting the parish.

During this visit he had an invitation to a profitable  
curacy in London, no doubt through his London labours;  
but it was declined. A more inviting, because a more  
difficult and more trying, sphere of labour was Georgia,  
to which he was now called in a way earnest enough to  
arouse all the enthusiasm of his ardent soul, and plain  
enough to leave him without a doubt that God willed  
that he should go. While the agreeable quietude and  
holy companionships of Oxford were continued to him,  
Georgia was not thought of; but removal from them  
revived all the agitation and anxiety that he had felt  
when Georgian news first reached him at the Tower. A  
predisposition in favour of the new colony was in process  
of formation when, in December, news came of the

return of Charles Wesley. Next there came a letter  
from his old friend, stating that he had come over for  
labourers; but adding, with reference to Whitefield,—  
‘I dare not prevent God’s nomination.’ A few days  
elapsed, and a letter came from John, couched in  
stronger and less diffident language than Charles had  
used. So strange and unexpected are the changes which  
come over the course of events in life, that Wesley, who  
was shortly to leave America, and never again visit it,  
could write in this urgent and confident way—‘Only  
Mr. Delamotte is with me, till God shall stir up the hearts  
of some of His servants, who, putting their lives in their  
hands, shall come over and help us, where the harvest is  
so great, and the labourers so few. What if thou art the  
man, Mr. Whitefield?’ Another of his letters, by pre-  
senting to Whitefield’s mind nothing but heavenly  
rewards, was still better calculated to secure his co-  
operation—‘Do you ask me,’ he says, ‘what you shall  
have? Food to eat, and raiment to put on, a house to lay  
your head in such as your Master had not, and a crown  
of glory that fadeth not away.’ As Whitefield read, his  
heart leaped within him, and echoed to the call. The  
call was heaven-sent, if ever any call has been.

The United States, then a line of English colonies, were  
to share largely in Whitefield’s labours, and he as largely  
in their kindness and generosity; and that hand which  
was beckoning him to their shore, was quietly and effec-  
tually undoing the ties which held him to England. Mr.  
Kinchin obtained the appointment of Dean of Corpus  
Christi, and could take Whitefield’s place as the leader of  
Methodism at Oxford. Mr. Hervey was ready to serve  
the cure of Dummer. No place would suffer from White-  
field’s departure, and there seemed to be a necessity for

him to help Georgia, which was a young, increasing  
colony, enjoying much favour from the home govern-  
ment. Besides, there were many Indians near the colony,  
and Whitefield felt the stirrings of a missionary spirit.  
As for the old hindrance of his supposed inability to  
endure a sea voyage, it was disposed of by the report  
that the sea was sometimes beneficial to feeble people.  
In any case, whether the experiment turned out well or  
ill, he would have to return for priest’s orders, and it  
would then be for him to decide where his field of labour  
was to be. In short, the decision was given in favour of  
Georgia, and in a way that made alteration almost out of  
the question. Neither Oxford friends nor Gloucester  
relations were this time consulted; but a firm, personal  
resolution was made, which nothing was to be allowed  
to assail. Relations were informed of his intentions, but  
told that he would not so much as come to bid them  
farewell, unless they promised not to dissuade him; for  
he said that he knew his own weakness.

However, his weakness so far gained upon him as to  
send him down to Gloucester on New Year’s Day,  
1736-7, after he had said goodbye to his friends at  
Oxford; and his strength had so much increased that he  
succeeded in abiding by his purpose. Bishop Benson  
welcomed him as a father, approved of his design, wished  
him success, and said, ‘I do not doubt but God will bless  
you, and that you will do much good abroad.’ But his  
‘own relations at first were not so passive. His mother  
wept sore’—which was both to his credit and hers.  
Others tempted him with base words, which must have  
buttressed his citadel, instead of undermining it; they  
‘urged what pretty preferments he might have if he  
would stay at home.’ He showed no wavering, and the  
opposition ceased.

This farewell visit was marked by that constant industry  
which distinguished him to the last. He preached often

enough‘to grow a little popular,’ and to gather large con-  
gregations, which were moved by the word of God. In  
three weeks he went to Bristol to take leave of his friends  
there; and again he preached, undertaking duty this time  
in an unexpected way. It being his custom, go where he  
might, to attend the daily services of the Church, he went  
to St. John’s to hear a sermon. When prayers were over,  
and the psalm was being sung, the minister came to him  
and asked him to preach. ‘Having his notes about him,  
he complied.’ The next day the same thing was repeated  
at St. Stephen’s, but this time the ‘alarm’ excited by his  
preaching was so widespread, that, on the following Sunday,  
crowds of people, of all denominations, ‘Quakers, Bap-  
tists, Presbyterians, &c.’ flocked to the churches where  
he had to officiate, and many were unable to find admis-  
sion. The civic authorities paid him respect, the mayor  
appointing him to preach before himself and the corpo-  
ration. ‘For some time following he preached all the  
lectures on week-days, and twice on Sundays, besides  
visiting the religious societies.’ As always, so now, he  
preached with power and with the Holy Ghost; and the  
new doctrines—new as compared with the prevalent  
teaching of the times—of justification by faith and the  
new birth—‘made their way like lightning into the  
hearers’ consciences.’ It is touching to mark the holy  
jealousy with which, amid the city’s excitement and eager-  
ness to hear him, he entreated a friend—‘Oh! pray, dear  
Mr. H., that God would always keep me humble, and  
fully convinced that I am nothing without Him, and that  
all the good which is done upon earth, God doth it  
Himself.’

CHAPTER III.

**March, 1737—March, 1738.**

APPOINTED CHAPLAIN TO THE GEORGIAN COLONY FIRST   
 POPULARITY FIRST VOYAGE.

Georgia was the last colony founded in America by  
England. Its charter was dated the ninth day of June,  
1732; its name was given in honour of George II.  
Reasons, partly political and partly philanthropical, actu-  
ated the original Trustees of the colony and the imperial  
government in undertaking the work. The chief poli-  
tical reason was, that the Spaniards and the French were  
likely to disturb the possessions already held by the  
British crown on the American sea-board, and Georgia  
was intended to be an outpost for holding them in check.  
How its exposed position caused Whitefield and his  
friends no little anxiety will by-and-by appear.

The philanthropical reason was discovered by James  
Oglethorpe, who, as a commissioner for inquiring into  
the state of the gaols throughout the kingdom, had found  
out how vast and how intense was the misery hidden in  
them. His attention was especially directed to the state  
of poor debtors, many of whom had been so long in con-  
finement that when, at his intercession with Parliament,  
they were released, they went out both friendless and  
helpless. It was necessary to find a home for them, and  
not leave them to face fresh temptations and fresh risks  
of finding their way back to prison. The population of  
England was also thought to be greater than the country  
could well sustain; and Oglethorpe anticipated the satis-

faction of transplanting many families to enjoy riches and  
comfort in the new land, which was described as a land  
of beauty and plenty, instead of enduring poverty and  
wretchedness at home. The Highlanders of Scotland,  
who, although they did not swarm among their native  
hills and valleys, like the poor in the yards of London,  
yet had poverty to complain of, and were restless through  
political troubles not long past and gone; and many of  
these also accepted the opportunity of emigrating. The  
sympathy of Oglethorpe, a man of somewhat romantic, as  
well as philanthropic, turn of mind, was also called out  
towards the persecuted Protestants of Germany; and  
through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel an  
invitation was given to the Saltzburgers, who had been  
driven from their homes by Roman Catholic cruelty and  
bigotry, to settle in the new colony, where Catholics  
would not be permitted to come.

The first company of emigrants, numbering one hundred  
and twenty, and headed by Oglethorpe, was composed  
principally of poor English. After they landed, a vessel,  
containing twenty Jewish families, sailed into their waters,  
and permission was asked and gained to land and settle in  
the colony. Next came a vessel carrying forty convicts,  
who had been refused at Jamaica; but Georgia, not being  
equally dainty in her tastes, received them, and in due  
time found them troublesome enough.

The second company of emigrants, numbering three  
hundred persons, and also headed by Oglethorpe, was  
composed of English, Scotch, and Moravians. The two  
Wesleys, with their friends Delamotte and Ingham, were  
on board one of the vessels.

The governing power of the colony was, for the first  
twenty-one years, in the hands of twenty-one Trustees,  
‘who collected money for fitting out the colonists and  
maintaining them, till they could clear the lands;’ ap-  
pointed all the officers, and ‘regulated all the concerns

of the colony.’ A considerable proportion of them were  
Presbyterians, and at their head was the fourth Earl  
of Shaftesbury. Oglethorpe, the most active and the  
most distinguished of their number, was appointed gover-  
nor of the colony; in 1737, he was created brigadier-  
general.

The Trustees ‘prohibited the introduction of ardent  
spirits,’ says Bancroft, but Whitefield mentions rum as  
the only liquor prohibited. They also forbade the intro-  
duction of slaves. The testimony of Oglethorpe, who yet  
had once been willing to employ Negroes, and once, at  
least, ordered the sale of a slave, explains the motive of  
the prohibition. ‘Slavery,’ he relates, ‘is against the  
gospel, as well as the fundamental law of England. We  
refused, as Trustees, to make a law permitting such a  
horrid crime.’ ‘The purchase of Negroes is forbidden,’  
wrote Yon Beck, ‘on account of the vicinity of the  
Spaniards; ’ and this was doubtless ‘the governmental  
view.’ The colony was also ‘an asylum to receive the  
distressed. It was necessary, therefore, not to permit  
slaves in such a country, for slaves starve the poor  
labourer.’ But, after a little more than two years, several  
‘of the better sort of people in Savannah’ addressed a  
petition to the Trustees ‘for the use of Negroes.’1 With  
this opinion of the Trustees the Moravians thoroughly  
agreed; and, ‘in earnest memorials, they long depre-  
cated the employment of Negro slaves, pleading the  
ability of the white man to toil even under the suns of  
Georgia.’2

The first lot of emigrants fixed their settlement on the  
banks of the Savannah, under the direction of Oglethorpe;  
and friendly relations were established with the Creeks,  
the Indians of the country, who numbered 25,000. Their

1 Bancroft’s ‘ History of the Colonisation of the United States,’ vol. iii.  
 p. 426.

2 Ibid. p. 430.

rights were respected, and their goodwill conciliated.  
Everything showed a desire on the part of the Trustees  
and their representative to make the colony morally  
sound and useful. It was not to be a marauding expe-  
dition in any sense; and was to enjoy, as far as possible,  
all the social advantages of the mother country.

With a view of keeping the sanctions of religion before  
the minds of the settlers, a chaplain, by name Bosomworth,  
was sent out with the first company; his fitness for his  
office proved to be nothing but a simulated piety. He  
soon directed his attention to other things than his spi-  
ritual duties, and by his artful use of the poor Indians  
almost succeeded in ruining the colony. There was  
among the Indians a native woman, named Mary Mus-  
grove, who had formerly lived among the English in  
some more northern settlements, and here the new comers  
employed as interpreter between themselves and the  
natives. Her position thus became very influential; and  
Bosomworth took her to himself for wife, doubtless with  
the intention of using her as a tool for his own ambitious  
ends. He first inflamed the pride of the Indians by per-  
suading them to crown one of the greatest of their  
number ‘as prince and emperor of all the Creeks then  
he made his wife declare herself to be the eldest sister of  
the new sovereign, and the granddaughter of a former  
Creek king, whom the Great Spirit himself had conse-  
crated to the kingly office. He next got Mary to declare  
to a large assembly of her countrymen, that the whites  
were oppressing and robbing them, and deserved exter-  
mination. Assuming the attitude of a second Boadicea,  
she called them to arm themselves, to stand by her, and  
to drive the enemy from their territories. Nor were they  
slow to respond. Every chief swore fidelity to her;  
warriors painted themselves with war-paint; tomahawks  
were sharpened to cleave British skulls. A dusky army,  
headed by the royal lady and her chaplain-husband,

marched against Savannah; but their progress was effec-  
tually stopped by a little company of horsemen, led by  
an intrepid man, named Noble Jones. The leaders were  
ordered into the city; the chiefs might follow without  
arms. Oglethorpe found, from a friendly interview with  
the natives, that they had been deceived, and that his  
own chaplain was the cause of the mischief, which had  
been intended to end only with the destruction of all the  
whites. Bosomworth was ordered to prison, but this  
measure was bravely resisted by Mary, who cursed the  
general to his face, and declared that she stood upon ground  
which was her own. Such a spirit could only be safely  
dealt with in one way, and Mary too was thrown into  
prison. A conciliatory course was pursued towards the  
Indians; they were entertained at a feast; and the trick  
which had been played upon them exposed in calm and  
friendly intercourse. But while all things were going on  
so pleasantly, Mary managed to escape from prison.  
Hearing of the feast, she dashed in among the company,  
exclaiming, ‘Seize your arms! seize your arms! Re-  
member your promise, and defend your queen.’ The  
scene was changed at once; the guests stood with toma-  
hawk in hand, ready to slay their hosts, and turn a  
feasting-liall into a shambles. Noble Jones was again  
equal to the emergency; with his drawn sword he de-  
manded peace. Mary, to whom the Indians looked for  
directions, quailed under his courage, and was quietly led  
back by him to prison. Confinement humbled husband  
and wife, who, upon confession of their wrong and after  
promising amendment, were suffered to go free and leave  
the city. But again they laid an unsuccessful plot to  
seize three of the Sea Islands. The crafty man next ap-  
pealed with more success to the law of England, and  
actually succeeded in getting one of the islands, St. Ca-  
therine’s, as his own property, by a legal judgment. Here  
he lived supreme. Here he buried Mary, and also a

second wife, formerly one of his servants. When he died,  
he was buried between them.

Such a chaplain was not good either for colonist or  
native; and one can hardly wonder that a native chief,  
when urged to embrace Christianity, should have said,  
and should have had good ground for doing so, ‘Why,  
these are Christians at Savannah! these are Christians at  
Frederica! Christian much drunk!1 Christian beat men!  
Christian tell lies! Devil Christian! Me no Christian! ’

The Trustees did not, on account of one failure, lose  
all faith in their plan of having a chaplain. One of their  
number, Dr. Burton, of Corpus Christi College, knowing  
the religious zeal of John Wesley and his contempt for  
the ordinary comforts of life, recommended him to  
Oglethorpe as the right kind of man for the rough work  
to be done. At first Wesley refused to entertain the  
offer made to him; but his mother’s willingness to part  
with him when such a duty called, finally decided him to  
accept it. His brother Charles, though already ordained,  
also accompanied him in the capacity of secretary to the  
governor. They reached Savannah on February 5,1736.  
John was to stay there; and Charles was to accompany  
the governor to Frederica, on the island of St. Simon’s,  
another settlement on the coast, about one hundred miles  
farther south.

Nothing could have been more unfortunate, nothing  
more unwise, than the conduct of these two estimable  
men in their respective spheres of duty. John, mis-  
guided by the same mistaken views which he held so sin-  
cerely and so vigorously while at Oxford, treated his  
charge (with whom he ought to have been gentle and  
forbearing) as a mediaeval abbot might have treated a  
band of monks who had vowed obedience to his sternest  
rules. He would baptize infants only by immersion.

1 ‘ Christian much drunk,’ because, when rum was prohibited, the ‘Chris-  
tians ’ had it smuggled in.

When a Dissenter, evidently as good a Christian, if not  
better than himself, desired to communicate, he would  
not suffer him to do so unless he would consent to be  
baptized again; and to another Dissenter he denied (with  
a bigotry unhappily still lingering among some English  
clergymen) the right of Christian burial. He either be-  
came or seemed to become, so personal in his attacks  
upon the vices and follies of his hearers—and it is easy to  
believe that he would see plenty of both in such a com-  
munity—that he soon had a greatly diminished audience.  
He seemed bent upon driving the people to accept his  
own rigid form of religion, and the people were equally  
determined not to be driven. Law was in his lips con-  
stantly, but not ‘the law of kindness,’ although he was  
one of the kindest of men. The consequence was a wide-  
spread and deep dislike of him and of his teaching, which  
culminated when he refused the sacrament to a Miss  
Causton, with whom he had become intimate after his  
arrival, and who had sought to entrap him into marriage.  
In his unhappy connexion with this lady he behaved  
with perfect uprightness, while she and General Ogle-  
thorpe, her prompter, were as much to be condemned.  
Oglethorpe had thought to cure the eccentricities and  
sweeten the severity of his chaplain, by getting him  
married; and Sophia Causton was to play the en-  
chantress. But, fortunately for Wesley, his friends saw  
further into the young lady’s heart than he did; and  
being warned that all was not sincere, he broke off the  
connexion. His denying her the sacrament (by this time  
she had married a Mr. Williamson) was undoubtedly the  
result of those inflexible notions of duty which had  
brought him into such ill-favour with the colonists, and  
not of any petty feeling of revenge. He must have known  
that his intended action would expose him to attack, both  
publicly and privately; yet he resolutely carried out his  
purpose. Private persecution and public legal action

were put in force against him. He met them without  
flinching. It was only when he saw that his usefulness was  
at an end that he thought of returning home; and when  
he left the colony, it was with a hearty defiance flung in  
the face of those who would have crushed him by legal  
impositions. If at this time he lacked St. Paul’s gentle  
charity and forbearance, he lacked none of his resolute-  
ness of self-defence. Before leaving, he called upon his  
hottest enemy—Mrs. Williamson’s uncle, the chief magis-  
trate of Savannah—told him of his intention, and asked  
for money for the expenses of his voyage. He also  
posted the following notification and request in the city  
square:—‘Whereas John Wesley designs shortly to set  
out for England, this is to desire those who have bor-  
rowed any books of him to return them as soon as they  
conveniently can.’ Being forbidden by the magistrates  
to leave the province until he had answered the allega-  
tions brought against him (though he was leaving simply  
because he was tormented by constant appearances before  
courts which wearied him, and hindered him from doing  
good), or until he had offered sufficient bail for his ap-  
pearance, he told them that they should have neither  
bond nor bail from him, and added the plain words,  
‘You know your business, and I know mine.’ The order,

‘not meant to be obeyed,’ that he was to be taken into  
custody if he attempted to escape from the province, did  
not move him; and he left indignant and defiant. ‘Being,’  
he says, ‘now only a prisoner at large in a place where I  
knew by experience every day would give fresh oppor-  
tunity to procure evidence of words I never said, and  
actions I never did, I saw clearly the hour was come for  
leaving this place; and soon as evening prayers were  
over, about eight o’clock, the tide then serving, I shook  
off the dust of my feet, and left Georgia, after having  
preached the gospel there (not as I ought, but as I was  
able) one year and nearly nine months.’

At Frederica, Charles Wesley was as soon and as  
deeply in trouble as his brother. He too began on the  
stern Methodistical plan among his people, which, as we  
have already seen, nearly drove Whitefield insane; and,  
in six days, all the place was in a ferment of passion.  
Where wise men would have shut their eyes, and let  
troubles and differences right themselves, he felt bound  
to interfere, and so made bad worse. The women hated  
him more than the men; and some of them, reputed to  
have been of ‘lax morality,’ persuaded their husbands  
and friends to use their influence with the governor for  
the removal of a man who would administer reproof and  
maintain discipline among them. After an attempt to  
shoot him had failed, the plan of falsely accusing Charles  
of stirring up the people to rebel and leave the colony  
was adopted, and was only too successful. It was easy  
for men to pretend that they were dissatisfied, and would  
not live where the chaplain was always making trouble;  
and when Oglethorpe, who had been absent in another  
part of the colony during the rise of the agitation, re-  
turned, his mind was unfairly set against Charles Wesley  
by the lying tales carried to him. Even when the charge  
was disproved he remained suspicious, embittered, and  
cruel; partly because, with all his generosity and magna-  
nimity, he was of quick temper and fickle in resolution,  
and partly because his circumstances were vexatious.  
His anger had much provocation. His was the task of  
building up, and every one else seemed to be going on  
the principle that it was equally his task to pull down.

Very dark days were those which the luckless, well-  
meaning chaplain spent under the frown of the governor  
and the colonists; and only an honest conscience could  
have upheld him in his work. So extreme were the  
hatred and ill-treatment to which he was subjected, that  
he exclaimed, ‘Thanks be to God, it is not yet made  
capital to give me a morsel of bread! The people have

found out that I am in disgrace; my few well-wishers are  
afraid to speak to me; some have turned out of the way  
to avoid me; others have desired that I would not take it  
ill if they seemed not to know me when we should meet.  
The servant who used to wash my linen sent it back un-  
washed. It was great cause of triumph that I was for-  
bidden the use of Mr. Oglethorpe’s things, which in effect  
debarred me of most of the conveniences, if not the  
necessaries, of life. I sometimes pitied them, and some-  
times diverted myself with the odd expressions of their  
contempt.’ Boards for a bedstead were denied him, and  
he had to lie on the bare ground in a hut. One night,  
when he was dreadfully ill of fever, he had the luxury of  
sleeping on a bed left by a poor man whom he had buried,  
and which he thought might very properly fall to his lot,  
but, before the third night, it was cruelly removed by the  
order of Oglethorpe, who refused to spare him a car-  
penter to mend him up another.

At length that caprice of temper which, aggravated by  
circumstances, had helped the governor to maintain the  
quarrel, enabled him to make approaches to Wesley for  
the purpose of reconciling their differences. He admitted  
the folly and injustice of his late anger, which he im-  
puted to his want of time for consideration. He said, ‘I  
know not whether separate spirits regard our little con-  
cerns. If they do, it is as men regard the follies of their  
childhood, or as I my late passionateness.’ He ordered  
Charles whatever he could think he wanted; promised to  
have a house built for him immediately; and was just the  
same to him as he had formerly been. The people soon  
found out that he had been taken into favour again, and  
showed it by their ‘provoking civilities.’ Three months  
afterwards he sailed for England, bearing despatches from  
the governor, and never returned to the Georgian chap-  
laincy, in which he had so signally failed.

If we consider the trouble with Bosomworth, the con-

tentions at Savannah, and the disaffection at Frederica,  
we must admit that the irritation and temporary harsh-  
ness of the governor are not without large excuse. He  
could hardly have helped suspecting the fidelity of his  
secretary when a charge was openly laid against him, and  
when he remembered their recent peril from the Indians.  
Something, too, of dislike to the clerical order could  
hardly have been absent from his mind: indeed it was  
much to his credit that he did not resolve never again to  
suffer a clerk within the settlement.

Yet ‘James Oglethorpe, Esq., and the Honourable  
Trustees ’ received the young preacher, George Whitefield,  
with kindness, when he appeared before them early in  
March, 1737, desiring an appointment in their colony of  
Georgia. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop  
of London both approved of Whitefield’s design; the  
former prelate, however, expressing himself in these un-  
gracious words: ‘I shall take particular notice of such  
as go to Georgia, if they do not go out of any sinister  
view.’ A nature more resentful than Whitefield’s might  
have flashed up at such an insinuation, or have carried it  
as a secret wound; but all that Whitefield remarks is,

‘This put me upon inquiry what were my motives in  
going; and, after the strictest examination, my conscience  
answered—Not to please any man living upon earth, nor  
out of any sinister view; but simply to comply with what  
I believe to be Thy will, 0 God, and to promote Thy  
glory, Thou great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.’

It was not an easy thing to sail to a distant land a  
hundred and thirty years ago. A prolonged stay, en-  
forced by the slow despatch of business, or by the absence  
of favourable winds, often gave the traveller more than  
one opportunity of saying farewell to his friends; and,  
even when embarkation fairly took place, it was no  
guarantee that he was finally gone. A calm might  
land him at any port on the British shores, and from

thence he was sure to communicate with his friends.  
Thus it happened that Whitefield, after his appointment,  
continued three weeks in London, waiting for Mr. Ogle-  
thorpe, who was expecting to sail every day; and then,  
at last, quietly betook himself to Stonehouse in Gloucester-  
shire, to supply the place of a clerical friend who went  
to London on business. Of course the time spent in the  
metropolis was devoted to preaching, and Stonehouse  
was to prove a happier Dummer. A little ‘society’ of  
pious people had prayed for him to be sent amongst  
them, and great was their joy when he came. The rest  
of the parishioners, all of them well instructed in Christian  
truth, gave him a kindly welcome to their homes, and  
attended his ministry with pleasure. His meetings in  
private houses and the public services in the church were  
both attended by overflowing congregations. It was a  
time of much spiritual gladness with him. ‘I found,’ he  
says, ‘uncommon manifestations granted me from above.  
Early in the morning, at noonday, evening, and midnight,  
nay, all the day long, did the blessed Jesus visit and re-  
fresh my heart. Could the trees of a certain wood near  
Stonehouse speak, they would tell what sweet communion  
I and some dear souls enjoyed with the ever-blessed God  
there. Sometimes, as I have been walking, my soul would  
make such sallies that I thought it would go out of the  
body. At other times I would be so overpowered with  
a sense of God’s infinite majesty, that I would be con-  
strained to throw myself prostrate on the ground, and  
offer my soul as a blank in His hands, to write on it what  
He pleased. One night was a time never to be forgotten.  
It happened to lighten exceedingly. I had been ex-  
pounding to many people, and some being afraid to go  
home, I thought it my duty to accompany them, and im-  
prove the occasion, to stir them up to prepare for the  
second coming of the Son of man; but oh! what did my  
soul feel? On my return to the parsonage-house, whilst

others were rising from their beds, and frightened almost  
to death, to see the lightning run upon the ground, and  
shine from one part of the heaven to the other, I and  
another, a poor but pious countryman, were in the field  
praising, praying to, and exulting in, our God, and long-  
ing for that time when Jesus shall be revealed from  
heaven in a flame of fire! Oh that my soul may be in a  
like frame when He shall actually come to call me!’

The gentleness and sweetness of spring had their at-  
tractions for him, as well as the thunder and lightning  
which so vividly reminded him of the signs of the second  
coming of our Lord. It was early in May, and the  
country, he says, ‘looked to me like a second paradise,  
the pleasantest place I ever was in through all my life.’  
The thought of leaving ‘Stonehouse people,’ with whom  
he ‘agreed better and better,’ touched his affectionate  
heart not a little, and he wrote to a friend—‘I believe  
we shall part weeping.’ There had been but a month’s  
short intercourse with them, and they were the flock of  
another pastor; but it was Whitefield’s way to love  
people and to labour for them as if he had known them  
a lifetime, never jealous of anyone, nor dreaming that  
anyone could be jealous of him; and when he took his  
leave on Ascension Day, ‘the sighs and tears,’ he says,  
‘almost broke my heart. Many cried out with Ruth,  
“whither thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I  
will lodge.” But I only took one with me, who proved  
a good servant, and is, I believe, a true follower of our  
ever blessed Jesus.’

The guest whom Stonehouse was sorry to part with,  
Bristol was glad to receive; indeed the people there,  
gratefully remembering Whitefield’s visit to them in  
February, insisted upon his coming to see them again.  
The account of their enthusiastic reception of him reads  
more like an extract from the journal of a conquering  
general, or from that of a prince on a progress through

his provinces, than that of a young clergyman, twenty-  
two years old. Multitudes on foot and many in coaches  
met him a mile outside the city gates; and as he passed  
along the street in the midst of his friends, almost every  
one saluted and blessed him. The general joy was deep-  
ened, when, to his own regret, Mr. Oglethorpe sent him  
word, that their departure for America would be delayed  
two months longer. Bristol was completely under the  
spell of its visitor, or rather of him and the doctrines he  
preached. The rich forsook their comforts and pleasures,  
to jostle and push among the crowd which five times  
every week besieged the church where Whitefield was to  
preach. The quiet Quaker left the unimpassioned talk  
of his meeting-house to feel the thrill of oratory. The  
uncompromising Nonconformist left his chapel for the  
church, where he had too often failed to find the heart-  
searching preaching which alone could satisfy his wants,  
but where he was now pierced as with arrows, and healed  
as with the ‘balm of Gilead.’ The idle worldling, who  
seldom made an effort to be interested in anything, shook  
off his supineness at least to go and hear what the stranger  
had to say. The vicious and depraved strove for a place  
where they might hear the love of God toward sinners,  
the greatness and preciousness of the work of His Son  
Jesus, and the mighty help of the Holy Ghost in the  
hearts of all who would live a holy life, spoken of with a  
tenderness and an earnestness befitting themes so dear to  
them in their abject condition. The broken-hearted  
rejoiced in the sympathetic feeling of a teacher who  
knew all their sorrow. The mixed mass of hearers filled  
the pews, choked the aisles, swarmed into every nook  
and corner, hung upon the rails of the organ loft, climbed  
upon the leads of the church. As many had to turn  
away disappointed as had gained admission. And the  
preacher’s words were more than a pleasant sound, much  
enjoyed while it lasted, and soon forgotten when it ceased;

they struck into heart and conscience, turning the wicked  
man from his wickedness, that he might save his soul  
alive, and awakening the generous emotions of all.

Whitefield began with his congregations as he con-  
tinued and ended with them. He made a practical, bene-  
volent use of them; for he felt that our profession of  
love to God is but a mockery, unless it be connected  
with love to one another, and ‘love which is not in  
word, but in deed and in truth.’ Nothing was further  
from his mind than to seek only or chiefly the excite-  
ment and flattery of preaching to large congregations;  
and the same sense of devotion to the highest end of  
life, which made him forget himself, and think only of  
the glory of God, made him strive to teach the people a  
benevolence as cheerful and a self-denial as thorough as  
his own. He did not preach to please his hearers; and  
they must not come to be pleased. They must come to  
know their duty, as well as their privilege, in the gospel;  
and so, twice or thrice every week, he appealed to them  
on behalf of the prisoners in Newgate, and made collec-  
tions. Howard had not yet begun his holy work in our  
gaols; but the temporal and spiritual wants of prisoners  
never failed to move the sympathy of Whitefield and  
of all the early Methodists. The first band of Methodists  
had a special fund for the prisoners in Oxford gaol, and  
when Whitefield left the University he had the disposing  
of it, and the chief charge of the prisoners. In London  
and in Gloucester he was a regular visitor at Newgate;  
and in Bristol he pursued the same charitable plan.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The same comprehensive charity was displayed towards  
the poor of Georgia, whose faces he had not yet seen.  
During his stay at Bristol he paid a visit to Bath, where  
his preaching produced as deep an impression as in the  
sister city, and where some rich ladies gave him more  
than a hundred and sixty pounds for the poor of his  
future flock.

If parting from the simple peasants of Stonehouse was  
hard, it could not be easy to tear himself away from  
Bristol, which offered him both ample means and affec-  
tionate regard, if he would continue to minister in its  
churches. Nor the money he cared nothing; for love he  
cared everything. He was a foremost disciple in the  
school of Him who has recently been called the ‘Author  
of the Enthusiasm of Humanity.’1  But happily the ‘en-  
thusiasm’ which he felt could not be confined to one  
place, and dear as Bristol had made itself, it must be left.  
‘June 21,’ he says, ‘I took my last farewell of Bristol.  
But when I came to tell them it might be that they  
would “see my face no more,55 high and low, young and

have planted a desire which Lad as yet Leen no man's care! Not yet had  
Howard turned his thoughts to the prison, Romilly was but a boy of nine  
years-old, and Elizabeth Fry Lad not been born.’ True: but for thirty  
years before dear Mr. Primrose was bom, the Methodists, with their bene-  
volent leaders, Whitefield and the Wesleys, for ensamples, had cherished  
tenderly and devoutly the ‘desire ’ which Mr. Forster says was ‘no man's  
care.’ The honour of entering the gaol of the last century, which Mr.  
Forster so justly says was ‘the gallows' portal ‘and ‘crime's high school,' is  
due to one of the most obscure of the Oxford Methodists. Mr. Morgan, the  
son of an Irish gentleman; and had not death carried him off in his youth, he  
might have anticipated Howard's labours in their wide extent, as he cer-  
tainly did in their Christian spirit.

Prison philanthropy, however, can be traced further back than the day of  
Oliver Goldsmith, or the rise of the Methodists. Sixty years before the  
‘Holy Club’ was formed, a hundred before the ‘Vicar of Wakefield' was  
published, an Oxford student, by name Joseph Alleine, an intimate friend  
of John Wesley, the grandfather of the Methodist, used to visit the pri-  
soners in Oxford county gaol. His last biographer, Charles Stanford, says  
that he was ‘the first friend they were ever known to have had.’

1 Ecce Homo.

old, burst into such a flood of tears as I have never seen  
before: drops fell from their eyes like rain, or rather  
gushed out like water. Multitudes, after sermon, fol-  
lowed me home weeping; and the next day I was em-  
ployed from seven in the morning till midnight, in talking  
and giving spiritual advice to awakened souls.

‘About three the next morning, having thrown myself  
on the bed for an hour or two, I set out for Gloucester,  
because I heard that a great company on horseback  
and in coaches intended to see me out of town. Some,  
finding themselves disappointed, followed me thither,  
where I staid a few days, and preached to a very crowded  
auditory. Then I went on to Oxford, where we had, as  
it were, a general rendezvous of the Methodists; and,  
finding their interests flourishing, and being impatient to  
go abroad, I hastened away, after taking a most affec-  
tionate leave’ (this was the third leave-taking of his friends  
at Oxford, the second of his friends at Bristol and Glou-  
cester), ‘and came to London about the end of August.’

This popularity inevitably brought trouble. His doc-  
trine was not approved of by all; and thus, under the  
pressure of aspersions from enemies and entreaties from  
friends, he was induced to publish his sermon on ‘Re-  
generation.’ It contains a statement of the ordinary  
evangelical views upon that subject, given in very or-  
dinary language; but two sentences would be likely to  
catch the eye of any one who might read the sermon  
with a previous understanding of the preacher’s views.  
Once he makes a side hit at metaphorical interpreters:

‘It will be well if they do not interpret themselves out  
of their salvation.’ In another sentence he states a view  
which he and his contemporary Methodist friends—to  
their honour be it said—always carried into practice, as  
well as urged in their preaching; he says, ‘The sum of  
the matter is this: Christianity includes morality, as grace  
does reason.’ Elsewhere he defines true religion in these

strikingly noble words—‘A universal morality founded  
upon the love of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.’  
‘The only Methodism,’ he exclaims, ‘I desire to know  
is a holy method of dying to ourselves, and of living to  
God.’

The prophets themselves, to whom, in ancient time,  
was committed, among other exalted duties, the task of  
guarding the morality of the Hebrew nation, of protesting  
against every use of the ceremonial law and of the temple  
service which would degrade religion into a superstition;  
and the apostles, who never failed to link the plainest  
and humblest of duties with the loftiest doctrines they  
taught, were not more jealous that religion and morality  
should not be divorced from each other, than were White-  
field and the Wesleys. The ground of the moderns was  
taken up clearly and boldly by Whitefield in his sermon  
just referred to, and throughout his whole life was never  
for a moment forsaken. This is doubtless one main  
reason why the great religious movement of the last cen-  
tury has deepened and widened to the present day, and  
gives promise of continued extension. The great strength  
of it lay, not in the advocacy of any peculiar doctrine,  
but in the union of doctrine and precept, of privilege  
and responsibility. It was a true expression of the  
apostle’s argument to the church at Rome—the doctrine  
of grace united with purity of life. ‘Shall we continue  
in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall  
we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?’ So  
far from the movement’s resting alone or principally upon  
a particular doctrine, Whitefield and Wesley were di-  
vided upon doctrine, the one holding with Arminius, the  
other with Calvin; yet their work, even after the rupture  
between them, was not hindered or destroyed, but car-  
ried forward with as much vigour, and as much to the  
profit of mankind, as ever. Some would have morality  
without religion, but these men proclaimed everywhere,

that religion is the root of morality; that every man  
needs the renewing power of the Spirit of God in his  
heart; and that the ‘fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,  
peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meek-  
ness, temperance.’[[3]](#footnote-3)

Whether friends and enemies did Whitefield a service  
by forcing him to publish, has been much questioned;  
indeed, nearly every one has condemned the step. Frank-  
lin thought that he did himself an abiding injustice,  
because his power lay not in the pen, but in the tongue;  
and that it would have been better for his reputation,  
had he allowed only the reports of his genius and of his  
triumphs to be kept as his memorial for succeeding  
generations. As to the sermons, perhaps Franklin was  
right; but Whitefield would have been no more than an  
idle name, had we been left without some of his writings,  
without his journal and some of his letters. I say some,  
because a great number of his published letters never  
could be of any service, excepting to the persons who  
received them. But with Whitefield it was no consi-  
deration what might be thought of his powers. During  
his life he never gave a moment to recollect whether he  
had any literary reputation or not; and least of all did  
he hunger after posthumous fame. He published, in the  
first instance, because he wanted to clear himself from  
aspersions, and his friends wished to have his sermons;  
and, in the second instance, because he found that his

sermons were often as useful when read, as when heard.  
Many weeping eyes, in England, in Scotland, in America,  
in the hut of the emigrant, in the cottage of the peasant,  
in the hall of the nobleman, once eagerly searched for  
consolation and hope, and found them, in those pages  
which no one now cares to read, excepting curious  
orators, who want to find out the secret of Whitefield’s  
power, and sound evangelicals, who think that old  
theology is the safest and best. The two old volumes  
have a touching interest when their history is remem-  
bered. They speak of broken-hearted penitents and of  
rejoicing believers; and this, despite their feeble thought  
and unpolished language, lends them an air of sanctity.  
Their very feebleness becomes their wonder. As the  
rod with which Moses divided the Red Sea, or the sling  
from which David hurled the ‘smooth stone’ against  
Goliath’s head, would be an object of interest, did we  
possess it, its very inefficiency aiding us to the better esti-  
mate of that power which made it so effectual, so these  
sermons give us, by their tameness, a clearer conception of  
the flaming zeal and yearning love that must have been  
necessary to make them persuasive, convincing, con-  
quering, and of that power of the Holy Ghost which  
through them could move nations. It would be a pro-  
found satisfaction to the humble spirit of their author to  
know that men regard them as ‘weak things;’ for, re-  
membering how they once prevailed over irreligion and  
vice, and over cultivated, thoughtful minds, he would  
simply say, ‘Then hath God chosen the weak things of  
the world to confound the mighty.’

The sermons which had aroused Bristol and Bath were  
next preached in London, whither Whitefield went about  
the end of August. If his life in Bristol had been busy  
and excited enough, what shall be said of the storm of  
religious excitement that arose around him in the metro-

polis? His intention was to remain in perfect retirement,  
and devote himself, until the time of his departure for  
Georgia, to his much loved employment of reading and  
praying over the word of God upon his knees; but his  
soul had not long tasted the sweetness of this repose  
when invitations to preach poured in amain. The  
stewards and members of the religious societies (of  
which I shall presently have occasion to speak more  
particularly) were remarkably fond of hearing him; and  
for a good reason—he attracted large congregations, and  
got large collections. Friendly clergymen—only too soon  
to forget their present admiration—wanted help in their  
services, and sought it from this willing worker. The  
largest churches could not hold the people; thousands  
went away for want of room. Then the churchwardens  
and managers of the charity schools, perceiving the effect  
of his preaching, that is to say, its money-effect, thought  
that they must have a share of the harvest, and began to  
plead with him for the benefit of the children. For  
three months the stream of people flowed steadily to-  
wards any church in which he might be ministering;  
and sometimes constables had to be placed, both inside  
and outside the building, to preserve order. Nine times  
a week did Whitefield engage in his delightful work of  
preaching. On Sunday morning it was his habit to rise  
very early, and during the day to walk many miles  
between the various churches at which he was expected.  
These early sacraments, which called him out before  
daybreak,’were,’ he says, ‘exceeding awful. At Cripple-  
gate, St. Anne’s, and Foster Lane, 0 how often have we  
seen Jesus Christ crucified, and evidently set forth before  
us! On Sunday mornings, long before day, you might  
see streets filled with people going to church, with their  
lanthorns in their hands, and hear them conversing about  
the things of God.’ The ordinary congregations, too,  
which were not composed of such persons as these devout

communicants, but of all kinds, heard the word ‘like  
people hearing for eternity.’

Such popularity quite disturbed the usual order of  
things. On sacramental occasions fresh elements had  
sometimes to be consecrated twice or thrice. The  
stewards had larger offerings than they could con-  
veniently carry to the table, their collection boxes or  
bags not having been made for such an exceptional time.  
A newsagent, who heard of what was doing in the  
religious world, thought that he was as much entitled to  
turn an honest penny as the stewards; and one Monday  
morning, when Whitefield was quietly taking breakfast  
with a friend at the Tower, his eye caught sight in the  
newspaper of a paragraph to the effect, that there was a  
young gentleman going volunteer to Georgia; that he  
had preached at St. Swithin’s, and collected eight pounds,  
instead of ten shillings—three pounds of which were in  
halfpence (which was all quite true); and that he was to  
preach next Wednesday before the societies at their  
general quarterly meeting. The paragraph chagrined  
Whitefield very much. He was not yet inured to the  
annoyances of public life, and he requested the printer  
not to put him in his paper again; but his only comfort  
was the printer’s saucy answer, ‘that he was paid for  
doing it, and that he would not lose two shillings for  
anybody,’ and a full church—Bow Church it was—on  
the following Wednesday.

As popularity and usefulness increased, opposition in-  
creased proportionably. The ground which it took was  
extraordinary, it being actually urged that these crowds  
which followed Whitefield interfered with the attendance  
at church of regular parishioners; further, that the pews  
were spoiled; next, that Whitefield was a spiritual pick-  
pocket; and, finally, that he made use of a charm to get  
the people’s money, which was perfectly true. And the  
clergy—some of them, at least—who had listened and

admired, grew angry and spiteful. The charmer, it was  
rumoured, would be silenced by the bishop upon the  
complaint of the clergy; the pickpocket would be hin-  
dered from plying his thievish arts.

But Whitefield was not a man to tremble under a  
threat, or grow pale at a rumour. He had a native  
pugnacity, not yet humbled and subdued; and quickly did  
he show his enemies that he could fight as well as preach  
and pray, and that silencing him would be a difficult  
thing. He at once waited upon the bishop, and asked  
whether any complaint had been lodged against him;  
the bishop answered that there was none. He asked his  
lordship whether any objection could be made to his  
doctrine; and the bishop replied, ‘No: for I know a  
clergyman who has heard you preach a plain scriptural  
sermon.’ Whitefield then asked his lordship whether he  
would grant him a licence; and the answer was, ‘You  
need none, since you are going to Georgia.’ ‘Then,’  
said Whitefield, ‘you would not forbid me?’ The  
bishop gave a satisfactory answer, and Whitefield took  
his leave.

But what the bishop chose not to do in his diocese,  
individual clergymen, using their liberty to dispose of  
their pulpits in their own way, chose to do in their own  
churches; and two of them sent for him to tell him, that  
they would not let him preach in their pulpits any more,  
unless he renounced that part of the preface of his sermon  
on regeneration, wherein he wished that his ‘brethren  
would oftener entertain their auditories with discourses  
upon the new birth.’ This he had no freedom to do,  
and so they continued to oppose him.

The obnoxious sentence, for whatever reason it may  
have been removed, does not appear in the sermon as  
printed after Whitefield’s death. It is probable that, as  
his early inclination to a slight censoriousness gave place  
to a wide charity towards the end of his fife, and his

favourite doctrine had gained considerable acceptance  
and influence, he felt that his wish could no longer be  
appropriately entertained, and that its continuance in his  
sermon would be to preserve a needless record of an  
early struggle.

Whitefield had, in part, broken with his profession.  
Some of them he had censured; and they had replied  
by shutting their churches against him. Others attempted  
to crush him by denouncing him for fraternising with  
Dissenters; one clergyman called him ‘a pragmatical  
rascal,’ and ‘vehemently inveighed against him and the  
whole body of Dissenters together.’ His intimacy with  
Dissenters, it is true, was great, and lasted throughout  
the whole of his life. The grounds of it were honour-  
able to both parties concerned. The piety and zeal of  
the preacher drew the pious of other denominations to  
hear him; and in their houses, to which they kindly  
invited him, and he as kindly went, they assured him,

‘that if the doctrine of the new birth and justification by  
faith were powerfully preached in the Church, there  
would be but few Dissenters in England.’ Whitefield  
found their conversation ‘savoury,’ and thinking that his  
practice of visiting and associating with them was agree-  
able to Scripture, he judged that ‘the best way to bring  
them over was not by bigotry and railing, but modera-  
tion and love, and undissembled holiness of life.’

True hearts get all the nearer when false ones show  
their baseness. ‘A sweet knot of religious intimates,’ as  
he calls them, gathered around him; and an hour every  
evening was set apart by them for intercession for their  
work and their friends. ‘I was their mouth unto God,’  
he says; ‘and He only knows what enlargement I felt in  
that divine employ. Once we spent a whole night in  
prayer and praise; and many a time at midnight, and at  
one in the morning, after I have been wearied almost to  
death in preaching, writing, and conversation, and going

from place to place, God imparted new life to my soul,  
and the sweetness of this exercise made me compose my  
sermon upon “Intercession.”’

The end of these London labours came at Christmas,

1737. Anxious to get to his Georgian charge, and an  
opportunity offering by a transport ship, which was about  
to sail with a number of soldiers, he determined at once  
to start. His purpose wounded the hearts of thousands;  
prayers were offered for him; the people would embrace  
him in the church; wishful looks would follow him as he  
went home. A solemn, weeping sacrament celebrated  
the final parting.

He left the charity schools one thousand pounds richer  
by his labours, and he carried more than three hundred  
pounds with him for the poor of Georgia. He ever,  
from the first voyage to the thirteenth, crossed the  
Atlantic, guarded by the prayers of thousands, and  
freighted with their benevolent gifts.

On December 28, Whitefield left London, and, on the  
30th, went on board the ‘Whitaker,’ at Purfleet. His  
labours now were divided between the ship and the shore,  
the former containing the companions of his voyage, the  
latter having the presence of friends, who followed him  
from point to point, till he got out to sea, and who were  
always ready to engage him in some religious duties.  
Great kindness and prudence marked his conduct among  
the men of the ship from the first day he went on board.  
He attended them in sickness, taught them, and cate-  
chised them. To the officers, both naval and military,  
he showed marked deference, and allowed not his zeal to  
carry him into any unwise attempts to force religion upon  
their attention. Some brisk gales caught the ship in her  
passage down the channel, which gave him opportunities  
of showing kindness to the sea-sick soldiers and their  
families, and of speaking weighty words concerning death  
and the judgment to those who came to prayers. The

quietness of his first Sunday was a new experience to him.  
and made him not only remember the days when he  
‘led the joyful sacred throng,’ but write in his journal,  
‘He is unworthy the name of a Christian who is not  
as willing to hide himself when God commands, as to act  
in a public capacity.’ Nor was he insensible to the fresh  
scenes which nature displayed before his eye; to the  
calmness of the sea, which looked like Sabbath repose; to  
the clear sky, bespangled with stars, or illumined by the  
moon, which suggested thoughts of His majesty who  
‘stretched the heavens abroad.’ His entire sincerity in  
his work was beautifully exhibited in his new kind of  
life. He was as attentive to teach a few soldiers or a  
few women the catechism, as he had been zealous for the  
crowds of London. At night he would walk on the  
deck that he might have an opportunity of speaking  
quietly to some officers whom he wanted to gain over to  
the service of God, or go down into the steerage where  
the sailors were congregated, that he might be as one of  
them. He soon became a favourite. The captain of the  
ship gave him the free use of his cabin, the military  
captain was friendly, and so were the rest of the officers.  
At length, prayers were read daily in the great cabin;  
and, at the request of the captain, Whitefield preached to  
the ‘gentlemen.’ Until they left Deal on January 30,  
he also regularly preached on shore in a house; and the  
congregations became so large that the preaching room  
had to be propped up. It seems that ‘running’ and  
buying ‘run goods’ was ‘a sin that did most easily beset  
the Deal people’ of that day; and though Whitefield took  
care to show them ‘the absolute unlawfulness’ of their  
deeds, yet they still waited on his word.

The same morning that he sailed from Deal, John  
Wesley arrived there from Georgia. On reaching shore  
Wesley learned that his friend was in a vessel in the  
offing, bound for Georgia. From some cause or other,

perhaps because he had miserably failed at Savannah,  
and thought that no one else could do any good, Wesley  
deemed it necessary to take some steps to know whether  
Whitefield ought to continue his voyage. His method of  
deciding the difficulty was by sortilege, a practice which  
he long continued, but one which Whitefield never fol-  
lowed.1 He even resorted to it in the dispute between  
himself and Whitefield on the subjects of election and  
free-grace. In a letter addressed to Wesley, in reply  
to Wesley’s sermon on ‘free-grace,’ Whitefield said about  
the Deal lot, ‘The morning I sailed from Deal for  
Gibraltar you arrived from Georgia. Instead of giving  
me an opportunity to converse with you, though the ship  
was not far off the shore, you drew a lot, and imme-  
diately set forwards to London. You left a letter behind  
you, in which were words to this effect:—“When I saw  
God, by the wind which was carrying you out brought  
me in, I asked counsel of God. His answer you have  
inclosed.” This was a piece of paper, in which were  
written these words, “Let him return to London.”

‘When I received this, I was somewhat surprised.  
Here was a good man telling me he had cast a lot, and  
that God would have me return to London. On the other

1 The Moravians were much addicted to the use of sortilegium. In ‘an  
extract of the constitution of the church of the Moravian Brethren at  
Hemhuth, laid before the theological order of Wirtemberg in the year  
1733,’ quoted by Wesley in his journal, it is said—‘They have a peculiar  
esteem for lots, and accordingly use them both in public and private, to  
decide points of importance when the reasons brought on each side appear  
to be of equal weight. And they believe this to be then the only way of  
wholly setting aside their own will, of acquitting themselves of all blame,  
and clearly knowing what is the will of God.’ It is probable, as Southeytsuggests, that Wesley took to the practice through the example of the  
Moravians, of whom he had seen much during his voyage to Georgia and  
stay there.

Whitefield’s opinion was expressed in a public letter nearly three years  
after his first departure for Georgia. ‘I am no friend,’ he says, ‘to casting  
lots, but I believe, on extraordinary occasions, when things can be deter-  
mined in no other way, God, if appealed to and waited on by prayer and  
fasting, will answer by lot now as well as formerly.’

hand, I knew that my call was to Georgia, and that I  
had taken leave of London, and could not justly go from  
the soldiers who were committed to my charge. I betook  
myself with a friend to prayer. That passage in the first  
book of Kings, chapter xiii., was powerfully impressed  
upon my soul, where we are told, “That the prophet was  
slain by a lion, that was tempted to go back (contrary to  
God’s express order) upon another prophet’s telling him  
God would have him do so.” I wrote you word, that I  
could not return to London. We sailed immediately.  
Some months after I received a letter from you at  
Georgia, wherein you wrote words to this effect:  
“Though God never before gave me a wrong lot, yet,  
perhaps, He suffered me to have such a lot at that time,  
to try what was in your heart.” I should never have  
published this private transaction to the world, did not  
the glory of God call me to it.’

It was well, for the sake of every one, and for the sake  
of religion, that Whitefield was not so superstitious as his  
friend, and that he was not turned from a sober purpose  
by a ridiculous chance. His return to London would  
have demanded public explanation, and what could he  
have said but this: ‘John Wesley drew a lot, on which  
were these words—“Let him return to Londonand so  
I am here’? Then all the sensible part of his congrega-  
tions would either have lost confidence in him, or have  
become as foolish as himself; and enemies, who were  
rapidly multiplying, would have assailed him with irre-  
sistible force. All his prayers, resolutions, tears, and  
ponderings would have been covered with shame and  
confusion, and he could never have become a leader, since  
men will follow only the decided and consistent. Wesley  
himself, notwithstanding his blind faith in lots, would not  
have been turned from his purpose by a dozen of them  
drawn by a friend, had he been so far and so openly  
committed as was Whitefield. One short answer would

have cut through the difficulty—‘My friend may draw  
lots for himself, but not for me; at this rate, everybody  
will be trying to divine my duty, and the contradictory  
answers will leave me in hopeless embarrassment.’

All went pleasantly with the ‘Whitaker’ and her pas-  
sengers until the Bay of Biscay was reached. Whitefield’s  
entry in his journal for Tuesday, February 14, gives a good  
picture of the troubles and dangers to which he exposed  
himself on many occasions by his American voyages. It  
shows also the brotherly kindness which ever filled his  
heart: —‘May I never forget,’ he says, ‘this day’s mercies,  
since the Lord was pleased to deal so lovingly with me!  
About twelve at night a fresh gale arose, which increased  
so very much by four in the morning, that the waves  
raged horribly indeed, and broke in like a great river on  
many of the poor soldiers, who lay near the main hatch-  
way. Friend H. and I knew nothing of it, but per-  
ceived ourselves restless, and could not sleep at all; he  
complained of a grievous headache. I arose and called  
upon God for myself and those that sailed with me, absent  
friends, and all mankind. After this I went on deck;  
but surely a more noble, awful sight my eyes never yet  
beheld; for the waves rose more than mountain high, and  
sometimes came on the quarter-deck. I endeavoured all  
the while to magnify God for thus making His power to  
be known; and then, creeping on my knees (for I knew  
not how to go otherwise), I followed my friend H.  
between decks, and sung psalms, and comforted the poor  
wet people. After this I read prayers in the great cabin;  
but we were obliged to sit all the while. Then, thinking  
I should be capable of doing nothing, I laid myself across  
the chair, reading; but God was so good so to assist me  
by His Spirit that, though things were tumbling, the ship  
rocking, and persons falling down unable to stand, and  
sick about me, yet I never was more cheerful in my life,  
and was enabled, though in the midst of company, to

finish a sermon before I went to bed, which I had begun  
a few days before! So greatly was God’s strength magni-  
fied in my weakness! “Praise the Lord, 0 my soul, and  
all that is within me praise His holy Name.”’

So few are the references, in Whitefield’s journal or  
letters, to the manners of the people among whom he  
stayed, or to the scenery through which he passed in his  
travels, that I am glad to extract any that he made, as a  
proof that his was not a dull soul without delight in nature,  
without sensitiveness to answer to the soft sweetness of  
a southern sky, or awe to respond to the wildness and  
majesty of a storm. It may be fairly doubted whether  
he could have been the orator he was, had he lacked  
these qualities; and the reason why such slight evidence  
of their existence in him is to be found, was his attention  
to his high duties as an ambassador for Christ. While  
his earlier journals are brightened here and there with a  
descriptive touch, his later and revised journal is almost  
entirely without a reference to anything but his spiritual  
work. The following account of his feelings as he ap-  
proached Gibraltar is given in his first journal, but not in  
his revised one: ‘Saturday, February 18. Though the  
weather was exceedingly pleasant all the day, yet it grew  
more and more pleasant in the evening, and our ship sailed  
at the rate of nine miles an hour, and as steady as though  
we were sitting on shore. The night was exceeding clear,  
and the moon and stars appeared in their greatest lustre;  
so that, not having patience to stay below, I went upon  
deck with friend H., and praised God for his wonderful  
lovingkindness in singing psalms, and gave thanks for  
the blessings, and asked pardon for the offences, of the  
week, and then had a long intercession.

‘It is worth coming from England to see what we have  
beheld this day.

‘Sunday, February 19. Slept better to-night than I  
have a long while; blessed be the Keeper of Israel!

Read prayers in the great cabin; was enlarged in ex-  
pounding both the lessons to the soldiers; and had prayers,  
and preached one of the sermons God enabled me to make  
since I came on board, on open deck in the afternoon.  
All the gentlemen attended; benches were laid for the  
people; and the ship sailed smoothly, and the weather  
was finer than I can express, so that I know not where  
I have performed the service more comfortably. And,  
indeed, I have been so delighted these two days with our  
pleasant sailing and the promontories all around us, that  
I could not avoid thanking God for calling me abroad,  
and stirring up all to praise Him, “who by his strength  
setteth fast the mountains, and is girded about with  
power.”’

On February 20, the ‘Whitaker’ reached Gibraltar.  
Whitefield received marked kindness from the governor,  
General Sabine, a man of steadfast consistency, who,  
during the time of his governorship, had never been  
absent from public worship, except through sickness, and  
who ‘was very moderate towards the Dissenters.’ He  
gave Whitefield a general invitation to dine with him  
every day. Kindness was also shown by one Major  
Sinclair (a man whom Whitefield had never seen), ‘who  
provided a convenient lodging at merchant B.’s, and de-  
sired Whitefield to go on shore.’ That was on the fourth  
day after arriving at Gibraltar; and it suggests that the  
great preacher must still have carried the charm which  
had so readily extracted money from the pockets of  
Londoners. But, what was better than all temporal  
comfort, the religious life of Gibraltar had in it much  
that was pleasing and gratifying; there was devoutness  
among a number of the soldiers; there was respect for  
the convictions of people who were not members of the  
Established Church of England; there was goodwill be-  
tween two ministers of different denominations. Doubt-  
less the second and third parts of the blessedness of the

place were strange things to excite the congratulations of  
Christians, yet they were good grounds for praise, and  
will continue to be so while they are so rare.

Gibraltar, Whitefield thought, was ‘the world in epi-  
tome;’ he might have added, the Church too; for Dis-  
senters and Churchmen, ‘New Lights’ and ‘Dark  
Lanthorns,’ Jews, and Roman Catholics were on the rock.  
The ‘New Lights’ were an interesting company of soldiers,  
gathered into a society by one Sergeant B., who for  
twelve years had been their leader. Their meetings were  
first held in ‘dens and mountains and caves of the rocks,’  
but afterwards, on applying for leave to build a little  
sanctuary of their own, the minister of the church and  
the governor wisely and generously gave them the free  
use of the church. This offer they gladly accepted; and  
it was their custom to meet three times a day, to read,  
and pray, and sing psalms. Their Nonconformity, in a  
place where so much liberality on religious subjects and  
religious practices obtained, seems strange; and most  
likely it was based on the common ground of the Non-  
conformity of those days—a desire for freer and more  
social worship than the forms of the Church will admit.  
Going early to church one morning to expound, White-  
field was highly pleased to see several soldiers kneeling  
in different parts of the building, engaged in private  
devotion; as early as two o’clock in the morning some  
would retire for that purpose.

The ‘Dark Lanthorns’ were some ‘serious Christians’  
of the Scotch Church. Whitefield did not think it  
‘agreeable’ to visit them; but sent them, as well as the  
other society, ‘some proper books.’ He talked with  
several of them privately, and urged a union between the  
two societies.

A few days sufficed to make Whitefield as popular  
with the soldiers as he had been with the sailors, with  
the townspeople as he was with the garrison. Officers

and soldiers crowded the church when he preached; and  
at the governor’s table, where he had dreaded being  
treated with more than sober hospitality, ‘all the officers  
behaved in such a decent, innocent manner’ that they  
pleased him very much. They were studious to oblige  
him, and solicitous for him to stay; but his face was set  
to go to Georgia. Many of the inhabitants pressed him  
to stay with them, and for his sake treated the friends  
who journeyed with him with marked kindness.

None of this popularity was won at the expense of  
fidelity. While all were crowding to hear him, he  
eagerly embraced the opportunity of reproving them for  
the sin of drunkenness, the curse of the place, and for  
profane swearing. His presence and labours created so  
much excitement that even the chief of the Jews came  
to hear him on the latter subject. Not knowing this,  
Whitefield next day attended the synagogue, and was  
astonished when the presiding elder came to him, and  
conducted him to a chief seat, as a mark of honour for  
his having preached so well, according to Jewish ideas,  
against the sin of profaning the Divine name. The Roman  
Catholic Church was also visited; but everything there  
was contrary to the simplicity which the plain Methodist  
loved.

The stay at Gibraltar lasted thirteen days, and on the  
last day of it many came to Whitefield, weeping, to tell  
him what God had done for their souls, to ask for his  
prayers, and to promise him theirs in return. Others sent  
him presents of cake, wine, figs, eggs, and other neces-  
saries for his voyage. Two hundred soldiers, women,  
officers, and others, stood on the beach to see him go on  
board, and wish him ‘good luck in the name of the  
Lord.’

The results of his work he thus summed up: ‘Many  
that were quite stark blind have received their sight;  
many that had fallen back have repented, and turned

unto the Lord again; many that were ashamed to own  
Christ openly have waxen bold; and many that were  
saints have had their hearts filled with joy unspeakable  
and full of glory.’

Once more out at sea, he renewed his former efforts  
for the good of the soldiers who sailed with him; public  
services were zealously promoted, and personal visitation  
added to them, as a means whereby the faith of each one  
might be known.

Mr. Habersham, a friend of Whitefield, who accom-  
panied him, instructed the soldiers in the elements of  
learning, and formed a school for the benefit of their  
children.

Whitefield’s journal contains the following entry for  
Thursday, March 16:—‘Preached this afternoon my ser-  
mon against swearing, at which several of the soldiers  
wept. Blessed be God that sin is much abated amongst  
us; and I think a visible alteration may be perceived  
through the whole ship. “Not unto me, not unto me, 0  
Lord, but unto thy name, be the glory!”’ It was at the  
close of one of those services, perhaps the one just  
referred to, that Captain Mackay asked the soldiers to  
stop, ‘whilst he informed them that, to his great shame,  
he had been a notorious swearer himself; but, by the  
instrumentality of that gentleman, pointing to Mr. White-  
field, he had now left it off, and exhorted them, for  
Christ’s sake, that they would go and do likewise.’ The  
women began to remark, ‘What a change in our cap-  
tain!’ and the soldiers as a body were almost reformed.  
This entry is against March 18 ‘The weather being

very fair, and the sea calm, I went with Captain W. on  
board the “Lightfoot,” dined with the gentlemen belong-  
ing to the ship, and Colonel Cochran, who came on board  
to pay them a visit. Married a couple, and dispersed  
bibles, testaments, and soldiers’ monitors, amongst the  
men; exchanged some books for some cards; preached a

sermon against drunkenness, which I finished yesterday;  
and returned in the evening, much pleased with seeing  
the porpoises roll about the great deep. “‘0 Lord, how  
marvellous are thy works.”’ Monday, March 27, has a  
mournful story: ‘Last night, God was pleased to take  
away a black boy of Captain Whiting’s, after he had been  
ill of a violent fever for some days. He was never bap-  
tized;’—poor lad, he was black, and the colour of his skin  
would account for his never having partaken of the benefits  
of this rite of the Church;—‘but I had a commission from  
his master, who seemed much affected at his death, to  
instruct and baptize him, if it had pleased the Most High  
that he should recover; but God saw fit to order it other-  
wise. His holy will be done. About ten in the morning  
he was wrapped up in a hammock, and thrown into the  
sea. I could not read the office over him, being unbap-  
tized; but Captain W. ordered the drum to beat, and I  
exhorted all the soldiers and sailors “to remember their  
Creator in the days of their youth,” and to prepare for  
that time when “the sea should give up its dead, and all  
nations be called together to appear before the Son of  
God.” Oh that they may lay to heart what has been  
said, and practically consider their latter end.’ While to  
that prayer none can refuse an amen, it would not have  
been strange had some of the men gone away to consider  
what the black boy had done amiss, that he should be  
buried like a beast.

So the voyage was continued, the only diversity to the  
kind of life just sketched being the presence of fever,  
which carried off two of the worst men on board, and  
struck Whitefield down for several days. To a friend he  
writes—‘How goes time? I can scarce tell; for I have  
been some time past, as one would think, launching into  
eternity. God has been pleased to visit me with a vio-  
lent fever, which He, notwithstanding, so sweetened by  
divine consolations, that I was enabled to rejoice and sing  
in the midst of it. Indeed, I had many violent conflicts  
with the powers of darkness, who did all they could to  
disturb and distract me; but Jesus Christ prayed for  
me; and though I was once reduced to the last ex-

tremity, and all supernatural assistance seemed to be sus-  
pended for awhile, and Satan, as it were, had dominion  
over me, yet God suffered not my faith to fail; but came  
in at length to my aid, rebuked the tempter, and from  
that moment I grew better. Surely God is preparing me  
for something extraordinary; for He has now sent me  
such extraordinary conflicts and comforts as I never  
before experienced. I was, as I thought, on the brink  
of eternity. I had heaven within me; I thought of  
nothing in this world; I earnestly desired to be dissolved  
and go to Christ; but God was pleased to order it other-  
wise, and I am resigned, though I can scarce be recon-  
ciled to come back again into this vale of misery. I  
would write more, but my strength faileth me. We  
hope to be at Savannah on Monday.’

Whitefield’s farewell sermon to the soldiers was  
preached on May 6, and caused much weeping. On the  
evening of the following day he reached Savannah,  
where he was welcomed by Mr. Delamotte, the friend  
whom Wesley left behind him, and some other ‘pious  
souls,’ who were rejoiced at his arrival, and joined him  
in thanksgiving and prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

**1738.**

**SIX MONTHS IN GEORGIA SECOND VOYAGE.**

WhiteField, on his arrival at Savannah, knew nothing of  
the circumstances under which his friend Wesley had left  
it. The whole story was related to him, and he wisely  
determined to act as if nothing of an unhappy kind had  
occurred; he would not even make any record of it in  
his journal. His original journal says, ‘Mr Charles  
Wesley had chiefly acted as secretary to General Ogle-  
thorpe, but he soon also went to England to engage more  
labourers; and, not long after, his brother, Mr. John  
Wesley, having met with unworthy treatment, both at  
Frederica and Georgia ( Savannah?) soon followed. All  
this I was apprised of, but think it most prudent not to  
repeat grievances.’ In his revised journal he says, ‘I  
find there are many divisions amongst the inhabitants;  
glad shall I be to be an instrument of healing them.’ Pull  
of loving anxiety to do his work well, and heartily believ-  
ing that the gospel he preached could promote peace and  
harmony, he never gave a thought to the unhappy past,  
in which his friends had, though not without provocation,  
received harsh treatment, but began early and zealously  
to preach and teach. At five o’clock on the morning  
after his arrival he read public prayers, and expounded  
the second lesson to a congregation of seventeen adults  
and twenty-five children. Such was the exchange for  
crowded churches in England!

In the afternoon of the same day, Mr. Causton, Wesley’s

keen enemy, sent word that he and the magistrates would  
wait upon Whitefield, but Whitefield chose to wait upon  
them, a courtesy which could hardly fail to prepare the  
way for kindly intercourse. The interview was marked  
by much ‘civility’ shown to the new chaplain; and the  
principal part of the conversation was upon the place of  
his settlement. The magistrates were as diplomatic as  
civil; for it was resolved that the place should be  
Frederica, where a house and tabernacle were to be  
built for him—then they themselves would not run the  
risk of any trouble with him—but that he ‘should serve  
at Savannah, when, and as long as he pleased.’ Thus they  
avoided raising a contention with him, by not arbitrarily  
sending him away from the principal place. They had  
evidently learned the secret of conceding for the sake  
of getting; but, in the present case, their caution was  
needless.

The ship-fever had not quite left Whitefield, when,  
with his usual promptness, he arranged the plan of his  
work and made a beginning. His first week in Savannah  
was spent in confinement, and, on the second Sunday, his  
attempt to officiate broke down before he reached the  
second service; but, on the following Tuesday, he was out  
at his pastoral work, and made a call on Tomo Chichi,  
the Indian king, who had refused to become a Christian,  
on the ground that Christians were such bad wretches.  
The poor emaciated man lay on his blanket, his faithful  
wife fanning him with Indian feathers; and, as there was  
no one who could speak English, the chaplain could do  
no more than shake hands with him and leave. Four  
days afterwards Whitefield made a second call on the  
chief, and had some conversation with him through his  
nephew, who knew English. He says, ‘I desired him to  
inquire of his uncle, whether he thought he should die?   
who answered, “He could not tell.” I then asked, where  
he thought he should go after death? He replied, to

heaven. But, alas! how can a drunkard enter there?

I then exhorted Tooanoowee (who is a tall, proper youth)  
not to get drunk, telling him he understood English, and  
therefore would be punished the more if he did not  
live better. I then asked him, whether he believed a  
heaven? He answered, “Yes.” I then asked, whether  
he believed a hell? and described it by pointing to the  
fire; he replied, “No.” From whence we may easily  
gather, how natural it is to all mankind to believe there  
is a place of happiness, because they wish it may be so;  
and, on the contrary, how averse they are to a place of  
torment, because they wish it may not be so. But God  
is true and just, and as surely as the righteous shall go  
into everlasting happiness, so the impenitently wicked  
shall go into everlasting punishment.’ The severity of  
this kind of address to an untaught heathen is strange in  
one who was so full of the spirit of love; and though he  
may have thought, that only by terror could the dormant  
conscience be aroused and the heart prepared for the  
gentler message of the work of Jesus Christ for sinners,  
one wonders why he did not say something about love as  
well as wrath. There can be no doubt, however, that  
he had no fitness, though much zeal, for preaching to the  
Indians. Along with the Wesleys he had dreamed of  
winning both natives and colonists to the faith of his  
Lord, but he knew nothing of the language of the Indians,  
and had no great aptitude for acquiring it.

For oratory there was little scope in Georgia, where a  
congregation of one or two hundred persons was the  
largest that could be mustered; but there was ample  
room for industry, for humility, for gentleness, and for  
self-denial; and Whitefield, by his assiduous cultivation  
of these graces, showed that he cared more for charity  
than for the gift of speaking ‘with the tongues of men  
and of angels.’ Oratory was nothing to him as an art:  
it was supremely valuable as a talent to be used for his

Lord, an instrument by which hearts might be drawn to  
the cross. When it could no longer be exercised, except  
in a limited way, his zeal and ready tact immediately  
adopted the only method by which truth and purity  
could be diffused among the colonists. He went among  
the villages, like a travelling missionary in a heathen  
country; made himself the friend of every one in them,  
men, women, and children, no matter what their nation  
or their creed; praised their industry and success; re-  
proved their faults; and invited them to trust in Him  
who could save them from their sins. He was scrupu-  
lously careful not to offend the religious or national  
prejudices of any; and strove to draw all by ‘the cords  
of love,’ because he rightly judged that obedience re-  
sulting from that principle was the ‘most genuine and  
lasting.’ It is easy to believe that a chaplain whose  
heart was touched with the colonists’ every sorrow, who  
entered into their difficulties, who came to cheer them at  
their work, and sit as one of them in their huts, where  
the children gathered round his knee and the workers  
talked about the soil and the crops, was loved as a per-  
sonal friend. As such they looked upon him. The love  
which won Dummer, Bristol, London, and Gibraltar was  
simply repeating its inevitable conquests. His dauntless  
and brotherly spirit, which still retained a touch of the  
asceticism of his Oxford days, made him resolve to  
endure the worst hardships of colonial life. The weather  
was intensely hot, sometimes burning him almost through  
his shoes; and ‘seeing others do it who,’ he says, ‘were  
as unable, I determined to inure myself to hardiness by  
lying constantly on the ground; which, by use, I found  
to be so far from being a hardship, that afterwards it be-  
came so to lie on a bed.’ With this endurance he com-  
bined the charming quality of gratitude for any kindness  
either to himself or his friends. This was particularly  
displayed when the brother of his friend Habersham was

lost for some days in the woods, and the colonists—  
happily with success—made every effort to recover him:  
Whitefield went from house to house to thank them, and  
again at evening prayers, when a large congregation was  
present, ‘I returned my dear hearers,’ he says, ‘hearty  
thanks for the late instance of their sincere affection.’

The settlers in the villages had but a hard lot. Their  
children offered the best field for Whitefield’s efforts;  
and he at once arranged to begin schools for them. ‘I  
also,’ he says, ‘inquired into the state of their children,  
and found there were many who might prove useful  
members of the colony, if there was a proper place pro-  
vided for their maintenance and education. Nothing can  
effect this but an orphan-house, which might easily be  
erected at, or near, Savannah, would some of those that  
are rich in this world’s good contribute towards it. May  
God, in His due time, stir up the wills of His faithful  
people, to be ready to distribute, and willing to com-  
municate on this commendable occasion.’ The following  
extract shows the need of the flock and the tender-hearted-  
ness of the shepherd: ‘Began to-day visiting from house  
to house, and found the people in appearance desirous of  
being fed with the sincere milk of the word, and soli-  
citous for my continuance amongst them. Poor crea-  
tures! My heart ached for them, because I saw them  
and their children scattered abroad as sheep having no  
shepherd.’

The first of these extracts points to the inference, that  
the idea of an orphan-house for the colony was White-  
field’s own; and many of his friends who helped him  
gave him the credit of it; but he was frank in unde-  
ceiving them, and in giving the praise to Charles Wesley  
and the humane governor, General Oglethorpe. Before  
he had thought of going abroad, they had seen and felt  
the necessity of some provision being made for the  
orphans, who must inevitably be thrown upon the colony

when their parents died and left them unprovided for.  
A scheme somewhat like the one which was ultimately  
adopted was devised, but, though the Wesleys made its  
practical accomplishment impossible, yet the idea was  
not abandoned. Whitefield was entreated by his friend  
Charles Wesley to remember the orphans; and such a  
call was never made in vain upon him. He ‘resolved,  
in the strength of God, to prosecute the orphan-house  
design with all his might.’ The Trustees, acting no  
doubt at the suggestion of Oglethorpe, favoured him. In  
accordance with the religious character which they had  
always given to their colonisation scheme, they wrote to  
the Bishop of Bath and Wells, asking leave for Whitefield  
to preach in the abbey church, Bath, on behalf of the pro-  
jected charity. The bishop consented, and Whitefield  
preached, with what success we have already seen. Now  
it occurred to him, that personal knowledge of the colony  
would be a better foundation on which to plead, than  
the conclusions and wishes of others, even though they  
were persons as estimable and wise as Charles Wesley  
and the governor. His design was accordingly held in  
abeyance until he could return to England; and the  
money—more than three hundred pounds—which he  
had collected, and which he carried to Savannah, was  
devoted to general purposes among the poor.

When he reached his charge, he found that the con-  
dition of the orphans was deplorable, all the kindness  
of the Trustees notwithstanding. Some were quartered  
here and there with such families as had promised, for  
a money consideration, to take them and rear them.  
Others were engaged in service when they ought to have  
been at school, and were kept at work so long and so  
hard, that educating them in their present position was  
impossible. The morals of all were corrupted by bad  
example; the learning of those who had learned any-  
thing at all was forgotten. There was but one feasible

plan for curing the mischief: a home must be built, and  
the children must be lodged, fed, clothed, and taught in  
it. Meanwhile, until he could return to England, to  
take priest’s orders, and procure a grant of land from the  
Trustees, and beg money enough to build the home, and  
give it a start, he wisely did what he could to ameliorate  
the condition of them and of all other children, by  
establishing schools in the villages.

The moral influence of the orphan-house, the esta-  
blishment of which was now his fixed purpose, was to  
prove as great and as happy over Whitefield as over the  
destitute children. He was to receive as much as he  
gave. His love and zeal and self-denial, in founding  
and maintaining it, were to return with usury of spiritual  
good. It was to be a standing appeal to his tenderness  
and test of his faith, a constant spur to his effort, and an  
anchor to his excitable mind, which might have spent  
itself upon trifles, because unable to cope with the states-  
manlike work which the legislative mind of Wesley  
gloried in mastering. It was to become the ballast of a  
noble ship which had to carry high sail in dangerous  
seas. So far as good to himself was concerned there was  
no reason why he should have been sent to his ‘little  
foreign cure,’ in which he was really happy, and where  
(such was his humility and his carelessness about popu-  
larity) he could have cheerfully remained, excepting to  
undertake the charge of the orphans. With this excep-  
tion, he did nothing in Georgia which he might not have  
done elsewhere, and done better. But it is remarkable  
to observe how the door of America was closed against  
Wesley, whose talents were most serviceable when con-  
centrated upon one place; while Whitefield received a  
charge which supplied a constant motive to him to range  
through every country where he could get a congrega-  
tion to hear his message, and help his work. He was  
meant for more than a parish priest; he was an evan-

gelist of nations, and the orphans supplied him with the  
motive to visit every place.

The journal of Whitefield on Wednesday, May 24, and  
the journal of Wesley on the same day, present a striking  
contrast as well between the condition of mind as the  
work of these much attached friends. It was a quiet day  
with Whitefield; and doubtless could Wesley have seen  
him going among the people with a contented heart,  
welcomed and honoured, he would have been both  
surprised and gratified with his unexpected success. It  
was a day of excitement, of anguish, and of joy with  
Wesley, the day of his conversion; and could Whitefield  
have known what was going on in Aldersgate Street, it  
would have filled his mouth with joyful praise, though  
he might have been surprised that not until a time so late  
had his former religious teacher come to experience the  
same spiritual change that had taken place in himself long  
before. ‘Wednesday, May 24, went to day,’ Whitefield  
says, ‘to Thunderbolt, a village about six miles off  
Savannah, situated very pleasantly near the river, and  
consisting of three families, four men and two women,  
and ten servants. I was kindly received, expounded a  
chapter, used a few collects, called on a family or two  
that lay near our way, and returned home to Savannah  
very comfortably in the evening. Blessed be God for  
strengthening my weak body!’ Wesley says that his  
spiritual condition at this time was characterised by  
‘strange indifference, dulness, and coldness, and unusu-  
ally frequent relapses into sin.’ In the evening I went  
very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where  
one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the  
Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was  
describing the change which God works in the heart  
through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.  
I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and  
an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my

sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and  
death.

‘I began to pray with all my might for those who had  
in a more especial manner despitefully used me and per-  
secuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I  
now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before  
the enemy suggested, “This cannot be faith, for where is  
thy joy?” Then I was taught, that peace and victory  
over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salva-  
tion; but that, as to the transports of joy that usually  
attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have  
mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes with-  
holdeth them according to the counsels of His own will.

‘After my return home I was much buffeted with  
temptations, but cried out, and they fied away. They  
returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes,  
and He “sent me help from His holy place.” And herein  
I found the difference between this and my former state  
chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all  
my might, under the law, as well as under grace. But  
then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I  
was always conqueror.’

While Whitefield, by his unceasing labours, his un-  
feigned humility, and his judicious conduct, was laying  
the foundation of an enduring affection between the whole  
colony and himself, he acknowledged himself to be largely  
indebted to his predecessors. Delamotte was much be-  
loved by the poor, to whom he was devoted; and his  
return home was an occasion of grief to them. ‘The  
good Mr. John Wesley has done in America, under God,  
is inexpressible,’ says Whitefield.’ His name is very pre-  
cious among the people; and he has laid such a founda-  
tion among the people, that I hope neither men nor devils  
will ever be able to shake. Surely I must labour most  
heartily, since I come after such worthy predecessors.’

The new chaplain was known as a man of strong con-

victions, which he would carry out at any personal risk.  
When a notorious infidel died he refused to read the  
burial service over him, because it would have been a  
solemn mockery. He appealed to the people whether he  
was not justified in his refusal, and they acquiesced in his  
decision. Another of his parishioners was examined as  
to his views on the ‘eternity of hell torments,’ and White-  
field, finding that he believed in the annihilation of the  
wicked, not in their torment, and that he regarded it as  
his duty to speak the convictions of his mind, admonished  
him as an heretic, and told him that, for the future, he  
could not partake of the Lord’s Supper. Staggered a  
little by the announcement, the heretic maintained his  
patience, and ventured to pronounce Whitefield un-  
charitable; to which Whitefield replied, that they should  
meet at the judgment-seat, and then it would be seen  
upon what principles he acted. This incident must have  
suggested his sermon on the subject discussed between  
him and his parishioner; it was so satisfactory to the  
people of Savannah that they asked him to publish it. I  
am half-inclined to call this achievement—the moving a  
colony of men of irregular habits and very imperfect  
morality, to ask for the publication of a sermon on ‘the  
eternity of hell torments ’—the greatest of his life. But,  
as will appear when the sermon comes under our eye  
again, they doubtless desired the words of love which  
abound on every page, more than the words of terror,  
which are scattered only here and there, in much the  
same proportion as they are found in the teachings of  
our Lord. The preacher was not half so terrible as the  
inquisitor.

It is pleasantest to see how he was welcomed in the  
villages; how they of Savannah delighted in his visits,  
even enduring his rebukes without murmuring; how at  
Frederica nearly the whole of the inhabitants—a hundred  
and twenty in number—came to hear him preach, and

the settlement was all activity to build a preaching-room,  
to serve the place, pro tempore, of a church; how the  
sturdy Highlanders of Darien, settled under the pastoral  
care of a worthy minister named McLeod, crowded the  
house in which he preached to them at the end of a single  
day’s visit; and how the Saltzburgers, who were settled,  
after weary wanderings over land and sea, at a place  
which their grateful hearts called Ebenezer, received him  
with brotherly love, while he ‘joyed at beholding their  
order.’ Their lands were the best cultivated in the colony,  
and yielded the best crops. Their differences were re-  
ferred not to any court, but to the judgment of their two  
pastors, Boltzius and Gronau, whom they loved devotedly,  
and to whom they looked up as fathers. Their orphan-  
house, founded on the model of Professor Franck’s, of  
Halle, was a model of the one he was purposing to build;  
and when, at the close of his visit, the seventeen orphan  
children—‘the little lambs,’ he calls them—came and  
shook hands with him, his heart must have renewed its  
vow of devotion to all who were in like distress.

On Sunday, August 27, he preached his farewell sermon  
to his people, who, sorrowing to lose him, were comforted  
by his assurance that he would not delay his return to  
them. On the following day the chief magistrate, Mr.  
Causton, and the recorder, called to take their leave of  
him. The general demonstrations of affection for him  
overwhelmed him; and he took the first opportunity of  
‘venting his heart by prayers and tears.’ ‘0 these part-  
ings!’ he exclaims; ‘hasten, 0 Lord, that time when we  
shall part no more!’

The voyage was to prove one of the most dangerous  
that he performed. When they had been a month at  
sea, they were caught by a gale from the east, which  
‘put all the sailors to their wits’ end.’ Sails were slit,  
and tackling rent. The sea broke over the vessel with  
such violence that not a dry spot was left anywhere; and

Whitefield, who slept in the most secure part, wrapped  
in a buffalo’s hide, was drenched twice or thrice in one  
night. His composure and faith in God made so deep an  
impression on the crew, that they would say, ‘How should  
we have been blaming and cursing one another, had not  
Mr. Whitefield been amongst us!’

The storm left the vessel sadly disabled, besides having  
destroyed or washed away a large portion of the pro-  
visions. There was the prospect of a tedious voyage and  
much hardship, and so it turned out. Contrary winds  
prevailed for a long time; at the end of October the pas-  
sengers were allowed a quart of water a day. Their con-  
stant food for a long time was salt beef and water  
dumplings, which, says Whitefield, ‘did not agree with  
the stomachs of all amongst us.’ To bodily trials were  
added, in Whitefield’s case, ‘a variety of inward trials;’  
but these were in due time followed by ‘great comfort.’  
No doubt the inactivity of his life, together with the ex-  
citement caused by danger, and the physical depression  
consequent on short rations, had quite their share in pro-  
ducing his ‘inward trials;’ although there is a solemn  
reality in that sense of spiritual desolation, as if God had  
forgotten the soul, or as if He had cast it away, of which  
Whitefield, in common with all devout men, frequently  
complained.

With a humble, constant recognition of the working of  
the Almighty in all things did Whitefield hold on to the  
close of this distressing voyage. Three days before they  
sighted land, most of those in the cabin had begun to be  
weak, and to look hollow-eyed. He exclaims, ‘May we  
patiently tarry God’s leisure! Amen! Amen! ’ On  
November 11 they were reduced to an ounce or two of  
salt beef, a pint of muddy water, and a cake made of  
flour and skimmings of the pot, as the allowance for each  
man. Cold weather had also set in, and, to add to their  
distresses, they did not know where they were, there  
being only a prevalent opinion that they were off the  
coast of Ireland. That day was closed with the appro-  
priate prayer, ‘May we now learn that man liveth not by

bread alone.’ And the next day, Sunday, November 12,  
opened with the grateful ascription, ‘Blessed be the Lord  
God of Israel, who this day hath visited a distressed  
people!’ They had entered Carrickaholt Bay, in the  
mouth of the Shannon, and were hospitably received and  
succoured by Mr. Mac Mahon, whose house stood at the  
head of the bay.

Here Whitefield was kindly furnished with horses for  
his journey to Dublin; and on his way he called to pay  
his respects to Dr. Burscough, the bishop of Limerick,  
who received him with ‘the utmost candour and civility.’  
The day being Sunday, the traveller was sure to be made  
the preacher; for nothing but absolute inability could  
ever keep him out of the pulpit. Limerick cathedral  
rung to his eloquence, and Irish hearts gave a quick and  
deep response. But for his unquestionable truthfulness  
in every detail of his life given by himself, and for the  
universally-attested fact that his sermons generally pro-  
duced intense excitement and awakened for himself such  
a degree of personal affection as few men enjoy even  
among their friends, it would be hard to believe that, on  
the Monday, the inhabitants looked alarmed as they passed  
along the streets, and followed him wishfully with their  
eyes wherever he went; that one man compelled him to  
enter his house, and accept his hospitality; and that the  
bishop, when he took leave of him, kissed him, and said,  
‘Mr. Whitefield, God bless you; I wish you success  
abroad: had you stayed in town, this house should have  
been your home yet such, he assures us, was the case.

At Dublin he preached with the same success; and was  
cordially received by Dr. Delany, dean of St. Patrick’s,  
by Dr. Rundel, bishop of Derry, and by Dr. Boulter,  
primate of all Ireland. He dined with the primate, and

at his table heard an expression fall from the lips of Dr.  
Delany which he never forgot, and never failed to act  
upon:—‘I wish, whenever I go up into a pulpit,’ said  
the Dean, ‘to look upon it as the last time I shall ever  
preach, or the last time the people may hear.’

On December 8 he reached London, accompanied by  
some friends who had gone to meet him on his way.  
Wesley was at Oxford; and, as soon as the news of White-  
field’s arrival reached him, he hastened up to London, and  
‘God gave us,’ he says, ‘once more to take sweet counsel  
together.’

At the close of such a year of travel and labour White-  
field had some reasons for winding up his journal with  
this emphatic verse:—

‘Give me thy strength, 0 God of power!

Then let winds blow, or thunders roar,

Thy faithful witness will I be,

’Tis fixed! I can do all through Thee!’

CHAPTER V.

**Dec. and Jan. 1738-39.**

FETTER LANE MEETINGS--ORDAINED PRIEST.

Nothing could have been more opportune for the welfare  
of Methodism in England than the arrival of John Wesley  
at Deal at the same time that Whitefield sailed for Georgia.  
The newly-kindled fire had no time to burn low. Wesley  
at once began his labours, and that with such power as  
to bring upon him the anger and opposition which must  
have come upon Whitefield, had he stayed any longer in  
London. On Saturday, February 4,1737-8, one day after  
his arrival in London, he preached at St. John the Evan-  
gelist’s, and so offended many of the best of the parish,  
that he was afterwards informed he was not to preach  
there any more. Eight days afterwards he preached with  
the same result at St. Andrew’s, Holborn; then in quick  
succession the doors of St. Lawrence’s, St. Catherine  
Cree’s, Great St. Helen’s; St. Ann’s, Aldersgate; St. John’s,  
Wapping; St. Bennett’s, Paul’s Wharf; St. George’s,  
Bloomsbury; and the chapel at Long Acre, were closed in  
his face. More rejections might have followed, but early  
in June he started with his friend Ingham to see the  
brethren at Hernhuth, that they might together be re-  
freshed by fellowship with enlightened and saintly men,  
whom Wesley regarded with holy envy as possessors of  
spiritual truth which he understood not. His mind seems to  
have been in much the same condition as was Whitefield’s  
in the early part of his Oxford life, yet none can think  
that he was so far from the kingdom of God as he always

thought himself to be. The brethren of Hernhuth and  
others whom he met in England—especially Peter Böhler  
—said much to him about justification, and on his return  
home he experienced that conversion of which I have  
before spoken. Charles had already undergone it. Thus  
did both Wesley’s great friends and helpers precede him  
in the practical knowledge of facts and doctrines which  
they all spent their lives in preaching.

The close of this year saw the beginning of the united  
work of all the three; and, for some time, their lives were  
closely blended together. They preached in the same  
rooms, prayed and spoke in the same meetings, and pre-  
sided over the same private societies, which were formed  
for the nurture of the Christian life.

The day after Whitefield’s arrival in London, he waited  
on the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of  
London, and was favourably received; but some of the  
clergy denied him their pulpits—five in two days. He  
also went to a meeting of the Methodist society, which  
had been formed in Fetter Lane, and joined them in their  
love-feast; an institution which Methodism still upholds,  
and which consists in eating a little bread and drinking a  
little water, singing and praying, and narrating personal  
religious experience. There were at this time other  
religious societies besides those which were springing out  
of the labours of the Methodists, and to some of them he  
had preached before he left for Georgia, getting them  
welcome collections for the charitable work they under-  
took. These societies, which were formed about 1675,  
were the result of lectures given by Dr. Horneck and Mr.  
Smithies to young men. Their original design was as  
near the Methodist model of class-meetings as possible,  
but circumstances modified them, at one time making  
them detectors and exposers of Popery; and, at another,  
reformers of the manners of the people, and prosecutors  
of criminals. They helped to foil the Popish machina-

tions of James II., and to deliver the terrified inhabitants  
of the Tower Hamlets from city thieves, who plundered  
their houses, and abused their persons. Altogether they  
could boast of having had to do with the closing of several  
markets which had been kept open on the Sunday; with  
the suppression of some hundreds of houses of ill-fame,  
and the punishment of their frequenters; with the prose-  
cution of two thousand persons of bad repute, and the  
infliction upon them of whipping, fining, carting, &c.;  
and with the conviction of notorious swearers and sabbath-  
breakers. They crowded the bridewells with prisoners,  
and do not seem to have thought of kinder methods of  
reforming criminals. Better than all, they relieved the  
sick, buried the poor, sheltered orphans, established  
schools for the education of children, and sent them out  
to trades. Their influence over the pulpits of the city  
was great and useful, for they secured eminent clergymen  
to preach upon questions vitally affecting the present con-  
dition of the people, thus helping to form a healthy public  
opinion and an earnest public spirit. Perhaps they were  
somewhat too inquisitorial, and had too great a notion of  
treating men as small children; yet they did good service  
in their day; and although, in the time of Whitefield,  
they had, as he says, declined much from their original  
warmth of religious zeal and energy of action, they still  
were the friends of charity, and to them Whitefield partly  
owed some of his first popularity in the city.1

It must have been to one of these societies that he  
was preaching in Redcross Street, on Christmas Day, at  
four o’clock in the morning, when he first used extem-  
poraneous prayer. A laborious day must that Christmas  
Day have been, with its first sermon at four, its second at  
six—when the preacher felt a ‘little oppressed with  
drowsiness’—its sacramental service, and three more

1 ‘An Account of the Religious Societies in the City of London.’ By  
J. Woodward, D.D., 1701.

sermons; and not an unworthy anniversary of a man’s  
baptism. Besides, Whitefield had preached twice on  
Christmas Eve, and expounded to two societies—one of  
them the society at Fetter Lane—and then continued with  
many other brethren in prayer, singing, and thanksgiving,  
until nearly four o’clock in the morning. No wonder he  
felt a ‘little oppressed with drowsiness!’ That society  
at Fetter Lane was at present the heart of the Methodist  
movement, its central fire. The engagements of Christ-  
mas Eve, 1738, were only an example of the prolonged,  
fervent, and, one would have thought, exhausting, but,  
Whitefield says, refreshing and invigorating, devotions  
which the brethren engaged in there.

Sympathy of thought and feeling drew the band of  
men close together, and their souls glowed with a passion  
of religious zeal which must, sooner or later, break forth  
upon the land for good or evil, or both, while the opposi-  
tion from without only fanned the flame. It was a hope-  
ful and a dangerous time. Firstfruits of the coming  
movement abounded in the meeting—first ‘watch-night  
meeting’ (?)—in which the leaders and a company of sixty  
brethren celebrated the departure of the old year and the  
coming of the new. ‘About three in the morning,’  
Wesley says, ‘as we were continuing instant in prayer,  
the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that  
many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the  
ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that  
awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we  
broke out with one voice, “We praise Thee, 0 God; we  
acknowledge Thee to be the Lord! ”’ Five nights after-  
wards, eight ‘ministers of Jesus Christ, despised Method-  
ists, whom God in his providence brought together,’ met  
at Islington to confer upon several things of importance,  
and continued in fasting and prayer until three o’clock,  
when they parted with ‘the conviction that God was  
about to do great things.’ The whole of the second

night after that Whitefield spent at Fetter Lane in the  
same devout engagements, and the next day was got  
through with one hour’s sleep. ‘There was a great deal  
of divine influence amongst us,’ he says.

Amid these numerous engagements, the object of his  
return to England, to receive ordination as a priest, was  
not lost sight of. At the end of December he writes to a  
friend at Gloucester: ‘I am appointed by the Trustees to  
be minister of Savannah. The Bishop of London (Dr.  
Gibson) accepts the title, and has given me letters dimis-  
sory to any other bishop. I have waited also on Dr.  
Seeker, bishop of Oxford, who acquaints me that our  
worthy diocesan, good Bishop Benson, ordains for him to-  
morrow fortnight at Oxford, and that he will give me  
letters dimissory to him. God be praised! I was praying  
day and night, whilst on shipboard, if it might be the  
Divine will that good Bishop Benson, who laid hands on  
me as a deacon, might now make me a priest. And now  
my prayer is answered. Be pleased to wait on his  
lordship, and desire him to inform you, when I must be  
at Oxford in order to receive imposition of hands. Oh,  
pray that I may be duly prepared.’ With the fire of the  
Fetter Lane meetings burning in his soul, he returned to  
Oxford; and on January 14, 1739, had the hands of  
‘good Bishop Benson’ laid on him.1 To make proof of  
his ministry he that day preached and administered the  
sacrament at the Castle, preached again in the afternoon  
at St. Alban’s to a crowded congregation, the church

1 Bishop Benson sent Lord Huntingdon, but evidently for the benefit of  
Lady Huntingdon, an account of the ordination, and added—‘I hope this  
will give some satisfaction to my lady, and that she will not have occasion  
to find fault with your lordship’s old tutor. Though mistaken on some  
points, I think him (Mr. Whitefield) a very pious, well-meaning young  
man, with good abilities and great zeal. I find his Grace of Canterbury  
thinks highly of him. I pray God grant him great success in all his under-  
takings for the good of mankind, and a revival of true religion and holiness  
among us in these degenerate days; in which prayer I am sure your lordship  
and my kind good Lady Huntingdon will most heartily join.’

being surrounded with gownsmen, who stood as attentive  
bearers at the windows, then joined in thanksgiving for  
all his mercies, read prayers at Carfax, expounded to a  
devout company at a private house, and spent the rest  
of the evening with thirteen more friends, doubtless in  
religious engagements.

On his return to London, the day after his ordination,  
he resumed the kind of life which has been described,  
—preaching, praying, expounding, and collecting money  
for his poor flock in Georgia. The only diversity was  
opposition to his doctrine of the new birth, to his and  
his brethren’s use of extempore prayer, and to their  
using the private societies for religious purposes. These  
last, it was alleged, were offences against the canons and  
the act of Charles II. Whitefield replied that his meet-  
ings were for private worship, not public, and had no  
hostile intent against the Church. Another noticeable  
incident was his visit to Dr. Watts, now an old man, who  
received him ‘most cordially.’ But the most important  
fact of the month was the thought of preaching in the  
open air, which was suggested to him by a crowd of a  
thousand people having been unable to gain admission  
to Bermondsey Church, where he preached one Sunday  
afternoon. It met with no encouragement when he  
mentioned it to some of his friends; they thought it was a  
‘mad motion.’ However, it would have been carried  
out the next Sunday at Ironmongers’ Almshouses, had  
not the preacher been disappointed in his congregation,  
which was small enough to hear him from the pulpit.  
He took two sermons with him, one for within and the  
other for without. What were his impressions about  
this untoward circumstance he nowhere says; most pro-  
bably he had humble and self-reproachful thoughts for  
having run before there seemed to be need.

Such intense and long continued work as he rushed into  
upon his return home could not fail to tell upon him, and

his entry in his journal on February 6 is such as one  
expects to see: ‘Went to St. Helen’s, where, all on a  
sudden, I was taken so ill in body, and was so deserted  
in soul, that I would have given anything for my written  
notes; yet God gave me to trust in Him for strength and  
assistance, and before I had done I was warm in heart,  
and strong enough in body to continue to offer Jesus  
Christ freely for a considerable time to all that would lay  
hold on Him by faith.’ At this time we hear the sound  
of those peculiar Amens, which have distinguished the  
children of Methodism down to this late day. ‘Many  
seemed to feel what was spoken, and said hearty and  
loud amens to my sentences.’ The next day another  
keen attack struck him at Windsor. We shall see this  
weakness showing itself all through his life to the last:  
and if we keep in memory its existence, and not allow  
ourselves to think, as we follow him day and night  
through his ceaseless toils, that we are with a man who  
has no infirmities—who, as it has been expressed,1 ‘was  
gifted with an incapacity of fatiguing or of being fatigued’  
—we shall form a juster estimate of the heavenly fervour  
which triumphed first over his own frailness, and then  
over every outside difficulty. He was often fatigued  
beyond endurance; but the sight of his congregation,  
the delight he had in his work, and the strength which  
comes from above, quickened him to speak with freedom  
and power. ‘Freedom and power’—these were the two  
qualities in his preaching which he prized before all  
others. If anything was present to gladden him these  
were his joy; if anything was absent and depressed him,  
these were the missing treasure. But not often was  
he without them; not often could he fear to appropriate  
the humble boast of St. Paul—‘Our gospel came not  
unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the  
Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.’

1 ‘Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography.’ By Sir J. Stephen.

A short tour in the provinces gave him his first taste  
of direct hostility, the mob and the Church being of one  
mind in openly opposing him. It also gave him his first  
taste of the sweets of field preaching. There was truth  
in half of the exclamation which a not too devout ob-  
server uttered when Whitefield started from London:  
‘I believe the devil in hell is in you all’— that was the  
untrue half;—‘Whitefield has set the town on fire, and  
now he is gone to kindle a flame in the country’—that  
was the true half. There was alarm among the powers  
of the Church in the cities of Bath and Bristol before his  
arrival there; and his application to preach in the Abbey  
church at Bath on behalf of the orphan-house was met  
with a positive refusal, although the bishop had given  
the Trustees of Georgia a promise, before Whitefield  
sailed for Georgia, that such a service might be held.  
The refusal came not, however, from the bishop. Similar  
treatment at Bristol, to which he at once withdrew, led  
to results so important, that we must devote another  
chapter to them.

CHAPTER VI.

**February to April, 1739.**

EXPELLED THE CHURCHES—OPEN AIR PREACHING.

‘Near the city of Bristol is a tract of country called  
Kingswood. Formerly, as its name implies, it had been a  
royal chase, containing between three and four thousand  
acres; but it had been gradually appropriated by the  
several lords whose estates lay round about its borders;  
and their title, which for a long time was no better than  
what possession gave them, had been legalised. The deer  
had long since disappeared, and the greater part of the  
wood also; and coal mines having been discovered there,  
from which Bristol derives its chief supply of fuel, it was  
now inhabited by a race of people as lawless as the forest-  
ers their forefathers, but far more brutal, and differing as  
much from the people of the surrounding country in dia-  
lect as in appearance. They had at that time no place of  
worship, for Kingswood then belonged to the out-parish  
of St. Philip and Jacob; and if the colliers had been dis-  
posed to come from a distance of three or four miles,  
they would have found no room in the parish church of  
a populous suburb. When, upon his last visit to Bristol,  
before his embarkation, Whitefield spoke of converting  
the savages, many of his friends said to him, “What need  
of going abroad for this? Have we not Indians enough  
at home? If you have a mind to convert Indians, there  
are colliers enough in Kingswood.”’

1 Southey’s, ‘Life of Wesley,’ ch. vi.

And the colliers were still Indians when Whitefield  
revisited Bristol, the pious friends having, as is usual with  
those who dissuade from mission work, done nothing  
themselves to produce a change. Heathenism was at  
their doors, and they left it alone in its sin and misery,  
till the young clergyman should return from the Georgian  
Creeks and grapple with it; and even he might have  
failed in this gracious task had not opposition confronted  
him. When clergymen were cold, and the chancellor of  
the diocese captious, and churches scarce, Whitefield had  
time and inducements to carry out those loving wishes  
towards the colliers, which had stirred his heart for a  
long time; nor was the desire to attempt open-air preach-  
ing without its weight on the same side.

Understanding that the minister of St. Mary Redcliffe  
was willing to lend his church for sermons to be preached  
on behalf of the orphan-house, Whitefield applied first of  
all to him, and the answer was a civil refusal; the church  
could not be lent without a special order from the chan-  
cellor. To the chancellor Whitefield went. The reply  
from him was, ‘that he would not give any positive  
leave, neither would he prohibit any one that should  
lend Whitefield a church; but he would advise him to  
withdraw to some other place till he had heard from the  
bishop, and not preach on that or any other occasion  
soon.’ Whitefield asked him his reasons. He answered,  
‘Why will you press so hard upon me? The thing has  
given a general dislike.’ Whitefield replied, ‘Hot the  
design of the orphan-house. Even those that disagree  
with me in other particulars approve of that. And as  
for the gospel, when was it preached without dislike?’  
The dean, when called upon soon after the interview  
with the chancellor, gave the same ambiguous replies  
with the same plain meaning: ‘Mr. Whitefield, we would  
rather not say yea or nay to you; but we mean nay, and  
greatly wish that you would understand us so.’

The societies were still open, so was Newgate, and  
then there were the colliers. These last were visited  
on a Saturday afternoon for the first time. Whitefield  
took his stand on Hannan Mount, and spoke upon Matt,  
v. 1, 2, and 3, to as many as came to hear; upwards  
of two hundred attended. He does not say what were  
his feelings in his novel situation, nor what were the im-  
pressions upon his audience. His only remark in his  
journal is, ‘Blessed be God that the ice is now broke,  
and I have now taken the field! Some may censure me.  
But is there not a cause? Pulpits are denied, and the  
poor colliers ready to perish for lack of knowledge.’ As  
this act was taken on the day after his interviews with  
the chancellor and the dean, he had lost no time in  
breaking the ice. Now he was the owner of a pulpit  
that no man could take from him, and his heart rejoiced  
in this great gift. But all in Bristol was not so dark on  
Sunday morning as it had been on Friday night and  
Saturday. Three pulpits were placed at his disposal,  
and from two of them he preached, one being that of  
St. Mary Redcliffe: there he had such a congregation as  
his eyes had never yet seen, and he preached with  
‘liberty.’ But the most enjoyable part of the day was  
its close, which was spent with two of the societies.  
Monday opened the parish church of St. Philip and Jacob,  
and gave him a noble congregation, and a collection of  
eighteen pounds for his orphan-house.

Perhaps these quick, decisive movements put the chan-  
cellor on his mettle; for, on the Monday, a summons  
came from the apparitor commanding Whitefield’s ap-  
pearance before the chancellor. With this document in  
his pocket, Whitefield spent a joyful night among his  
friends in Baldwin Street; and on Tuesday morning, at  
ten o’clock, he waited upon the chancellor, who plainly  
told him that he intended to stop his proceedings. ‘I  
have sent for the register here, sir,’ said he, ‘to take

down your answer.’ The first question was, by what  
authority Whitefield preached in the diocese of Bristol  
without a licence. Whitefield replied, that he thought  
that custom was grown obsolete. And then becoming  
questioner in turn, he asked the chancellor, ‘And why,  
pray sir, did not you ask the clergyman this question  
who preached for you last Thursday?’ He said that was  
nothing to Whitefield. He then read over part of the  
ordination office, and those canons that forbid any minis-  
ter’s preaching in a private house, &c.; and asked what  
Whitefield had to say to them. He answered, that he  
apprehended that those canons did not belong to pro-  
fessed ministers of the Church of England. The chan-  
cellor replied that they did. Again Whitefield resorted  
to the ad hominem method: ‘There is also a canon, said  
I, sir, forbidding all clergymen to frequent taverns and  
play at cards; why is not that put in execution?’ Said  
the chancellor—‘Why does not some one complain of  
them, and then it would?’ That is the old church  
scandal; doctrine and form are put before common  
morality; for not seldom has it been safer to break all  
the laws of God, while swearing to articles, or pronoun-  
cing party words, than to be undecided about an article,  
or unable to shape the words, yet loving to do the will  
of God. The chancellor next accused Whitefield of false  
doctrine, whereupon he received a proper answer: ‘I  
cannot but speak the things I know ; and I am resolved  
to proceed as usual.’ ‘Observe his answer, then, Mr.  
Register,’ said he. Then, turning to Whitefield, he  
added, ‘I am resolved, sir, if you preach or expound any-  
where in this diocese, till you have a licence, I will first  
suspend, and then excommunicate you. And what I do is  
in the name of the clergy and laity of the city of Bristol.’  
How much truth there was in the whole statement ap-  
peared on the afternoon of the day that it was made. The  
laity of Bristol, who were said to want the silencing of

Whitefield, congregated in thousands around St. Nicholas'  
Church, hoping to hear him preach; but the lecturer  
sent word that orders were given by the clergyman that  
he should not preach in his church. The societies re-  
mained open, and the laity crowded their meetings that  
night.

The second interview with the chancellor was followed  
by the same action as the first, and with more encoura-  
ging results. On the following day the journal relates,  
‘All the church doors being now shut, and if open not  
able to contain half that came to hear, at three in the  
afternoon I went to Kingswood among the colliers. God  
highly favoured us in sending us a fine day, and near two  
thousand people were assembled on that occasion. I  
preached and enlarged on John iii. 3 for near an hour,  
and, I hope, to the comfort and edification of those that  
heard me.’ Two days afterwards he stood upon the  
same spot, and preached to a congregation of four or five  
thousand with great freedom. The bright sun overhead  
and the immense throng standing around him in awful  
silence formed a picture which filled him with ‘holy ad-  
miration.’

He kept up this double conflict with ecclesiastics and  
with the devil with surprising ease. From a sermon to  
Kingswood heathen, or an exposition to Newgate prison-  
ers, to an interview with the chancellor, or a letter to the  
bishop, he could turn himself without discomfort; and  
the two kinds of engagements come up in his journal  
with an amusing regularity of sequence. In the follow-  
ing letter he told his case to the bishop:

‘ Bristol, Feb. 24, 1739.

‘My Lord,—I humbly thank your lordship for the favour of  
your lordship’s letter. It gave abundant satisfaction to me  
and many others, who have not failed to pray in a particular  
manner for your lordship’s temporal and eternal welfare. To-  
day I showed your lordship’s letter to the chancellor, who

(notwithstanding he promised not to prohibit my preaching for  
the orphan-house, if your lordship was only neuter in the  
affair) has influenced most of the clergy to deny me their  
pulpits, either on that or any other occasion. Last week he  
was pleased to charge me with false doctrine. Today he has  
forgot that he said so. He also threatened to excommunicate  
me for preaching in your lordship’s diocese. I offered to take  
a licence, but was denied. If your lordship should ask what  
evil I have done? I answer none, save that I visit the religious  
societies, preach to the prisoners in Newgate, and to the poor  
colliers in Kingswood, who, they tell me, are little better than  
heathens. I am charged with being a Dissenter, though many are  
brought to the Church by my preaching, not one taken from it.  
Indeed, the chancellor is pleased to tell me my conduct is con-  
trary to canons; but I told him those canons which he produced  
were not intended against such meetings as mine are, where  
his majesty is constantly prayed for, and every one is free to  
see what is done. I am sorry to give your lordship this trouble,  
but I thought proper to mention these particulars, that I might  
know of your lordship wherein my conduct is exceptionable.  
I heartily thank your lordship for your intended benefaction.  
I think the design is truly good, and will meet with success,  
because so much opposed. God knows my heart, I desire only  
to promote His glory. If I am spoken evil of for His sake, I  
rejoice in it. My Master was long since spoken evil of before  
me. But I intrude on your lordship’s patience. I am, with  
all possible thanks, my lord,

‘Your lordship’s dutiful son and servant,

‘ George Whitefield.’

To the chancellor he wrote as follows:—

‘Reverend Sir,—The enclosed is a letter I sent on Saturday  
to the Bishop of Bristol; be pleased to peruse, and see if any-  
thing contrary to truth is there related by,

‘Reverend sir, your very humble servant,

‘George Whitefield.’

‘Bristol, Feb. 26, 1738/9.’

Of course the intervening day, Sunday, was devoted  
to preaching. Bussleton, a village two miles from Bristol,

opened its church to him, and a numerous congregation  
coming together, he first read prayers in the church and  
then preached in the churchyard. At four he hastened to  
Kingswood. Though the month was February the weather  
was unusually open and mild; the setting sun shone with  
his fullest power; the trees and hedges were crowded  
with hearers who wanted to see the preacher as well as  
hear him. For an hour he spoke with a voice loud  
enough to be heard by every one, and his heart was not  
without joy in his own message. Calling to mind the  
observation made on his setting out for the country, he

wrote in his journal: ‘Blessed be God, Mr. ---- spoke

right. The fire is kindled in the country ; may the gates  
of hell never be able to prevail against it!’ The day was  
closed by visits to two societies. At nine he came home  
rejoicing to find how all things turn out for the further-  
ance of the gospel. He began his day’s work at six in  
the morning, and so weary as to think he could do no-  
thing: fifteen hours’ work out of a weary body! What a  
tale does that one Sunday tell of the triumph of the spirit  
over the flesh!

It is important to know what were his feelings when  
he met these immense field congregations, whose numbers  
had grown from two hundred to twenty thousand, and  
what were the effects of his preaching upon his audience.  
His own words are, ‘Having no righteousness of their  
own to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who  
was a friend to publicans, and came not to call the  
righteous, but sinners to repentance. The first dis-  
covery of their being affected was, to see the white  
gutters made by their tears, which plentifully fell down  
their black cheeks, as they came out of their coal pits.  
Hundreds and hundreds of them were soon brought  
under deep convictions, which (as the event proved)  
happily ended in a sound and thorough conversion. The  
change was visible to all, though numbers chose to im-

pute it to anything rather than the finger of God. As  
the scene was quite new, and I had just begun to be an  
extempore preacher, it often occasioned many inward  
conflicts. Sometimes, when twenty thousand people were  
before me, I had not, in my own apprehension, a word  
to say, either to God or them. But I was never totally  
deserted, and was frequently (for to deny it would be  
lying against God) so assisted, that I knew by happy  
experience, what our Lord meant by saying, “Out of his  
belly shall flow rivers of living water.” The open firma-  
ment above me, the prospect of the adjacent fields, with  
the sight of thousands and thousands, some in coaches,  
some on horseback, and some in the trees, and, at times,  
all affected and drenched in tears together, to which  
sometimes was added the solemnity of the approaching  
evening, was almost too much for, and quite overcame,  
me.’

The overpowering emotion of which he speaks, and the  
tears which made white gutters on the begrimed faces of  
the colliers, were the answer to his own passionate feelings.  
Seldom did he preach without drenching his audience in  
tears, and the effect was due quite as much to his unre-   
strained manifestation of strong feeling as to his words.   
Especially must this characteristic have struck the hearts  
of rough men, who, after having been long uncared for,  
at last saw a clergyman willing to endure fatigue and  
shame for the sake of preaching to them. He spoke as  
having nothing to keep back from them, as having no-  
thing to be ashamed of, least of all of those tender yearn-  
ings of divine compassion which had constrained him to  
come to them, and instead of assuming a placid com-  
posure which he did not feel he let his whole manner  
express what was in him. ‘I hardly ever knew him go  
through a sermon without weeping more or less,’ said his  
friend Cornelius Winter, ‘and I truly believe his were  
the tears of sincerity. His voice was often interrupted

by his affection; and I have heard him say in the pulpit,  
“You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it,  
when you will not weep for yourselves, though your  
immortal souls are upon the verge of destruction, and, for  
aught you know, you are hearing your last sermon, and  
may never more have an opportunity to have Christ  
offered to you.” His freedom in the use of his passions  
often put my pride to the trial. I could hardly bear  
such unreserved use of tears, and the scope he gave to  
his feelings, for sometimes he exceedingly wept, stamped  
loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome,  
that, for a few seconds, you would suspect he never  
could recover; and when he did, nature required some  
little time to compose herself.’

The visit to Bristol was interrupted for a few days to  
make an excursion into Wales; but, although this was the  
first appearance of a famous, avowed Methodist among  
the Welsh, Methodism was already among them, both in  
mode and spirit. Clergymen had gone beyond parish  
boundaries, preaching to large congregations in churches,  
in churchyards, and in fields; religious societies, founded  
upon the rules which Hr. Woodward had laid down for  
the societies in London, were scattered here and there to  
the number of thirty; the great doctrines and holy com-  
mandments of the Gospel were taught with power which  
fell little, if at all, below that which marked the minis-  
trations of Whitefield. The two prime movers in the  
work were Griffith Jones and Howel Harris.

Griffith Jones, rector of Llanddowror, Caermarthenshire,  
was a man of ardent' piety and noble courage, and the   
greatest preacher in the principality in his day. His  
fame extended far beyond the limits of his own cure; and  
congregations not favoured with so popular and useful a  
ministry as was his, would send him pressing invitations  
to come and preach to them. Nor, in spite of constitu-  
tional weakness, was he unwilling to accept the calls. He

so arranged his tours as to take several places at the  
same time, and generally in Easter or Whitsun-week,  
when he knew that wakes, fairs, and other riotous gather-  
ings of the people would be doing their destructive  
work. In this irregular work he preceded all the English  
Methodists; and it is not unlikely that Whitefield had his  
example in his mind when he stood up at Kingswood and  
in Moorfields. But there was not always unanimity be-  
tween the parishioners and their clergy about these invi-  
tations and visits. Idle and irreligious clergymen did not  
like to be placed in contrast with the diligent rector; and  
so, after the churchwarden had announced the coming  
visitor, the incumbent would often make sure of the  
church-key, and compel both his people and their  
favourite preacher to take their stand in the open air.   
The next act of brotherly charity was to lodge an accu-  
sation in the Ecclesiastical Court, and torment the rector  
with law. He had twenty years of litigation.

But Griffith Jones’s ‘Welsh Circulating Schools’ eclipsed  
his labours as a preacher. He conceived the idea of set-  
tling a schoolmaster in a locality where the people had  
requested to be taught—of his continuing there until all  
who wished for instruction had received it, and then of  
his passing on to the next place where he was wanted.  
The instruction was not, of course, very elaborate: it con-  
sisted in reading the Bible in the Welsh tongue, in psalmody,  
and in knowing the catechism. Its object was eminently  
religious. Jones wanted the people to be able to follow  
him intelligently in the service of the Church, and to help  
themselves when he was not with them. As helpers in  
his work he was obliged, on account of the bad state of  
the Established Church, to fall back upon Nonconformists,  
who supplied him with most of his teachers. These he  
trained in a seminary at Llanddowror. Staunch church-  
man as he was, he had to turn from his own communion,  
and unwillingly seek the co-operation of men whose eccle-

siastical views were disagreeable to him. His benevolence,  
his zeal, his foresight, and his charity were amply justi-  
fied and rewarded by the results of his work. Within ten  
years of the establishment of the schools, or two years  
after Whitefield paid his first visit to Wales, there were  
one hundred and twenty-eight schools, and seven thou-  
sand five hundred and ninety-five persons instructed in  
them. Twenty years later, ten thousand persons were  
taught to read in one year.1

The testimony of this true churchman and devoted  
Christian as to the religious condition of his country may  
be taken as of some account. He says: ‘I must also do  
justice to the Dissenters in Wales, and will appeal for the  
truth of it to all competent judges, and to all those them-  
selves who separate from us (except only such who have  
hardly any more charity for those they differ from than  
the Church of Rome), that it was not any scruple of con-  
science about the principles or orders of the Established  
Church that gave occasion to scarce one in ten of the  
Dissenters in this country to separate from us at first,  
whatever objections they may afterwards imbibe against  
conforming. No, sir; they generally dissent at first for no  
other reason than for want of plain, practical, pressing,  
and zealous preaching, in a language and dialect they  
are able to understand; and freedom of friendly access to  
advise about their spiritual state. When they come (some  
way or other) to be pricked in their hearts for their sins,  
and find perhaps no seriousness in those about them, none  
to unbosom their griefs to, none that will patiently hear  
their complaints, and deal tenderly by their souls, and  
dress their wounds, they flee to other people for relief, as  
dispossessed demoniacs will no longer frequent the tombs  
of the dead. For, though the Church of England is  
allowed to be as sound and healthful a part of the  
catholic church as any in the world, yet when people are

1 ‘History of Nonconformity in Wales,’ by Thomas Rees, p. 351.

awakened from their lethargy and begin to perceive their  
danger, they will not believe that there is anything in  
reason, law, or gospel that should oblige them to starve  
their souls to death for the sake of conforming, if their  
pastor (whose voice, perhaps, they do not know, or who  
resides a great way from them) will not vouchsafe to deal  
out unto them the Bread of Life.’1

If for Dissenters, in the above extract, we read Metho-  
dists, from the time of Whitefield’s labours, we shall have  
a sound explanation of the causes why Methodism gained  
such a footing among the Welsh. An idle, incapable, irre-  
ligious clergy will not be tolerated for ever, even by the  
most abject of nations; and only one result can follow.  
When anyone, whether clergyman, Dissenter, or Church-  
man, with religious life in his soul, speaks the things he  
knows and believes, the people will go and hear him.

Howel Harris was born in January, 1714, thirty years  
after Griffith Jones, and eleven months before Whitefield.  
The Welsh and the English preachers were very similar  
in disposition. When youths, they both were sprightly  
and fond of a jest. When men and ministers, they both  
were irresistibly earnest, vehement, solemn, exciting rage  
or subduing their audiences like children. Harris perhaps  
being the sterner of the two. Underneath all his lightness  
of manner there had lain, as in the case of Whitefield,  
much religious seriousness from the days of his childhood  
to the time of his becoming a new man which was in  
1735, about the same time that Whitefield passed through  
his memorable change. A sharp, incisive sentence, spoken  
by his vicar, struck into his conscience, and made him  
resolve to live a new life. It was tins, ‘If you are not fit  
to come to the Lord’s table, you are not fit to come to  
church; you are neither fit to live nor die.’ His mind was  
filled with alarm when he discovered how vast were the

1 Welsh piety for 1741 (quoted from Rees’ ‘ History of Nonconformity in  
Wales,’ p. 356).

claims of the divine law, and how imperfect had been his  
acknowledgment of them. Then he fasted, and denied  
himself every temporal comfort, in order to subdue his  
depravity; but all was of no avail, until he believed that  
Christ had died for him, and that all his sins had been  
laid on Him. Ignorant of all the disputed points of reli-  
gion, he lived in the simple faith that God loved him,  
and would, for His own name’s sake, love him freely to  
the end.

His tender, earnest, pure mind was much shocked by  
the prevailing wickedness of his native land, its neglect of  
family worship, its swearing, lying, and reviling, its  
drunkenness, fighting, and gaming. He also expresses his  
concern about the neglect of the people by their pastors,  
which, considering how his own religious life had been  
quickened, strikes one as somewhat strange, and leads us  
to conclude either that he must have been very unfair to  
his own vicar, or that the vicar must have been addicted  
to good preaching, when he did preach, and yet have  
been an unfaithful shepherd. His zeal found work among  
some poor people who went every Sunday night to hear  
him preach in his mother’s house; and he soon became  
‘the talk of the country.’

In November, 1735, he went to Oxford, and entered at  
St. Mary’s Hall; but Oxford had nothing congenial, or he  
failed to find it; and, instead of continuing there, as  
Whitefield and the Wesleys had done, and as other  
devout men were doing at the time he was there, at the  
end of the term he returned to Wales, weary of the place,  
because, as he says, of ‘the irregularities and wickedness  
which surrounded him.’

‘After my return, I was occupied in going from house  
to house, until I had visited nearly the whole of the parish  
in which I was born’—Talgarth, in Brecon—‘together  
with some of the neighbouring ones. The people began  
now to assemble in vast numbers, so that the houses in

which I addressed them were too small for the congre-  
gations. The word was attended with such power, that  
many cried out on the spot for the pardon of their sius.  
Such as lived in malice acknowledged their faults, made  
peace with one another, and appeared concerned about  
their eternal state. The parish churches were now better  
attended, and family worship was set up in many  
houses.’1

Opposition from the clergy, the magistrates, and the  
populace checked the enterprise a little. He next opened  
a school; and, at the end of 1736, a novel method of em-  
ploying his gift suggested itself. He accompanied from  
parish to parish a young man who went about to instruct  
young people in psalmody; and, at the close of the music  
lesson, offered ‘a word of exhortation.’ Then he set on  
foot the religious societies to which I have referred. He  
went on teaching his school in the day, and preaching at  
night and on the Sunday, until his school was taken from  
him, which only gave him the greater opportunity to  
accept every invitation to preach; instead of the odd  
night services he preached now to crowded auditories  
from three to six times a day.

A fiercer storm answered his larger devotion. He  
says, ‘How I was loaded with all manner of calumnies,  
from all quarters. The magistrates threatened me, and  
the clergy preached against me, branding me with the  
character of a false prophet and deceiver. The mob was  
also active, lying in wait for me in many places, with  
mischievous intentions. Yet during all this I was carried  
as on wings of an eagle triumphantly over all. I took  
no particular texts, but discoursed freely, as the Lord  
gave utterance. The gift I had received was to convince  
the conscience of sin. There appeared now a general  
reformation in several counties. Public diversions were

1 Morgan’s ‘Life and Times of Howel Harris,’ in Rees’ ‘Welsh. Noncon-  
formity,’ p. 362.

laid aside, religion became a common subject of conver-  
sation, and places of worship were everywhere crowded.  
The Welsh Charity Schools, by the exertions of the Rev.  
Griffith Jones, began to spread; people in general ex-  
pressed a willingness to receive instruction; and societies  
were formed in many places.’’

About this time a friend brought him news of White-  
field’s labours in London, immediately before sailing for  
Georgia; and at once the young Welshman felt his heart  
united to Whitefield ‘in such a manner as he had never  
felt the like with anyone before.’ He longed to see him,  
but that was impossible. To his great joy, however, a  
letter came to him from Whitefield, soon after his return  
from Georgia.

‘London, December, 1738.

‘My dear brother,—Though I am unknown to you in person,  
yet I have long been united to you in spirit; and have been re-  
joiced to hear how the good pleasure of the Lord prospered in  
your hands. Go on, go on! He that sent you will assist, com-  
fort, and protect you, and make you more than conqueror  
through His great love. I am a living monument of this truth.  
I love you, and wish you may be the spiritual father of thou-  
sands, and shine as the sun in the kingdom of your heavenly  
Father. Oh, how shall I joy to meet you at the judgment seat!  
How you would honour me if you would send a line to your  
affectionate though unworthy brother,

George Whitefield.’

To this letter Harris replied the day after its reception.  
The following are extracts from it:—

‘Glamorgan, Jan. 8, 1739.

‘Dear brother,—I was most agreeably surprised last night by  
a letter from you. The character you bear, the spirit I see and  
feel in your work, and the close union of my soul and spirit to

1 Morgan’s ‘Life and Times of Howel Harris,’ in Rees ‘Welsh  
Non-conformity,’ p. 369.

yours, will not allow me to use any apology in my return to  
you. Though this is the first time of our correspondence, yet  
I can assure you I am no stranger to you. When I first heard  
of you and your labours and success, my soul was united to  
you, and engaged to send addresses to heaven on your behalf.  
When I read your diary, I had some uncommon influence of  
the Divine presence shining upon my poor soul almost con-  
tinually. And my soul was, in an uncommon manner, drawn  
out on your account; but I little thought our good Lord and  
Master intended I should ever see your handwriting. Sure, no  
person is under such obligations to advance the glory of free  
goodness and grace as this poor prodigal. Oh, how ravishing it  
is to hear of the Divine love and favour to London! And, to  
make your joy greater still, I have some more good news to  
send you from Wales. There is a great revival in Cardiganshire  
through one Mr. D. Rowlands, a Church clergyman, who has been  
much owned and blessed in Caermarthenshire also. We have  
also a sweet prospect in Breconshire and part of Monmouthshire.  
I hint this in general, as I could not testify my love any way  
more agreeably to your soul, than to let you know how the in-  
terest of our good, gracious, and dear Saviour prospers here-  
abouts. Were you to come to Wales it would not be labour in  
vain. I hope the faithful account I have given you will excite  
you to send again a line to him that would be sincerely yours,  
in Christ Jesus, whilst Η. H.’

Though it was of no small use to Harris, who was greatly  
distressed about his own irregular mode of preaching, to  
hear Whitefield’s encouraging ‘Go on, go on!’ he yet  
was not completely satisfied. His fear of not being right  
made him halt in his step; but the importunity of the  
people, the visible good tendency of his labours, the ap-  
probation of many whom he regarded as good ministers,  
and the continual power he felt helping him in his work,  
at length overcame every scruple. Besides, he had  
several times offered himself for holy orders, and been  
refused, because he preached as a layman, and so he was  
shut up to this way, or to total silence.

It will be seen from these sketches of Griffith Jones

and Howel Harris what was the state of things in the  
Church of England in Wales, and to some extent in Non-  
conformity. The preaching of the godly clergy was  
frowned upon by their own brethren, and supported, as  
well as welcomed, by the Dissenters.

We can also understand why Whitefield broke away  
for a few days from the thousands of Bristol and Kings-  
wood. His soul and the soul of Harris leaped to each  
other like flames of fire.

An incident of the short passage to Wales is much too  
characteristic of the times to be omitted. Contrary winds  
delayed Whitefield at the New Passage, and he says, ‘At  
the inn there was an unhappy clergyman, who would  
not go over in the passage-boat because I was in it.  
Alas! thought I, this very temper would make heaven  
itself unpleasant to that man, if he saw me there. I was  
told that he charged me with being a Dissenter. I saw  
him, soon after, shaking his elbows over a gaming table.’  
How inevitably the figure of this priest recalls the ‘young  
fellow in a rusty gown and cassock, who,’ as Roderick  
Random ‘afterwards understood, was curate of a neigh-  
bouring parish.’ ‘However,’ according to the testimony  
of the exciseman who helped Parson Shuffle to cheat the  
two farmers, and who therefore ought to have known his  
own friend, ‘the fellow cannot be too much admired for  
his dexterity in making a comfortable livelihood in spite  
of such a small allowance. You hear he plays a good  
stick, and is really diverting company; these qualifications  
make him agreeable wherever he goes; and, as for play-  
ing at cards, there is not a man within three counties a  
match for him. . . He can shift a card with such address  
that it is impossible to discover him.’ Some parsons in  
the north and some in the west do not seem to have been  
much unlike in the days of Smollett and Whitefield.

The Welsh visit was very short, and was marked with  
those experiences which Whitefield was to know as com-

mon things for the rest of his life. First of all, the  
church at Cardiff was denied him, and he had to resort  
to the town-hall, where he preached from the judge’s seat  
to a small audience of four hundred people. No outrage  
was attempted in the building, but some of the baser sort  
amused themselves by trailing a dead fox around it outside  
—a very trifling annoyance to a preacher with such lung  
power, and who could make himself heard in spite of the  
shouting and noise. Then there were ‘melting’ meetings  
of a more private sort with the religious societies; and  
on the whole he had reason, as he says, to think that  
there was ‘a most comfortable prospect of the spreading  
of the gospel in Wales.’

On his return to Bristol he had to suffer meaner oppo-  
sition than any he had met with before. Newgate, where  
he had delighted to preach to the prisoners, and where,  
by his gifts, he had relieved much distress, was closed  
against him. Unwilling to lose their friend and teacher,  
many of the prisoners sent a petition to the mayor, pray-  
ing that he might be allowed to come among them as  
usual; but the mayor would not grant them their request.  
Mr. Dagge, the keeper, a convert and friend of Whitefield,  
remonstrated, and urged that Whitefield preached agree-  
ably to Scripture; but the only answer was, to appoint  
another clergyman to the post of chaplain—for shame  
forbade his denying the poor unfortunates all religious  
aid. This disappointment was cause for great rejoicing  
to the expelled Methodist, who, taking up St. Paul’s lan-  
guage, wrote in his journal, ‘Some preach Christ out of  
contention, and others of good will: however, Christ is  
preached.’

His persecution had ample compensation in the new  
power of which he had become conscious, and in the new  
field of labour which he had found since his arrival in the  
west, the fields giving him room enough for any congre-  
gation, and the people delighting to meet him there in

all weathers, even the cold and snow of March not being  
able to keep them away. At Bath, at Bristol, and in the  
neighbouring villages, he was daily engaged in preaching  
to thousands,—in the churches if he could gain admis-  
sion to them, and if not, then under the May-pole or in  
the fields, or in any open space where the people had a  
right to assemble. Then it was that he felt the wonder-  
ful influence which pervades mighty audiences, possessed  
with one concern, bending their attention to one subject,  
and engaged in one common service. His favourite con-  
gregation was the Kingswood one, which met on the  
Sunday. The crowds standing in awful silence, and the  
echo of their singing running from side to side, was, he  
says, very solemn and striking. Weariness and sickness  
often oppressed him, yet he always found strength when  
the task faced him, and probably he ended feeling vigo-  
rous and well. He was already beginning to learn the  
curative properties of effort, and to trust for invigoration  
to what exhausted him. Then, too, there was popular  
sympathy on his side. He had but to take his stand any-  
where, and an audience was before him. When Newgate  
was closed, and his sister’s room, where he had been ac-  
customed to address a congregation as earlv as six o’clock  
on Sunday morning, could not accommodate a fourth of  
the people who came, some gentlemen gave him the use  
of a bowling-green: and his first congregation in that  
novel church was five thousand. This was his first  
attempt at preaching in the open air early in the morning.  
Its success, and the kindness of friends who had come to  
his rescue, cheered and encouraged him; his heart was  
full to breaking of grateful emotion. Sympathy, and,  
more and better than that, deep religious concern, dis-  
played themselves in a striking manner when he came to  
the bowling-green for his second service, which was only  
thirty-four hours after his first, and on a Monday after-  
noon. His hearers crowded the windows and balconies

of the adjoining houses as well as occupied the green, and  
great was their excitement when the preacher’s heart  
flowed forth in fervent prayer for them, and his tongue  
began to enlarge on a theme which never failed to com-  
mand all his powers—the love and free grace of Jesus  
Christ.

Pressed by repeated invitations, he next presented him-  
self in a very different part of the city, where many dwelt  
who neither feared God nor regarded man, and preached  
to thousands in a yard of the glass-houses, declaring both  
the threatenings and promises of the Almighty, so that  
none might either presume or despair.

At this service Whitefield was called upon to show his  
wisdom and firmness in managing the unruly mob which  
he had called together. While, he was preaching, he heard  
the holloaing which only an English crowd can raise  
when excited; and thinking that it came from some  
troublers, he gave no heed to it, but went on, depending  
on the strength of his voice, the importance of his subject,  
and the blessing of God, to hold his audience together,  
and win their hearts to truth. His sermon finished, he  
inquired about the noise, and was told that a drunk  
‘gentleman’ had taken the liberty to call him a dog, and  
to say that he ought to be whipped at the cart’s tail, at  
the same time offering money to anyone who would pelt  
him. The hint was at once taken; only, to the ‘gentle-  
man’s’ surprise, the boys and people near him, thinking  
that it would be better justice to pelt the drunkard than the  
preacher, poured a shower of stones and dirt on him. On  
hearing the story Whitefield condemned the behaviour of  
his champions in strong terms, and finished with a moral  
drawn from the ‘gentleman’s’ experience—‘What sorry  
wages the devil gives his servants.’

His courage and tact were sometimes severely tried,  
but more at Bath than Bristol, by the scoffing which he  
heard as he passed through the crowd, and by the

laughter which greeted him when he mounted a table  
for his pulpit. The merriment never lasted long; for  
that true love and unusual zeal which carried him to  
such congregations bore him strongly and patiently on  
with his work, and it was not in human nature to con-  
tinue trifling with one so superior to the passions of his  
audience. Whoever came to annoy must either submit  
to the spell which soon caught the most of the audience,  
and stay, either a willing or an unwilling hearer, or go  
away disappointed of his sport. To the last we shall  
find that Whitefield was never beaten, hazardous and  
questionable as some of his efforts afterwards were. His  
convictions on the power of preaching, penned after he  
had hushed and awed a jeering crowd at Bath, give in  
part the secret of his confidence: ‘Men may say what  
they please, but there is something in this foolishness of  
preaching which, when attended with a Divine energy,  
will make the most stubborn heart bend or break. “Is  
not my word like fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer  
that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

The picture of his life at Bristol would not be com-  
plete without some mention of his kind and fraternal  
intercourse with Quakers, which may be said to have  
begun in that city. The fiery, vehement, weeping clergy-  
man had as great attractions for them as for any body of  
men, and he was often invited to enjoy their hospitality.  
Always willing to hear what good men had to say for  
their particular views, he discussed with them their  
arguments for discarding all outward signs, for omitting  
baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for denying an outward  
call to the ministry, and for insisting so much upon an  
inward life, and told them that he thought their omis-  
sions were not satisfactory, while their positive view, the  
holding to an inward life, placed religion too much in  
the non-use of externals. He thought it was good that  
they should desire an internal Christ; but, for his part, he

wanted an external Christ as well; so marvellously did  
he fail, on account of the scholastic way in which he had  
been taught to look upon theological truth, to apprehend  
the true oneness between much of his own teaching and  
theirs. When he preached he insisted as much as George  
Fox himself upon the necessity of having Christ in the  
heart, of being spiritually minded, of following a ‘Light  
which never was on sea or shore,’ and of attaching more  
value to the hidden life of the soul than to the outward  
life of forms. He was almost a Quaker in an Anglican’s  
gown. But when he chatted with the Quaker by the  
fireside, he was the gownsman of Oxford, jealous for his  
orders, his calling, and the sacraments that he had to  
administer. However, he cared little for the differences  
when he considered the sincerity and simplicity among  
his friends, thought that their catholic spirit was beau-  
tiful, and prayed God to keep him from extremes.

The time when he must leave the city was near; and  
that his work might not fall to the ground, or come to a  
stand after his departure, he again and again requested  
Wesley to come from London, and carry it on; but  
Wesley could not be sure that he ought to go. His in-  
clination was not towards Bristol; and, on 'resorting to  
his practice of bibliomancy, many passages of Scripture  
had a sinister meaning. They were these, ‘Get thee up  
into this mountain; and die in the mount whither thou  
goest up, and be gathered unto thy people.’ ‘And the  
children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab  
thirty days.’ ‘I will show him how great things he  
must suffer for my name’s sake.’ ‘And devout men  
carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamenta-  
tion over him.’ His journey was next proposed to the  
society in Fetter Lane. Charles could not bear the  
mention of it; but an appeal to a Bible, opened at hap-  
hazard, brought him under the power of these strong  
words: ‘Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire

of thine eyes with a stroke: yet thou shalt not mourn or  
weep, neither shall thy tears run down;’ and thinking  
that they were a voice from heaven, he held his peace.  
Still the brethren were not satisfied, and, to settle the  
difficulty, an appeal was made to the lot. This said he  
must go. Many wanted a divine confirmation of this  
supposed divine announcement, and the rest consenting to  
the suggestion, a Bible was opened thrice, and these were  
the Scriptures hit upon: ‘Now there was long war be-  
tween the house of Saul and the house of David; but  
David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of  
Saul waxed weaker and weaker.’ ‘When wicked men  
have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his  
bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hands,  
and take you away from the earth?’ ‘And Ahaz slept

with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in  
Jerusalem.’

The journal of Whitefield contains the following entry  
for Saturday, March 31:—‘Went this morning and visited  
the poor man who was misused at the glass-houses. He  
seemed much concerned for what he had done, and con-  
fessed he knew not what he did; upon which I took  
occasion to dissuade him from the sin of drunkenness,  
and parted from him very friendly. At eleven, I went  
and gave the prisoners a farewell private exhortation,  
and left orders concerning the distribution of the money  
that had been collected for them. At four, I preached  
as usual at the poor-house, where was a greater congre-  
gation than ever, and, at my return home, I was much  
refreshed with the sight of my honoured friend, Mr. John  
Wesley, whom I had desired to come hither, and whom  
I had now the pleasure of introducing to my friends, he  
having never before been at Bristol. Help him, Lord  
Jesus, to water what thy own right hand hath planted,  
for thy mercy’s sake.’ Wesley writes in his journal,

‘Saturday, 31. In the evening, I reached Bristol, and

met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself  
at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of  
which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all  
my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point  
relating to decency and order, that I should have thought  
the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done  
in a church.’ The freer and more impetuous nature of  
Whitefield stands out in all distinctness from the states-  
manlike nature of the founder of Wesleyan Methodism,  
as the two friends begin the work of Sunday. Whitefield  
had seen, more by the instinct of his quick emotions  
than by the reasoning of his mind, the value of his irre-  
gular work, and already had its fruits approved it to him  
as acceptable to God; and that day he went out con-  
fident and joyful, while Wesley was bewildered and half  
inclined to turn away. True to his cautious, practical  
mind, Wesley adopted field preaching only when he had.  
seen its worth, just as he took up the class-meeting idea  
from others, and only consented to lay preaching because  
it had been started by men more headlong than himself,  
and then supported by the wisdom and piety of his  
mother, who warned him not to hinder a work of God.  
Others moved, he quickly followed; and, if it was found  
practicable, passed on and took the lead.

Whitefield took him the round of his work on  
April 1, and any heart less bold and less devoted than  
Wesley’s must have quailed when he saw what was  
expected of him. They began at the bowling-green  
with the usual Sunday morning service, which was at-  
tended by a larger audience than ever. They went to  
Hannam Mount, where the colliers and others came in  
unusually great numbers. They passed on to Rose Green,  
and here the congregation was more enlarged than either  
of the other two. Twenty-four coaches and many horse-  
men mingled with the crowd, and though the wind was  
not so favourable as usual, ‘I was strengthened,’ White-

field says. ‘to cry aloud, and take my last farewell.’  
Prayers, blessings, and good wishes were showered on  
him as they returned to the city. At seven, Whitefield  
went to take his leave of one of the societies, and found  
the room and the way to it so crowded that he had to  
mount a ladder, and come at the door by climbing over  
the tiling of an adjoining house.

The morning of the following day was spent in talking  
with those who came to take their leave, and tears were  
freely shed on both sides. Crowds were hanging about  
the door when he left, and a company of twenty friends  
accompanied him out of the city on horseback; and if he  
was leaving no small gifts behind, he also was carrying  
away a substantial gift of two hundred pounds for his  
orphan-house.

He travelled by way of Kingswood; for his collier  
friends, who had always been kind and hospitable, wanted  
to receive a last sendee at his hand, and to show him a  
last kindness. He says, ‘Having taken a most sorrowful  
leave, and passed through the people of Bristol, who  
poured out many blessings upon me, I came, about two,  
to Kingswood, where the colliers, unknown to me, had  
prepared an hospitable entertainment, and were very  
forward for me to lay the first stone of their school. At  
length I complied, and a man giving me a piece of ground,  
in case Mr. C. should refuse to grant them any, I laid a  
stone, and then kneeled down, and prayed God that the  
gates of hell might not prevail against our design. The  
colliers said a hearty Amen; and after I had given them  
a word of exhortation suitable to the occasion. I took my  
leave, promising that I would come amongst them again,  
if ever God should bring me back from Georgia to  
England. Fiat! Fiat! ’

Whitefield had not been gone three hours from Bristol,  
when his friend Wesley submitted, as he says, to make  
himself more vile than he had been on the preceding day,

when he preached to one of the societies, by proclaiming  
in the highways the glad tidings of salvation to about  
three thousand people; and, on the following Sunday,  
he stepped fearlessly into the severe path that White-  
field had shown him a week before. Within three weeks  
of Wesley’s assuming the lead of the Methodist move-  
ment, scenes such as Whitefield’s preaching had not yet  
created became common: some of the hearers were seized  
with fearful agony and cried out; then they as suddenly  
shouted for joy.

On April 9, Whitefield, after having paid a second visit  
to Wales, reached his native city. A great packet of  
letters awaited him, giving him an account of the success  
of the gospel in different parts; and after reading them  
he writes in his journal, ‘God grant I may see some such  
fruit amongst my own countrymen.’ His prayer was  
speedily answered. Twice he was permitted the use of  
St. Michael’s, but some were offended at the greatness of  
the congregations, and others complained that business  
was hindered; hence the clergyman was obliged to deny  
his pulpit for any more week-day services. He then re-  
sorted to the Boothall, the place where the judges sat,  
and to his brother’s field; and thousands came to hear  
him. Early friends who took an interest in him and his  
work must have been peculiarly gratified, both with his  
vast and extending influence, and with the humble  
manner in which he bore his successes; and there was  
also one who had not been counted of that number, who  
had as much joy, perhaps more, than any of them. It  
was ‘old Cole,’ the dissenting minister. Some one had  
told the old man of the smart saying of the youth of  
thirteen about stories in the pulpit, and when he heard  
Whitefield tell one in one of the city pulpits, he quietly  
remarked, ‘I find that young Whitefield can now tell  
stories as well as old Cole.’ He used to subscribe himself  
Whitefield’s curate, and follow him in his excursions into

the country to preach after him. ‘These are days of the  
Son of Man, indeed,’ he would exclaim, as he followed up  
the younger man’s work. He had an end beautifully in  
keeping with his zeal and the simplicity of his character.  
One evening, while preaching, he was struck with death;  
he then asked for a chair to lean on till he concluded his  
sermon. That finished, they carried him upstairs, and he  
died. ‘0 blessed God,’ exclaims Whitefield, when telling  
the story, if it be Thy holy will, may my exit be like  
his!’ It was not unlike.

Chafford, Painswick, Stroud, Stonehouse—where three  
thousand people waited for him in the rain, and not one  
of them moved away until the sermon was done, though  
it rained the whole time--and Orwell were places which  
he visited during his Gloucester trip.

He performed a notable ceremony on the last morning  
of his stay. It was the baptism, by permission of the  
bishop, in St. Mary de Crypt, of a professed Quaker, of  
sixty years of age, who had become ‘convinced of the  
necessity of being born again of water as well as of the  
Spirit.’ The officiating clergyman not only exhorted the  
goodly number present, but took occasion to reflect,  
before the font where he himself was baptized, upon his  
frequent breaches of his baptismal vow.

Passing through Cheltenham. Badsey, Evesham, and  
Bengeworth, and preaching in bowling-greens, in town-  
halls, and in fields, as he went, he came to Oxford. Here,  
through his going to exhort one of the societies, the vice-  
chancellor fell foul of him. The society had before been  
threatened, if they continued to meet for exhortation; and  
when they all were upstairs, and on the point of bidding  
Whitefield good-bye before he started for London, the  
vice-chancellor sent for him to come down. The vice-  
chancellor was in a passion, and demanded to know  
whether Whitefield had his name in any book there.

‘Yes, sir.’ was the reply; ‘but I intend to take it out

soon.’ The vice-chancellor said, ‘Yes; and you had best  
take yourself out too, or otherwise I will lay you by the  
heels. What do you mean by going about, and alien-  
ating the people’s affections from their proper pastors?  
Your works are full of vanity and nonsense; you pretend  
to inspiration. If you ever come again in this manner  
among these people, I will lay you first by the heels, and  
these shall follow.’ Then he turned his back, and went  
away. Whitefield turned, and having prayed with his  
friends, set out for London. Letters from Savannah,  
containing goodnews, met him at Uxbridge, and made  
him desire an early departure to the people of his charge.

His eleven weeks’ labour in the country had kindled a  
fire which is not extinguished to this day.

CHAPTER VII.

**May to August, 1739.**

IN MOORFIELDS; ON COMMONS; AT FAIRS AND RACES.

MR. Storehouse, vicar of Islington, was favourable to  
Methodism, but his churchwarden was of another mind.  
To which of the two posterity ought to feel the most  
grateful it would be hard to say—perhaps to the church-  
warden. As soon as Whitefield arrived in London, the  
vicar gave him the use of his pulpit for a week-day  
service. The churchwarden would dispute Whitefield’s  
right. In the midst of the prayers he entered the  
church, demanded Whitefield’s licence, and forbade his  
preaching without one. No licence was forthcoming,  
nor was the preacher sorry for that, though by being in  
priest’s orders and holding the living of Savannah, which  
was in the diocese of London, he felt that he had legal  
standing ground. For peace sake he determined not to  
preach in the church. When the communion service  
was over he withdrew to the churchyard, and preached  
there, feeling assured that his Master now called him out  
in London, as well as in Bristol. In a letter, written to  
a friend that day, he said that his Master had, by His  
providence and Spirit, compelled him to preach in the  
churchyard at Islington. ‘To-morrow I am to repeat  
that mad trick, and on Sunday to go out into Moorfields.  
The word of the Lord runs and is glorified. People’s  
hearts seem quite broken. God strengthens me exceed-  
ingly. I preach till I sweat through and through.’ He  
evidently was well satisfied with being driven to adopt

his country practices, or he would not have announced  
his intention to preach at Moorfields on the second day  
after his expulsion, or withdrawal, whichever it may be  
called, from Islington Church.

The news of his going to Moorfields soon spread  
through the city; and many, on hearing it, said that if he  
ventured into that domain of the rabble he would never  
come out alive. Moorfields, which had been the first  
brickyard of London, next the exercise ground of the  
city archers, then the site of Bedlam, and afterwards the  
City Mall, where fashion took its daily stroll, had fallen  
into the possession of the roughest part of the population,  
simply by this part’s presenting itself in the presence of  
fashion, and desiring to share, in its peculiar way, the  
shade of the trees and the smoothness of the paths. The  
partnership was quietly declined. To this place and to  
this people Whitefield felt himself called to take his  
message of love and peace. On Sunday morning, April  
29, an ‘exceeding great multitude’ assembled in the  
‘fields’ to hear him; but, to while away the time before  
his arrival, there was a little preliminary sport in break-  
ing to pieces a table which had been placed for his pulpit.  
In due time he drove up in a coach, accompanied by  
some friends, and, with one of them on either side, at-  
tempted to force his way to the place where the table  
ought to have been found. His bodyguard was soon  
detached from him, and he was left at the mercy of the  
congregation, which at once parted, and made an open  
way for him to the middle of the ‘fields,’ and thence—  
for there was no pulpit there—to the wall which divided  
the upper and lower ‘fields,’ upon which he took his  
stand. It was a novel sight to the preacher—that mass  
of London rabble—as his eye ranged over it; it was a  
more novel sight to the people—that young clergyman in  
gown, bands, and cassock, as he lifted himself up before  
them. His tall, graceful figure; his manly and com-

manding bearing; his clear blue eyes, that melted with  
tenderness and kindness; his raised hand, which called  
for attention—everything about him declared him a man  
who was capable of ruling them; and they were willing  
to listen to him. When he spoke, and they heard his  
strong but sweet voice, exquisitely modulated to express  
the deepest, strongest passion, or the soberest instruction,  
or the most indignant remonstrance, they stood charmed  
and subdued. Then his message was so solemn and so  
gracious, something in which every one was interested  
both for time and eternity; and he delivered it as if it  
were all real to him, as indeed it was; as if he believed  
it and loved it, and wanted them also to accept it, as  
indeed he did. No scoffer durst raise his shout, no dis-  
turber durst meddle with his neighbour, as the thrilling  
text flew all around, every one hearing it, ‘Watch  
therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour in  
which the Son of Man cometh;’ and as the preacher,  
with finger pointed upwards, cried, ‘There shall be a day  
wherein these heavens shall be wrapt up like a scroll—  
the elements melt with fervent heat—this earth and all  
things therein be burnt up, and every soul of every  
nation summoned to appear before the dreadful tribunal  
of the righteous Judge of quick and dead, to receive  
rewards or punishments according to the deeds done in  
their bodies.’ Quietness and attention reigned through all  
the host while, for perhaps an hour and a half, he spoke  
of the wise and the foolish virgins, and then—for he had  
a pleasant egotism, which for a moment turned men’s  
minds to himself only to direct them onward to the Master  
-—entreated them, with a last entreaty, not to reject his  
message because he was young. ‘Oh! do not turn a deaf  
ear to me,’ he begged; ‘do not reject the message on  
account of the meanness of the messenger! I am a child,  
a youth of uncircumcised lips, but the Lord has chosen  
me, that the glory might be all His own. Had He sent

to invite you by a learned Rabbi, you might have been  
tempted to think the man had done something. But  
now God has sent a child that cannot speak, that the  
excellency of the power may be seen to be not of man,  
but of God. Let letter-learned Pharisees, then, despise  
my youth; I care not how vile I appear in the sight of  
such men, I glory in it; and I am persuaded, if any of  
you should be set upon your watch by this preaching,  
you will have no reason to repent that God sent a child  
to cry, “Behold! the Bridegroom cometh! ” 0 my

brethren! the thought of being instrumental in bringing  
some of you to glory fills me with fresh zeal. Once  
more, therefore, I entreat you—“Watch, watch and  
pray for the Lord Jesus will receive all that call upon  
Him faithfully. Let that cry, “Behold! the Bridegroom  
cometh!” be continually sounding in your ears; and  
begin now to live as though you were assured this was  
the night in which you were to be summoned to go forth  
to Him.’

At five o’clock in the evening of the same day he  
met, on Kennington Common, an audience computed at  
twenty thousand, and of a higher class of people than he  
had addressed in the morning. The wind, which was  
favourable, carried his words to the farthest hearer; the  
whole company listened with as much decorum as a  
congregation in a church, joined in the psalm and the  
Lord’s prayer, and dispersed, evidently touched and  
moved by what they had heard.

All his time was now devoted to preparation for the  
voyage to Georgia, and to open-air preaching. All went  
well between him and the Trustees, who received him  
with much ‘civility;’ agreed to everything he asked;  
and gave him a grant of five hundred acres of land, to  
him and his successors for ever, for the use of the orphan-  
house. The liberality of the Trustees was rivalled by  
that of the congregations at Moorfields and Kennington

Common, for in nine days he collected from them almost  
two hundred pounds. The Common was his church on  
the Sunday evening and during the week, and at the  
close of the services he stood on the eminence from  
which he had preached, to receive the gifts of the people,  
who crowded to him from below. Moorfields was his  
church on the Sunday morning, and, after his third service  
there, he collected fifty-two pounds, nineteen shillings and  
sixpence, more than twenty pounds of which was in half-  
pence. He declares that he was nearly weary of re-  
ceiving their mites, and that one man could not carry  
the load home. The evident emotion of the people while  
he preached, their awe, their silence, their tears, and the  
generosity with which, evening after evening, they re-  
sponded to his appeals for his orphan-house, showed  
that he had their faith and sympathy, and that his word  
was bringing forth fruit. Letters came telling him how  
useful his preaching had been to the writers; and many  
persons waited on him to receive further private instruc-  
tion. He even says that he could mark an alteration for  
the better in the congregation at Kennington Common,  
which had from the first been exemplary. No doubt  
many came from anything but religious motives, as where  
is the congregation which is without the idle, the curious,  
the formal, the foolish, who do not come to be made any  
better, and who would be greatly startled if they were?  
The second congregation at Moorfields, which was com-  
posed of about twenty thousand people, most likely had  
many sightseers; and so, most likely, had the congrega-  
tion on the Common, on the evening of the same day—a  
congregation which was reckoned to consist of between  
thirty and forty thousand persons on foot, besides many  
horsemen, and about eighty coaches. The sight that  
evening was such as surprised even Whitefield, well accus-  
tomed as he had become to look down upon vast crowds.

Quick, enterprising men, who perhaps would have had

as much pleasure, if not a little more, in erecting stands  
on a racecourse, or stalls at a wake, saw that a sunshiny  
day for trade had come, and soon provided accommoda-  
tion in the shape of waggons, scaffolds, and other con-  
trivances; and the audience gladly paid for it. There  
was a pew-rent and a collection at every service; but  
with this advantage, that no official brought the collecting-  
box round, and no hearer was compelled to occupy a  
stand, or go without the privilege of hearing.

It is said that the singing of these congregations could  
be heard two miles off, and Whitefield’s voice nearly a  
mile.1

Much as Whitefield felt the importance of his work,  
deeply persuaded as he was that God had called him to  
it, and encouraging as were the sympathy and help of  
the people, he was not able to throw off some sense of  
discomfort arising from his being an outcast from the  
sanctuaries and pulpits of his Church, and from his having  
to gather his money for the orphan-house in such an irre-  
gular way. Something of this feeling manifests itself in  
an entry in his journal, while he was in the first flush of  
his out-door popularity: ‘I doubt not,’ he says, ‘but  
many self-righteous bigots, when they see me spreading  
out my hands to offer Jesus Christ freely to all, are ready  
to cry out, “How glorious did the Rev. Mr. Whitefield  
look to-day, when, neglecting the dignity of a clergyman,  
he stood venting his enthusiastic ravings in a gown and  
cassock upon a common, and collecting mites from the  
poor people.” But if this is to be vile, Lord grant that I  
may be more vile. I know this foolishness of preaching  
is made instrumental to the conversion and edification of  
numbers. Ye scoffers, mock on; I rejoice, yea, and will

rejoice.’ The intenseness of his feeling while writing  
those words was not the calm satisfaction of one who  
could afford to let others scoff or praise as they might  
please; it was the struggle of a man who felt acutely the  
disadvantages of his new position, and who was deter-  
mined to accept them only because they were associated  
with duty and heavenly privilege; there was a conflict  
between the flesh and the Spirit.

It is not an unwelcome release to get disengaged from  
these eager, excited congregations, to follow the preacher,  
and mark how he attempted to fulfil the precepts he had  
publicly taught. He does not appear to disadvantage  
when seen nearer at hand. One day he received a letter  
dated from Bethlehem Hospital, No. 50, which read  
thus:—

‘*To the Rev. Mr. Whitefield*, *these.*

‘Dear Sir,—I have read your sermon upon the New Birth,  
and hope I shall always have a due sense of my dear Redeemer’s  
goodness to me, that He has so infinitely extended His mercy  
to me, which sense be pleased to confirm in me by your prayers;  
and may Almighty Grod bless and preserve you, and prosper  
your ministerial function. I wish, sir, I could have some ex-  
planatory notes upon the New Testament, to enlighten the  
darkness of my understanding, to make me capable of becom-  
ing a good soldier of Jesus Christ; but, above all, should be  
glad to see you.

‘I am, dear sir, yours affectionately, with my whole heart,

‘Joseph Ρεriam.’

Periam was supposed to be mad, but in a new way; he  
was ‘Methodically mad;’ and his tender relations, father  
and sister, had sent him to Bethlehem Hospital, until the  
fit should leave him. The officials of the hospital treated  
him, on his reception, with the gross cruelty which one-  
while was practised towards all who were of weak mind.  
They thought he ought to have a huge dose of physic,  
but Periam, knowing that he was quite well, declined it,

when four or five attendants ‘took hold of him, cursed  
him most heartily, put a key into his mouth, threw him  
upon the bed, and said (though Whitefield had not then  
either seen him or heard of him), “You are one of  
Whitefield’s gang,” and so drenched him.’ Orders were  
criven that neither Whitefield, nor any of Whitefield’s  
friends, should see him; but Whitefield and his friend  
Seward were both admitted, when, in answer to Periam’s  
request, they went to the hospital. They thought him  
sound, both in body and mind. His sister was of a dif-  
ferent opinion, and cited three symptoms of his madness.  
First, that he fasted for near a fortnight. Secondly, that  
he prayed so as to be heard four story high. Thirdly,  
that he had sold his clothes, and given them to the poor.  
The fact is, he was a literalist. In his first religious  
anxiety, reading one day about the young man whom  
our Lord commanded to sell all, and give it to the poor,  
he thought that the words must be taken literally—so he  
sold his clothes, and gave the money to the poor. If  
poor Periam was mad for his close adhesion to the letter,  
it would take a large asylum to hold those who have his  
poor wits without his honest conscience.

A second letter came to Whitefield; it contained a  
string of queries:—

‘Query 1, If repentance does not include a cessation from sin,  
and turning to virtue; and though, notwithstanding, I want that  
deep contrition mentioned by some divines, yet as I live not  
wilfully in any known sin, and firmly believe the gospel of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, may I not thereby he entitled to the benefits  
of Christ’s death and resurrection, in the perseverance of know-  
ledge, and practice of my duty?

‘Query 2. If I am in prison, whether I may not, without  
offence to God, make use of endeavours to he discharged, by  
which I may he enabled to get into a pious Christian family,  
and consequently he grounded and firmly settled in the love of  
God, it being my desire; for I am surrounded by nothing but  
profaneness and wickedness?

‘Query 3. If my objections to being imprisoned are incon-  
sistent or wicked, which are, that I am obliged to submit to the  
rules of the house, in going to my cell at seven or eight of the  
clock at night, and not let out till six or seven in the morning,  
by which I am debarred the use of candle, and consequently  
books; so that all that time, except what is spent in prayer  
and meditation, is lost; which exercises, though good, are, by  
so constant repetition, and for want of change, deadened?

‘Query 4. If I should, by the goodness of God, be discharged,  
whether I may, without offence to the gospel of Jesus Christ,  
follow the business of an attorney-at-law, to which I was put  
as a clerk; and by a conscientious discharge of my duty, be  
thereby entitled to a heavenly inheritance; my fear on this  
point arising from our Lord’s advice about going to law,  
Matthew v. 40?

‘Query 5. If I cannot be discharged by proper application  
(which application pray be pleased to let me have), how can I  
best spend my time to the glory of God, myself, and brethren’s  
welfare? And please to give me rules for the same.

‘Worthy Sir,—These questions, whether momentary or not,  
I leave to your judgment. If you think they deserve an  
answer, should be glad to have them solved; for as I am sen-  
sible of the power of my adversary the devil, surely I cannot  
but act with the utmost circumspection, which gives me occa-  
sion to trouble you herewith; and I hope, sir, the circumstance  
of the place I am in, may excuse the manner in which I have  
wrote to you, and count it not an affront; for God is witness  
how I love and esteem the ministers of Jesus Christ, for whose  
dear sake may the God of infinite love and goodness establish  
and confirm you in the daily success of your ministerial labours,  
which are the daily prayers of

‘Your most unworthy, but faithful humble servant,

‘Joseph Periam.

‘Bethlehem, No. 50.

‘May 5, 1739.’

‘P.S. I am afraid, sir, I misbehaved myself when you so  
kindly came to see me; but if I did in any measure, your   
Christian love and charity will excuse it; for not being warned

of your coming, the surprise, though pleasant, so fluttered my  
spirits that I was overburdened with joy.

‘0 how pleased should I be to see you!’

Whitefield replied as follows:—

‘May 7, 1739.

‘Dear Sir,—The way to salvation is by Jesus Christ, who is  
the way, the truth, and the life. The way to Christ is by faith.  
“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me,” says our Lord,  
“though he were dead, yet shall he live.” But this faith, if  
it is a saving faith, will work by love. Come then to Jesus  
Christ as a poor sinner, and He will make you a rich saint.  
This, I think, serves as an answer to your first query.

‘It is no doubt your duty, whilst you are in the house, to  
submit to the rules of it; but then you may use all lawful  
means to get yourself out. I have just now been with your  
sister, and will see what can be done further. “Watch and  
pray.”

‘I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and servant,

G*.*W.

A day or two after, Whitefield received a third letter:—

‘Worthy Sir,—I received your letter, which was a full  
answer to my queries, and give you my hearty thanks for the  
trouble you have taken upon you (the only gratitude I can at  
present pay; but He whom I have perfectly at heart will supply  
the deficiency to you, and will not suffer a meritorious act to  
go unrewarded). Oh, how do I daily experience the love of  
Christ towards me, who am so vile, base, and unworthy! I  
pray God I may always be thankful, and both ready to do and  
suffer His most gracious will, which I trust, through your  
prayers and God’s grace, I shall at all times submit to.

‘My father was with me last night, when I showed him your  
letter. He was pleased to say he thought me not mad, but  
very well in my senses, and would take me out, on condition  
Dr. Monro and the Committee were of his opinions. Then he  
varied again, and thought it convenient for me to stay the  
summer, and so to take physic twice a week, fearing a relapse.  
I told him, as a father, he should be wholly obeyed; but when

at parting he mentioned my leaving religion (or words to that  
purpose, at which I was somewhat stirred in my spirit), I told  
him nothing should prevail upon me to leave Jesus Christ;  
upon which he left me. This is the substance of what passed  
between us, which I hope is not amiss to let you know of, as  
you have been so kind as to plead for my liberty.

‘Upon the whole of the matter, sir, God gives me perfect  
resignation, and I trust, when He shall see fit, will discharge  
me; and as I find His love daily more and more shed abroad  
in my heart, all things will work together for my good. Pray,  
sir, be thankful for me, and if opportunity will let you, I should  
be sincerely glad to see you before you set out for America.  
And may Almighty God, in His infinite goodness, prosper,  
guide, and protect you through this transitory life, and here-  
after receive you triumphantly into the heavenly Jerusalem,  
there to converse with and see the ever-blessed Jesus, that  
dear Lamb of God, to which that you may attain are the hearty  
and fervent wishes of

‘Your loving and sincere friend,

‘Joseph Periam.

‘Wednesday, May 9, 1739.’

He adds a postscript, which is as touching for its feeling  
as the letter is amusing for its grave simplicity, ‘I am  
ashamed to trouble you thus, but my heart is full.’ It  
must have been that short line which so deeply touched  
Whitefield with a fellow-feeling of the poor man’s  
misery, that he asked and prevailed on Mr. Seward and  
two other friends to wait upon the Committee. ‘Alas!’  
exclaims Whitefield, ‘the Committee esteemed my friends  
as much mad as the young man, and frankly told them  
both I and my followers, in their opinion, were really  
beside themselves.’ Mr. Seward attempted to rebut this  
charge, and seriously instanced the examples of the young  
persons who called the prophet that was sent to anoint  
Jehu king a mad fellow; of our Lord, whom His own  
relations, and the Scribes and Pharisees took to be mad,  
and beside Himself; and Festus’ opinion of St. Paul. He  
next remarked that young people, when they are under

first religious impressions, are usually tempted by the  
devil into some extremes. This only confirmed the  
Committee in the opinion that the speaker was a fit sub-  
ject for the treatment of their ‘hospital.’ And as to the  
madness of Periam, how could that be denied when one  
of the attendants came forward to testify that, on his  
first admission to the place, he stripped himself to the  
shirt and prayed? History does not say which of these  
two vagaries—the stripping or the praying—was held to  
be the surest sign of madness; but, at any rate, it is  
evident that the Committee had read neither the ‘Lives  
of the Saints,’ in which the barest sinners are the holiest  
saints, nor the Acts of the Apostles, in which praying is  
occasionally mentioned. But Periam, who always had a  
good literal reason for everything he did, said that he  
had dispensed with clothes in order to inure himself to  
the hardships of his new home—a cold place without  
windows and above a damp cellar—a very contrast to  
Bethnal Green, where he had been taken care of! He  
wanted to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus  
Christ! Fortunately for every one concerned, the word  
Georgia was'dropped in the midst of the discussion; the  
Committee would engage that his father should give leave  
for his release, if Whitefield would take him there. The  
father, when waited upon, gave his son an excellent  
character—much as some masters do when they want to  
get rid of a servant—and consented to his going abroad.  
The doctor, when waited upon, pronounced him well.  
The Committee saw him, and also thought him well, and  
gave him a discharge.

He went with Whitefield to America, and married one  
of the orphan-house mistresses. After a few years both  
of them died, and two of their sons, very promising boys,  
became inmates of the institution.

The ship ‘Elizabeth,’ in which Whitefield had taken

berths for himself and eleven others, was detained by an  
embargo until August, and during the odd weeks thus  
accidentally thrown into his hands he laboured with  
tremendous energy, and abundantly fulfilled the animated  
charge which Charles Wesley addressed to him in the  
following verses:—

‘Brother in Christ, and well-beloved,

Attend, and add thy prayer to mine;

As Aaron called, yet inly moved,

To minister in things divine.

Faithful, and often owned of God,

Vessel of grace, by Jesus used;

Stir up the gift on thee bestowed,

The gift by hallowed hands transfused.’

Fully thy heavenly mission prove,

And make thy own election sure;

Booted in faith, and hope, and love,

Active to work, and firm t’endure.

Scorn to contend with flesh and blood,

And trample on so mean a foe;

By stronger fiends in vain withstood,

Dauntless to nobler conquests go.

Go where the darkest tempest lowers,

Thy foes’ triumphant wrestler foil;

Thrones, principalities, and powers,

Engage, o’ercome, and take the spoil.

The weapons of thy warfare take,

With truth and meekness armed ride on;

Mighty, through God, hell’s kingdom shake,

Satan’s strongholds, through God, pull down.

Humble each vain, aspiring boast;

Intensely for God’s glory burn;

Strongly declare the sinner lost;

Self-righteousness o’erturn, o’erturn.

Tear the bright idol from his shrine,

Nor suffer him on earth to dwell,

Τ’ usurp the place of blood divine,

But chase him to his native hell.

Be all into subjection brought,

The pride of man let faith abase;

And captivate his every thought,

And force him to be saved by grace.’

Not to follow him step by step, we may still single out  
some experiences which will illustrate his own mode of  
action, the spirit that impelled him, the opposition he  
met with, and the encouragements that cheered him. It  
was at Northampton, the third place at which he stayed  
for preaching on one of his short excursions from London,  
that he met with the pious, able, and accomplished Dr.  
Doddridge, who was striving with unwearied industry to  
keep the lamps of learning and religion burning among  
the Dissenters. The doctor, whose attention to those  
‘forms of civility and complaisance which are usual  
among well-bred people’ is duly noted by his bio-  
grapher, received Whitefield most courteously—perhaps  
more courteously than joyfully, for some of his brethren  
were not so well inclined as himself to the new sect, and  
in due time sent him ‘several angry letters,’ reproaching  
him for his ‘civility’ to the Methodist leaders. At any  
rate, the chapel pulpit was not offered, and Whitefield  
had to take his stand at the starting-post on the common.

Bedford had a clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Rogers, who  
had adopted Whitefield’s plan of open-air preaching; his  
pulpit was the steps of a windmill; and there Whitefield  
preached to three thousand people. Good news came to

him from Scotland. Ebenezer Erskine. the father of  
United Presbyterianism, wrote to say that he had preached  
to fourteen thousand people. Yet Whitefield was ill at  
ease, even when other ministers were moving in the path  
he had chosen. The great need of the country called  
for more help, and he prayed, ‘Lord, do Thou spirit up  
more of my dear friends and fellow-labourers to go out  
into the highways and hedges, to compel poor sinners to  
come in. Amen.’ His soul was also stirred within him  
to testify ‘against those vile teachers’—so he calls them  
—‘and only those, who say we are not now to receive  
the Holy Ghost, and who count the doctrine of the new  
birth enthusiasm. Out of your own mouths I will con-  
demn you, you blind guides. Hide you not, at the time  
of ordination, tell the bishop that you were inwardly  
moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you the ad-  
ministration of the church? Surely, at that time, you  
acted the crime of Ananias and Sapphira over again.  
“Surely,” says Bishop Burnet, “you lied not only unto man,  
but unto God.” These words might have had reference  
to a pastoral letter written about this time by the Bishop  
of London, on ‘Lukewarmness and Enthusiasm,’ in which  
the people of London and Westminster were specially  
warned against the enthusiast, George Whitefield; but  
from the ‘civil’ reception which the bishop gave him  
two days after he penned them, I infer that there was  
peace thus far. But count Whitefield wrong, or count  
him right, in assailing other clergymen, the heart warms  
to him as he is seen going out, sick and weak, to preach  
in the rain or the sunshine; his eyes overflowing with  
tears, while to his weeping congregations he explains his  
favourite doctrines of the new birth and justification by  
faith; his heart so moved when he gets upon the love  
and free grace of Jesus Christ, that, though an hour and  
a half has passed by, he would fain continue till midnight.  
A hint from him to the congregation at Moorfields, that

he must soon leave the country, makes it weep as for a  
brother, and ejaculations and prayers for him are poured  
out on every side. The numbers who flocked to hear  
him increased, and at Kennington Common one Sunday  
their weeping was so loud as almost to drown his voice.

In the early part of June he preached mostly at  
Blendon, Bexley, and Blackheath; and had great enjoy-  
ment in the fellowship of many friends (among whom  
was the vicar of Bexley), who were of the same mind as  
himself. It was on a Thursdav evening; that ‘he intro-  
duced,’ he says, ‘his honoured and reverend friend, Mr.  
John Wesley, to preach at Blackheath.’ Wesley says in  
his journal, ‘I went with Mr. Whitefield to Blackheath,  
where were, I believe, twelve or fourteen thousand  
people. He a little surprised me, by desiring me to  
preach in his stead; which I did (though nature recoiled)  
on my favourite subject, “Jesus Christ, who of God is  
made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and  
redemption.” I was greatly moved with compassion for  
the rich that were there, to whom I made a particular  
application. Some of them seemed to attend, while others  
drove away their coaches from so uncouth a preacher.’  
Whitefield continues in his journal, ‘The Lord give him  
ten thousand times more success than He has given me!  
After sermon we spent the evening most agreeably to-  
gether, with many Christian friends, at the Green Man.  
About ten we admitted all to come that would. The  
room was soon filled. I exhorted and prayed for near  
an hour, and then went to bed, rejoicing that another  
fresh inroad was made upon Satan’s territories, by Mr.  
Wesley’s following me in field preaching in London as  
well as in Bristol. Lord, speak the word, and great shall  
the company of such preachers be. Amen. Amen.’

Towards the end of the month his enemies devised a  
new scheme for hindering him. Whenever he journeyed  
reports were circulated that he was wounded, or killed,

or had died suddenly. Coming to Blackheath one even-  
ing, after an excursion into the country, he found, not his  
usual twenty thousand, but one thousand, and the rest  
had stayed at home because of a report that he was dead.  
Wherever he went he found the people much surprised  
and rejoiced to see him alive. Another blow fell on him  
at the same time. His friend, the Vicar of Bexley, was  
forbidden to allow him his pulpit. That night he  
preached on Blackheath to as large a congregation as  
ever from the text, ‘And they cast him out,’ and recom-  
mended the people to prepare for a gathering storm.

That storm was what he had been expecting for some  
time, yet not always for any good reason; indeed, his let-  
ters read as if he courted persecution, and saw signs of it  
where there were none. His excited mind thought that  
the glory of apostolical times was not returned unless,  
along with apostolical preaching, and labours, and suc-  
cesses, there were also prisons and chains for a reward.  
‘Perhaps,’ he writes in April, ‘you may hear of your  
friend’s (his own) imprisonment. I expect no other pre-  
ferment. God grant I may behave so, that, when I suffer,  
it may not be for any imprudences, but for righteousness’  
sake; and then I am sure the spirit of Christ and of glory  
will rest on me.’ In May he sees less probability of  
imprisonment; ‘I am not fit as yet to be so highly  
honoured.’

Matters were a little threatening when he visited  
Tewkesbury on July 2. He had created great excite-  
ment at Gloucester, at Randwick, and at Hampton Com-  
mon. The bailiffs of Tewkesbury had raised much  
opposition to his coming thither also, and had him, on  
his arrival at his inn, attended by four constables. These  
were quickly sent off by a lawyer, a friend of Whitefield,  
who demanded their warrant, and found that they had  
none. Three thousand people attended an evening ser-  
vice outside the liberties of the town.

The next morning he waited upon one of the bailiffs  
to ask his reason for sending the constables. The bailiff  
replied that it was the determination of the whole council,  
and that the people had been noisy, and reflected upon  
the bailiffs. ‘The noise,’ Whitefield answered, ‘was owing  
to their sending the constables with their staves to appre-  
hend me when I should come into the town.’ The bailiff  
retorted in anger, that a certain judge had declared his  
determination to take Whitefield up as a vagrant if he  
preached near him. ‘He is very welcome,’ said White-  
field, ‘to do as he pleases; but I apprehend no magis-  
trate has power to stop my preaching, even in the streets,  
if I think proper.’ ‘ No, sir,’ said the bailiff; ‘if you  
preach here to-morrow, you shall have the constable to  
attend you.’ Whitefield went away, telling him first  
that he thought it his duty as a minister to inform him  
that magistrates were intended to be a terror to evil-  
doers, and not to those who do well; he desired him to  
be as careful to appoint constables to attend at the next  
horse-race, balls, assemblies, &c. Whitefield and his  
friends then left for Evesham, where he met with sympa-  
thising friends, and a threat from the magistrates, that, if  
he preached within their liberties, they would apprehend  
him. Next morning, however, he did preach; and the  
magistrates were quiet. Passing on to Pershore, he was  
kindly welcomed by the incumbent, and, apparently,  
from him procured the loan of a field in Tewkesbury;  
then at five in the evening he turned, with a company  
of a hundred and twenty horsemen, towards Tewkes-  
bury, which he found much alarmed, people from all  
parts crowding the streets. He rode right through the  
town to the field, and preached to about six thousand  
hearers; the bailiffs wisely refrained from keeping their  
threat, and no constable came within sight. Imme-  
diately after the sermon he took horse, and reached  
Gloucester near midnight. The exciting day’s work had

begun at seven o’clock at Evesham, and he was preach-  
ing next morning at ten, with a ‘heart full of love to his

dear countrymen.’

What trials he had were counterbalanced by the  
happy effects of his labours, visible in the places he  
had visited. Kings wood had put on a different appear-  
ance; the colliers, who had formerly been the terror  
of the neighbourhood, were to be heard singing hymns  
in the woods, instead of pouring out blasphemy; the  
school had been carried on so successfully by Wesley,  
that in July, when Whitefield visited the place, the roof  
was ready to be put up. Methodism was yielding its first  
fruits of purity, of honesty, of quietness, and of godliness,  
among the humbler classes. It would have been gratify-  
ing had any record been kept of particular cases, which  
might have served as examples of the rest. This, how-  
ever, is wanting, and we are mainly guided by general  
statements about the spirit and behaviour of the congre-  
gations where he had preached somewhat continuously.  
Curious hearers were dropping off, and the vast number  
that remained may be fairly supposed to have had a pro-  
found interest in what they heard. The numbers were  
countless who came after the services to ask for counsel  
as to how they might leave the ‘city of destruction,’  
which they had too long inhabited.

One incident, related in the letter of a Quaker to Whitefield,

may serve to show what thoughts were finding their way into

humble homes throughout all the land. The old clerk at Bre-  
ferton could get no rest in his spirit, after hearing White-  
field preach at Badsey; he set to work to compare what  
he had heard with the Church homilies and articles, and  
found a singular agreement between them. The landlord  
of Contercup, with whom he got into conversation upon  
the subject, informed him that he too had found White-  
field’s doctrines set forth in some old books which he  
possessed, the refuse of a clergyman’s library. This fact

was remembered when, shortly afterwards, the clerk, who  
was a tailor by trade, went to work at the landlord’s; he  
borrowed the last book that was left, all the rest having  
been lent; and did not read above a page or two before  
‘the truth broke in upon his soul like lightning.’ His  
fingers itched for the book more than for his work, and  
he was allowed to take it home with him. A second of  
the books which he borrowed so strengthened him in his  
new faith, that he felt as if he could die for it. Always  
well esteemed before, he was now threatened by his  
neighbours with the loss of custom and livelihood.

This wandering life which Whitefield was living, ac-  
ceptable as it was to the people (who on one occasion, at  
least, rung the bells and received him ‘as an angel of  
God’), and satisfactory to his own conscience, was viewed  
with much displeasure by others. Even Bishop Benson  
sent him an affectionate admonition to exercise the autho-  
rity he had received, in the manner it was given him, by  
preaching the gospel only to the congregation to which  
he was lawfully appointed. "Whitefield replied within  
four days, and said—

‘My Lord, -- I thank your for your lordship’s kind

letter. My frequent removes from place to place prevented

my answering it sooner. I am greatly obliged to your lord-

ship in that you are pleased to watch over my soul, and to   
caution me against acting contrary to the commission given me

at ordination. But if the commission when then receive obliges

us to preach nowhere but in that parish which is committed to

our care, then all persons act contrary to their commission

when they preach occasionally in any strange place; and, con-

sequently, your lordship equally offends when you preach out

of your own diocese.

‘As for inveighing against the clergy without a cause, I deny

the charge. What I say I am ready to make good whenever

your lordship pleases. Let those that bring reports to your

lordship about my preaching be brought face to face, and I

am ready to give them an answer. St. Paul exhorts Timothy

“not to receive an accusation against an elder under two or  
three witnesses.” And even Nicodemus could say, “the law  
suffered no man to be condemned unheard.” I shall only add,  
that I hope your lordship will inspect into the lives of your  
other clergy, and censure them for being over-remiss, as much  
as you censure me for being over-righteous. It is their falling  
from their articles, and not preaching the truth as it is in  
Jesus, that has excited the present zeal of—whom they call in  
derision—“the Methodist preachers.” Dr. Stebbing’s sermon  
(for which I thank your lordship) confirms me more and more  
in my opinion, that I ought to be instant in season and out of  
season. For, to me, he seems to know no more of the true  
nature of regeneration than Nicodemus did when he came to  
Jesus by night.

‘But the doctor and the rest of my reverend brethren are  
welcome to judge me as they please. Yet a little while, and  
we shall all appear before the Great Shepherd of our souls.  
There, there, my lord, shall it be determined who are His true  
ministers, and who are only wolves in sheep’s clothing. Our  
Lord, I believe, will not be ashamed to confess us publicly in  
that day. I pray God we may all approve ourselves such faith-  
ful ministers of the New Testament, that we may be able to lift  
up our heads with boldness.

‘As for declining the work in which I am engaged, my blood  
runs chill at the very thoughts of it. I am as much convinced  
it is my duty to act as I do, as that the sun shines at noon-day.  
I can foresee the consequences very well. They have already,  
in one sense, thrust us out of the synagogues. By and by  
they will think it is doing God service to kill us. But, my  
lord, if you and the rest of the bishops cast us out, our great  
and common Master will take us up. Though all men should  
deny us, yet will not He; and however you may censure us as  
evildoers and disturbers of the peace, yet if we do suffer for  
our present way of acting, your lordship at the great day will  
find that we suffer only for righteousness’ sake. In patience,  
therefore, do I possess· my soul. I willingly tarry the Lord’s  
leisure. In the meanwhile, I shall continually bear your lord-  
ship’s favours upon my heart, and endeavour to behave so as to  
subscribe myself,

‘My lord, your lordship’s obedient son, and obliged servant,

‘ George Whitefield.’

So much excitement and such strong feeling had been  
raised, that it was not always commercially wise for inn-  
keepers to admit Whitefield to them houses; and at  
Abingdon he was ‘genteelly told’[[4]](#footnote-4) by one of them, that  
there was no room for him and his party. Matters were  
worse at Basingstoke the next evening. Whitefield had  
just thrown himself, languid and weary, upon the bed,  
when—to use his own odd expression—he was ‘refreshed  
with the news that the landlord would not let them stay  
under his roof.’ Probably resentment was the occasion  
of the expulsion; for one of the landlord’s children had  
been touched by Whitefield’s preaching the last time he  
visited Basingtoke. He and his friends went out, amid  
the mockery and gibing of the crowd, to seek for another  
inn; and when they got one, the crowd amused itself by  
throwing; fire rockets around the door. It was too late  
to preach, and Whitefield sought his own room: he had  
been there about an hour when the constable handed him  
this letter from the mayor:—

‘Sir,—Being a civil magistrate in this town, I thought it my  
duty, for the preservation of peace, to forbid you, or at least  
dissuade you, from preaching here. If you persist in it, in all  
probability it may occasion a disturbance, which I think is  
your duty as a clergyman, as well as mine, to prevent. If any  
mischief should ensue (whatever pretence you may afterwards  
make in your own behalf), I am satisfied it will fall on your own  
head, being timely cautioned by me, who am,

‘Sir, your most humble servant,

‘John Abbott.

‘Basingstoke, July 19, 1739.

‘PS. The legislature has wisely made laws for the preser-  
vation of the peace, therefore I hope no clergyman lives in  
defiance of them.’

Whitefield immediately sent the following answer:--

‘Honoured Sir,--I thank you for your kind letter, and I   
humbly hope a sense of your duty, not a fear of man, caused

you to write it. If so, give me leave to remind you, honoured  
sir, as a clergyman, you ought to be a terror to evildoers, but  
a praise to them that do well. I know of no law against such  
meetings as mine. If any such law be existing, I believe you  
will think it your duty to apprise me of it, that I may not offend  
against it. If no law can be produced, as a clergyman, I think  
it my duty to inform you, that you ought to protect, and not  
anyways to discourage, or permit others to disturb, an assembly  
of people meeting together purely to worship God. To-morrow,  
I hear, there is to be an assembly of another nature ; be pleased  
to be as careful to have the public peace preserved at that, and  
to prevent profane cursing and swearing, and persons breaking  
the sixth commandment, by bruising each other’s bodies by  
cudgelling and wrestling; and if you do not this, I shall rise  
up against you at the great day, and be a swift witness against  
your partiality.

‘ I am, honoured sir, your very humble servant,

**‘ George Whitefield.’**

Whitefield followed his letter next morning, and had  
an interview with the mayor, which must have en-  
dangered his gravity much more than his temper. His  
object was to see this prohibitory law, but the mayor  
broke out—‘Sir, you sneered me in the letter you sent  
last night; though I am a butcher, yet sir, I . . .’ White-  
field interposed—‘I honour you as a magistrate, and only  
desire to know what law could be produced against my  
preaching: in my opinion there is none.’ ‘Sir,’ said the  
mayor, ‘you ought to preach in a church.’ ‘And so I  
would,’ replied Whitefield, ‘if your minister would give  
me leave.’ The mayor said, ‘Sir, I believe you have  
some sinister ends in view: why do you go about making  
a disturbance?’ More of the same sort followed, and  
the mayor, who found himself a poor match for the ready  
preacher, and had a fair to attend, cut short the interview  
by saying that he ‘had wrote’ Whitefield another letter,  
which he would send him yet, if he pleased. Whitefield

thanked him, paid him the respect due to a magistrate,  
and took his leave.

The letter which followed was very much in the  
‘though-I-am-a-butcher’ style. It was this :—

‘Basingstoke, July 20, 1730.

‘Rev. Sir,—I received your extraordinary letter, and could  
expect no other from so uncommon a genius.

‘I apprehend your meetings to he unlawful, having no tole-  
ration to protect you in it. My apprehensions of religion  
always was, and I hope always will be, that God is to be wor-  
shipped in places consecrated and set apart for His service, and  
not in brothels and places where all manner of debauchery  
may have been committed; but how far this is consistent with  
your actions, I leave you to judge.

‘As for the other assembly you are pleased to mention, ’tis  
contrary to my will, having never given my consent to it, nor  
approved of it, but discouraged it before your reverendship came  
to this town; and if these cudgellers persist in it, I shall set  
them upon the same level with you, and think you all breakers  
of the public peace. You very well know there are penal laws  
against cursing and swearing, and I could wish there were the  
same against deceit and hypocrisy. Your appearing against  
me as a swift witness at the day of judgment is a most terrible  
thing, and may serve as a bugbear for children or people of  
weak minds; but believe me, reverend sir, those disguises will  
have but little weight amongst men of common understanding.

Yours,

John Abbott.

‘I told you I had a letter wrote: I made bold to send it.’

Whitefield replied in his most serious manner, and had  
less success than he would probably have gained had he  
tried, what he could so well use when he chose, humour  
and geniality. But he could not keep down his tre-  
mendous earnestness, or, rather, he could not bring into  
action along with it the lighter qualities which have their  
part to play in the intercourse of life. His soul was

absorbed in the one thought of winning the crowds for  
his Saviour. The crowds which were to assemble at the  
revel the next day were resolved to have their coarse  
pleasures and sins; nor do the authorities seem to have  
had any serious intention, except that of hindering the  
preacher, and sheltering them. There seems reason to  
believe that Whitefield had purposely come on the day  
of the revel, and if he did, his wisdom cannot be com-  
mended; for the people had time to become exasperated  
before his arrival, and that conquering influence which he  
generally threw over his audiences had no fair chance to  
exert itself. Landlords, showmen, cudgellers, wrestlers,  
and their attendant rabble, were sure to be active on the  
side of their interests; and thus the whole town had  
been set against him before he entered it. However,  
being resolved to go on with his work, he went at eight  
o’clock in the morning into a field to preach. One had  
said that he should never come out alive, and another  
that the drum should beat close by him, but nothing  
occurred to hinder him from speaking freely against  
revelling. Only in going to and from the field did he  
meet with any unpleasantness; the rabble and the boys  
saluted him, and called him ‘strange names.’

He mounted to take his departure, but, ‘as I passed by  
on horseback,’ he says, ‘I saw a stage; and, as I rode  
further, I met divers coming to the revel; which affected  
me so much, that I had no rest in my spirit. And there-  
fore, having asked counsel of God, and perceiving an  
unusual warmth and power enter into my soul, though I  
was gone above a mile, I could not bear to see so many  
dear souls, for whom Christ had died, ready to perish,  
and no minister or magistrate interpose. Upon this I  
told my dear fellow-travellers, that I was resolved to  
follow the example of Howel Harris in Wales, and to  
bear my testimony against such lying vanities; let the  
consequences, as to my own private person, be what they

would. They immediately consenting, I rode back to  
town, got upon the stage erected for the wrestlers, and  
began to show them the error of their ways. Many  
seemed ready to hear what I had to say; but one, more  
zealous than the rest for his master, and fearing con-  
viction every time I attempted to speak, set the boys on  
repeating their huzzahs.

‘My soul, I perceived, was in a sweet frame, willing to  
be offered up, so that I might save some of those to  
whom I was about to speak; but all in vain! While I  
was on the stage, one struck me with his cudgel, which I  
received with the utmost love. At last, finding the devil  
would not permit them to give me audience, I got off;  
and after much pushing and thronging me, I got on my  
horse with unspeakable satisfaction within myself, that  
I had now begun to attack the devil in his strongest  
holds, and had borne my testimony against the detestable  
diversions of this generation.’

There had been more danger in Basingstoke than he  
saw, and it was well that he went to an inn and not to a  
friend’s house, as had been expected. A band of twelve  
ruffians had been lying in wait in that quarter of the  
town where he was expected to sleep, determined to give  
him ‘a secret blow and prevent his making disturbances;’  
and one of them had the audacity to confess their inten-  
tion to a Quaker friend of Whitefield, J. Portsmouth, the  
day after Whitefield left the town.

Nothing daunted by his late peril, full particulars of  
which were sent after him, he, within a week, made  
another experiment, almost as bold, which was more  
successful. He announced that he would preach at  
Hackney Marsh, on the day of a horserace, and ten  
thousand gathered around him, hardly any of whom left  
him for the race. Some who left returned very quickly,  
and to them he addressed a few words specially.

Before any censure for rashness or recklessness is pro-

nounced upon him for these efforts, it should be well  
understood that he did not boast of them; that he did  
not covet notoriety; and that he did not act without  
either prayer or consideration. He both feared that his  
faith might fail him before he went to Hackney Marsh,  
and entreated a friend to pray that his zeal might be  
tempered with knowledge. ‘It would grieve me,’ he  
said, ‘should I bring sufferings causelessly upon my-  
self.’

His time in England was now very short. He must pay  
a farewell visit to each of his congregations, and reply to  
the Bishop of London, who had just made an attack upon  
him in a pastoral letter. At Kennington Common he  
preached from St. Paul’s parting speech to the elders at  
Ephesus, and, as was certain to be the case, so moved  
the people’s feelings that he could scarce make his appli-  
cation. His last sermon at Blackheath was of the same  
kind, and had like effect; his own heart was so full  
that he knew not when to leave off, and darkness was  
stealing over them as he said, Amen. It is almost need-  
less to say a word about the state of mind in which such  
labours were carried on. They bear their own testimony  
to secret joy and peace, to a clear hope of everlasting  
glory, and an unquestioning belief of the gospel; they  
could come only from one who had much of the mind of  
Him who, ‘though He was rich, yet for our sakes became  
poor.’ Yet one or two sentences from his letters well  
deserve to be linked to the story of his toils and suffer-  
ings. ‘As for my own soul, God mightily strengthens  
me in the inward man, and gives me often such foretastes  
of His love, that I am almost continually wishing to be  
dissolved that I may be with Christ. But I am only  
beginning to begin to be a Christian.’’ The harvest is  
very great. I am ashamed I can do no more for Him,  
who hath done so much for me; not by way of retaliation,  
but gratitude. Pain would I love my Master, and will

not go from Him; His service is perfect freedom; His  
yoke is easy, His burden light.’

Controversy always attends deep religious movements,  
and, its abuses apart, it may be hailed as a blessing. It  
tempers the assumptions of the proud, gives clearness to  
the dim conceptions of both parties, and helps to hold the  
religious world in equipoise. Neither Whitefield nor his  
views were the worse for the assaults they sustained, any  
more than the formal party of the Church was damaged  
by the arousing calls which rung in their ears like the  
shout of the hosts of God. Methodist wildfire—for there  
was wildfire flashing in those strange congregations which  
assembled in Fetter Lane, on Kennington Common, and  
in Bristol—needed regulating and subduing, and bishops  
and clergy were soon at hand to help.

The first shaft was shot at Whitefield soon after his  
arrival from Savannah, by a brother clergyman; but no  
notice was taken of it, except in one sentence in the  
journal, ‘Thou shalt answer for me, 0 Lord.’ The  
Bishop of London next entered the lists, with a pastoral  
letter on ‘Lukewarmness and Enthusiasm.’ The latter was  
evidently a greater sin in his eyes than the former; and,  
but for the new enthusiasm, the old lukewarmness would  
probably have been allowed its ancient comfort and ease.  
The appeal addressed to it was not very arousing; it was  
dignified, proper, and paternal, after the ecclesiastical  
fashion. To cope with the Methodists was more stimu-  
lating, and the bishop braced himself for his task as one  
who relished it. He opened his ‘Caution’ with a defi-  
nition of enthusiasm: ‘A strong persuasion on the mind  
of persons that they are guided, in an extraordinary  
manner, by immediate impressions and impulses of the  
Spirit of God. And this is owing chiefly to the want of  
distinguishing aright between the ordinary and extra-  
ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit.’ Extraordinary

operations were the miracles and speaking with tongues,  
with which the Apostles were favoured as a witness to  
their mission and doctrine. Ordinary operations are—  
he does not say what; but they are ‘not discernible  
otherwise than by their fruits and effects, as these appear  
in the lives of Christians.’ He protests that the Church  
of England teaches the ‘truth and reality of a regene-  
ration and new birth, and of the influence of the Holy  
Spirit in our Christian course,’ and makes ample quota-  
tions from the Prayer Book to prove it. The key to his  
position is this sentence: ‘It is one thing to pray for the  
Spirit, and another thing to pray by the Spirit.’ In  
general we may be sure that we have the Spirit to help  
us to live a godly life, but we may not call any single  
emotion, or conviction, or desire, the effect of His in-  
working. The first is humble, sound piety; the second  
is dangerous enthusiasm. After discussing the subject  
generally, he culled from such parts of Whitefield’s  
journal as were then published—the parts which have  
formed the principal foundation of this life up to the  
point we have reached — illustrations of eight danger-  
ous phases of the new teaching. ‘God forbid,’ he says,

‘that, in this profane and degenerate age, everything that  
has an appearance of piety and devotion should not be  
considered in the most favourable light that it is capable  
of. But, at the same time, it is surely very proper that  
men should be called upon for some reasonable evidences  
of a divine commission:

I. When they tell us of extraordinary communications  
they have with God, and more than ordinary assurances  
of a special Presence with them.

‘II. When they talk in the language of those who  
have a special and immediate mission from God.

‘III. When they profess to think and act under the  
immediate guidance of a divine inspiration.

‘IV. When they speak of their preaching and ex-  
pounding, and the effects of them, as the sole work of a  
divine power.

‘V. When they boast of sudden and surprising effects  
as wrought by the Holy Ghost, in consequence of their  
preaching.

‘VI. When they claim the spirit of prophecy.

‘VΠ. When they speak of themselves in the language  
and under the character of Apostles of Christ, and even  
of Christ Himself.

‘V1Π. When they profess to plant and propagate a  
new gospel, as unknown to the generality of ministers  
and people in a Christian country.’

‘The Rev. Mr. Whitefield’s answer’ appeared twelve  
days after the ‘Pastoral Letter.’ It opens with some re-  
marks on the first part of the letter, which are feeble and  
wide of the mark, and would have been better omitted.  
He is strongest and safest on his own ground, and has  
little difficulty in defending positions which, in these  
days of subjective religious thought, would have been  
little questioned. He rejects, of course, the idea of  
having extraordinary operations of the Spirit in the work-  
ing of miracles, or the speaking with tongues; but lays  
claim to the ordinary gifts and influences which still  
continue. He contends that he can know, by his own  
joy and peace and satisfaction in any particular work,  
whether the Holy Ghost is with him, graciously and  
effectually moving his heart; that a general influence or  
operation of the Spirit must imply a particular operation;  
that the Holy Ghost may direct and rule our hearts in  
the minutest circumstance. He claims for himself a  
divine commission in his work, and forces the bishop to  
sit upon one of two horns of a dilemma—deny the priest’s  
divine commission, and thus his own divine right and

authority as bishop; or contend for his own commission,  
and thus admit the validity of the priest’s, who is or-  
dained by his hands. The charge of boasting that he  
spoke of his preaching and expounding, and the effects  
of them, as the sole work of a divine power, he rebuts  
by asking whether his lordship would have the preacher  
ascribe anything to himself? The fifth count against  
him gets an animated answer, which may well make  
any preacher of truth feel serious, ‘Where, my Lord, is  
the enthusiasm of such a pretension? Has your lordship  
been a preacher in the Church of England for so many  
years, and have you never seen any sudden or surprising  
effects consequent upon your lordship’s preaching? Was  
this my case, should I not have reason to doubt, my lord,  
whether I had any more than a bare human commission?’

In the sixth count the bishop had laid his finger on a  
very weak place in Whitefield’s creed; nor can White-  
field do more than appeal to his own sincere persuasion  
that he is right. He had gone so far astray as to pro-  
phesy (for it was nothing short of that) in his journal,  
that there certainly would be a fulfilling of those things  
which God by His Spirit had spoken to his soul; that he  
should see greater things than these; and that there were  
many promises to be fulfilled in him, many souls to be  
called, and many sufferings to be endured before he  
should go hence. In his answer he declares that God  
has in part fulfilled his hopes of success; that his enemies  
are fulfilling his expectations of suffering; and that some  
passages of scripture are so powerfully impressed upon  
his mind, that he really believes God will fulfil them in  
him in due time. Whitefield himself came to see that  
he was wrong in these views; and he expunged most, if  
not all, the obnoxious passages from his revised journal,  
as well as declared his mistake frankly and fully. He  
also did the same thing with the grounds of the seventh  
count, which were a thoughtless use of scriptural lan-

guage. But on the question of the last charge, which  
related principally to the doctrine of justification, he not  
only boldly announced Solifidianism, but adhered to it to  
the last. He was as impatient as Luther of any mention  
of good works in connection with justification. Works  
ought to come as the fruits and evidences of justification;  
but were not, even in the most limited sense, to be called  
a condition of it.

A host of pens became busy upon the contested points.  
Bate, the rector of St. Paul’s, Deptford, answered White-  
field in ‘Methodism Displayed.’ It contains but two  
things which can help to illustrate Whitefield’s work and  
the kind of views entertained of him by a large section of  
society. It asserts that numbers of poor tradesmen daily  
left their families to starve, while they rambled after  
Whitefield from place to place; and Bate asks whether  
he has ever rebuked any of them for doing so; his ques-  
tion being intended to mean, that the practice existed, and  
was encouraged by the preacher’s vainglory, who liked  
to see a crowd around him. That the practice of  
neglecting common duties for the sake of religious excite-  
ment did exist to some extent is no more than anyone  
might have expected; but that it was so common as to  
be a crying reproach is only an enemy’s falsity, and to  
whatever degree it prevailed, the fault was only with  
the hearers, who were often told by their faithful guide,  
that it was being righteous over-much to spend so  
much time in religious assemblies as to neglect family  
duties.

‘Methodism Displayed’ contains the following com-  
plimentary comparison between the regular clergy and  
the new itinerant brethren: it is supposed to be part of a  
clergyman’s address to his flock:—‘You, my brethren,  
have the happiness of being baptized into the Christian  
faith; and though you ought indeed to tremble with a

piteous awe for fear you tread awry, yet you are not to  
think yourselves out of the path to heaven when you  
really are in it. And the way to keep in it is, not to  
forsake the altars of the living God to follow the bleating  
of Jeroboam’s calves in Dan and in Bethel, but to keep  
constantly to your churches on Sundays; there to hearken  
to the instructions, admonitions, and reproofs of your own  
parochial clergy (who are both able and willing to do  
their duty); and on those other six days, which God has  
given you chiefly for the work and business of this world,  
take care to behave yourselves in your several lawful  
callings with honesty, diligence, and sobriety.’

An amusing, racy, and forcible reply to Bate came  
from the pen of Thomas Cumming, whom I suppose to  
have been a Quaker.1 It must have been cheering to the  
small sect, who have always exalted the ‘inner light,’ and  
defended its sufficiency to teach the things of salvation to  
all who will hear, to find itself represented in one of its  
chief beliefs by a young, ardent, bold, useful clergyman,  
who trusted, as did every Quaker preacher, to divine il-  
lumination and divine impulse. Cumming came to the  
defence of such a man and his teaching with right good  
will; the ‘Answer’ was just the kind of letter he or any  
of his brethren might have penned, and he stood by it on  
every point. His pamphlet is soiled here\* and there with  
phrases which once were only too common in controversy,  
while he supports the reputation of his sect for shrewdness  
and humour. To Bates’s taunt that Whitefield must lay  
in a greater stock of letter-learning, or die an enthusiast,  
Cumming mockingly replies, ‘And then what must become  
of him? No doubt our rector would give over hopes of

1 The tenor of his tractate is quite in harmony with the views of the  
 Friends. He exults in showing the inefficacy of ‘letter-learning’ in

contending for the ability of illiterate men when instructed by the Holy   
 Ghost, to expound the lively oracles, and in pointing out the faults of  
 paid priests.

ever seeing him in heaven along with him, and the rest  
of his letter-learned brethren! ’

In closing the journal which contains an account of his  
first open-air preaching, Whitefield made a tender appeal  
to others who might be constrained to do as he had done.  
He says, ‘I cannot but shut up this part of my journal  
with a word or two of exhortation to my dear fellow-  
labourers, whosoever they are, whom God shall stir up  
to go forth into the highways and hedges, into the lanes  
and streets, to compel poor sinners to come in. Great  
things God has already done. For it is unknown how  
many have come to me under strong convictions of their  
fallen state, desiring to be awakened to a sense of sin,  
and giving thanks for the benefits God has imparted to  
them by the ministry of His word. 0 my dear brethren!  
have compassion on our dear Lord’s Church, which He  
has purchased, with His own blood; and let them not  
perish for lack of knowledge. If you are found faithful  
you must undergo persecution. Oh, arm people against  
a suffering time; remind them again and again that our  
kingdom is not of this world, and that it does not become  
Christians to resist the powers that are ordained of God,  
but patiently to suffer for the truth’s sake. Oh, let us  
strive together in our prayers, that we may fight the good  
fight of faith, that we may have that wisdom which  
cometh from above, and that we may never suffer for our  
own faults, but only for righteousness’ sake: then will the  
Spirit of Christ and of glory rest upon our souls, and  
being made perfect by suffering here, we shall be qualified  
to reign eternally with Jesus Christ hereafter. Amen!  
Amen! ’

Conscious of the difficulty of passing through popu-  
larity and applause without moral injury—and, by this  
time, competing engravers were multiplying his portrait  
as fast as they could, and rival publishers were contending

for his journals—anxious to subdue such pride and selfish-  
ness as still dwelt in him, longing to know himself better,  
and much worn down with the gigantic labours of the  
past seven months and a half, he went on board the  
‘Elizabeth,’ saying, ‘Blessed be God! I am much rejoiced  
at retiring from the world.’

CHAPTER VIII.

August, 1739, to March, 1741.

THIRD VOYAGE—ITINERATING IN AMERICA

FOURTH VOYAGE, BREACH WITH WESLEY**.**

‘My family,’ as Whitefield called the eight men, one boy,  
two children, and his friend Mr. Seward, who accompanied  
him, had characters in it worth a passing notice,—Periam,  
the methodical madman, whom we know; Seward, the  
rich layman; and Gladman, a ship-captain, whom White-  
field got to know at the end of his last visit to Georgia.  
Seward was a gentleman of Evesham, thoroughly inspired  
with Methodist enthusiasm, who, to his wife’s mortifica-  
tion, became Whitefield’s companion in travel to help the  
good work. He was a Boswell in his admiration and  
fussiness; and, but for his early death, would have pre-  
served many interesting facts which are now lost. Glad-  
man was a convert who followed Whitefield from a double  
motive—love to the man and love to his Master. Distress  
brought him under Whitefield’s notice. His ship had  
been wrecked on a sand-bank near the Gulf of Florida.  
After ten days spent in that situation by him and his  
crew, they sighted a vessel, and hoisted a signal of dis-  
tress, which she answered. Gladman and part of his  
men pulled to her in a boat, and begged a passage for  
the whole number, which was promised them; but, as soon  
as they put off for the sandbank, the vessel made sail, and  
left them. Thirty days more were spent in their confine-  
ment; then they built a boat, into which he and five  
others stepped with the determination to make their

escape or perish; the rest were fearful of such a frail  
craft, and stayed behind. Boat and crew came safe to  
Tybee island, ten miles off Savannah, whither Gladman  
was brought, and where Whitefield invited him to break-  
fast. A deliverance so great prepared him to receive the  
kindly counsels which were given him over the breakfast  
table, and, as host and guest soon afterwards returned to  
England in the same vessel, Gladman became, through  
further instruction, a Christian of deep conviction and  
firm faith. Nothing would satisfy him but to return with  
Whitefield on his second voyage to Georgia.

The versatile preacher, who was well gifted with abi-  
lity to become all things to all men, and to make himself  
contented in all places, had been on board ship but two  
days when he felt almost as forgetful of what he had  
passed through as if he had never been out in the world.  
Present duty was the only thing that ever pressed hard  
upon him; past bitternesses he quickly forgot; future  
troubles he left with God. He lived one day at a time,  
and lived it thoroughly. He framed regulations for his  
‘family,’ instituted public prayer morning and evening,  
took to letter-writing and the reading of some very  
strongly-flavoured divinity; and, at the same time, in-  
dulged his favourite gift and passion of exhorting every  
one around him to follow his Lord and Master. In this  
last mentioned work he had the occasional help of a  
Quaker, to whom he would now and again lend his  
cabin. The only grief was, that the Quaker was not  
explicit enough upon justification by faith, and upon the  
objective work of the Saviour; for, much as Whitefield  
insisted upon the inward work of the Holy Ghost, his  
views of the mediatorial work of our Lord were objec-  
tive to the degree of grossness. But doctrinal questions  
by-and-by.

Letter-writing was a great pastime of the Method-  
ists, yet none of them have written any letters worth

preserving, either for their literary merit, or their theo-  
logical grasp. All that was attempted was to comfort  
and cheer each other in the conflict with earth and hell;  
and hence their letters abound in ‘experiences;’ every  
doubt, every fear, every temptation is told to another  
believer, who can understand its meaning, and give sym-  
pathy and the help of prayer. For all who have a desire  
to trace the wanderings of the human spirit, when it is  
driven into darkness and anguish by the strivings of the  
evil and the good which dwell within it, nothing can be  
more curious and entertaining than a batch of early  
Methodist letters. It was natural that minds similarly  
affected should commune in this way; and for preachers,  
who by their very calling were unable to stay in any one  
place, it was especially natural to send exhortations and  
counsels to their converts, lest labour should be spent in  
vain. As at the beginning, so now, epistles followed ser-  
mons. But the work which was begun with zest some-  
times became a burden, and a hindrance to more useful  
effort. Cornelius Winter complained bitterly in his old  
age of the time lost in writing letters, which might, if it  
had been devoted to reading, have yielded him more  
advantage, both mental and spiritual. Whitefield wrote  
sixty-five letters—none of them long, some of them mere  
notes—during his three months’ voyage; they were ad-  
dressed to converts who wanted encouragement, to back-  
sliders who wanted reproof, to students who wanted  
cheering in their espousal of the cause of Christ, to  
ministers who wanted words of brotherly love. A magis-  
trate, at Gloucester, gets a letter to tell him that for the  
future he must not show such partiality for balls, assem-  
blies, and wakes, and such prejudice against Methodist  
congregations; and Periam’s father is informed that his  
son is ‘diligent and pious, his mind settled and com-  
posed—a partaker, by reading the Bible, of that peace  
which the world cannot give.’ The burden and the spirit

are the same in all. ‘Show them,’ he says to Howel  
Harris about his congregations, ‘show them in the map  
of the word the kingdoms of the upper world, and the  
transcendent glories of them; and assure them that all  
shall be theirs, if they believe on Jesus Christ with their  
whole hearts. Press on them to believe on Him imme-  
diately. Intersperse prayers with your exhortations, and  
thereby call down fire from heaven, even the fire of the  
Holy Ghost,

“ To soften, sweeten, and refine,

And melt them into love.”

Speak every time, my dear brother, as if it was your last;  
weep out, if possible, every argument, and, as it were,  
compel them to cry—“ Behold how he loveth us !” ’ He  
discovers, in one of them, the full extent of his mistake  
about impressions—‘I have had great intimations from  
above concerning Georgia. Who knows but we may  
have a college of pious youths at Savannah! I do not  
despair thereof. Professor Prancks’ undertaking in Ger-  
many has been much pressed upon uny heart. I really  
believe that my present undertaking will succeed.’ The  
school did succeed; but the ‘great intimations’ were  
never fulfilled, and no college was ever built. As  
America is approached, he begins to show that greater  
things than building a college are shaping themselves in  
his mind, his world-wide work suggests itself; and with  
his usual promptitude he writes to a friend—‘I intend  
resigning the parsonage of Savannah. The orphan-  
house I can take care of, supposing I should be kept at  
a distance; besides, when I have resigned the parish, I  
shall be more at liberty to take a tour round America, if  
God should ever call me to such a work. However, I  
determine nothing; I wait on the Lord.’

The voyage was useful both to his body and soul—to  
his soul, however, in a very distressing way. His journal

from August to November is almost us dismal and painful  
as the early parts of Brainerd’s.1 ‘Tears were his meat  
day and night.’ One extract will suffice to show what  
was his state of mind until towards the end of the voy-  
age: ‘I underwent inexpressible agonies of soul for two  
or three days at the remembrance of my sins, and the  
bitter consequences of them. Surely my sorrows were so  
great that, had not God in the midst of them comforted  
my soul, the load would have been insupportable! All  
the while I was assured God had forgiven me; but I  
could not forgive myself for sinning against so much light  
and love. Surely I felt something of that which Adam  
felt when turned out of Paradise; David, when he was  
convicted of his adultery; and Peter, when with oaths  
and curses he had thrice denied his Master. I then, if  
ever, did truly smite upon my ungrateful breast, and cry  
—God be merciful to me a sinner! I ate but very little,  
and went mourning all the day long. At length my Lord

1 ' Tuesday, October 26, 1742 (at West Suffield), underwent the most

dreadful distresses under a sense of my own unworthiness; it seemed to me

I deserved rather to be driven out of the place than to have anybody treat

me with any kindness, or come to hear me preach. And verily my spirits

were so depressed at this time, as well as at many others, that it was impossible

I should treat immortal souls with faithfulness; I could not deal

closely and faithfully with them, I felt so infinitely vile in myself. Oh,

what dust and ashes I am, to think of preaching the gospel to others! . . .

In the evening I went to the meeting-house, and it looked to me near as easy

for one to rise out of the grave and preach as for me. However, God

afforded me some life and power, both in prayer and sermon; God was

pleased to lift me up, and show me that He could enable me to preach.'

Few, however, would shrink from such depression and consciousness of sin,

if they might come out upon the sunny plains where Brainerd rested in his

last days. 'Saturday, Sep. 19, 1747.—Near night, while I attempted to

walk a little, my thoughts turned thus: How infinitely sweet it is to love

God, and be all for Him! Upon which it was suggested to me, you are

not an angel, not lively and active. To which my whole soul immediately

replied: I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God as any angel in

heaven. ... I thought of dignity in heaven, but instantly the thought returned:

I do not go to heaven to get honour, but to give all possible glory

and praise. Oh, how I longed that God should be glorified on earth also!

—The Life of Brainerd, by Jonathan Edwards.

looked upon me, and with that look broke my rocky  
heart, and floods of contrite tears gushed out before my  
whole family, and indeed I wept most bitterly. When  
in this condition I wondered not at Peter’s running so  
slowly to the sepulchre, when loaded with the sense of  
his sin. Alas! a consideration of aggravated guilt quite  
took off my chariot wheels, and I drove so exceeding  
heavily, that was I always to see myself such a sinner as  
I am, and as I did then, without seeing the Saviour of  
sinners, I should not so much as be able to look up.  
Lord, what is man!’

The old Puritan theology, of which he had been a  
student from the time of his conversion, began, during  
this voyage, to affect his views in a very decided way.  
Until this time the broad, plain statements of Scripture  
had sufficed for a foundation for his teaching. The calls  
to repentance and faith, the assurances of pardon and  
eternal life for as many as will turn to God, the com-  
mandments binding every man to purity of heart and life,  
the simple declarations of the unspeakable love where-  
with the Saviour has loved us, and His power and willing-  
ness to help all who look to Him, constituted the message  
he had delighted to proclaim, and which, indeed, in spite  
of the views he was presently to embrace, he proclaimed  
to the last. Now he must have a system of theology;  
he must hold with the free grace men, or with the pre-  
destinarians; he must believe in freewill, or deny it; he  
must accept the dogma of imputed righteousness, or reject  
it. A book written by Jonathan Warn, called ‘The  
Church of England-Man turned Dissenter, and Armini-  
anism the Backdoor to Popery,’ which contained extracts  
from ‘The Preacher,’ by Dr. Edwards, of Cambridge,

‘strengthened him much.’ He tells Harris that, since he  
saw him, God had been pleased to enlighten him more in  
that comfortable doctrine of election, and now their prin-  
ciples agree, as face answers to face in the water. When

he returns to Wales he will be more explicit than he had  
been; for, ‘God forbid, my dear brother, that we should  
shun to declare the whole counsel of God.’ His Calvinism  
was not (as it never is in the purest hearts) a cold system  
of divinity, but a strong persuasion that, only by the ac-  
ceptance of such dogmas, and an earnest proclamation of  
them, could the glory and the honour be given to the  
God of our salvation. Whitefield was won over to Puri-  
tanism by the truth which has been the salt of that system  
—man must in no sense be a saviour to himself; he may  
watch and read and pray; he may practise good works—  
the more the better; he may—nay, he must—seek to per-  
fect holiness in the fear of God; for every consideration  
of gratitude and love, every holy and tender tie which  
binds him to his Father in heaven, demands it; but he  
must not say a word about these being conditions for the  
reception of any favour from above. All is retrospective;  
all is of God. He ‘provided’—as the phrase is—a Saviour;  
He also determined who should be saved by the Saviour.  
He gave His people to the Redeemer, and the Redeemer  
to His people, in a covenant that should never be broken.  
But for the centering of everything in God, Whitefield  
would have cared nothing for his favourite theories. So  
he exclaims in a letter to a brother clergyman: ‘I hope  
we shall catch fire from each other, and that there will be  
an holy emulation amongst us who shall most debase man  
and exalt the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the doctrines of  
the Reformation can do this. All others leave freewill in  
man, and make him, in part at least, a saviour to himself.  
My soul, come not near the secret of those who teach  
such things; mine honour be not thou united to them. I  
know Christ is all in all. Man is nothing; he hath a free-  
will to go to hell, but none to go to heaven, till God  
worketh in him to will and to do after His good pleasure.  
It is God must prevent, God must accompany, God must  
follow with His grace, or Jesus Christ will bleed in vain.’

While he was plunging into Calvinism, and deter-  
mining to be more outspoken on the five points—hap-  
pily he was slow at fulfilling this purpose—another  
mind, not less resolute, not less bold, and much more  
acute than his own, was as swiftly and irrevocably rush-  
ing into the opposite system of Arminianism. A sepa-  
ration between himself and Wesley was already inevitable,  
if each adhered, as he was sure to do, to his own convic-  
tions. That determination ‘to speak out, and hide none  
of the counsel of God,’ was an extension of a crack  
already made in the foundations of Methodism, which  
was to grow wider and longer for many a day to come,  
though never so wide that divided friends could not  
shake hands across it.

Thankful for his voyage, and timid about facing the  
difficulties of public life on shore—the responsibility of  
preaching to large congregations, the temptations of popu-  
larity, and the opposition of such as differed from him—  
yet again joyful and fearless because he knew that many  
prayers were being offered for him, he landed at Lewis  
Town, about one hundred and fifty miles from Phila-  
delphia. The ship’s provisions had run out, as they used  
to do in those days, and the kind thoughtfulness of  
Whitefield’s English friends, who had sent a good stock  
on board for him and his family, saved both crew and  
passengers from possible starvation, or a very lean  
dietary.

Whitefield, accompanied by his friend Seward, had a  
pleasant ride through the woods to the Quaker town,  
Philadelphia, which then numbered probably eleven or  
twelve thousand inhabitants, one-third of whom were  
Quakers (half the inhabitants of the state of Pennsylvania  
were of the same faith). It was a long, straggling place,  
the houses pleasantly built in the midst of orchards; the  
market-place unpaved; the stocks, the pillory, and the  
whipping-post still standing. The last-named instrument

of justice was in active operation, two women a month,  
being whipped at it. Benjamin Franklin had his printing-  
office opposite the market-place, and within sight of the  
whipping-post. The ‘Pennsylvania Gazette’ was rejoicing  
in great prosperity, through the shrewdness and industry  
of its famous proprietor and editor. ‘Poor Richard's  
Almanac ‘had but a few years before given its wit and  
wisdom to the good citizens for the sum of five-pence;  
and now some are willing to give twenty dollars for a  
single number of it! The people were quiet, peace-  
loving, tolerant, and not so intellectual as the Bostonians.1Their desire to hear the great Methodist was intense;  
for his immense fame had reached their town before  
him.

Whitefield’s first duty was to deliver some letters com-  
mitted to his charge, and then to go on board the ‘Eliza-  
beth,’ which had arrived the night before him, to see his  
family. He next paid his respects to the proprietor and  
the Commissary, who received him ‘very civilly.’ The  
day following, which was Sunday, he preached to a large  
congregation, and took part in other services. The  
churchwardens treated him better than their brethren in  
England had done; and the clergy of all denominations  
showed him great courtesy. Feeling was so different from  
that which he had left behind him, that whereas in  
England the only proper place for a sermon was thought  
to be a church, in Philadelphia the people preferred  
hearing it elsewhere, and asked him to gratify their taste,  
which he was not slow to do. The Quakers were very  
friendly, and their fellowship cheered him not a little.  
The atmosphere all around was peaceful, and balmy with  
brotherly love. Aged Mr. Tennent, who had an academy  
for training pious youths for the ministry, about twenty  
miles from the city, and was himself blessed with four  
sons of Christian reputation and influence, three of whom

1 Parton’s ‘Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin,’ vol. i. part 2, chap. iii.

were ministers, came into the city to speak to him. The  
week’s stay which he made was as quiet and agreeable as  
any he ever made in any place. All places of worship  
were open to him, all ministers favourable to him; and,  
when he left the ordinary religious buildings to preach  
from the steps of the court-house to congregations which  
no building could hold, and which listened in solemn  
silence while the prolonged twilight of the late autumn  
days filled the sky, he must have felt an unusual joy in  
his work. Once when the night was far advanced, and  
lights were shining in the windows of most of the ad-  
joining houses, he felt as if he could preach all night;  
and indeed, the night after, which was Saturday, the  
people, not feeling the pressure of a coming day’s work,  
seemed so unwilling to go away after they had heard an  
hour’s sermon, that he began to pray afresh, and after-  
wards they crowded his house to join in psalms and  
family prayer.

Franklin was a constant and delighted hearer. Calm  
and self-controlled under most circumstances, his tempe-  
rament caught fire at the glowing words of Whitefield;  
and if he did not become a convert to his views, he be-  
came an attached and life-long personal friend. It seems  
to have been during this visit that Whitefield triumphed  
so signally over Poor Richard’s prudence. The story  
is well known, but too good to be omitted here. White-  
field consulted Franklin about the orphan-house, for which  
he was still making collections wherever money could be  
obtained. Franklin approved the scheme, but urged that  
the house should be built in Philadelphia, and not in a   
colony which was thinly populated, where material and  
workmen were scarce, and which was not so prosperous  
as it had been. Unfortunately, Whitefield did not heed  
this sound counsel, but determined to follow his own  
plan; this made Franklin decide not to subscribe. ‘I  
happened soon after,’ he says, ‘to attend one of his

sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended  
to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he  
should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a  
handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and  
five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften,  
and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of  
his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined  
me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that  
I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector’s dish, gold  
and all! At this sermon there was also one of our club,  
who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in  
Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended,  
had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before he came  
from home. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, how-  
ever, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a  
neighbour who stood near him to lend him some money  
for the purpose. The request was made to perhaps the  
only man in the company who had the firmness not to  
be affected by the preacher. His answer was, “At any  
other time, friend Hopkinson, I would lend thee freely;  
but not now, for thee seems to me to be out of thy right  
senses.”’ Anecdotes seldom bear dates, and I can only  
fit some of those which are told of Whitefield into the  
right part of space, the right locality, not heeding the  
right year of time. Most probably it was near about  
the time of this visit, that the observant Franklin tried to  
find out how far the preacher could be heard, when one  
night he was preaching near Franklin’s shop. He says,  
‘I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard,  
by retiring backward down the street towards the river,  
and I found his voice distinct till I came near Front  
Street, when some noise in that street obscured it. Imagin-  
ing then a semicircle, of which my distance should be  
the radius, and that it was filled with auditors, to each  
of whom I allowed two square feet, I computed that he  
might well be heard by more than thirty thousand. This

reconciled me to the newspaper accounts of his having  
preached to twenty-five thousand people in the fields,  
and to the history of generals haranguing whole armies,  
of which I had sometimes doubted.’

It has been said that Whitefield’s visit ‘threw a horrid  
gloom ’ over the town, and for a time put ‘a stop to the  
dancing-schools, the assemblies, and every pleasant thing.’  
This judgment rests altogether on the assumption that,  
without dancing-schools, assemblies, and such ‘pleasant  
things,’ life can only be gloomy,—a conclusion which is  
not borne out by the facts of life as we see it. And if  
the innocent town was so oppressed by the ‘terror-  
exciting’ preacher, it showed a strange pleasure in always  
making him its welcome guest, and hanging upon his  
words. But the truth is, terror was not the power he  
wielded, but loving, urgent, yearning tenderness, which  
could not endure the thought of any man’s perishing in  
his sins. Whatever fault may be found with some of his  
views—and they lie exposed on every side, unguarded  
by argument, unmasked by sophistry—it never can be  
honestly charged upon him that he pictured the torments  
of the great condemnation in flashy colours, or with  
morbid pleasure. His soul moved too much in the orbit  
of the Master’s influence for that, and hence every allu-  
sion to the casting out was filled with a spirit which  
testified also of the joy of welcome. It is not meant that  
he was silent on the awful question of future punishment,  
for, seeing he believed in the generally accepted evan-  
gelical dogma, silence would in his case have been mental  
reservation, and his nature was too frank and too trans-  
parent to hold a doctrine without letting others know of  
it. All his beliefs had power over him, fashioning his  
character, and determining his ministry; but his soul  
lived mostly on the radiant side of his creed, and from  
his visions of love, and peace, and joy, he went forth to  
tell what he had seen. The tone of his addresses would

have been as congenial, in the main, to the minds of this  
generation as it was to the minds of that which heard  
him. It is not in man to turn a deaf ear to one who,  
after proving that future punishment will be eternal, cries  
out in the intenseness of his brotherly and Christ-like  
affection—‘But I can no more. These thoughts are too  
melancholy for me to dwell on, as well as for you to  
hear; and God knows, as punishing is His strange work,  
so denouncing His threatening is mine.’ And if the  
people of Philadelphia walked under a cloud while  
Whitefield enjoyed their free and generous hospitality, it  
was a cloud which ‘burst in blessings on their head.’  
That silent night, when the houses all around the preach-  
ing-stand had lights in their windows, near which sat or  
stood some listener, was a night of penitence for one lost  
soul, of a class which used often to find their way to the  
‘Man of Sorrows,’ but which seldom come now to any  
pastor. Next morning, before it was light, she came to  
Whitefield’s house, and desired to join in prayer; and  
when devotions were over, left the following letter with  
him: ‘Oh, what shall I say to express my thanks I owe  
to my good God, in and from you through Jesus Christ  
[for the good work] which you have been the instrument  
of beginning in my soul; and if you have any regard to  
a poor, miserable, blind, and naked wretch, that’s not only  
dust but sin, as I am confident you have, you will in  
nowise reject my humble request, which is that I, even  
I, may lay hold of this blessed opportunity of forsaking  
all, in order to persevere in a virtuous course of life.’  
The trembling, hoping penitent had not long been gone  
when the ‘terror-inspiring ’ man was approached by a  
child of seven, who came to request him to take her to  
Georgia, as she had heard that he was willing to take  
little- children with him!

Three months before his arrival at Philadelphia, a  
letter had come from Mr. Noble, of New York, who

wrote in his own name, and the name of many others,  
inviting him to that place; a second letter came imme-  
diately after his arrival, repeating the request. He de-  
termined to go. Friends lent him and his party four  
horses; and they rode on through the woods, stopping  
at Burlington and Trent Town, at which places he  
preached with great freedom, and Brunswick, where they  
met with Gilbert Tennent, an eccentric Presbyterian  
minister, who imitated the rude dress of the Baptist, and  
preached with terrible power. Nothing that Whitefield  
could say could surpass the fiery sarcasm and thunder-  
ing denunciation of Tennent; indeed, Whitefield’s sermons  
must have been like refreshing showers after a prairie  
fire, when he came into the neighbourhood of Tennent’s  
labours. The stern preacher had deliverd his soul of a  
faithful message in the spring of this year on ‘The  
Danger of an Unconverted Ministry,’ and had printed  
it for an abiding testimony amongst the people. It was  
based upon the pathetic words of the Evangelist—‘And  
Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was  
moved with compassion towards them, because they were  
as sheep not having a shepherd.’

Tennent joined Whitefield’s party, and rode off with  
them to New York, to join in the preaching campaign,  
the journey being shortened by each traveller’s telling  
the rest what God had done for his soul. Mr. Noble  
received them ‘most affectionately;’ and that night Ten-  
nent preached at the meeting-house, ‘but never before,’  
says Whitefield, ‘heard I such a searching sermon. He  
went to the bottom indeed, and did not daub with un-  
tempered mortar. He convinced me more and more  
that we can preach the gospel of Christ no further than  
we have experienced the power of it in our own heart.  
Being deeply convicted of sin, and driven from time to  
time off his false bottoms and dependencies by God’s  
Holy Spirit at his first conversion, he has learned expe-

rimentally to dissect the heart of the natural man. Hypo-  
crites must either soon be converted or enraged at his  
preaching. He is a son of thunder, and I find doth not  
fear the faces of men.’

New York was not so tolerant as Philadelphia. The  
Commissary denied Whitefield the use of his pulpit before  
it was even asked for, and angrily informed him that his  
assistance was not wanted. Whitefield replied, that ‘if  
they preached the gospel he wished them good luck in  
the name of the Lord, and that, as the church had been  
denied without being asked for, he should preach in the  
fields, for all places were alike to him.’ To the fields he  
went that afternoon, and though some seemed inclined  
to mock, they soon grew more serious. An attempt to  
get the town hall was unsuccessful; but Pemberton,  
the Presbyterian minister, was glad to have him in his  
meeting-house, which was crowded night after night;  
and some who had been profligate learned to look upon  
their past lives with shame. That Whitefield, along with  
his fine indignation at the unfaithfulness of unworthy  
men, who held the sacred office of pastor and teacher,  
and his ardent zeal to save all men, had a touch of cen-  
soriousness, and perhaps peremptoriness, this latter quality  
growing upon him as he got older, cannot be denied;  
but his spirit must also have had rare reverence for age  
and goodness. He was no young upstart, who, thinking  
himself so much more competent to guide the people,  
delighted to treat old men and their views with neglect;  
he never looks more dignified and manly than when,  
with respect in his manner and diffidence in his heart, he  
meets some aged Samuel, like old Mr. Tennent, or old  
Mr. Pemberton, and takes his place as a listener and  
learner. After leaving New York, his sensitive mind,  
which cherished the memory of the least kindness with  
fond faithfulness, became uneasy about some fancied  
want of humility in the presence of Mr. Pemberton, and

he sought to make amends in a letter, which must have  
touched the good man’s heart very deeply:—

‘Philadelphia, Nov. 28, 1739.

‘Rev. and dear Sir,—I have been much concerned since I  
saw you, lest I behaved not with that humility toward you  
which is due from a babe to a father in Christ; but you know,  
reverend sir, how difficult it is to meet with success and not he  
puffed up with it, and therefore, if any such thing was dis-  
cernible in my conduct, oh! pity me, and pray to the Lord to  
heal my pride. All I can say is, that I desire to learn of Jesus  
Christ to he meek and lowly in heart; but my corruptions are  
so strong and my employ so dangerous, that sometimes I  
am afraid. But wherefore do I fear? He that hath given me  
Himself will He not freely give me all things? By His help,  
then, I am resolved to ask till I receive, to seek till I find, and  
to knock till I know myself. Blessed he God! I have had a  
sweet retirement to search out my spirit, and bewail the in-  
firmities of my public ministrations. Alas! who can hope to he  
justified by his works? My preaching, praying, &c., are only  
splendida peccata. ... I am a child, and must be tutored and  
made meet by sufferings to he a partaker of the heavenly in-  
heritance with the saints in light.’

A letter written to his mother, when he reached New  
York, will show his relation to the old home circle, and  
how constantly the one absorbing topic of salvation by  
Christ was on his pen and his tongue:—

‘New York, Nov. 16, 1739.

‘Hon. Mother,—Last night, God brought me hither in health  
and safety. I must not omit informing you of it. Here is  
likely to be some opposition, and, consequently, a likelihood  
that some good will he done. New friends are raised up every  
day whithersoever we go; the people of Philadelphia have  
used me most courteously, and many, I believe, have been  
pricked to the heart. God willing! I leave this place next  
Monday, and in about a fortnight think to set out for Virginia  
by land. In about a twelvemonth I purpose returning to  
England: expect then to have the happiness of seeing me suffer

for my Master’s sake. Oh that God may enable you to rejoice  
in it! If you have the spirit of Christ you will rejoice, if not,  
you will be sorrowful. Oh! my honoured mother, my soul is in  
distress for you: flee, flee, I beseech you, to Jesus Christ by  
faith. Lay hold on Him, and do not let Him go. God hath  
given you convictions. Arise, arise, and never rest till they  
end in a sound conversion. Dare to deny yourself. My  
honoured mother, I beseech you, by the mercies of God in  
Christ Jesus, dare to take up your cross and follow Christ.

‘I am, honoured mother, your ever dutiful, though unworthy  
son,

‘ George Whitefield.’

The preservation of this letter by his mother, and its  
publication after his death may, very properly, encourage  
the hope that mother and son were not separated in faith,  
and that his pleadings must have been as effectual for her  
as for others, though it remains one of the saddest mys-  
teries of this mysterious life, that parents and children  
are sometimes the most widely separated at a point where  
union is sweetest.

The return of the party from New York was a preach-  
ing tour, under the direction of Tennent, who in due  
time brought them to Neshamini, where his father lived,  
and where Whitefield was announced to preach. It may  
serve to keep alive an interest in his feelings amidst his  
labours, to mention that, in the early part of the service,  
the three thousand people who were assembled to hear  
him seemed unaffected, that this caused him to ‘wrestle’much for them in himself, and that at night he had to  
withdraw for a while from the delightful conversation of  
the circle of holy men, to recover in private his com-  
posure and joy. Then they talked together of what  
plans would be the best for promoting the kingdom of  
our Lord. The best plan, however, was already in ope-  
ration in that log-house which stood hard by, old Mr.  
Tennent’s Academy ‘the College,’ as it was contemptu-

ously called by such as thought that learning could not  
be nursed in such rude quarters, whatever might become  
of any piety which sought its shelter. Seven or eight  
good men had just gone forth from it to their work; more  
were almost ready to follow; and a foundation was being  
laid for the instruction of many others. The minister  
whose sold was so hot about the ‘Pharisee-teachers’ who  
knew nothing of the new birth, had here a work which  
thoroughly commanded his heart. They all felt sure  
that it was right. Whitefield says, ‘The devil will cer-  
tainly rage against them; but the work, I am persuaded,  
is of God, and therefore will not come to nought. Carnal  
ministers oppose them strongly; and because people,  
when awakened by Mr. Tennent or his brethren, see  
through, and therefore leave their ministry, the poor  
gentlemen are loaded with contempt, and looked upon  
(as all faithful preachers will be) as persons that turn the  
world upside down. A notable war, I believe, is com-  
mencing between Michael and the dragon. We can  
easily guess who will prevail.’ Whitefield’s guesses proved  
better than his prophecies; the dragon got the worst of  
it; and out of the log-house, which the dauntless, vehe-  
ment, sarcastic Tennents built in faith, rose Princeton  
College.

The doctrine of imputed righteousness was not satis-  
factory to everyone in Philadelphia, On Whitefield’s  
return to the city, one of its opposers took occasion to  
express his mind publicly in church after Whitefield had  
preached. He told the congregation, with a loud voice,  
that there was ‘no such term as imputed righteousness in  
Holy Scripture; that such a doctrine put a stop to all  
goodness ; that we were to be judged for our good works  
and obedience; and were commanded to do and live.’  
Whitefield denied his first proposition, and quoted a text  
to refute him; but thinking the church an improper place  
for discussion, he let the matter drop until the afternoon,

when he preached from the text, ‘The Lord our righteous-  
ness,’ and discussed the whole question. This time he  
had the field to himself.

His wandering life, the excitement which his presence  
always caused, and the curiosity of all to see and hear  
him, were sure to bring to his notice some of the oddest  
phases of life, and some of the saddest and tenderest too.  
One day he was taken to see an old hermit, who had  
lived a solitary life for forty years—a hermit, but not a  
misanthrope. The old man talked with much feeling of  
his inward trials, and when asked by Whitefield whether  
he had not many such in so close a retirement, he  
answered with pathos and beauty, ‘No wonder that a  
single tree which stands alone is more exposed to storms  
than one that grows among others.’ He rejoiced to hear  
of what was being done in England, and kissed his visitor  
when they parted—the old man to continue solitary, the  
young man to live and think and feel, with the eyes of  
thousands on him daily. A little hitch in life might once  
have made the preacher the hermit; for had not he also  
shunned human society, neglected all ordinary comforts,  
and wrestled with his troubles alone, as the single tree  
which has no fellows to shelter it contends with the  
storm?

The next day a German came to him as he was passing  
along the street, and said, ‘Thou didst sow some good  
seed yesterday in German Town, and a grain of it fell  
into my daughter’s heart. She wants to speak with thee,  
that she may know what she must do to keep and in-  
crease it.’ The daughter, who was standing hard by,  
came at her father’s call, and both stood weeping while  
Whitefield exhorted to watchfulness and prayer and close-  
ness of fellowship with the Saviour. Wonderful gentle-  
ness and sympathy must have graced him whom repentant  
prodigals, little children, and women could approach  
without fear, and whom old men loved as a son.

The good people of Philadelphia showed their appre-  
ciation of their visitor, not only by crowding to his ser-  
vices but by sending him presents for his family, which  
was to proceed to Savannah by sea while he went by  
land, preaching wherever he could get a congregation.  
Butter, sugar, chocolate, pickles, cheese, and flour came  
for the ‘poor orphans.’ A sloop that was lent him  
Seward bought, and named it ‘Savannah Gladman was  
to be its captain, and a recent young convert offered him-  
self as mate. Society had been thoroughly awakened,  
both in New York and Philadelphia; many of the ‘good  
sort of people had been unhinged,’ said an opposer.  
Numbers of letters came to tell him how their writers  
had been led to consider his words. The printers were  
anxious for sermons, one of them having obtained two hun-  
dred subscriptions for printing his sermons and journals;  
another said that he could have sold a thousand sermons  
if he had had them; and, at the solicitation of his friends,  
he put two extempore ones—by which he probably means  
that they were written after delivery—into the printer’s  
hands. The farewell sermon had to be preached in the  
open air, notwithstanding it was the end of November;  
for no building could hold the congregation of ten thou-  
sand which stood listening for an hour and a half. The  
people were in great grief as, accompanied by twenty  
horse, he passed through their town and left them.  
Seven miles from the town another company of horsemen  
joined them, and the cavalcade enlarged until about a  
hundred and fifty horse attended him. Franklin’s news-  
paper for that month contained the intelligence that, ‘on  
Thursday last, the Reverend Mr. Whitefield left this city,  
and was accompanied to Chester by about one hundred  
and fifty horse, and preached there to about seven thou-  
sand people. On Friday he preached twice at Wilding’s  
Town to about five thousand; on Saturday, at Newcastle,  
to about two thousand five hundred; and the same even-

ing, at Christiana Bridge, to about three thousand; on  
Sunday, at White Clay Creek, he preached twice, resting  
about half an hour between the sermons, to about eight  
thousand, of whom three thousand, it is computed, came  
on horseback. It rained most of the time, and yet they  
stood in the open air.’

Meanwhile his interest in other workers was not  
abated. His heart was in England with the Wesleys, in  
Wales with Harris, and in Scotland with the Erskines.  
A correspondence with the Scotch brothers was prepar-  
ing the way for a trip over the border some day. He  
writes to Ralph—Ralph was the gentle, sensitive, poetical  
brother; Ebenezer, the bold, fearless, dignified one, who  
preached the truth in its majesty—‘The cordial and tender  
love which I bear you will not permit me to neglect any  
opportunity of sending to you. I bless the Lord from my  
soul for raising you and several other burning and shining  
lights, to appear for Him in this midnight of the church.  
My heart has been warmed during my voyage, by read-  
ing some of your sermons, especially that preached before  
the Associate Presbytery. I long more and more to hear  
the rise and progress of your proceedings, and how far  
you would willingly carry the reformation of the Church  
of Scotland. There are some expressions which I suppose  
will be interpreted to your disadvantage, both by your  
domestic and foreign enemies. I should be glad to know  
who are those martyrs to which you refer, and of what  
nature those covenants were which you mention in your  
sermon. My ignorance of the constitution of the Scotch  
Church is the cause of my writing after this manner. I  
should be obliged to you, if you would be pleased to re-  
commend to me some useful books, especially such which  
open the holy sacrament; for in God’s law is my delight.  
“Boston’s Fourfold State of Man,” I like exceedingly.  
Under God it has been of much service to my soul. I  
believe I agree with you and him in the essential truths

of Christianity. I bless God His Spirit has convinced me  
of our eternal election by the Father through the Son, of  
our free justification through faith in His blood, of our  
sanctification as the consequence of that, and of our final  
perseverance and glorification as the result of all. These,  
I am persuaded, God has joined together; these neither  
men nor devils shall ever be able to put asunder. My  
only scruple at present is, “whether you approve of  
taking the sword in defence of your religious rights?”  
One of our English bishops, I remember, when I was with  
him, called you Cameronians. They, I think, took up  
arms, which I think to be contrary to the spirit of Jesus  
Christ and His apostles. Some few passages in your  
sermon before the Presbytery, I thought, were a little  
suspicious of favouring that principle. I pray God your  
next may inform me that I am mistaken; for when zeal  
carries us to such a length, I think it ceases to be zeal  
according to knowledge. Dearest sir, be not angry at  
my writing thus freely.’

Another difficulty, besides the question of appealing to  
arms to decide religious belief, stood in the way of a  
union between the English priest and the Scotch presby-  
ters. The latter held the divinity of their form of church  
government and the sacredness of their ordination in so  
exclusive a way as practically to excommunicate a minister  
of any other church. Whitefield refers to this in another  
letter to the same friend. He says, ‘I think I have but  
one objection against your proceedings—your insisting  
only on Presbyterian government, exclusive of all other  
ways of worshipping God. Will not this, dear sir, neces-  
sarily lead you (whenever you get the upper hand) to  
oppose and persecute all that differ from you in their  
church government, or outward way of worshipping  
God? Our dear brother and fellow-labourer Mr. Gilbert  
Tennent thinks this will be the consequence, and said he  
would write to you about it. As for my own part

(though I profess myself a member of the Church of  
England), I am of a catholic spirit; and if I see a man  
who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, I am not very  
solicitous to what outward communion he belongs.’ His  
fears about opposition, if not about persecution, proved  
only too true; he himself was to get no small share of it.  
The denominational spirit and the spirit catholic clashed  
as soon as ever they met.

To get again upon his track southwards. Once away  
from Whiteley Creek and William Tennent’s hospitality,  
he had a ride through forest, swamp, and partially cleared  
country, seeing and sharing in the life of the sparse popu-  
lation which lay scattered along his route. Gentlemen  
were as glad to show kindness to travellers, where few  
human beings were to be seen, as travellers were to re-  
ceive it; and thus the private house—generally that of a  
military man—was as often the resting-place for the night  
as the tavern. But taverns were a welcome lodge, though  
noisy guests might sleep in the next room, or the bed be  
made in the kitchen; for sometimes the way was dangerous  
enough to gratify anybody with a Robinson Crusoe nature  
—the evening wolves would come out and howl like a  
kennel of hounds round the travellers. Odd meetings  
with people who had some connexion with the old  
country, and whose talk could pleasantly recall the past,  
now and again happened. One day it was with a Welsh  
family, which had been at Cardiff when he preached there;  
and another day it was with two Oxford contemporaries,  
who had come out to manage one of the new colleges  
which were beginning to spring up, to foster learning by  
the side of labour. The congregations were like every-  
thing else; now a handful of forty, now a hundred in  
place of the usual twenty, now the family whose hospi-  
tality was being enjoyed, and now a stray visitor who  
came in nobody knew how, and in every case the Negroes  
of the house were got together. The great work was,

never forgotten, never neglected, never despised; the  
preacher would talk earnestly and persuasively to one  
when he could not get more.

The account of crossing the Potomac—a name now  
familiar to the ear through ‘the army of the Potomac,’  
which played so conspicuous a part in the war between  
York and South—helps one to realise the condition of the  
whole land through which they were passing. ‘Potomac,’  
Whitefield says, ‘is a river which parts the two pro-  
vinces, Maryland and Virginia. It is six miles broad. We  
attempted to go over it; but, after we had rowed about  
a mile, the wind blew so violently, and night was coming  
on so fast, that we were obliged to go back and lie at the  
person’s house who kept the ferry, where they brought  
out such things as they had.’ These creeks and rivers  
formed no slight difficulty and danger; and, on one occa-  
sion, Whitefield’s physical cowardice kept him in a constant  
tremble while his horse struggled with the rushing water,  
swimming with him from bank to bank. Christmas Day  
was spent very pleasantly at Newborn Town: public  
worship was attended, the sacrament was received, a  
congregation was gathered to hear the word, and heard  
it with tears; the hostess provided a Christmas dinner,  
and would take no fare from the traveller when he  
offered it. New Year’s Day was spent in riding; and at  
sunset a tavern was reached, which stood just within  
South Carolina; but another kind of visitor than a parson,  
and especially a Methodist parson, would have been more  
welcome when the house had a goodly company of neigh-  
bours who had come together for a dance! Such a  
company, however, must have a word of exhortation.  
So the preacher stepped in among them, and all was  
silence while he discoursed on baptism, and the necessity  
of being born again, in order to enjoy the kingdom of  
heaven. The words took so much effect that he was  
asked to baptize a child of the house. At break of day

he started again, having first spoken a final word to the  
dancers. The morning proved as delightful as the night  
was to prove disagreeable. For twenty miles the tra-  
vellers rode along the shore of a beautiful bay, as level  
as a terrace walk, the porpoises that were enjoying their  
pastime making sport for them all the way. Whitefield’s  
heart rejoiced to hear shore resounding to shore, across  
the noble expanse, the praise of Him who hath set bounds  
to the sea that it cannot pass. Then they rode into the  
forest, and had to take their chance among the roads and  
by-roads. As night came on the moon was too beclouded  
to show them where the by-paths led from the main road,  
and thus the path to a house where they purposed seek-  
ing lodgings was missed. There was nothing for it but  
to push on till some resting-place could be reached, and  
they had not gone far before they saw a light. Two of  
them went up towards it, and saw a hut full of Negroes,  
of whom they inquired about the gentleman’s house to  
which they had been directed. The Negroes seemed sur-  
prised, and said that they were but new comers, and knew  
no such man. This made one of the more timid hearts  
infer that these Negroes might be some of a company  
which had made an insurrection in the province, and had  
run away from their masters. All the rest adopted his  
suspicion, and therefore thought it best to mend their  
pace. Soon another great fire was seen near the road-  
side, and the travellers, imagining that there was a second  
nest of rebels, made a circuit into the woods, and one of  
them observed Negroes dancing round the fire. The  
moon now shone out clearly, and they soon found their  
way again into the main road, along which they rode for  
twelve miles, expecting at every step to come upon more  
fires and more Negroes, when they had the good fortune  
to see a large plantation, the master of which gave them  
lodging and their beasts provender. ‘Upon our relating  
the circumstances of our travels,’ says Whitefield, ‘he

gave us satisfaction about the Negroes, informed us whose  
they were, and upon what occasion they were in those  
places in which we found them.’ Then comes a sentence  
which takes all the flavour out of the story. ‘This af-  
forded us much comfort after we had rode near three-  
score miles, and, as we thought, in great perils of our  
lives.’ Two short days more and a morning carried him  
safe into Charles Town (abbreviations in names had not  
begun at this time, and Charleston was still called by its  
full name), and a ride of seven hundred and fifty miles  
was over.

His absence from Charles Town had not been long, but  
still sufficiently so to allow of changes. He himself was  
changed into a field preacher; and, in consequence of this,  
Commissary Garden, who, on the preceding visit to Ame-  
rica, had promised to defend him with life and fortune,  
was changed into a cold friend and then a hot enemy.

The devoted friend was absent from home, and his  
curate had no commission to lend the pulpit. Still it  
was pleasant to get near civilisation again. Letters and  
papers were received, informing him of the success of  
God’s work in New York; the English papers told the  
same good news of home; and if the Commissary had  
shut the English church against him, and absented him-  
self, there was the Independent meeting-house open to  
him, and its minister and several gentlemen very kindly  
disposed towards him. The congregation in the meeting-  
house was large and ‘very polite,’ rivalling in affected  
finery and gaiety of dress the court end of London,—a  
circumstance which looked ill in Whitefield’s eyes, who  
remembered ‘such divine judgments’ as had lately been  
sent abroad among them. He did not forget to reprove  
them for it; but he seemed to them as one that mocked.  
However, there was more feeling underneath ‘the light,  
airy, unthinking manner’ in which they left than he had  
supposed, and next morning he found them desirous to

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hear him a second time. He consented; and the French  
Church was crowded with a reverent congregation, many  
of whom were melted into tears, and departed with  
‘concern in their faces.’ Again he was importuned to  
preach; again he consented; and, after half-an-hour’s  
notice, a large congregation was assembled in the meeting-  
house. His quick and powerful word soon changed gaiety  
into seriousness, and made a whole town attend to the  
things of God.

The rest of the distance to Savannah was performed by  
water, in an open canoe, steered and rowed by five Negro  
slaves. ‘The poor slaves,’ he says, ‘were very civil, dili-  
gent, and laborious.’ The first night they slept on the  
water, and the second on the shore, with, a large fire to  
keep away wild beasts. At noon on the second day they  
reached Savannah, and had a joyful meeting with the  
‘family,’ which had been there three weeks. He looks  
more like a settled family man during the three months  
after his arrival, than during any other part of his life.  
The huge congregations, which would not allow of five  
minutes’ leisure with him, are left behind; so too is the  
anger of opponents. The poor orphans are around him,  
and his humane heart thinks and feels for them with un-  
wearied tenderness, as if they were the lambs of his own  
home. He busies himself about them daily, and watches  
the progress of the work which is to make them as good  
a home as they can have, now that the dear old places  
are silent and lonely, without father or mother. He will  
be a father to them all; he will feed and clothe them;  
instruct them and pray over them. On the second morning  
after his arrival he went to see a tract of land, consisting  
of five hundred acres, which Habersham, whom he had  
left schoolmaster of Savannah when he returned to  
England, had chosen as the site of the orphanage. ‘The  
land,’he says, ‘is situated on the northern part of the  
colony, about ten miles off Savannah, and has various

kinds of soil in it; a part of it very good. Some acres,  
through the diligence of my friends, are cleared. He has  
also stocked it with cattle and poultry. He has begun the  
fence, and built a hut; all which will greatly forward the  
work. I choose to have it so far off the town because  
the children will then be more free from bad examples,  
and can more conveniently go upon their lands to work;  
for it is my design to have each of the children taught to  
labour, so as to be qualified to get their own living.  
Lord, do Thou teach and excite them to labour also for  
that meat which endureth to everlasting life. Thursday,  
January 24.—Went this morning and took possession of  
my lot. I hope it is cast in a fair ground, and God, in  
answer to our prayers, will show that He has given us a  
goodly heritage. I called it Bethesda, that is, the house  
of mercy; for I hope many acts of mercy will be shown  
there, and that many will thereby be stirred up to praise  
the Lord, as a God whose mercy endureth for ever.  
Tuesday, January 29.—Took in three German orphans,  
the most pitiful objects, I think, that I ever saw. No new  
Negroes could possibly look more despicable, or require  
more pains to instruct them. Was all the money I have  
collected to be spent in freeing these three children from  
slavery, it would be well laid out. I have also in my  
house near twenty more, who, in all probability, if not  
taken in, would be as ignorant of God and Christ, compa-  
ratively speaking, as the Indians. Blessed be God they  
begin to live in order. Continue this and all other  
blessings to them, for Thy infinite mercy’s sake, 0 Lord,  
my strength and my Redeemer. Wednesday, January 30.  
—Went this day with the carpenter and surveyor, and  
laid out the ground whereon the orphan-house is to be  
built. It is to be sixty feet long and forty wide; a yard  
and garden before and behind- The foundation is to be  
brick, and is to be sunk four feet within, and raised three  
feet above the ground. The house is to be two story

high with a hip roof; the first ten, the second nine feet  
high. In all there will be nearly twenty commodious  
rooms. Behind are to be two small houses, the one for  
an infirmary, the other for‘a workhouse. There is also to  
be a still-house for the apothecary; and I trust, ere my  
return to England, I shall see the children and family  
quite settled in it. I find it will be an expensive work;  
but it is for the Lord Christ. He will take care to defray  
all charges. The money that will be spent on this occa-  
sion will keep many families from leaving the colony;  
there are near thirty working at the plantation already,  
and I would employ as many more if they were to be  
had. Whatsoever is done for God ought to be done  
speedily, as well as with all our might. Monday,  
February 4.—Met, according to appointment, with all  
the magistrates, and the former trustee of the orphans,  
who heard the recorder read over the grant given me by  
the Trustees, and took a minute of their approbation of  
the same. Lord, grant that I and my friends may care-  
fully watch over every soul that is or shall be committed  
to our charge!’

Gladman, the converted captain, proved a wise helper  
in the management of the orphanage money. It was he  
who counselled Whitefield, before he left London, to  
invest the thousand pounds that had been collected, in  
goods which might be sold to advantage on their arrival  
in America; and it was he who managed to sell them so  
advantageously in Philadelphia as nearly to realise the  
expenses of the voyage for the whole family. Another of  
the family was a surgeon, who had come out of the same  
condition as the rest, that is, he was to have food and  
clothing—it was as much as Whitefield himself ever had.  
Acting upon the truth that, ‘whatever is done for God  
ought to be done speedily,’ Whitefield did not wait until  
the orphanage was ready before beginning his philan-  
thropic work, but at once hired a large house, and took

in all the orphans he could find in the colony; and that  
he might get all, he went to several of the settlements,  
and brought them home himself. He says that ‘a great  
many also of the town’s children came to school gratis;  
and many poor people who could not maintain their  
children, upon application had leave given them to send  
their little ones for a month or two, or more, as they  
could spare them, till at length my family consisted of  
between sixty and seventy. Most of the orphans were in  
poor case, and three or four almost eaten up with lice.  
I likewise erected an infirmary, in which many sick people  
were cured and taken care of gratis. I have now by me  
(he writes this six years afterwards) a list of upwards of a  
hundred and thirty patients who were under the surgeon’s  
hands, exclusive of my private family. This surgeon I  
furnished with all proper drugs and utensils, which put  
me to no small expense.’

The foundation-brick of the ‘great house,’ as he calls  
the orphanage, was laid by himself on Tuesday, March 25,  
without any parade—even without a silver trowel or a  
mahogany mallet—but with full assurance of faith. The  
workmen were the spectators, and knelt down with him  
to offer the dedication prayer. They sang a hymn toge-  
ther, and he gave them a word of exhortation, bidding  
them remember to work heartily, knowing that they  
worked for God. Forty children were then under his  
care, and nearly a hundred mouths had to be daily sup-  
plied with food. The expense was great, ‘but,’ he says,  
‘our great and good God, I am persuaded, will enable me  
to defray it. As yet I am kept from the least doubting.  
The more my family increases, the more enlargement and  
comfort I feel. Set thy fiat to it, 0 gracious Father, and  
for Thy own name’s sake convince us more and more that  
Thou never wilt forsake those that put their trust in  
Thee!’ He needed both his own comfortable faith and  
God’s fiat upon that solitary little brick which he had

kid on the ground; for that day he was worth only one  
hundred and fifty pounds. The future justified his act  
before men; his loving heart justified it from the first  
before God.

But all was not at rest. His very friendships were to  
cause him his greatest troubles; and the first signs of  
them appeared while he was busy among his family;  
there a letter and a journal from John Wesley reached  
him. That Whitefield himself had been anxious about  
the respective views of Calvin and Arminius has been  
told already, and also that he had determined to speak  
out the conclusions he had come to. For once he was  
behind his friend, and it was an honourable slowness to  
contention. Wesley, while at Bristol, had been accused  
in a letter, apparently anonymous, of not preaching the  
gospel, because he did not preach up election. This led  
him to consult the lot as to whether he should preach  
and print his sermon on free grace, and the lot he drew  
said, ‘preach and print and accordingly he did so; but  
at Whitefield’s request, who was then in England, he  
desisted from publishing so long as his friend should re-  
main in the country.

Soon after Whitefield sailed the sermon appeared.  
Wesley also adopted into his creed the doctrine of per-  
fection; that is, ‘free, full, and present salvation from all  
the guilt, all the power, and all the in-being of sin.’ His  
letter to Whitefield at Savannah was upon their re-  
spective doctrines of election and perfection, asking him  
to give up the former and embrace the latter. To this  
Whitefield could not consent; he answered him, ‘I could  
now send a particular answer to your last; but, my  
honoured friend and brother, for once hearken to a child,  
who is willing to wash your feet. I beseech you, by the  
mercies of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, if you would  
have my love confirmed towards you, write no more to  
me about misrepresentations wherein we differ. To the

best of my knowledge at present no sin has dominion  
over me, yet I feel the strugglings of indwelling sin day  
by day. I can therefore by no means come into your  
interpretation of the passage mentioned in the letter, and  
as explained in your preface to Mr. Halyburton. The  
doctrine of election, and the final perseverance of those  
who are in Christ, I am ten thousand times more con-  
vinced of, if possible, than when I saw you last. You  
think otherwise: why, then, should we dispute, when-  
there is no probability of convincing? Will it not in the  
end destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take from us  
that cordial union and sweetness of soul which, I pray  
God, may always subsist between us? How glad would  
the enemies of the Lord be to see us divided! How  
many would rejoice, should I join and make a party  
against you! And, in one word, how would the cause  
of our common Master every way suffer by our raising  
disputes about particular points of doctrine! Honoured  
sir, let us offer salvation freely to all by the blood of  
Jesus; and whatever light God has communicated to us,  
let us freely communicate it to others. I have lately  
read the life of Luther, and think it nowise to his honour,  
that the last part of his life was so much taken up in  
disputing with Zuinglius and others, who in all pro-  
bability equally loved the Lord Jesus, notwithstanding  
they might differ from him in other points. Let this,  
dear sir, be a caution to us; I hope it will be to me;  
for, by the blessing of God, provoke me to it as much as  
you please, I do not think ever to enter the lists of con-  
troversy with you on the points wherein we differ. Only  
I pray to God, that, the more you judge me, the more I  
may love you, and learn to desire no one’s approbation  
but that of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ.’ Unfor-  
tunately he did not abide by these truly Christian pur-  
poses, neither was Wesley so forbearing as he ought  
to have been.

Whitefield’s kind heart was busy with another good  
work while he was gathering the orphans to his house.  
That month’s ride through Maryland, Virginia, and  
Carolina had brought him near slavery and all its revolt-  
ing accessories; and he was pained at the heart. It  
would not do to be silent about the wrongs of such as  
had no helper; he took pen in hand, and wrote to the  
inhabitants of those three states:—

‘As I lately passed through your provinces ’ [he says] ‘in my  
way hither, I was sensibly touched with a fellow feeling of the  
miseries of the poor Negroes. Could I have preached more  
frequently among you, I should have delivered my thoughts to  
you in my public discourses; but, as business here required me  
to stop as little as possible on the road, I have no other way to  
discharge the concern which at present lies upon my heart,  
than by sending you this letter. How you will receive it  
I know not. Whether you will accept it in love, or be  
offended with me, as the master of the damsel was with Paul  
for casting the evil spirit out of her, when he saw the hope of  
his gain was gone, is uncertain; but, whatever be the event, I  
must inform you, in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that  
I think God has a quarrel with you for your abuse of and  
cruelty to the poor Negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians  
to buy slaves, and thereby encourage the nations from whence  
they are brought to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall  
not take upon me to determine; but sure I am it is sinful,  
when bought, to use them as bad as, nay worse than, brutes;  
and whatever particular exceptions there may be (as I would  
certainly hope there are some), I fear the generality of you that  
own Negroes are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I  
believe, work as hard, if not harder, than the horses whereon  
you ride. These, after they have done their work, are fed and  
taken proper care of; but many Negroes, when wearied with  
labour in your plantations, have been obliged to grind their  
own corn after they return home.

‘Your dogs are caressed and fondled at your tables; but your  
slaves, who are frequently styled dogs or beasts, have not an  
equal privilege; they are scarce permitted to pick up the  
crumbs which fall from their masters’ tables; nay, some, as I

have been informed by an eyewitness, have been, upon the most  
trifling provocation, cut with knives, and have had forks thrown  
into their flesh; not to mention what numbers have been given  
up to the inhuman usage of cruel taskmasters, who, by their  
unrelenting scourges, have ploughed upon their backs and made  
long furrows, and at length brought them even to death itself.

‘Tis true, I hope, there are but few such monsters of bar-  
barity suffered to subsist amongst you; some, I hear, have been  
lately executed in Virginia for killing slaves, and the laws are  
very severe against such who at any time murder them.

‘And perhaps it might be better for the poor creatures them-  
selves to be hurried out of life, than to be made so miserable  
as they generally are in it. And indeed, considering what usage  
they commonly meet with, I have wondered that we have not  
more instances of self-murder among the Negroes, or that they  
have not more frequently risen up in arms against their owners.  
Virginia has been once, and Charles Town more than once,  
threatened in this way.

‘ And though I heartily pray God they may never be per-  
mitted to get the upper hand, yet, should such a thing be  
permitted by Providence, all good men must acknowledge the  
judgment would be just. For is it not the highest ingratitude,  
as well as cruelty, not to let your poor slaves enjoy some fruits  
of their labour?’

‘ When passing along, whilst I have viewed your plantations  
cleared and cultivated, many spacious houses built, and the  
owners of them faring sumptuously every day, my blood has  
frequently almost run cold within me, to consider how many of  
your slaves had neither convenient food to eat, nor proper  
raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you  
enjoy were solely owing to their indefatigable labours. The  
Scripture says—“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth  
out the corn.” Does God take care of oxen? And will He  
not take care of the Negroes also? Undoubtedly He will.  
“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that  
shall come upon you.” Behold the provision of the poor Negroes  
which have reaped down your fields, which is by you denied  
them, crieth, and the cries of them who reaped are entered into  
the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. We have a remarkable in-  
stance of God’s taking cognisance, and avenging the quarrel of

poor slaves, 2 Sam. xxi. 1: “Then there was a famine in the  
days of David, three years, year after year; and David enquired  
of the Lord. And the Lord answered, It is for Saul and his  
bloody house, because he slew the Gribeonites.” Two things  
here are very remarkable; first, that these Gribeonites were  
only hewers of wood and drawers of water, or, in other words,  
slaves like yours. Secondly, that this plague was sent by Grod,  
many years after the injury, the cause of the plague, was com-  
mitted. And for what end was this and such like examples  
recorded in Holy Scripture? Without doubt for our learning,  
upon whom the ends of the world are come; for God is the  
same to-day as He was yesterday, and will continue the same  
for ever. He does not reject the prayer of the poor and desti-  
tute, nor disregard the cry of the meanest Negroes. Their blood,  
which has been spilt for these many years in your respective  
provinces, will ascend up to heaven against you. I wish I could  
say it would speak better things than the blood of Abel. But  
this is not all. Enslaving or misusing their bodies, compara-  
tively speaking, would be an inconsiderable evil, was proper  
care taken of their souls; but I have great reason to believe  
that most of you on purpose keep your Negroes ignorant of  
Christianity; or otherwire, why are they permitted through  
your provinces openly to profane the Lord’s day by their dan-  
cing, piping, and such like? I know the general pretence for  
this neglect of their souls is, that teaching them Christianity  
would make them proud, and consequently unwilling to submit  
to slavery. But what a dreadful reflection is this upon your  
holy religion! What blasphemous notions must those have  
that make such an objection of the precepts of Christianity.  
Do you find any one command in the gospel that has the least  
tendency to make people forget their relative duties? Do you  
not read that servants, and as many as are under the yoke of  
bondage, are required to be subject in all lawful things to their  
masters, and that not only to the good and gentle, but also to  
the froward? Nay, may I not appeal to your own hearts,  
whether deviating from the laws of Christ Jesus is not the cause  
of all the evils and miseries mankind now universally groan  
under, and of all the vices we find both in ourselves and others?  
But what Christianity were they taught? They were baptized,  
and taught to read and write; and this they may do, and much

more, and yet be far from the kingdom of God; for there is a  
vast difference between civilising and Christianising a Negro.  
A black as well as a white man may be civilised by outward  
restraints, and afterwards break through those restraints again;  
but I challenge the world to produce a single instance of a  
Negro’s being made a thorough Christian, and thereby made  
a worse servant: it cannot be. But further, if the teaching  
slaves Christianity has such a bad influence upon their lives,  
why are you generally desirous of having your children taught?  
Think you they are any better by nature than the poor Negroes?  
No, in nowise. Blacks are just as much, and no more, con-  
ceived and born in sin as white men are: both, if born and bred  
up here, I am persuaded are naturally capable of the same im-  
provement. And as for the grown Negroes, I am apt to think,  
whenever the gospel is preached with power amongst them,  
that many will be effectually brought home to God. Your  
present and bad usage of them, however ill-designed, may thus  
far do them good as to break their wills, increase the sense of  
their natural misery, and consequently better dispose their  
minds to accept the redemption wrought out for them by the  
death and obedience of Jesus Christ. Not long since God hath  
been pleased to make some of the Negroes in New England  
vessels of mercy, and some I hear have been brought to cry  
out, “What shall we do to be saved?” in the province of  
Pennsylvania. Doubtless there is a time when the fulness of  
the Gentiles will come in; and then, I believe, if not before,  
these despised slaves will find the gospel of Christ to be the  
power of Grod to their salvation, as well as we. But I know all  
arguments to prove the necessity of taking care of your Negroes’  
souls, though never so conclusive, will prove ineffectual till  
you are convinced of the necessity of securing the salvation of  
your own. That you yourselves are not effectually convinced  
of this, I think, is too notorious to want evidence. A general  
deadness as to divine things, and not to say a general profane-  
ness, is discernible both in pastors and people.

‘Most of you are without any teaching priest; and, what-  
ever quantity of rum there may be, yet I fear but very few  
bibles are annually imported into your different provinces. God  
has already begun to visit for this as well as for other wicked  
things. For near two years last past He has been, in a remark-

able manner, contending with the people of South Carolina;  
their houses have been depopulated with the small-pox and  
fever, and their own slaves have risen up in arms against them.  
These judgments are undoubtedly sent abroad, not only that  
the inhabitants of that, but of other provinces should learn  
righteousness; and, unless you all repent, you all must in like  
manner expect to perish. God first generally corrects us with  
whips; if that will not do, He must chastise us with scorpions.  
A foreign enemy is now threatening to invade you; and nothing  
will more provoke God to give you up as a prey into their teeth  
than impenitence and unbelief. Let these be removed, and the  
sons of violence shall not be able to hurt you: no, your oxen  
shall be strong to labour; there shall be no decay of your  
people by epidemical sickness, no leading away into captivity  
from abroad, and no complaining in your streets at home.  
Your sons shall grow up as young plants, and your daughters  
be as the polished corners of the temple; and, to sum up all  
blessings in one, “Then shall the Lord be your God.” That  
you may be the people who are in such a happy case is the  
earnest prayer of

Your sincere well-wisher and servant in Christ,

‘George Whitefield.’

Whitefield was absolutely blind to the wickedness of  
slavery as slavery; it was only the brutal conduct of some  
of the masters that appeared wrong to him. At his first  
visit to Georgia he expressed his persuasion that the  
colony must always continue feeble, if the people were  
denied the use of rum and slaves; and he afterwards dis-  
honoured himself by becoming a slave-owner, and work-  
ing his slaves for the good of the orphanage. There is  
little or nothing to be said in extenuation of his conduct;  
for though it was a popular notion in his day, that slavery  
was permissible, it was not the notion of every one; and  
he might have come to a better understanding of the  
subject had he pondered it. Among his Quaker friends  
there were some who could have led him into the light,  
had he spent time enough ill conferring with them; but

his incessant preaching gave him no opportunity for  
thinking and forming an independent conclusion. He  
had only one thought, and cared nothing for a second,  
because the first was paramount. It might have been  
impossible for him to preach, and at the same time plead  
for the freedom of the Negroes; but at least he might  
have kept his own hands clean, and have given a prac-  
tical rebuke to his neighbours’ sins. One sentence in his  
letter shows that his mind might have arrived at a just  
conclusion but for the hurry which called him away to  
other things, ‘Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy  
slaves, and thereby encourage the nations from whence  
they are brought to be at perpetual war with each other,  
I shall not take upon me to determine.’ But that was  
just the thing he was bound to determine; and, if his  
convictions on the unlawfulness of war for religious ends  
had any depth in them, which hardly appears to have  
been the case, he must have concluded that war for en-  
slaving men who were of the same flesh as their captors  
and buyers, and of equal value in the sight of God, must  
be much less justifiable than religious wars. It may be  
safely affirmed that the lash was never used on the farm  
where the orphan-house stood; that the children were not  
brutalised by the sight of cruelty; and that the Negroes  
did not go home weary and sore to grind their corn for  
the evening meal. But there must have been some things  
to offend,—almost certainly, separation between husband  
and wife, between parents and children. Orphaned hearts  
must have toiled in the fields to support the orphans in  
the home.

On the day of the appearance of the letter to the  
slave-owners, Seward chronicled in his journal a story  
which well illustrates the quality of Negro human nature.  
He says, ‘Heard of a drinking-club that had a Negro boy  
attending them, who used to mimic people for their di-  
version. The gentlemen bid him mimic our brother

Whitefield, which he was very unwilling to do; but they  
insisting upon it he stood up, and said, “I speak the  
truth in Christ, I lie not; unless you repent, you will all  
be damned.” This unexpected speech broke up the  
club, which has not met since.’

Within six days of the ceremony at Bethesda, White-  
field was called northward by the claims of the orphans,  
who must be maintained; and nothing could be found for  
them in Georgia. He sailed in his sloop, and no sooner  
got on board than he devoted his time to the writing of  
as strange and loveless a love letter as ever came from  
the hand of the most witless boor. It was addressed to  
an English lady at Blendon:—

‘*To Mr, ancl Mrs. D.*

‘On "board the “ Savannah,” bound to Philadelphia  
 from Georgia. April 4, 1740.

‘My dear friends,—Since I wrote last we have buried our  
Sister L. Rachel I left at Philadelphia, and Sister T. seems  
to he in a declining state; so that Sister A. alone is like  
to he left of all the women who came over with me from  
England. I find by experience that a mistress is absolutely  
necessary for the due management of my increasing family, and  
to take off some of that care which at present lies upon me.  
Besides, I shall in all probability, at my next return from  
England, bring more women with me; and I find, unless they  
are all truly gracious (or indeed if they are), without a superior  
matters cannot he carried on as becometh the gospel of Christ  
Jesus. It hath been, therefore, much impressed upon my heart  
that I should marry, in order to have a helpmeet for me in the  
work whereunto our dear Lord Jesus hath called me. This  
comes (like Abraham’s servant to Rebekah’s relations) to know  
whether you think your daughter, Miss E., is a proper person  
to engage in such an undertaking? If so, whether you will be  
pleased to give me leave to propose marriage unto her? You  
need not he afraid of sending me a refusal. For, I bless God,  
if I know anything of my own heart, I am free from that foolish  
passion which the world calls Love. I write only because I

believe it is the will of God that I should alter my state; but  
your denial will fully convince me that your daughter is not  
the person appointed by God for me. He knows my heart. I  
would not marry but for Him, and in Him, for ten thousand  
worlds. But I have sometimes thought Miss E. would be  
my helpmate; for she has often been impressed upon my heart.  
I should think myself safer in your family, because so many  
of you love the Lord Jesus, and consequently would be more  
watchful over my precious and immortal soul. After strong  
crying and tears at the throne of grace for direction, and after  
unspeakable troubles with my own heart, I write this. Be  
pleased to spread the letter before the Lord, and if you think  
this motion to be of Him, be pleased to deliver the enclosed  
to your daughter. If not, say nothing, only let me know you  
disapprove of it, and that shall satisfy, dear sir and madam,

‘Your obliged friend and servant in Christ,

‘George Whitefield.’

The enclosure ran thus: —

‘*To Miss E.*

‘On board the Savannah, Apil 4, 1740.

‘Be not surprised at the contents of this. The letter sent  
to your honoured father and mother will acquaint you with  
the reasons. Do you think you could undergo the fatigues  
that must necessarily attend being joined to one who is every  
day liable to be called out to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ?  
Can you bear to leave your father and kindred’s house, and to  
trust on Him who feedeth the young ravens that call upon him  
for your own and children’s support, supposing it should please  
Him to bless you with any? Can you undertake to help a  
husband in the charge of a family consisting of a hundred  
persons? Can you bear the inclemencies of the air, both as to  
cold and heat, in a foreign climate? Can you, when you have  
a husband, be as though you had none, and willingly part with  
him, even for a long season, when his Lord and Master shall  
call him forth to preach the gospel, and command him to leave  
you behind? If, after seeking to God for direction and search-  
ing vour heart, vou can say, “I can do all those things through  
Christ strengthening me,” what if you and I were joined together

in the Lord, and you came with me at my return from England,  
to be a helpmeet for me in the management of the orphan-  
house? I have great reason to believe it is the Divine will  
that I should alter my condition, and have often thought yon  
was the person appointed for me. I shall still wait on God for  
direction, and heartily entreat Him that, if this motion be not  
of Him, it may come to nought. I write thus plainly, because,  
I trust, I write not from any other principles but the love of  
God. I shall make it my business to call on the Lord Jesus,  
and would advise you to consult both Him and your friends.  
For, in order to attain a blessing, we should call both the Lord  
Jesus and His disciples to the marriage. I much like the  
manner of Isaac’s marrying with Rebekah, and think no marriage  
can succeed well unless both parties are like-minded with Tobias  
and his wife. I think I can call the God of Abraham, Isaac,  
and Jacob to witness, that I desire to take you my sister to  
wife, not for lust, but “uprightly; and therefore I hope He will  
mercifully ordain, if it be His blessed will that we should be  
joined together, that we may walk as Zachary and Elizabeth  
did, in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless.” I make no  
great profession to you, because I believe you think me sincere.  
The passionate expressions which carnal courtiers use, I think  
ought to be avoided by those that would marry in the Lord. I  
can only promise, by the help of God, “to keep my matrimonial  
vow, and to do what I can towards helping you forward in the  
great work of salvation.” If you think marriage will be any  
way prejudicial to your better part, be so kind as to send me a  
denial. I would not be a snare to you for the world. You  
need not be afraid of speaking your mind. I trust I love you  
only for God, and desire to be joined to you only by His com-  
mand, and for His sake. With fear and much trembling I write,  
and shall patiently tarry the Lord’s leisure, till He is pleased to  
incline you, dear Miss E., to send an answer to

‘ Your affectionate brother, friend, and servant in Christ,

‘ George Whitefield.’

‘Dear Miss E.’ did not care to be wooed for a house-  
keeper instead of a wife; and Whitefield stood a rejected  
suitor, but not a disappointed lover, for he subsequently

learned that at the time of his offer the lady was ‘in a  
seeking state only;’ besides, he was not in love.

The sloop made a quick passage to Newcastle, from  
whence Whitefield hastened his journey to Philadelphia  
by way of Willingtown. The truth had not been in-  
active during the absence of its eloquent preacher; some  
it had conquered, others it had hardened and driven into  
open hostility. All around Philadelphia, as well as in  
the city, there was much religious excitement; and many  
ministers, who had been of the ‘Pharisee-teacher class,’  
had become earnest, active labourers, and were following  
up Whitefields work. The minister of Abingdon passed  
through a very great trial before he entered into the  
spiritual peace enjoyed by Whitefield; and his honesty  
of conduct attests his sincerity of mind. He had been  
for some years a preacher of the doctrines of grace with-  
out knowing the power of what he taught, until White-  
field came and preached for him. After Whitefield’s  
departure he attempted to preach, but failed. Humbly  
confessing to his congregation the deception he had prac-  
tised on himself and them, he asked those of them who  
could pray to make intercession for him. Still anxious  
and unsettled, he again resumed his work; for he judged  
that in the way of duty he would be the most likely to  
find light and peace; nor was he left without the blessing  
he so earnestly desired. A congregation which had a  
pastor in such a state of mind could hardly fail to receive  
Whitefield’s word with deep emotion; ‘a great influ-  
ence was observable’ among them when he spoke, and  
‘the word came with a soul-convicting and comforting  
power to many.’

The Commissary of Philadelphia told Whitefield that  
he could lend him his pulpit no more. Thanking God  
that the fields were open, he betook himself to Society  
Hill next day, and preached in the morning to six thou-  
sand, and in the evening to eight thousand. On the fol-

lowing Sunday morning, at seven o’clock, ten thousand  
assembled to hear him, and gave him one hundred and  
ten pounds for his orphans. The same day he went  
morning and evening to church, and had the comfort of  
being treated as he treated others who did not think with  
him. The minister preached upon justification by works,  
and did his best to damage Whitefield’s favourite doctrine  
of justification by faith, though with ill success; for many  
hearers who had entered church on seeing Whitefield go  
in, were more deeply persuaded than ever of the truth of  
evangelical doctrines. Besides, such attacks made him  
look like a persecuted man, and gave him something to  
answer; hence it was no wonder that, when he went from  
the church to preach in the open air, fifteen thousand  
people came together. A second collection of eighty  
pounds showed that more than curiosity, or a desire to  
hear a reply, had moved them to come.

From Franklin to tipplers there was one subject of  
conversation. The tipplers, Whitefield says, ‘would  
mutter in coffee-houses, give a curse, drink a bowl of  
punch, and then cry out against me for not preaching up  
more morality. From such profane moralists may I  
always turn away.’ Franklin was amazed at the way in  
which people of all denominations went to hear him: he  
speculated on the extraordinary influence of Whitefield’s  
oratory on his hearers, and on their admiration and re-  
spect for him, notwithstanding they were often told that  
they were naturally half beasts and half devils. He won-  
dered to see the change soon made in the manners of the  
inhabitants; how, from being thoughtless or indifferent  
about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing  
religious, so that no one could walk through the town of  
an evening without hearing psalms sung in different  
families of every street.

The indiscreet zeal of Seward might, during this visit,  
have cost both him and Whitefield, whom he seems to

have fawned upon, very serious consequences. Excited  
at finding that a son of Penn was one of the proprietors  
of the assembly rooms, he obtained the key of the rooms  
from the keeper, under a promise that he would take the  
consequences, and then locked the door, to drive out all  
the people to hear Whitefield. This freak cost him a  
good deal of abuse, a threat that he should be caned, and  
the maintenance of the keeper’s family; and, well as he  
deserved what he got, he mistook it for persecution!  
Another of his follies was to trumpet Whitefield’s praises  
in the newspapers by writing both advertisements and  
paragraphs. He gave his own colouring in the New  
York papers to his exploit with the assembly rooms, and  
made it appear that the rooms had been closed by some  
one in authority. His disingenuous paragraph was as  
follows: ‘We hear from Philadelphia, that, since Mr.  
Whitefield’s preaching there, the dancing-school and  
concert-room have been shut up as inconsistent with the  
doctrines of the gospel; at which some gentlemen were  
so enraged that they broke open the door. It is most  
extraordinary that such devilish diversions should be sup-  
ported in that city, and by some of that very sect whose  
first principles are an utter detestation of them, as appears  
from William Penn’s “No Cross, no Crown,” in which he  
says, “every step in a dance is a step to hell.” ’ Cir-  
cumstances called both Gladman and Seward away from  
Whitefield’s side before New York was reached; and it  
cannot be regretted that the latter, much as Whitefield  
was attached to him, never returned.1 They were des-

1 Here is a scene in Benjamin Franklin’s shop, occasioned by this para-  
graph. ‘May 23, 1740.—Called at Mr. Franklin’s the printer’s, and met  
Mr. P. and several other gentlemen of the Assembly, who accosted me  
very roughly concerning a paragraph I had put in the papers, alleging it to  
be false. They much insisted that my paragraph insinuated as if the gen-  
tlemen were convicted of their error by Mr. Whitefield’s preaching, which  
they abhorred. I told them I thought no one would construe it so; but if  
they did, it was an honour to them, for that I myself was formerly as fond  
of them as they could be, but, blessed be the Lord! that I was convinced to

patched to England to bring over some one to take  
charge of the orphanage in Whitefield’s absence, to ac-  
quaint the Trustees of Georgia with the state of the colony,  
to procure an allowance of Negroes—that is, slaves; also  
a free title to the lands, an independent magistracy, and  
money for building the church at Savannah. Seward  
died in England before his work was done.

Sick and weary, Whitefield preached his way from  
Philadelphia to New York, where his friend Mr. Noble  
received him. A strong, healthy man might flatter him-  
self that he had achieved marvels, could he say that he  
had done as much as Whitefield did there under weak-  
ness of body and much loneliness of heart. The services  
were early and late, numerous, sometimes in the fields,  
and attended by crowds which few speakers could have  
made hear. Brotherly kindness was there to cheer him,  
and the generosity of the people, who gave him three  
hundred pounds, stirred all his gratitude. It was here,  
too, that he received the first of those childish letters  
from his dear orphans, which were afterwards to reach  
him both in England and America. He does not say  
what they contained, but only that in a packet of letters  
from Charles Town and Savannah ‘were two or three  
from my little orphans.’

Still feeble and low in spirits, he preached his way back  
from New York to Philadelphia, and was welcomed to the  
house of good Anthony Benezet;1 but to tell how he

the contrary.’—‘Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia, &c.  
By William Seward, Gent., companion in travel with the Rev. Mr. George  
Whitefield,’ 1740.

1i Anthony Benezet was the personal friend of Mr. Whitefield, who fre-  
quently lodged at his house whenever he visited Philadelphia. His father  
was one of the many Protestants who, in consequence of the persecutions  
which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, sought an asylum in  
foreign countries. After serving an apprenticeship in an eminent mercantile  
house in London, he removed to Philadelphia, where he joined in profession  
the Quakers. He considered the accumulation of wealth as of no importance  
when compared with the enjoyment of doing good; and he chose the humble,

preached and was preached against—how he comforted  
the sin-stricken and cared for the Negroes, who came in  
large numbers to ask for his counsel, would be to repeat  
a tale already told. A new feature, however, was be-  
ginning to manifest itself in his congregations, though it  
was not very remarkable until he reached Nottingham,  
where the Tennents and other men of a similar spirit had  
been labouring with much success for some time, and to  
which he was invited in the strongest terms by some of  
the inhabitants. Thinly populated as the place was,  
nearly twelve thousand people were assembled, many of  
them having come from a great distance; indeed, it was  
common for a great number to go with him as far from  
their homes as they conveniently could; and, on the  
morning when he last left Philadelphia, two boats that  
plied the ferry near Derby were employed from three  
o’clock in the morning until ten, in ferrying passengers  
across who wanted to hear him as often as possible. He  
had not spoken long before he perceived numbers melt-  
ing; as he proceeded the influence increased, till at last,  
both in the morning and afternoon, thousands cried out,  
so that they almost drowned his voice. ‘Oh, what strong  
crying and tears,’ he says, ‘were shed and poured forth

despised, but beyond appreciation useful and honourable, situation of a  
schoolmaster, as according best with this notion, believing that, by endea-  
vouring to train up youth in knowledge and virtue, he should become more  
extensively useful than in any other way to his fellow-creatures. His works  
on the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British dominions  
contained a clear and distinct development of the subject, and became emi-  
nently instrumental in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of  
the trade. He died at Philadelphia in the spring of 1784. The interment  
of his remains was attended by several thousands of all ranks, professions,  
and parties, including some hundreds of those poor Africans who had been  
personally benefited by his labours, and whose behaviour on the occasion  
showed the gratitude and affection they considered to be due to him as the  
benefactor of their whole race. It was at this amiable philanthropist’s  
funeral, when hundreds of weeping Negroes stood round, that an American  
officer said, “I would rather be Anthony Benezet in that coffin than General  
Washington with all his fame.” ’—‘The Life and Times of the Countess of  
Huntingdon,’ vol. ii. p. 266.

after the dear Lord Jesus! Some fainted, and when they  
had got a little strength, they would hear and faint again.  
Others cried out in a manner almost as if they were in  
the sharpest agonies of death. And after I had finished  
my last discourse, I myself was so overpowered with a  
sense of God’s love, that it almost took away my life.  
However, at length I revived, and having taken a little  
meat, was strengthened to go with Messrs. Blair, Tennent,  
and some other friends to Mr. Blair’s house, about twenty  
miles from Nottingham. In the way we refreshed our  
souls by singing psalms and hymns. We got to our  
journey’s end about midnight, where, after we had taken  
a little food, and recommended ourselves to God by  
prayer, we went to rest, and slept, I trust, in the favour  
as well as under the protection of our dear Lord Jesus.  
Oh Lord, was ever love like Thine?’ The next day, at  
Fog’s Manor, where Blair was minister, the congregation  
was as large as that at Nottingham, and as great, White-  
field says, ‘if not a greater, commotion was in the hearts  
of the people. Look where I would, most were drowned  
in tears. The word was sharper than a two-edged sword,  
and their bitter cries and groans were enough to pierce  
the hardest heart. Oh, what different visages were then  
to be seen! Some were struck pale as death, others were  
wringing their hands, others lving on the ground, others  
sinking into the arms of their friends, and most lifting up  
their eyes towards heaven, and crying out to God for  
mercy! I could think of nothing, when I looked upon  
them, so much as the great day. They seemed like per-  
sons awakened by the last trump, and coming out of their  
graves to judgment.’ The people, agitated and under  
violent convictions of guilt, and dread of the wrath of  
God, came many miles to seek his advice, followed him,  
indeed, as far as Newcastle, where his sloop, now under  
the charge of its former mate, lay ready to receive him  
and take him to Savannah.

His affectionate nature was beautifully shown in the  
many thoughtful letters and messages which he addressed  
to all kinds of friends during the time that the sloop  
waited for a fair wind. Always more prone to be too  
open than too reticent, he speaks without once thinking  
of the common safeguards which the timid place around  
themselves. He sends, in a letter to a Philadelphia  
friend, his ‘love to Negro Peggy and all her black  
sisters,’ and asks them to pray for him. All converts,  
all persons who had shown him kindness, all inquirers  
after truth, are regarded as personal friends. But the  
affection he was wont to inspire was strongest in the  
hearts of the orphans and his dependent family, and, on  
his return to Savannah with the five hundred pounds that  
he had collected among the northern churches, each in  
turn hung upon his neck, kissed him, and wept over him  
with tears of joy. Several of his parishioners came and  
joined the rejoicing family in weeping, praying, and  
giving of thanks.

Next day the house was a miniature Nottingham-Pog-  
Manor congregation. The excitement began with a man  
who had come with him from the scenes of his preaching  
triumphs, and who became much stirred up to pray for  
himself and others. Whitefield also went and prayed for  
half an hour with some of the women of the house and  
three girls, who seemed to be weary with the weight of  
their sins. At public worship, young and old were all  
dissolved in tears. After service, several of his parishion-  
ers, all his family, and the little children, returned home  
crying along the street, and some could not refrain from  
praying loudly as they went. Weak and exhausted he  
lay down for a little rest, but the condition of most in  
the house constrained him to rise again and pray; and  
had he not lifted his voice very high, the groans and  
cries of the children would have prevented his being  
heard. This lasted for nearly an hour, and the concern

increasing rather than abating, he wisely desired them to  
retire. They did so, and then began to pray in every corner  
of the house. A storm of thunder and lightning which burst  
over the town at this time added to the solemnity of the  
night, and reminded them the more vividly of the coming  
of the Son of Man. All were not quiet even the next day.  
And no marvel, when we consider how profoundly inter-  
ested every one had been in the result of Whitefield’s trip  
to the North. His success was their home, their comfort,  
their life; and his failure their return to want and misery.  
His coming opened the fountain of all hearts, and natural  
gratitude quickly rose into higher religious emotions  
under his influence, by whom God had wrought penitence,  
broken-heartedness, and reformation among total stran-  
gers, among rugged sailors, and among opposers, who  
owed him nothing until they owed him themselves.

His return to Savannah introduces us again to the  
Wesley trouble. His last day on board the sloop, May  
24, was partly spent in writing to friends in England,  
John Wesley among the number. He said, ‘Honoured  
sir, I cannot entertain prejudices against your principles  
and conduct any longer without informing you. The  
more I examine the writings of the most experienced  
men and the experiences of the most established Chris-  
tians, the more I differ from your notion about not com-  
mitting sin, and your denying the doctrines of election  
and final perseverance of the saints. I dread coming to  
England, unless you are resolved to oppose these truths  
with less warmth than when I was there last. I dread  
your coming over to America, because the work of God  
is carried on here, and that in a most glorious manner,  
by doctrines quite opposite to those you hold. Here are  
thousands of God’s children who will not be persuaded  
out of the privileges purchased for them by the blood of  
Jesus. Here are many worthy experienced ministers  
who would oppose your principles to the utmost. God

direct me what to do! Sometimes I think it best to stay  
here, where we all think and speak the same thing: the  
work goes on without divisions, and with more success,  
because all employed in it are of one mind. I write not  
this, honoured sir, from heat of spirit, but out of love.  
At present I think you are entirely inconsistent with  
yourself, and therefore do not blame me if I do not  
approve of all that you say. God Himself, I find, teaches  
my friends the doctrine of election. Sister H. hath  
lately been convinced of it; and, if I mistake not, dear  
and honoured Mr. Wesley hereafter will be convinced  
also. From my soul I wish you abundant success in the  
name of the Lord. I long to hear of your being made a  
spiritual father to thousands. Perhaps I may never see  
you again till we meet in judgment; then, if not before,  
you will know that sovereign, distinguishing, irresistible  
grace brought you to heaven. Then you will know that  
God loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore  
with loving-kindness did He draw you. Honoured sir,  
farewell. My prayers constantly attend both you and  
your labours. I neglect no opportunity of writing. My  
next journal will acquaint you with new and surprising  
wonders. The Lord fills me both in body and soul. I  
am supported under the prospect of present and impend-  
ing trials with an assurance of God’s loving me to the  
end, yea, even to all eternity.’ The brotherly spirit is  
still there, but in a more decided attitude towards the  
disputed question, and the treatment it should receive,  
his intercourse with the northern Presbyterians having  
made him change thus much. The counsel to moderation  
and to avoid teaching doctrines on which the Methodist  
leaders were divided was, notwithstanding his resolution,  
made during his last voyage, to speak out, honourably  
acted upon by himself. He wrote to a friend in London  
beseeching him ‘to desire dear brother Wesley, for  
Christ’s sake, to avoid disputing with him. I think I had

rather die than to see a division between us; and yet,  
how can we walk together if we oppose each other?’

In another letter, which was written on June 25, he  
beseeches Wesley, for Christ’s sake, never, if possible, to  
speak against election in his sermons. ‘No one,’ he  
asserts, ‘can say that I ever mentioned it in public dis-  
courses, whatever my private sentiments may be. For  
Christ’s sake let us not be divided among ourselves; no-  
thing will so much prevent a division as your being silent  
on this head.’ Then he runs into a pleasanter strain,  
where his heart was most at home. ‘I should have  
rejoiced at the sight of your journal. I long to sing a  
hymn of praise for what God has done for your soul.  
May God bless you more and more every day, and cause  
you to triumph in every place.’ His generous, trustful  
disposition made him think that his friend would take  
some interest in his work among the orphans, and so he  
added at the end of his letter, ‘My family is well re-  
gulated; but I want some more gracious assistants. I  
have near an hundred and thirty to maintain daily with-  
out any fund. The Lord gives me a full undisturbed  
confidence in His power and goodness. Hear sir, adieu.  
I can write no more; my heart is full. I want to be a  
little child.’

Before these last words reached Wesley, he replied, in  
a very short but kindly letter, to the letter of May 24.  
‘The case is quite plain. There are bigots both for pre-  
destination and against it. God is sending a message to  
those on either side. But neither will receive it, unless  
from one who is of their own opinion. Therefore, for a  
time, you are suffered to be of one opinion, and I of an-  
other. But when His time is come, God will do what man  
cannot, namely, make us both of one mind. Then per-  
secution will flame out, and it will be seen whether we  
count our lives dear unto ourselves, so that we may finish  
our course with joy.’ We look in vain, however, for any

response to the entreaty not to follow a public course of  
hostility to his old friend.

The fashionable people of Charleston, now considerably  
changed in spirit and manner by the preaching of White-  
field, were anxious again to hear him before his intended  
visit to New England. He set sail, and came to them  
fresh from the excitement of Savannah, where, to use his  
own metaphor, ‘the stately steps of our glorious Emma-  
nuel often appeared.’ He was glad to come; the orphan-  
age was becoming so great a burden that he was almost  
tempted to wish he had never undertaken it. Charleston  
had been munificent in its gifts before, and he could be  
sure of help again; he loved change and travel; his mind  
would be relieved from the anxiety of whether he should  
marry or not, for now, knowing that the lady whose hand  
he had sought was not adapted to the work of caring for  
the children, he hesitated whether to abide as he was, or  
to look for another helpmeet. Every difficulty would  
seem less if he again itinerated. His former friend, and  
now virulent enemy, the Commissary of Charleston, gave  
him a warm reception on the first Sunday after his  
arrival, when Whitefield, as was often his custom, went  
to church as a hearer. The sermon was directed against  
Methodists in general, and in particular against the Arch-  
Methodist present in the church. The effect of it was to  
send away in disgust a large number of the congregation,  
who would not receive the sacrament at the hands of  
such a clergyman. Whitefield was waited upon in his  
pew by the clerk, and desired not to approach the table  
till the Commissary had spoken with him. He imme-  
diately retired to his lodgings, rejoicing that he was  
counted worthy to suffer this degree of contempt for his  
Lord’s sake. ‘Blessed Jesus,’ he exclaimed, ‘lay it not  
to the minister’s charge.’ The meeting-house of his friend  
Smith, the Independent minister, was open to him, and  
there he preached the word with power. This exaspe-

rated Mr. Garden, who claimed jurisdiction over him,  
and cited him to appear before himself and some of his  
clergy, to answer for conducting divine worship in the  
meeting-house without reading the common prayer.  
Whitefield appeared thrice in open court, denied the Com-  
missary’s right to interfere with a clergyman of another  
province, and appealed home. It fell out to the further-  
ance of his work. The suit compelled Whitefield to pro-  
long his stay in Charleston, and gave him better reasons  
for deciding to return to England in the following year.

Excursions were made to places near Charleston as  
opportunity offered. The work was carried on under  
great depression from the intense heat of the weather.  
On one of his excursions he was driven to seek repose in  
a public-house, where he lay for a considerable time  
almost breathless and dead; but that evening he preached  
in his appointed place both with freedom and power. To  
preach his last sermon to ‘the dear people of Charleston,’  
he went from his bed, and was carried to the chapel.  
Many of the rich people all around showed him great  
respect and hospitality; and, on the day of his departure  
from Charleston, he rode to the house of Colonel Bee, of  
Ponpon, forty miles from town, which was reached at  
midnight. The next morning he was too weak to offer  
family prayer; but at noon he rode a mile, and preached  
under a great tree to an attentive auditory. Weakness  
hindered either a second sermon, or any further advance  
that day. ‘Surely,’ he said, ‘it cannot be long ere this  
earthly tabernacle will be dissolved. As the hart panteth  
after the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after the full  
enjoyment of Thee, my God.’ The next day he travelled  
and preached, but the effort almost cost him his life. Some-  
times he hoped that God would set his imprisoned soul  
at liberty. The thoughts of his Saviour’s love to him,  
and that the Lord was his righteousness, melted him into  
tears. A dear friend and companion wept over him, and

seemed not unwilling to take his flight with him into  
‘the arms of the beloved Jesus.’ The poor Negroes, who  
had learnt from their master that the sufferer was a  
friend of their race, crowded around the windows, ex-  
pressing by their looks and attentions great concern. The  
master sat by and wept. ‘But, alas!’ says Whitefield,  
who hoped his time of departure was come; ‘alas! in a  
short time, I perceived my body grow stronger, and I  
was enabled to walk about.’ He got back among the  
beloved orphans in a very prostrate condition, and could  
hardly bear up under the joy and satisfaction which he  
felt. The arrival of some Charleston friends somewhat  
revived him; but again he was cast down by weakness  
of body and concern of mind; and one night, just as he  
began family prayer, he was struck, as he thought, with  
death. A few broken accents, a soft prayer—‘Lord  
Jesus receive my spirit’—fell from his lips. Yet he was  
still appointed to life. The next day was Sunday, and  
feeble, indeed, must he have been to give up, as he did,  
the thought of officiating. More friends, however, had  
come in, and when he solicited a Baptist minister, who  
was among the visitors, to preach for him, that gentleman  
peremptorily refused, and urged (so great was his faith  
for another!) that God would strengthen him if he begun.  
And Whitefield stood rebuked. The willing heart mus-  
tered the body’s broken powers for another effort; and  
hardly had his prayer begun when one of the visitors  
dropped, ‘as though shot with a gun.’ The power of  
God’s word, as the visitor himself explained his conduct,  
had entered his heart. He soon arose, and sat attentively  
to hear the sermon. The influence quickly spread abroad,  
and the greatest part of the congregation was under great  
concern. When Whitefield and his friends returned  
home, the Baptist minister said, ‘Did I not tell you God  
would strengthen you?’ Whitefield bowed his head,  
feeling that he was justly reproved, and prayed, when he

recorded the events of the clay in his journal—‘Dearest  
Lord, for thy mercies’ sake, never let me distrust thee  
again. 0 me of little faith!’

Pressing invitations to visit New England having come  
to him from the Rev. Dr. Colman and Mr. Cooper, min-  
isters in Boston, and feeling desirous to see the descend-  
ants of the Puritans, he left his family again, and sailed  
first to Charleston and thence to Rhode Island, several  
Charleston friends accompanying him. By this time his  
frame had recovered something of its former vigour,  
through the cooler weather and the fresh sea breezes, yet  
he was not sanguine, of recovery. Amid his numerous  
engagements in Charleston he found time to write to his  
mother, whom he loved and honoured more and more  
every day, and of whom he had heard from a sailor who  
had seen her early in the year, by whom she had sent a  
message to her son, should he ever see him. He tells her  
that although he is better than he has been, he cannot,  
without a miracle, ‘think of being long below,’ and that  
every day he is longing ‘to be dissolved, and to be with  
Christ.’ On the same day he wrote to Wesley: ‘Last  
night I had the pleasure of receiving an extract of your  
journal. This morning I took a walk and read it. I  
pray God to give it His blessing. Many things, I trust,  
will prove beneficial, especially the account of yourself;  
only, give me leave with all humility to exhort you not  
to be strenuous in opposing the doctrines of election and  
final perseverance, when, by your own confession, “you  
have not the witness of the Spirit within yourself,” and,  
consequently, are not a proper judge. I remember  
dear brother E. told me one day, that “he was con-  
vinced of the perseverance of the saints.” I told him you  
were not. He replied, but he will be convinced when he  
hath got the Spirit himself. I am assured God has now  
for some years given me this living witness in my soul.  
When I have been nearest death, my evidences have been

the clearest. I can say I have been on the borders of  
Canaan, and do every day—nay, almost every moment—  
long for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; not to  
evade sufferings, but with a single desire to see His  
blessed face. I feel His blessed Spirit daily filling my  
soul and body, as plain as I feel the air which I breathe,  
or the food I eat. Perhaps the doctrines of election and  
final perseverance have been abused (and what doctrine  
has not?); but, notwithstanding, it is children’s bread,  
and ought not in my opinion to be withheld from them,  
supposing it is always mentioned with proper cautions  
against the abuse. Dear and honoured sir, I write not  
this to enter into disputation. I hope at this time I feel  
something of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I  
cannot bear the thoughts of opposing; but how can I  
avoid it, if you go about, as your brother Charles once  
said, to drive John Calvin out of Bristol? Alas! I never  
read anything that Calvin wrote; my doctrines I had  
from Christ and His apostles; I was taught them of God.  
My business seems to be chiefly in planting; if God send  
you to water, I praise His name. I wish you a thousand-  
fold increase. I find there is disputing among you about  
election and perfection. I pray God to put a stop to it;  
for what good end will it answer? I wish I knew your  
principles fully. Did you write oftener, and more frankly,  
it might have a better effect than silence and reserve.’  
Whitefield was thoroughly consistent in his pleadings for  
peace. His complaint that Wesley was silent and re-  
served came from his deep dislike of having anything  
hidden. To ‘walk with naked hearts together ’ was his

conception of brotherliness and friendship; and his pa-  
tience was taxed by the cooler temperament of his friend.  
Longer consideration might have led him to believe that  
Wesley’s silence was a sign of unwillingness to dispute;  
but an ardent nature like his cannot understand such pro-  
found self-possession. The day after he wrote to Wesley

he wrote to a friend in Bristol, and said: ‘I hear there  
are divisions among you. Avoid them if possible. The  
doctrines of election and final perseverance I hold as well  
as you. But then they are not to be contended for with  
heat and passion. Such a proceeding will only prejudice  
the cause you would defend. Pray show this to your  
other friends. Exhort them to avoid all clamour and  
evil speaking, and with meekness receive the engrafted  
word which is able to save your soul.’

Rhode Island was expecting its visitor. He reached  
Newport just after the beginning of Sunday evening ser-  
vice, and sat in the church undiscovered, as he thought;  
but friendly eyes had marked him; and, after sermon, a  
gentleman asked him whether his name was not White-  
field. ‘Yes, it was.’ Then the unknown friend would  
provide lodgings for him and his party. Soon a number  
of gentlemen, chief of them all old Mr. Clap, an aged  
dissenting minister, who had held his charge for forty  
years and was much esteemed for his good works, came  
to pay their respects to him. The minister of the Church  
of England consented to Whitefield’s preaching in his  
pulpit. The Assembly one day adjourned its sitting to  
attend divine worship. The people became so eager after  
the truth, that Whitefield could not move about the town,  
even in the darkness of the evening, without being no-  
ticed and followed. A thousand of them once crowded  
round a friend’s house which he had thought to visit pri-  
vately, and others came into the house until every room  
was filled. Taking his stand on the threshold, he  
preached for nearly an hour from the appropriate text,  
‘Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteous-  
ness; for they shall be filled.’ The same respect was  
shown him at Bristol; but his heart was cold in his work,  
and others seemed to feel little. When he had approached  
within four miles of Boston, he was met by the governor’s  
son, several other gentlemen, and two ministers; the

brother-in-law of Dr. Colman received him to his house;  
the governor of Massachusetts, Jonathan Belcher, was  
gratified that he had come, and gave him his special  
friendship; the Commissary was polite, but declined to  
give him the use of the church. Once again were the

meeting-houses and the fields to be his sanctuaries. But,  
before we mingle with the crowds which thronged them,  
it will be necessary to pay some attention to several  
packets of letters which came to him at Boston imme-  
diately after his arrival.

The friends from England wrote him strange things.  
The Methodist camp was distracted with the cries of two  
sections of theologians, holding respectively the views of  
Wesley and Whitefield. To have his favourite doctrine  
of election contested and spoken against, had troubled  
Whitefield; to see a new doctrine, that of perfection, ex-  
alted in its place, ruffled him still more; and the news  
which came to Boston made him offer his first words of  
expostulation. His letter to a friend in England shows  
that he was becoming disturbed by the news which again  
and again came to his ears. ‘Sinless perfection,’ he wrote,

‘I think, is unattainable in this life. Show me a man that  
could ever justly say “I am perfect.” It is enough if we  
can say so when we bow down our heads and give up  
the ghost. To affirm such a thing as perfection, and to  
deny final perseverance, what an absurdity is this! To  
be incapable of sinning, and capable of being damned, is  
a contradiction in terms. From such doctrine may I ever  
turn away! I pray my Lord to carry on His work in  
London, and to keep His church from errors; but there  
must be a sifting time as well as a gathering time.’ To  
Howel Harris he expressed his fears for his place in the  
affection of his English converts. ‘Some of Fetter Lane  
Society, I fear, are running into sad errors; but this  
happens for our trial, especially mine. Those that before,  
I suppose, would have plucked out their eyes for me,

now, I suspect, I shall see very shy, and avoiding me.  
My coming to England will try my fidelity to my Master.’  
His manner to Wesley was the impatience of an unheeded  
affection: ‘Honoured sir,’ he began, ‘this is sent in answer  
to your letter dated March 25. I think I have for some-  
time known what it is to have righteousness, joy, and  
peace in the Holy Ghost. These, I believe, are the pri-  
vileges of the sons of God; but I cannot say I am free  
from indwelling sin. I am sorry, honoured sir, to hear by  
many letters that you seem to own a sinless perfection in  
this life attainable. I think I cannot answer you better  
than a venerable old minister in these parts answered a  
Quaker: “Bring me a man that hath really arrived to  
this, and I will pay his expenses, let him come from  
where he will.” I know not what you may think; I do  
not expect to say indwelling sin is finished and destroyed  
in me, till I bow down my head and give up the ghost.  
Besides, dear sir, what a fond conceit is it to cry up per-  
fection, and yet cry down the doctrine of final perseve-  
rance! But this and many other absurdities you will  
run into, because you will not own election; and you will  
not own election, because you cannot own it without be-  
lieving the doctrine of reprobation. What then is there  
in reprobation so horrid? I see no blasphemy in holding  
that doctrine, if rightly explained. If God might have  
passed by all, He may pass by some. Judge whether it  
is not a greater blasphemy to say, “Christ died for souls  
now in hell.” Surely, dear sir, you do not believe there  
will be a general gaol delivery of damned souls hereafter.  
Oh that you would study the covenant of grace! Oh that  
you were truly convinced of sin and brought to the foot  
of sovereign grace! Elisha Cole, on “God’s Sovereignty,”  
and “Veritas Bedux,” written by Doctor Edwards, are  
well worth your reading. But I have done. If you think  
so meanly of Bunyan and the Puritan writers, I do not  
wonder that you think me wrong. I find your sermon

has had its expected success; it hath set the nation a  
disputing; you will have enough to do now to answer  
pamphlets; two I have already seen. Oh that you would  
be more cautious in casting lots! Oh that you would not  
be too rash and precipitant! If you go on thus, honoured  
sir, how can I concur with you? It is impossible; I  
must speak what I know.’

That ‘great blasphemy,’ if blasphemy it be, was not  
altogether avoided by Whitefield himself, who, in the  
most impassioned way, would call upon his hearers to  
tell him how he could let souls perish for whom Christ  
died: no phrase recurs with greater frequency in his  
tenderest passages. Neither need much emphasis be laid  
upon the doctrine of reprobation, which he seemed to  
regard with unruffled complacency and satisfaction. It  
was only in his letters and in his talk that it got such  
honourable mention. His sermon on ‘The Potter and  
the Clay,’ which might fairly have been supposed to be  
built upon this conception of election and reprobation,  
rests on a far different foundation—the old foundation of  
all theology. Every son of man is, in the sight of God,

‘only as a piece of marred clay;’ being marred, he must  
necessarily be renewed by the Holy Ghost: ‘a short word  
of application’ winds up the whole discourse. After  
declaring, in his own exultant way, that ‘to deliver a  
multitude of souls of every nation, language, and tongue,  
from so many moral evils, and to reinstate them in an  
incomparably more excellent condition than that from  
whence they are fallen, is an end worthy the shedding of  
such precious blood’ as the blood of the Lord Jesus, he  
asks whether this religion ‘is not noble, rational, and truly  
divine?’ ‘And why then,’ he continues, ‘will not all that  
hitherto are strangers to this blessed restoration of their  
fallen natures (for my heart is too full to abstain any  
longer from an application), why will you any longer dis-  
pute, or stand out against it? Why will you not rather

bring your clay to this heavenly Potter, and say from your  
inmost souls, “Turn us, 0 good Lord! and so shall we be  
turned?” This you may and can do; and if you go  
thus far, who knows but this very day, yea this very  
hour, the heavenly Potter may take you in hand, and  
make you vessels of honour fit for the Redeemer’s use?’  
The Boston meeting-houses were filled to the utmost  
of their large dimensions by the congregations which  
crowded to hear the famous clergyman. A terrible and  
unaccountable panic seized one of the congregations as  
it was awaiting his appearance. Some threw themselves  
out of the gallery, others leaped from the windows, and  
some of the strong trampled upon the weak. When he  
came it was a scene of wild confusion. His invincible  
presence of mind did not forsake him, and he announced  
his intention to preach on the common. Many thousands  
followed him through the rain into the field, but there  
were five dead persons left behind in the meeting-house,  
and others were dangerously wounded. The calamity,  
which weighed heavily on his spirits, in nowise damaged  
his popularity; because, notwithstanding the painful sel-  
fishness shown by some of the people in the meeting-  
house, there was a real desire to know the truth.

Neighbouring towns were not forgotten. One of his  
excursions extended over one hundred and seventy-eight  
miles, and had sixteen preachings, yet he returned to  
Boston without being in the least fatigued. The students  
of Cambridge had several visits from him, and his lan-  
guage to them was, according to his after confession,  
made in the most public manner both from the pulpit  
and the press, both harsh and uncharitable. He suffered  
himself to be guided too much by hearsay; and there  
are always plenty of alarmists who can find nothing but  
heresy in tutors, and worldliness in students.

One of his greatest pleasures was to meet with the  
many aged, devout ministers who were in Boston and

its neighbourhood. Old Mr. Clap of Rhode Island, a  
bachelor, who gave away all his income to the poor and  
needy, and stood the constant friend of children, servants,  
and slaves through a ministry of forty years, the most  
venerable man Whitefield had ever seen, a very patriarch  
in the eyes of the young Puritan-worshipper—him we  
have seen among his own people. There was also old  
Mr. Walters, of Roxbury, whose ministry with that of his  
predecessor, Eliot, the apostle of the Indians, had lasted  
in the Roxbury congregation one hundred and six years.  
He complimented Whitefield at the governor’s table by  
calling one of his sermons ‘Puritanismus redivivus.’ Then  
there was ‘the reverend Mr. Rogers, of Ipswich,’ who  
lived to hear three of his sons and a grandson preach  
the gospel: they were all labouring in Whitefield’s day.  
York was blessed with ‘one Mr. Moody, a worthy, plain,  
and powerful minister of Jesus Christ, though now much  
impaired by old age,’ says Whitefield. One who had  
lived by faith for many years, and had been much des-  
pised by bad men, and as much respected by ‘the true  
lovers of the blessed Jesus,’ was just the kind of man to  
attract Whitefield, and accordingly he went to York on  
purpose to see him. Puritan habits still obtained in New  
England; Whitefield relates with satisfaction that the  
‘Sabbath in New England begins on Saturday evening,  
and perhaps is better kept by the ministers and people  
than in any other place in the known (!) world.’[[5]](#footnote-5)

The generosity of Boston was not behind that of any  
place. At Dr. Sewall’s meeting-house an afternoon con-  
gregation gave five hundred and fifty-five pounds to the  
orphanage; and on the same day, at Dr. Colman’s meet-  
ing-house, a second afternoon congregation gave four  
hundred and seventy pounds. The immense number of

people slowly, and as if unwilling to depart without  
giving, left the meeting-house; the minister said that it  
was the pleasantest time he had ever enjoyed in that place  
throughout the whole course of his life. There must  
have been something thoroughly good in these ‘Lord  
Brethren.’

By what power of compression Whitefield contrived  
to press five different services into the Sunday when he  
got those noble collections is not clear, and the perplexity  
is increased on finding that three letters bear the date of  
that autumn day. Well might his animal spirits be  
almost exhausted, and his legs be almost ready to sink  
under him at night. One of the letters, the longest,  
relieved the day with a good humoured piece of banter,  
sent to a brother whose weak mind had been disturbed  
by Whitefield’s neatness of dress; for things were very  
different from the Oxford days, when he neglected him-  
self that he might be a good Christian. Now his dress  
and everything about him was kept in scrupulous order.  
Not a paper in his room was allowed to be out of its  
place, or put up irregularly: every chair and piece of  
furniture was properly arranged when he and his friends  
retired for the night. He thought he could not die easy  
if he had an impression that his gloves were mislaid. ‘I  
could not but smile’—he wrote to his friend—‘to find  
you wink at the decency of my dress. Alas! my brother,  
I have known long since what it is to be in that state  
you are, in my opinion, about to enter into. I myself  
thought once that Christianity required me to go nasty.  
I neglected myself as much as you would have me for  
above a twelvemonth: but when God gave me the spirit  
of adoption, I then dressed decently, as you call it, out  
of principle; and I am more and more convinced that  
the Lord would have me act in that respect as I do.  
But I am almost ashamed to mention any such thing.’  
The second letter of that day’s date informed his friend,

that so many persons came to him under convictions and  
for advice that he scarce had time to eat bread. In the  
third letter he says:—

‘Dear brother Wesley,—What mean you by disputing in all  
your letters? May God give you to know yourself, and then  
you will not plead for absolute perfection, or call the doctrine  
of election a ‘doctrine of devils.” My dear brother, take heed;  
see you are in Christ a new creature. Beware of a false peace;  
strive to enter in at the strait gate; and give all diligence to  
make your calling and election sure. Remember you are but a  
babe in Christ, if so much. Be humble, talk little, think and  
pray much. Let God teach you, and He will lead you into all  
truth. I love you heartily. I pray you may be kept from  
error, both in principle and practice. Salute all the brethren.  
If you must dispute, stay till you are master of the subject;  
otherwise you will hurt the cause you would defend. Study to  
adorn the gospel of our Lord in all things, and forget not to  
pray for

‘Your affectionate friend and servant,

‘George Whitefield.’

The commotion caused in Boston by his presence and  
preaching was not diminished by a report which was  
very current during one of his excursions, that he had  
died suddenly, or had been poisoned; the people were all  
the more rejoiced to see him for their late fear that they  
had lost him. Everything fanned the flame of zeal, both  
in the people and in the preacher, and the end of the  
visit was more remarkable than the beginning. The  
touching words of a little boy, who died the day after he  
heard Whitefield preach, furnished the ground of one of  
Whitefield’s strongest appeals to old and young; imme-  
diately before he died the child said, ‘I shall go to Mr.  
Whitefield’s God.’ Old people bowed their heads in  
grief, not in anger, when the preacher, with a tenderness  
that desired the salvation of all, said, ‘Little children, if  
your parents will not come to Christ, do you come, and

go to heaven without them.’ Like a skilled fisher of  
men he knew that if the children were won, the salvation  
of their parents would be made more probable. The  
last congregation, which consisted of about twenty thou-  
sand, assembled on the common; and the myriad faces,  
thoughtful, eager, attentive, the great weeping, and the  
darkening shades of evening which, towards the close of  
the service, was coming on fast, recalled Blackheath  
scenes of a year before. His labours over, Governor  
Belcher, whose attentions had been most kind and un-  
interrupted, drove him, on the Monday morning, in his  
coach to Charleston Terry, handed him into the boat,  
kissed him, and with tears bade him farewell. Whitefield  
returned with five hundred pounds for his orphans.

It is not, of course, to be supposed that all Boston  
yielded to his teaching. ‘A small set of gentlemen ’  
attributed his power over the people to the force of  
sound and gesture, and in this they agreed with the  
judgment of Dr. Johnson, pronounced towards the close  
of Whitefield’s life. The misfortune of such theories was,  
that, when the sound had died away and the gesture  
could no longer be seen, many of those who had been so  
deeply moved by them continued to live a godly life.  
Nor did these converts object to attend the preaching of  
men who could boast no great histrionic talents. Or-  
dinary congregations were increased in every place of  
worship. People of all classes and all ages were ‘swift  
to hear.’

Whitefield’s intention on leaving Boston was to proceed  
to Northampton to see Jonathan Edwards, whom he  
describes as a ‘solid, excellent Christian, but at present  
weak in body.’ He also gives Edwards a place in the  
regard of the church by saying that he was the ‘grandson  
and successor to the great Stoddard,’ an order of prece-  
dence which would be reversed were he writing to-day.  
A great revival had taken place at Northampton some

five or six years before; and Whitefield’s ministrations  
quickened afresh all the feelings of that memorable  
season. Yet the two great men did not come very close  
together. Whitefield did not make a confidential friend  
of Edwards; and Edwards gave Whitefield very necessary  
cautions about his notions on impulses, and his habit of  
judging others to be unconverted. They, indeed, loved  
each other as servants of the same Lord, and rejoiced in  
each other’s work. Edwards might be seen sitting weeping  
while his visitor preached.

From Northampton he passed on to other places. At  
New Haven he dined with the rector of the college, Mr.  
Clap. The aged governor of the town also received him  
with tears of joy. His preaching here was upon the  
subject of an unconverted ministry; and he did not alto-  
gether avoid his Cambridge fault of censuring too hastily  
and too severely. Biding through Milford, Stratford,  
Fairfield, and Newark, at each of which he preached, he  
came to Stanford, where his words smote with unusual  
effect. Many ministers hung upon his track; and at  
Stanford two of them confessed, with much sorrow, that  
they had laid hands on two young men without asking  
them whether they were born again of God or not. An  
old minister, who could not declare his heart publicly,  
called Whitefield and his friend Mr. Noble out, to beg,  
as well as his choking emotions would allow him, their  
prayers on his behalf. He said that although he had  
been a scholar, and had preached the doctrines of grace  
a long time, he believed that he had never felt the power  
of them in his own soul.

At this point Whitefield set up his ‘Ebenezer,’ and  
gave God thanks for sending him to New England. He  
entered his impressions of what he had seen in his jour-  
nal, and his picture is worth a place on our page. ‘I have  
now,’ he says, ‘had an opportunity of seeing the greatest  
and most populous part of it, and, take it altogether, it

certainly on many accounts exceeds all other provinces  
in America; and, for the establishment of religion, per-  
haps all other parts of the world. Never, surely, was a  
place so well settled in so short a time. The towns all  
through Connecticut and eastward towards York, in the  
province of Massachusetts, near the river-side, are large,  
well peopled, and exceeding pleasant to travel through.  
Every live miles, or perhaps less, you have a meeting-  
house, and, I believe, there is no such thing as a pluralist  
or non-resident minister in both provinces. God has  
remarkably, at sundry times and in divers manners,  
poured out His Spirit in several parts of both provinces;  
and it often refreshed my soul to hear of the faith of  
their good forefathers who first settled in these parts.  
Notwithstanding they had their foibles, surely they were  
a set of righteous men. They certainly followed our  
Lord’s rule, sought first the kingdom of God and his  
righteousness, and, behold! all other things God hath  
added unto them. Many glorious men of God have come  
out of their colleges, and many more, I trust, will be sent  
out from time to time, till time itself shall be no more.  
As for the civil government of New England, it seems to  
be well regulated; and I think, at opening all their  
courts, either the judge or a minister begins with a  
prayer. Family worship, I believe, is generally kept up;  
and the Negroes I think better used in respect both to  
soul and body than in any other province I have yet  
seen: in short, I like New England exceedingly well.’

It was with but a desponding heart, and not expecting  
any great movings of soul among his hearers, that he  
rode towards New York. His companion, Mr. Noble,  
tried to encourage him, by assuring him that his last  
visit had done good to many, and bade him look for  
great things from God. The first service was an earnest  
of things not looked for. Pemberton’s meeting-house  
contained an anxious congregation on Friday morning,

some being hardly able to refrain from crying out; and  
at night the excitement was greater still. On Sunday  
his soul was down in the depths: before going to evening  
service he could only cast himself on the ground before  
God, confessing himself to be a miserable sinner, and  
wondering that Christ would be gracious to such a  
wretch. On his way to the meeting-house, he became  
weaker; and when he entered the pulpit he would rather  
have been silent than have spoken. The preparation for  
his work was such as only devoutest souls, who feel a  
constant need for the comfort and aid of an invisible  
Friend, can have; and the effect of the sermon was  
marvellous. Scarcely was it begun before the whole  
congregation was alarmed. Loud weeping and crying  
arose from every corner of the building. Many were so  
overcome with agitation that they fell into the arms of  
their friends. Whitefield himself was so carried away,  
that he spoke until he could hardly speak any longer.

Larger congregations came the next day, and the feel-  
ing was still intense. In the evening he bade them fare-  
well, and carrying with him a hundred and ten pounds as  
their gift to his orphanage, passed across to Staten Island.  
At Newark the scenes of New York were renewed. The  
word fell like a hammer and like fire. Looking pale  
and sick as if ready to die, one cried as he staggered to  
the ground, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ Whitefield’s  
host from Charleston, who seemed to be accompanying him  
because of a personal affection for him, and not because of  
thorough religious sympathy with him, was struck down  
and so overpowered that his strength quite left him: it  
was with difficulty he could move all the night after.  
From that time he became an exemplary Christian,  
and continued such to the last. Whitefield was now  
thoroughly spent, and could only throw himself upon  
the bed, and listen to his friend Tennent while he re-  
counted a preaching excursion he had lately made. The

power of the Divine Presence passed on with them to  
Baskinridge, where weeping penitents and rejoicing be-  
lievers prayed side by side. The apathy of many was  
changed into deep alarm, and the alarm passed into ex-  
ultant joy. ‘He is come! He is come!’ shouted one of  
the hearers, while Whitefield was speaking, the reve-  
lation of the Lord Jesus Christ to his soul having made  
self-restraint impossible. Most of them spent the rest of  
the night in praying and praising.

His departure was like that of an old and well-beloved  
friend; they crowded round his horse to shake hands  
with him: a poor Negro woman got leave from her  
master to join his company, and came prepared to go  
with him, but he advised her to go home, and serve her  
present master with a thankful heart.

Whitefield reached Philadelphia exactly a year after  
his first visit to that city. The season of the year,  
November, was too late for comfortable open-air services;  
and the Philadelphia people, having once suffered from  
inconvenience, had made provision against it for the  
future. Whitefield had not been long gone when they  
determined to build a house which should be at the  
disposal of any preacher who had anything to say to  
them, but his accommodation was their first object.  
Persons were appointed to receive subscriptions; land  
was bought; and the building, which was one hundred  
feet long and seventy broad, begun. When White-  
field returned, it was well advanced, though the roof  
was not up. The floor was boarded, and a pulpit raised;  
and he had the satisfaction of preaching the first sermon  
in it. It afterwards became, by common consent, an  
academy as well as a preaching place, and is now the  
Union Methodist Episcopal Church.

This visit was similar to the previous one; only a  
success and a failure were noticeable. Brockden, the  
recorder, a man of more than threescore years, came

under the power of Whitefield’s words. In his youth he  
had had some religious thoughts, but the cares of busi-  
ness banished them, and he at length sunk almost into  
atheism. His avowed belief, however, was deism; on  
behalf of which he was a very zealous advocate. At  
Whitefield’s first visit he did not so much as care to see  
what his oratory was like; and at the second visit he would  
not have gone to hear him but· for the persuasion of a  
deistical friend. He went at night when Whiteiield was  
preaching from the court-house steps, upon the conference  
which our Lord had with Nicodemus. Not many words  
were spoken before his interest was awakened by the con-  
viction that what he was hearing tended to make people  
good. He returned home, reaching it before his wife or any  
of his family. First his wife entered, and expressed her  
hearty wish that he had heard the sermon; but he said  
nothing. Another member of the family came in, and  
made the same remark; still he said nothing. A third  
returned and repeated the remark again. ‘Why,’ said  
he, with tears in his eyes, ‘I have been hearing him.’  
The old man continued steadfast in the truth, and was  
privileged to have spiritual joys as deep as his teacher’s.

It was news in Philadelphia one day that Whitefield  
had failed to make his congregation cry! He had been  
led to speak against unreasoning unbelievers—not a very  
pathetic subject—and the fountain of tears would not flow.  
‘What,’ said one of these same unbelievers to a friend of  
Whitefield, ‘what! Mr. Whitefield could not make the  
people cry this afternoon.’ ‘A good reason for it,’ was  
the reply, ‘he was preaching against deists, and you know  
they are a hardened generation.’ His eagerly expected  
preaching tour closed at Reedy Island.

‘Before I go on,’ he said, ‘stop, 0 my soul! and look  
back with gratitude on what the Lord hath done for thee  
during this excursion. I think it is now the seventy-fifth  
day since I arrived at Rhode Island. My body was then

weak, but the Lord has much renewed its strength. I  
have been enabled to preach, I think, one hundred and  
seventy-five times in public, besides exhorting frequently  
in private. I have travelled upwards of eight hundred  
miles, and gotten upwards of seven hundred pounds ster-  
ling in goods, provisions, and money for the Georgia  
orphans. Never did God vouchsafe me greater comforts.  
Never did I perform my journeys wdth so little fatigue,  
or see such a continuance of the Divine Presence in the  
congregations to whom I have preached. “Praise the  
Lord, 0 my soul! and all that is within me praise His  
holy name.”’

A pleasant sail carried him to Charleston, where he  
preached a comforting sermon, to compose the minds of  
the people under heavy losses which they had sustained  
by a great fire, three hundred houses in the best part of  
the town having perished in three hours. He came next  
to Savannah, and learning that his family had been re-  
moved to their permanent house at Bethesda, he went  
thither. The great house, he found, would not be  
finished for two months longer, in consequence of the  
Spaniards having captured a schooner laden with bricks  
intended for it, and with provisions intended for the  
workmen and the children. He found also that a planter,  
who had learned of Christ at the orphanage, had sent the  
family rice and beef, and that the Indians had often  
brought in large supplies of venison when there was no  
food left. The work of religion, which was dearer to  
him than even feeding the orphan, prospered among the  
children, among the labourers, and among the people  
round about. His heart was contented with his work,  
although he was five hundred pounds in debt after all his  
exhausting labours and the generous gifts of his friends.  
He now appointed Mr. Barber to take care of the spiritual  
affairs of the institution, and intrusted to James Haber-  
sham the charge of its temporal affairs. The institution

anticipated, in its cheerful tone and wise management,  
those well-ordered schools which in later times have  
brightened childhood’s years in thousands of instances.  
Religion was the great concern; but due weight was laid  
upon the connexion between its emotional and its practical  
parts. Praying might not exempt from working in the  
fields or at some trade, and spiritual delights might not  
supersede method in labour and humility of heart. The  
orphans often sang a hymn for them benefactors; daily  
they sang to the praise of their Redeemer; and always  
before going to work they joined in a hymn, intended to  
teach them that they must work for their own living.

Whitefield had carried about with him, and shown to  
several New England ministers, the draft of a letter which  
he had written in reply to Wesley’s sermon on ‘Free  
Grace;’ and on Christmas Eve, 1740, he sat down at the  
orphan-house to finish the letter, and send it to his friend.  
The sermon was a noble specimen of eloquence; its  
thrilling denunciations of Calvinistic doctrines almost pro-  
duce the persuasion that they are as horrible and blas-  
phemous as Wesley believed them to be. The headlong  
zeal of the preacher allows no time, permits no disposi-  
tion, to reason. You must go with him: you must check  
your questions, and listen to him. At the end it seems  
as if the hated doctrines were for ever consumed in a  
fame of argument and indignation. The letter in reply  
can boast no such fine qualities; it never rises above the  
level of commonplace.

Whitefield’s letter was headed by a short preface  
touching the probable effect of its publication, and ex-  
pressing the persuasion that the advocates of universal  
redemption would be offended; that those on the other side  
would be rejoiced; and that the lukewarm on both sides  
—such as were ‘carried away with carnal reasoning’—  
would wish that the matter had never been brought  
under debate. The second were very properly, but very

unavailingly, asked not to triumph, nor to make a party,  
for he detested any such thing; and the first not to be  
too much concerned or offended. The letter itself opened  
with strong affirmations of his unwillingness to take pen  
in hand against his old friend. Jonah did not go with  
more reluctance against Nineveh; were nature to speak,  
he would rather die than do it; he had no alternative; he  
must be faithful to God, to his own soul, and to the souls  
of others; the children of God were in danger of falling  
into error—nay, numbers had been misled, many of his  
own converts being among them; a greater number were  
loudly calling upon him to show his opinion, as Wesley  
had shown his; he must know no man after the flesh.

After giving an account of the publishing of Wesley’s  
sermon in the manner already told, the letter proposed to  
answer some of its arguments. It explained the doctrine  
of reprobation to be the divine intention to give saving  
grace through Jesus Christ only to a limited number, and  
to leave the rest to themselves, and affirmed that such  
was the teaching of Scripture and of the Church of Eng-  
land. It offered the well-known and well-worn answers  
on behalf of the Calvinistic view to the equally well used  
objections which Arminians make to it. It held with  
unwavering firmness to the useful moral power of the  
Genevan doctrine; and, on this point, Whitefield had a  
clear right to speak with authority. To Wesley’s objec-  
tion that ‘this doctrine tends to destroy the comforts of  
religion,’ &c., the letter asked with force and pertinence,  
‘But how does Mr. Wesley know this, who never be-  
lieved election? ‘Whitefield protested that, for his own  
part, the doctrine of election was his daily support, and  
that he should sink under a dread of impending trials,  
were he not firmly persuaded that God had chosen him  
in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and  
that the Almighty would suffer none to pluck him out of  
His hand. One paragraph was sadly illustrative of the

keenness with which men who have enjoyed each other’s  
confidence can strike at weaknesses. ‘I know,’ White-  
field says, ‘you think meanly of Abraham, though he  
was eminently called the friend of God; and, I believe,  
also of David, the man after God’s own heart. No won-  
der, therefore, that in the letter you sent me not long  
since, you should tell me, “that no Baptist or Presby-  
terian writer whom you have read knew anything of the  
liberties of Christ.” What! neither Bunyan, Henry,  
Flavel, Halyburton, nor any of the New England and  
Scots divines? See, dear sir, what narrow-spiritedness and  
want of charity arise from your principles, and then do  
not cry out against election any more on account of its  
being “destructive of meekness and love.” ’ It was a  
small matter what Wesley might think about Abraham  
or David, but Whitefield should have abstained from  
alluding to opinions expressed in private. The last part  
of the letter was a wonderful compound of sense, love,  
and assumption. ‘Dear, dear sir, 0 be not offended!  
For Christ’s sake be not rash! Give yourself to reading.  
Study the covenant of grace. Down with your carnal  
reasoning. Be a little child; and then, instead of pawn-  
ing your salvation, as you have done in a late hymn book,  
if the doctrine of universal redemption be not true; in-  
stead of talking of sinless perfection, as you have done in  
the preface to that hymn book, and making man’s salva-  
tion to depend on his own free will, as you have in this  
sermon, you will compose an hymn in praise of sovereign,  
distinguishing love. You will caution believers against  
striving to work a perfection out of their own hearts, and  
print another sermon the reverse of this, and entitle it  
free grace indeed. Free, because not free to all; but  
free, because God may withhold or give it to whom and  
when He pleases. Till you do this, I must doubt whether  
or not you know yourself. In the meanwhile I cannot  
but blame you for censuring the clergy of our Church for

not keeping to their articles, when you yourself, by your  
principles, positively deny the ninth, tenth, and seven-  
teenth. Dear sir, these things ought not so to be. God  
knows my heart; as I told you before so I declare again,  
nothing but a single regard to the honour of Christ has  
forced this letter from me. I love and honour you for  
his sake; and, when I come to judgment, will thank you  
before men and angels for what you have, under God,  
done for my soul. There, I am persuaded, I shall see  
dear Mr. Wesley convinced of election and everlasting  
love. And it often fills me with pleasure to think how I  
shall behold you casting your crown down at the feet of  
the Lamb, and as it were filled with a holy blushing for  
opposing the divine sovereignty in the manner you have  
done. But I hope the Lord will show you this before  
you go hence. Oh, how do I long for that day! ’

The letter made a shorter passage across the Atlantic  
than its writer generally did; and having, in some un-  
explained way, fallen into the hands of the Calvinistic  
party in London, was instantly printed, and used for their  
ends, without either Whitefield’s or Wesley’s consent.  
A great many copies were given to Wesley’s Foundry  
congregation, both at the door and in the Foundry itself.

‘Having procured one of them,’ says Wesley, ‘I related  
(after preaching) the naked fact to the congregation, and  
told them, I will do just what I believe Mr. Whitefield  
would, were he here himself. Upon which I tore it in  
pieces before them all. Everyone who had received it  
did the same; so that, in two minutes, there was not a  
whole copy left. Ah! poor Ahithophel! “ Ibi omnis

*effusus labor!* ” ’

At Charleston, whither Whitefield went to take ship  
for England, he had a writ served on him for revising  
and correcting a letter published by a friend, in which it  
was hinted that the clergy broke their canons. The  
warrant bore the plain mark of malevolence on its face;

it commanded the apprehension of Whitefield for ‘making  
and composing a false, malicious, scandalous, and infamous  
libel against the clergy’ of the province of South Carolina.  
He appeared in court, confessed to his share in the letter,  
and gave security to appear by his attorney at the next  
general quarter sessions, under a penalty of one hundred  
pounds proclamation money. He was now satisfied that  
he was a persecuted man. But that bold tongue of his  
could always inflict punishment for punishment; and he  
did not forget to declaim, before a sympathising audience,  
against the wickedness of persecuting under the pretence  
of religion.

Apprehensive of some difficulties that awaited him in  
England, he took ship, along with some friends, in the  
middle of January. During the whole voyage he was  
anxious for the future. One day he was yearning for a  
full restoration of friendship with the Wesleys; the next,  
he was meditating the publication of his answer to the  
sermon on ‘Free Grace,’ and consoling himself with the  
thought that it was written in much love and meekness;  
a third day he seemed to hear the Divine voice saying to  
him, ‘Fear not, speak out, no one shall set upon thee to  
hurt thee;’ another day he was writing to Charles Wesley  
deploring the impending separation, expostulating with  
him and John as if they could undo the past, and de-  
claring that he would rather stay on the sea for ever than  
come to England to oppose him and his brother. He  
knew not what to do, though he knew perfectly well  
what he wanted—the old friendship to be what it had  
once been, and every dividing thing, whether raised by  
himself or the brothers, done utterly away. For were  
his longings for peace stronger than those of Charles  
Wesley. It is painful to observe the way in which the  
two friends strove, with unavailing effort, against a tide  
which they felt was hurrying them into trouble and  
sorrow. Four months before Whitefield wrote his reply

to the sermon on ‘Free Grace,’ Charles, just recovering  
from a severe illness, sent him a letter, ‘labouring for  
peace,’ in which he used the strongest and most affection-  
ate language; he declared that he would rather White-  
field saw him dead at his feet than opposing him; that  
his soul was set upon peace, and drawn after Whitefield  
by love stronger than death. ‘It faints, in this bodily  
weakness,’ he wrote, ‘with the desire I have of your  
happiness. You know not how dear you are to me.’1

When Whitefield reached England, the meeting between  
them was most touching. ‘It would have melted any  
heart,’ says Whitefield, ‘to have heard us weeping, after  
prayer, that, if possible, the breach might be prevented.’  
Soon afterwards, however, he submitted his letter, which  
he had had printed before leaving America, to the judg-  
ment of his friend, who returned it endorsed with these  
words, ‘Put up again thy sword into its place.’ Put not  
so. That evil fortune which made Wesley preach and  
print a sermon on one of the profoundest subjects, under  
the provocation of an anonymous letter, and at the dicta-  
tion of a lot; which prevailed over Charles’ loving letter,  
and tempted Whitefield to pen and print his reply, still  
hovered near, and soon triumphed over the counsel of  
love and wisdom which was heeded only for awhile.

At first he said that he would never preach against the  
brothers, whatever his private opinion might be. Then  
his doctrines seemed to him to be too important to be  
held back; and when he went to the Foundry, at the in-  
vitation of Charles, to preach there, he so far forgot him-  
self, though Charles was sitting by him, as to preach  
them, according to the testimony of John, ‘in the most  
peremptory and offensive manner.’ When John, who  
had been summoned to London, met him, he was so far  
from listening to compromise as to say, that ‘Wesley and

1 ' The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.’ by Thomas Jackson,  
vol. ii. p. 167.

he preached two different gospels, and therefore he not  
only would not join with him, or give him the right hand  
of fellowship, but would publicly preach against him  
wheresoever he preached at all.’ He next ungenerously  
accused Wesley of having mismanaged things at Bristol,  
and perverted the school at Kingswood to improper uses,  
foreign to the intention with which the school had been  
undertaken. It was easy for the accused to answer all  
that was alleged against him; but, unfortunately, he took  
occasion, at the same time, to indulge in most irritating  
language towards Whitefield. He assumed an air of  
superiority, of patronage and pity, which would have  
ruffled many a cooler man than his former friend. It  
was more taunting than kindly to write, ‘How easy were  
it for me to hit many other palpable blots in that which  
you call an answer to my sermon! And how above  
measure contemptible would you then appear to all im-  
partial men, either of sense or learning! But I spare  
you; mine hand shall not be upon you; the Lord be  
judge between thee and me. The general tenor, both of  
my public and private exhortations, when I touch thereon  
at all, as even my enemies know, if they would testify, is,  
“Spare the young man, even Absalom, for my sake!’”

It may be safely affirmed that the two friends would  
not have quarrelled had they been left to themselves.  
They were the unwilling heads of rival parties among their  
own converts. ‘Many, I know,’ said Charles Wesley in  
his letter to Whitefield, ‘desire nothing so much as to see  
George Whitefield and John Wesley at the head of dif-  
ferent parties, as is plain from their truly devilish plans  
to effect it; but, be assured, my dearest brother, our  
heart is as your heart.’ Whitefield, as we have seen  
from his American letters, received embittering news  
from home; and on his arrival his ear was assailed bv  
reports from brethren who were already openly opposed  
to Wesley and to those who held his views. True, there

was also the anger of Wesley on account of Whitefield’s  
indefensible breach of confidence; and that and the  
meddling of partisans did more damage than the doctrines  
in dispute. The matter may be summed up thus: Wesley  
was wrong: in the beginning: 1. In attacking: Whitefield’s  
views at the taunt of an anonymous enemy; he struck  
the first blow, and struck it without a sufficient cause.  
2. In printing and publishing his sermon because of a  
lot. 3. In using irritating language to his opponent.  
Whitefield was wrong: 1. In yielding his mind to the  
infiuence of inflaming representations sent to him from  
England, and made to him when he returned home. 2.  
In exposing private opinions and deeds. 3. In preaching  
his peculiar views in the chapel of the Wesleys.

It is but a sad task to record these things, and the  
evident worth of the chief actors makes it all the more  
painful. Happily, the course of events soon took a dif-  
ferent direction; and the shadow resting upon the close  
of this chapter and the opening of the next will soon be  
seen breaking and vanishing away.

CHAPTER IX.

March, 1741, to August, 1744.

LOSS OF POPULARITY FIRST VISIT TO SCOTLAND—CONDUCT OF THE

DISSENTERS.

It was a dark report which Whitefield had to send to his  
family; and no little anxiety would be felt at the orphan-  
house when the following letter, addressed to Habersham,  
arrived:—

‘ London, March 25, 1741.

‘My dear Sir,—I wrote to you immediately on my coming on  
shore. We arrived at Falmouth last Wednesday was sevennight,  
and got here the Sunday following. Blessed be God we had a  
summer’s passage. Many of our friends, I find, are sadly divided,  
and, as far as I am able to judge, have been sadly misled. Congre-  
gations at Moorfields and Kennington Common on Sunday were  
as large as usual. On the following week days, quite the con-  
trary; twenty thousand dwindled down to two or three hundred.  
It has been a trying time with me. A large orphan family, con-  
sisting of near a hundred, to be maintained about four thousand  
miles off, without the least fund, and in the dearest part of his  
majesty’s dominions: also, above a thousand pounds in debt for  
them, and not worth twenty pounds in the world of my own,  
and threatened to be arrested for three hundred and fifty pounds  
drawn for in favour of the orphan-house by my late dear de-  
ceased friend and fellow-traveller Mr. Seward. My bookseller,  
who, I believe, has got some hundreds by me, being drawn  
away by the Moravians, refuses to print for me; and many, very  
many of my spiritual children, who at my last departure from  
England would have plucked out their own eyes to have given  
to me, are so prejudiced by the dear Messrs. Wesleys’ dressing  
up the doctrine of election in such horrible colours, that they  
will neither hear, see, nor give me the least assistance; yea,  
some of them send threatening letters that God will speedily

destroy me. As for the people of the world, they are so em-  
bittered by my injudicious and too severe expressions against  
Archbishop Tillotson and the author of the “Whole Duty of  
Man,” that they fly from me as from a viper; and, what is most  
cutting of all, I am now constrained, on account of our differing  
in principles, publicly to separate from my dear, dear old friends,  
Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, whom I still love as my own  
soul; but, through infinite mercy, I am enabled to strengthen  
myself in the Lord my God. I am cast down, but not destroyed;  
perplexed, but not in despair. A few days ago, in reading  
Beza’s “Life of Calvin,” these words were much pressed upon  
me — “Calvin is turned out of Geneva, but, behold, a new  
Church arises!” Jesus, the ever-loving, altogether lovely Jesus,  
pities and comforts me. My friends are erecting a place,  
which I have called a tabernacle, for morning’s exposition. I  
have not, nor can I as yet make, any collections; but let us not  
fear. Our heavenly Father, with whom the fatherless find  
mercy, will yet provide; let us only seek first the kingdom  
of God and His righteousness, and all other necessary things  
shall be added unto us. In about a fortnight, though I scarce  
know an oak from a hickory, or one kind of land from another,  
I am subpoenaed to appear before parliament, to give an account  
of the condition of the province of Georgia when I left it.’

The faith in which he began the orphanage did not fail  
him when he was threatened with arrest for debt. He  
one night cast himself on his knees before God, and with  
strong crying and tears entreated help and deliverance;  
he pleaded that it was not for himself that he asked any-  
thing, but only for the poor; he thought how Professor  
Franck obtained weekly help for his orphans, and that as  
his were four thousand miles from home he might run  
upon larger arrears. Then he could lie down to rest,  
satisfied that an answer would be given. Early next  
morning a friend came to inquire if he knew where a  
lady of his acquaintance might lend three or four hundred  
pounds. Whitefield replied, ‘Let her lend it to me, and  
in a few months, God willing, she shall have it again.’  
All the circumstances were told her, and she cheerfully

put the money into his hands. He was an outcast for  
awhile. Every church was closed against him; the  
Wesleys could not have him in their pulpits, seeing he  
preached against them by name; there was no way of  
gathering a congregation but by taking his stand in the  
open air daily; and he determined to begin on the old  
battle-ground—Moorfields—on Good Friday. Twice a  
day he walked from Leadenhall to Moorfields, and  
preached under one of the trees. His own converts for-  
sook him; some of them would not deign him a look as  
they passed by; others put their fingers into their ears,  
either to preserve them from the contamination of one  
Calvinistic word, or to ward off the witchery of that  
charming voice which never charmed in vain. Thus he  
held on his way amid contempt and hatred, not doubt-  
ing that he must again win the hearts of the people for his  
Lord and Master. He called Cennick to his aid from  
Kingswood, and a few ‘free grace Dissenters’ stood firmly  
by him. It was decided by them to build a large wooden  
shed for the congregations, which would serve until  
he should return to America; and, accordingly, they  
borrowed a piece of ground in Moorfields, and set a  
carpenter to work upon the erection, which, by the name  
of the Tabernacle, was opened and filled within two  
months of Whitefield’s landing in England. Crowds  
were gathered together in it to hear early morning  
lectures. But it had one drawback in standing so near  
the Foundry, and Whitefield abhorred the appearance of  
opposition to his old friends the Wesleys. However, a  
fresh awakening began immediately: the congregations  
grew rapidly; and, at the people’s request, he called in  
the help of a number of laymen, necessity reconciling  
him to the idea. Here again, as in open air preaching,  
he was the forerunner of Wesley.

His experience at Bristol, to which he paid a visit  
before his Tabernacle in London was erected, was similar

to that at London. The house at Kingswood which he  
had founded, for which he had preached and begged,  
and which was associated with his first holy works among  
the colliers, was denied him. Busy bodies on both sides  
carried tales and stirred up strife. He listened too much  
to them, and a breach ensued. Still there was some-  
thing stronger in the hearts of these mistaken, angry  
Methodists on both sides, than abhorrence of their  
respective tenets; for Whitefield gratefully records that,  
though different in judgment, they were one in affection;  
that both aimed at promoting the glory of their common  
Lord; and that they agreed in endeavouring ‘to convert  
souls to the ever blessed Mediator.’ As for Whitefield  
himself, no part of his career displays his completeness  
of devotion to the Lord Jesus more perfectly than this,  
in which he took the ingratitude of his spiritual children  
with sorrowful meekness, in which he welcomed rebukes  
as ‘a very little child,’ in which he carried his burden of  
debt for the orphans without once regretting his respon-  
sibility, in which he found time to intercede with one  
friend to write to his ‘dear little orphans, both boys and  
girls,’ and to thank another for his kindness to them, in  
which the peace and comfort of his heart through the  
gospel never failed him for an hour. All his healthful-  
ness of soul got free play when once the storm had  
discharged itself. It was with profound relief that he  
wrote to his friend the Independent Minister of Charleston,  
saying that he thought ‘the heat of the battle was pretty  
well over,’ and that the word of God was running and  
being glorified. That kind hand which had supported  
him through so many difficulties, and on which he leaned  
like a little child, cleared his way surprisingly. One day  
when he found himself forsaken and almost quite penni-  
less, his suspense was broken by a stranger coming and  
putting a guinea into his hand; then something seemed  
to say, ‘Cannot that God, who sent this person to give

thee this guinea, make it up fifteen hundred?’ And  
the inward voice was not untrue; soon he was making  
his apostolic circuit in Wiltshire, Essex, and other coun-  
ties, and everywhere his orphans found friends. ‘Field-  
preaching,’ he said, ‘is my plan; in this I am carried as  
on eagles’ wings. God makes way for me everywhere.  
The work of the Lord increases. I am comforted day  
and night.’ In London he saw such triumphs of the  
gospel as he had never seen in England before. The  
whole kingdom also was opening its doors to him; and  
soon he was to have such a list of subscribers to his  
charity as perhaps no one else ever held in his hand. He  
could count on helpers in every county of England and  
Wales, in large districts of Scotland, and in America  
from Boston to Savannah, and their number was tens of  
thousands.

The friendly relation between Whitefield and the  
Erskines, begun by a brotherly letter from Whitefield in  
the first instance, which letter Ralph Erskine, with true  
Scottish caution, answered only after making inquiries  
about his open-hearted correspondent, now caused press-  
ing invitations to be sent from Scotland. The Erskines  
and their friends had just seceded from the Church of  
Scotland, on the ground of its corruptness, and had the  
difficult task of founding and establishing a new church.  
In this task they were naturally anxious to get all possible  
help, and looked with high expectation to the mighty  
preacher who had achieved such wonders in England and  
America, and whose theological views harmonised perfectly  
with their own, and with those of their fellow-countrymen  
generally. He was more intimate with them than with  
anyone else in Scotland, and had often said how much  
pleasure it would afford him to visit them. Accordingly,  
Balph wrote in very urgent terms: ‘Come,’ he said, ‘if  
possible, dear Whitefield; come, and come to us also.  
There is no face on earth I would desire more earnestly

to see. Yet I would desire it only in a way that, I think,  
would tend most to the advancing of our Lord’s king-  
dom, and the reformation work among our hands. Such  
is the situation of affairs among us, that unless you  
came with a design to meet and abide with us, parti-  
cularly of the Associate Presbytery, and to make your  
public appearances in the places especially of their con-  
cern, I would dread the consequences of your coming,  
lest it should seem equally to countenance our perse-  
cutors. Your fame would occasion a flocking to you  
to whatever side you turn; and if it should be in their  
pulpits, as no doubt some of them would urge, we know  
how it would be improven against us. I know not with  
whom you could safely join yourself if not with us. You  
are still dearer and dearer to me. By your last journal  
I observed your growing zeal for the doctrine of grace.’

On the day of receiving this letter, Whitefield wrote to  
Ebenezer, and, referring to it, said, ‘This morning I  
received a kind letter from your brother Ralph, who  
thinks it best for me wholly to join the Associate Pres-  
bytery, if it should please God to send me into Scotland.  
This I cannot altogether come into. I come only as an  
occasional preacher, to preach the simple gospel to all  
that are willing to hear me, of whatever denomination.  
It will be wrong in me to join a reformation as to church  
government, any further than I have light given me  
from above. If I am quite neuter as to that in my  
preaching, I cannot see how it can hinder or retard any  
design you may have on foot. My business seems to be  
to evangelise, to be a presbyter at large. I write this  
that there may not be the least misunderstanding between  
us. I love and honour the Associate Presbytery in the  
bowels of Jesus Christ. With this I send them my due  
respects, and most humbly beg their prayers. But let  
them not be offended, if in all things I cannot imme-  
diately fall in with them. Let them leave me to God.

Whatever light He is pleased to give me, I hope I shall  
be faithful to.’ The answer of Ebenezer was creditable  
to his candour; after expressing his pleasure on hearing  
the good news of Whitefield’s success, he said, ‘How  
desirable would it be to all the sincere lovers of Jesus  
Christ in Scotland, to see Him “travelling in the great-  
ness of His strength” among us also in your ministrations!  
Truth falls in our streets. Equity cannot enter into our  
ecclesiastical courts. As our Assembly did last year eject  
us from our churches, and exclude us from our ministry  
and legal maintenance, for lifting up our reformation  
testimony, so all I can hear they have done this year is to  
appoint several violent intrusions to be made upon Chris-  
tian congregations, whereby the hock of Christ is scat-  
tered more and more upon the mountains; for a stranger  
will they not follow, who know the Shepherd’s voice. The  
wandering sheep come with their bleatings to the Asso-  
ciate Presbytery, whereby our work is daily increasing in  
feeding and rallying our Master’s flock, scattered and  
offended by the Established Church.

‘From this short glimpse of the state of matters among  
us, you will easily see what reason the Associate Pres-  
bytery have to say, come over to Scotland and help us;  
come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.  
We hear that God is with you of a truth, and therefore  
we wish for as intimate a connexion with you in the  
Lord as possible, for building up the fallen tabernacle of  
David in Britain; and particularly in Scotland, when you  
shall be sent to us. This, dear brother, and no party  
views, is at the bottom of any proposal made by my  
brother Ralph in his own name, and in the name of his  
Associate Brethren. It would be very unreasonable to  
propose or urge that you should incorporate as a member  
of our Presbytery, and wholly embark in every branch of  
our reformation, unless the Father of lights were clearing  
your way thereunto; which we pray He may enlighten

in His time, so as you and we may see eye to eye. All  
intended by us at present is, that when you come to  
Scotland, your way may be such as not to strengthen the  
hands of our corrupt clergy and judicatories, who are  
carrying on a course of defection, worming out a faithful  
ministry from the land, and the power of religion with it.  
Ere be it from us to limit your great Master’s commission  
to preach the gospel to every creature. We, ourselves,  
preach the gospel to all promiscuously who are willing to  
hear us. But we preach not upon the call and invitation  
of the ministers, but of the people, which, I suppose, is  
your own practice now in England; and should this also  
be your way when you come to Scotland, it could do the  
Associate Presbytery no manner of harm. But if, besides,  
you could find freedom to company with us and for us,  
and to accept of our advices in your work while in this  
country, it might contribute much to weaken the enemy’s  
hand, and to strengthen ours in the work of the Lord,  
when the strength of the battle is against us.’1

Whitefield thought that the Associate Presbytery was  
‘a little too hard’ upon him, and said that if he was  
neuter as to the particular reformation of church govern-  
ment till he had further light, it would be enough; he  
would come simply to preach the gospel, and not to  
enter into any particular connexion whatever. Had  
none but the Erskines sought a visit from him there  
can be no doubt that he would have gone to Scotland  
to preach only in connexion with them, while abstaining  
from all interference with the points in dispute between  
them and the Kirk; but Kirk people were as anxious as  
their rivals to see him. An opportunity was thus made  
for him to go to any party that would have him, only  
the Erskines had the first claim, and must have the first  
visit.

1  The Life and Diary of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, A.M. &c.’ By  
Donald Fraser, p. 424.

Full of cares he took his passage from London to Leith.  
Chief of all cares, and yet chief of all earthly joys, was  
that distant family. He hopes, when he gets aboard, to  
redeem time to answer his ‘dear lambs’ letters.’ They  
had rejoiced him exceedingly. He begs Mr. Barber to  
be particular in the accounts—and not without reason,  
since slander was soon busy with a tale about personal  
ends which Whiteiield was serving. He sends word that  
he has ordered hats and shoes for the children, and intends  
to send brother H.’s order, and other things, with some  
cash very shortly. ‘But the arrears hang on me yet.  
My Lord bears my burden; may He bear all yours for  
you. I am persuaded He will.’ When he sailed he  
found time to gratify his desire about the orphans, and  
ten of his short letters are preserved. They cannot  
compare with such charming letters as Irving wrote  
to his little daughter, and now and again the harshest  
parts of his creed appear in a most unpleasing form; but  
love keeps breaking through every line to lend its own  
gentle light to the hearts of the little ones.

Seven out of the ten letters were addressed to the boys.  
To one he said, ‘Hear James, I do not forget you. I hope  
you will never forget the love of Christ, who died and  
hath given Himself for you. Does not the very thought  
of this make you even to weep? Do you not want some  
private place where to vent your heart? Away, then, I  
will detain you no longer. Retire into the woods.’ It  
was in his best manner that he wrote to a child at  
Boston:—

and bless them! And when He was just ascending to the highest  
heaven, how tenderly did He speak to Peter, and bid him “feed  
His lambs.” Let all this encourage you to come to Him.’

Sifting the rest of the correspondence, we come upon a  
sentence in a letter to the students at Cambridge and  
New Haven in America, who had partaken of the religious  
influence so sedulously diffused by Whitefield during his  
American tour, which is worth a place in every student’s  
room, ‘Henceforward, therefore, I hope you will enter  
into your studies, not to get a parish, nor to be polite  
preachers, but to be great saints.’

The ‘Mary and Ann,’ after a pleasant passage, landed  
Whitefield at Leith on July 30, 1741. He was come to  
a ‘generation ’ which Ebenezer Erskine described as  
‘being generally lifeless, lukewarm, and upsitten.’ Yet  
there was no little warmth about the stranger whom the  
Associate Presbytery and the Kirk both struggled for.  
Persons of distinction welcomed him, and urged him to  
preach in Edinburgh on the day of his arrival. But he  
stayed in the city only an hour, and went thence, as  
Ralph Erskine phrases it, ‘over the belly of vast opposi-  
tion, and came to Ralph’s house at Dunfermline at ten  
o’clock at night. Next morning guest and host conferred  
together alone upon Church matters, when Whitefield  
admitted that he had changed his views of ordination; at  
the time of his ordination, he knew no better way, but  
now ‘he would not have it again in that way for a thou-  
sand worlds.’ As to preaching, he was firm in his reso-  
lution to go wherever he was asked, into the kirk, or into  
the meeting-house. Were a Jesuit priest or a Mohammedan  
to give him an invitation, he would gladly comply, and  
go and testify against them! Whitefield wrote to Cennick,  
telling him that Erskine had received him ‘very lovingly.’  
He says, ‘I preached to his and the townspeople ’—this  
was in the afternoon of the day after his arrival, and in  
the meeting-house—‘ a very thronged assembly. After

I had done prayer, and named my text, the rustling made  
by opening the bibles all at once quite surprised me; a  
scene I never was witness to before. Our conversation  
after sermon, in the house, was such as became the gospel  
of Christ. They entertained me with various accounts  
of the success of the Seceders’ labours; and, as a proof of  
God’s being with them, Mr. Ralph! son-in-law told me,  
that at one of their late occasions a woman was so deeply  
affected that she was obliged to stop her mouth with an  
handkerchief to keep herself from crying out. They  
urged a longer stay, in order to converse more closely,  
and to set me right about church government and the  
Solemn League and Covenant. I informed them that I  
had given notice of preaching at Edinburgh this evening,  
but, as they desired it, I would in a few days return and  
meet the Associate Presbytery in Mr. Ralph’s house. This  
was agreed on. Dear Mr. Erskine accompanied me, and  
this evening I preached to many thousands in a place  
called the Orphan-house Park. The Lord was there.  
Immediately after sermon, a large company, among whom  
were some of the nobility, came to salute me. Amidst  
our conversation came in a portly, well-looking Quaker,  
nephew to Messrs. Erskines, formerly a Baptist minister  
in the north of England, who, taking me by the hand,  
said, “Friend George. I am as thou art; I am for bringing  
all to the life and power of the everlasting God; and  
therefore, if thou wilt not quarrel with me about my hat,

I will not quarrel with thee about thy gown.” I find that  
God has blessed my works in these parts. I am most  
cordially received by many that love the Lord Jesus. I  
have just been in company with a nobleman who, I  
believe, truly fears God; and also with a lady of fashion  
that discovers a Christian spirit indeed. I already hear  
of great divisions; but Jesus knows how to bring order  
out of confusion.’

The proposed conference took place at Ralph Erskine’s

house on the sixth day after Whitefield’s arrival in the  
country. There were present Ralph and Ebenezer  
Erskine, Alexander Moncrieff, Adam Gib, Thomas and  
James Mair, and Mr. Clarkson; also two elders, James  
Wardlaw and John Mowbray. Ralph called the ‘tryst;’and Ebenezer began the proceedings with prayer. Some  
of the venerable men had come with the persuasion that  
they would succeed in making Whitefield an Associate  
Presbyterian; the wiser portion hoped for nothing more  
than to stagger his faith in any and every form of church  
government which was different from theirs, to keep him  
in suspense, and in the meanwhile to secure his services  
in their meeting-houses for the establishment of their  
cause. These also meant his conversion, but knew that  
it must be an affair beyond the power of a morning’s  
sitting of any Presbytery; it would be enough to enter  
into an alliance with him. Whitefield had evidently come  
to the meeting determined to keep himself from all  
alliances. The 'Seceders were separating from the Estab-  
lished Church on the ground that no persons holding  
‘unscriptural tenets should be admitted members of the  
Church;’ and the interpretation put upon ‘unscriptural  
tenets’ was so rigid as to mean, that any man who dif-  
fered from them in his views of church government  
should not hold communion with them. Hence their  
reason for wishing to convert Whiteiield was plain.  
While they wanted him, their own narrow views bolted  
the door in his face; then they must take him as a hope-  
ful catechumen who was looking for ‘more light,’ and  
who would come into their light eventually. Nor need  
any surprise be felt at such stickling for church govern-  
ment; they were in an unenviable position of separation,  
and thus naturally anxious to prove their zeal for order  
as well as for orthodoxy. It was thus that the conver-  
sation turned upon church government, though White-

field went away with the impression that they also wanted  
to bring him round to the Solemn League and Covenant!  
That was most likely a spectre in the mist. To White-  
field’s question, ‘Whether, supposing the Presbyterian  
government to be agreeable to the pattern shown in the  
mount, it excluded a toleration of such as Independents,  
Anabaptists, and Episcopalians, among whom there are  
good men,’ Ebenezer Erskine replied, with fine dexterity,  
‘Sir, God has made you an instrument of gathering a  
great multitude of souls to the faith and profession of the  
gospel of Christ throughout England, and also in foreign  
parts; and now it is fit that you should be considering  
how that body is to be organised and preserved; which  
cannot be done without following the example of Paul  
and Barnabas, who, when they had gathered churches by  
the preaching of the gospel, visited them again, and or-  
dained over them elders in every city; which you cannot  
do alone, without some two or three met together in a  
judicative capacity in the name of the Lord.’ Whitefield  
answered that he could not see his way to anything but  
preaching. But, it was urged, supposing he were to die,  
the flock would be scattered, and might fall a prey to  
grievous wolves. Then he fixed himself on a resolution,  
which, with the views that he had expressed about his  
ordination, it was, no doubt, made sure he could never  
reach: ‘I am of the communion of the Church of  
England,’ he said; ‘ none in that communion can join me  
in the work you have pointed to; neither do I mean to  
separate from that communion until I am cast out or ex-  
communicated.’ All tempers were not cool under the  
reasoning that went on; indeed, how could nine Scots,  
each one holding to the skirts of his sacred church, keep  
cool when dealing with a prelatist? The interview ended  
in a scene. While it was being contended that one form  
of church government was divine, Whitefield, laying his  
hand on his heart, said, ‘I do not find it here.’ Alexander

Moncrieff replied, as he rapped the bible that lay on the  
table, ‘But I find it here.’1

It is evident that Whitefield’s ecclesiastical position for  
the future is to be judged of by these three things:—1.  
That he did not believe that any form of church govern-  
ment was of divine origin; 2. That his ordination to be  
a priest of the Church of England did not any longer ac-  
cord with his conceptions of ordination to the ministerial  
functions; 3. That he was not free to leave the Church of  
England; he must be cast off, if the connexion must cease.

Three days after the interview Whitefield sent an ac-  
count of it to his friend Noble of New York; and were  
there no other reason for its insertion, the fact of its being  
almost the only letter with a touch of humour in it de-  
mands for it a place:—

‘Edinburgh, August 8, 1741.

‘My dear Brother,—I have written you several letters; and I  
rejoice to hear that the work of the Lord prospers in the hands  
of Messrs. Tennents, &c. I am glad that they intend to meet  
in a synod by themselves; their catholic spirit will do good.  
The Associate Presbytery here are So confined that they will not  
so much as hear me preach, unless I only will join with them. Mr.  
Ralph Erskine, indeed, did hear me, and went up with me into  
the pulpit of the Canongate church. The people were ready  
to shout for joy; but I believe it gave offence to his associates.

I met mdst of them, according to appointment, on Wednesday  
last. A set of grave, venerable men! They soon proposed to  
form themselves into a presbytery, and were proceeding to choose  
a moderator. I asked them for what purpose? They answered,  
to discourse and set me right about the matter of church  
government and the Solemn League and Covenant. I replied  
they might save themselves that trouble, for I had no scruple  
about it, and that settling church government and preaching  
about the Solemn League and Covenant was not my plan. I  
then told them something of my experience, and how I was led

1 The Life and Diary of Rev. Ralph Erksine, A.M.’ by Donald  
 ch. vii.

out into my present way of work. One in particular said lie  
was deeply affected; and the dear Mr. Erskines desired they  
would have patience with me, for that having been born and  
bred in England, and never studied the point, I could not be  
supposed to be so perfectly acquainted with the nature of their  
covenants. One much warmer than the rest immediately re-  
plied, “that no indulgence was to be shown me; that England  
had revolted most with respect to church government; and that  
I, born and educated there, could not but be acquainted with  
the matter now in debate.” I told him I had never yet made  
the Solemn League and Covenant the object of my study, being  
too busy about matters, as I judged, of greater importance.  
Several replied that every pin of the tabernacle was precious.  
I said that in every building there were outside and inside  
workmen; that the latter at present was my province; that if  
they felt themselves called to the former, they might proceed  
in their own way, and I should proceed in mine. I then  
asked them seriously what they would have me do; the answer  
was that I was not desired to subscribe immediately to the  
Solemn League and Covenant, but to preach only for them till  
I had further light. I asked, why only for them? Mr. Ralph  
Erskine said, “they were the Lord’s people.” I then asked  
whether there were no other Lord’s people but themselves; and  
supposing all other were the devil’s people, they certainly had  
more need to be preached to, and therefore I was more and  
more determined to go out into the highways and hedges; and  
that if the pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would  
gladly proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein. Soon  
after this the company broke up; and one of these otherwise  
venerable men immediately went into the meeting-house and  
preached upon these words—“Watchman, what of the night?  
Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morn-  
ing cometh, and also the night, if ye will enquire, enquire ye;  
return, come.” I attended; but the good man so spent himself  
in the former parts of his sermon in talking against prelacy, the  
common prayer book, the surplice, the rose in the hat, and such  
like externals, that when he came to the latter part of his  
text, to invite poor sinners to Jesus Christ, his breath was so  
gone that he could scarce be heard. What a pity that the last  
was not first, and the first last! The consequence of all this

was an open breach. I retired, I wept, I prayed, and, after  
preaching in the fields, sat down and dined with them, and then  
took a final leave. At table a gentlewoman said, she had heard  
that I had told some people that the Associate Presbytery were  
building a Babel. I said, “Madam, it is quite true; and I  
believe the Babel will soon fall down about their ears;” but  
enough of this. Lord, what is man, what the best of men, but  
men at the best! I think I have now seen an end of all per-  
fection. Our brethren in America, blessed be God I have not  
so learned Christ. Be pleased to inform them of this letter. I  
have not time to write now. The Lord blesses my preaching  
here; and the work, I think, is begun afresh in London. I  
preach to thousands daily, and several have applied to me  
already under convictions. I have been here about eight days.  
You may expect to hear from me shortly again. The Lord be  
with you. I love you in the bowels of Jesus Christ; He will  
bless you for what you have done for the poor orphans. He  
comforts me on every side. 0 free grace! Dear Brother S.  
salutes you all.

‘Ever yours in our common Lord,

‘Gr. Whitefield.’

The unfortunate close of the conference was a great  
sorrow to Ralph Erskine, who wrote to Whitefield, and  
plainly, but kindly, told him, that he was ‘sorrowful for  
being disappointed about Whitefield’s lying open to light,  
as appeared from his declining conversation on that head;  
and also for his coming harnessed with a resolution to  
stand out against every thing that should be advanced  
against —— ’ (presumably the Established Church).  
Ralph must not be allowed to rest under the shade of  
bigotry which the words, ‘We are the Lord’s people,’  
would cast over him. He may have used the very words  
in that warm discussion, when the ringing of bells and  
the expectation of sermon and the firmness of Whitefield  
threw him into confusion; but in calmer moments, when  
meeting his seceding followers at the table of the Lord,  
he could speak as became his better self, and say,’ We

are far from thinking that all are Christ’s friends that  
join with us, and that all are His enemies that do not.  
No, indeed.’ Had the Presbytery consisted only of the  
two brothers and young David Erskine, the son of  
Ebenezer, no disruption would have come about; neither  
would Ralph have been provoked to insinuate in a letter  
to Whitefield, that the orphan-house was making him  
temporise. ‘Indeed, dear sir,’ Whitefield replied, ‘you  
mistake, if you think I temporise on account of the  
orphans. Be it far from me. I abhor the very thought  
of it.’

There was commotion in all classes of society, and no  
small division, about this new preacher who depicted  
scenes instead of prosing over syllogisms, who appealed  
to the heart instead of turning faith and love into a  
mathematical formula. Some were against him, on the  
ground that his character was not sufficiently established;  
and even his friends commonly called him ‘that godly  
youth.’ The dispute as to his character and ministrations  
found its way into a debating club in the University,  
broke it up, and separated some of the members who  
were private friends. Yet he was on a flood-tide of  
popularity in the Scottish capital. He had the ear of the  
people, from the poorest to the noblest. At seven in  
the morning he had a lecture in the fields, which was  
attended by ‘the common people and by persons of  
rank.’ The very children of the city caught the spirit of  
his devotion, and would hear him eagerly while he read  
to them the letters of his orphans. At Heriot’s Hospital,  
the boys, who had been noted as the most wicked in the  
city, established fellowship meetings among themselves;  
indeed children’s meetings sprung up all over the city.  
Great numbers of young men met for promoting their  
Christian knowledge; and aged Christians, who had long  
maintained an honest profession of Christianity, were  
stimulated to seek closer brotherly communion.

Great as was the danger of this time, Whitefield bore  
himself with humility in the midst of applause, with love  
towards his enemies, and with patience and meekness so  
exemplary under the reproaches, the injuries, and the  
slanders which were heaped upon him, that one minister  
thought that God had sent him to show him how to  
preach, and especially how to suffer. In the pulpit he  
was like a flame of fire; among men he was most calm  
and easy, careful never to give offence, and never court-  
ing the favour of any. His temper was cheerful and  
grateful. His disinterestedness shone conspicuously in  
his refusal to accept a private contribution which some  
zealous friends thought of giving him. ‘I make no  
purse,’ he said; ‘what I have, I give away. “Poor, yet  
making many rich,” shall be my motto still.’ All that  
he cared for was his family; he would rather bear any  
burden than have it burdened. His pleadings on its  
behalf had the usual effect; and some ‘evil men’ soon  
had their tongues busy. Thousands of prayers were  
offered for him; and thousands of lies were spread abroad  
against him. It was said that he was hindering the poor  
from paying their debts, and impoverishing their families.  
But the fact was, that his largest donations came from the  
rich. He said to his friends respecting all this slander,  
for he never noticed it publicly, ‘I would have no one  
afraid of doing too much good, or think that a little  
given in charity will impoverish the country.’[[6]](#footnote-6)

Edinburgh did not monopolise his labours: Glasgow,  
Dundee, Paisley, Perth, Stirling, Crief, Falkirk, Airth,  
Kinglassie, Culross, Kinross, Cupar of Fife, Stonehive,  
Benholm, Montrose, Brechin, Forfar, Cupar of Angus,  
Inverkeithing, Newbottle, Galashiels, Maxton, Hadding-  
ton, Killern, Fintry, Balfrone, and Aberdeen received a  
visit from him. His visit to Aberdeen was at the oft-  
repeated request of Mr. Ogilvie, one of the ministers of  
the Kirk, and is thus described by himself: ‘At my first  
coming here, things looked a little gloomy; for the  
magistrates had been so prejudiced by one Mr. Bisset,  
that, when applied to, they refused me the use of the  
kirk-yard to preach in. This Mr. Bisset is colleague  
with one Mr. Ogilvie, at whose repeated invitation I  
came hither. Though colleagues of the same congrega-  
tion, they are very different in their natural tempers.  
The one is what they call in Scotland of a sweet-blooded,  
the other of a choleric disposition. Mr. Bisset is neither  
a Seceder nor quite a Kirk man, having great fault to  
find with both. Soon after my arrival, dear Mr. Ogilvie  
took me to pay my respects to him; he was prepared for  
it, and immediately pulled out a paper containing a great  
number of insignificant queries, which I had neither time  
nor inclination to answer. The next morning, it being  
Mr. Ogilvie s turn, I lectured and preached; the magis-  
trates were present. The congregation very large, and  
light and life fied all around. In the afternoon Mr. Bisset  
officiated; I attended. He began his prayers as usual,  
but in the midst of them, naming me by name, he en-  
treated the Lord to forgive the dishonour that had been

in Parliament; and withal, "because his circumstances require it, his lordship  
requires your kind influence for his encouragement, that he may undertake  
his journey. My lord’s circumstances are but low.” When therefore in the  
subsequent list we find Lord Banff’s name credited for 11/. 2s., we may  
safely conclude that this was the sum allowed his lordship for his travelling  
expenses.’—‘Reign of Queen Anne,’ by Earl Stanhope, pp. 251, 265,  
274, 284. \*

put upon Him, by my being suffered to preach in that  
pulpit; and that all might know what reason he had to  
put up such a petition, about the middle of his sermon  
he not only urged that I was a curate of the Church  
of England, but also quoted a passage or two out of  
my first printed sermons, which he said were grossly  
Arminian. Most of the congregation seemed surprised  
and chagrined, especially his good-natured colleague Mr.  
Ogilvie, who, immediately after sermon, without consult-  
ing me in the least, stood up and gave notice that Mr.  
Whitefield would preach in about half an hour. The  
interval being so short, the magistrates returned into the  
sessions-house, and the congregation patiently waited,  
big with expectation of hearing my resentment. At the  
time appointed I went up, and took no other notice of  
the good man’s ill-timed zeal than to observe, in some  
part of my discourse, that if the good old gentleman had  
seen some of my later writings, wherein I had corrected  
several of my former mistakes, he would not have ex-  
pressed himself in such strong terms. The people being  
thus diverted from controversy with man were deeply  
impressed with what they heard from the word of God.  
All was hushed, and more than solemn; and on the  
morrow the magistrates sent for me, expressed themselves  
quite concerned at the treatment I had met with, and  
begged I would accept of the freedom of the city. But  
of this enough.’

The spirit of love had been remarkably developed  
and strengthened in Whitefield since his return from  
America; his troubles, keen and undeserved as they  
were, had proved a kindly chastening to his spirit. The  
fine frankness of his nature and the sincerity of his re-  
ligion were shown at Aberdeen in a letter which he  
wrote to Wesley, and in another to Peter Bohler, whose  
name he had mentioned in a very inoffensive way in his  
famous letter to Wesley from Bethesda. In the case of

Bohler he had not sinned openly, but he knew that he  
had broken the law of charity in his own heart; and  
such faults are much to the true Christian.

‘Aberdeen, October 10, 1741.

‘Reverend and dear Brother,—I have for a long time ex-  
pected that you would have sent me an answer to my last; but  
I suppose that you are afraid to correspond with me, because I  
revealed your secret about the lot.’ (That was the lot which  
Wesley drew in the Channel on his return from America, and  
which Whitefield had revealed in the Bethesda letter.) ‘ Though  
much may be said for my doing it, yet I am sorry now that any  
such thing dropped from my pen; and I humbly ask pardon.  
I find I love you as much as ever, and pray God, if it be His  
blessed will, that we may be all united together. It hath been  
for some days upon my heart to write to you, and this morning  
I received a letter from Brother H., telling me how he had  
conversed with you and your dear brother. May God remove  
all obstacles that now prevent our union! Though I hold par-  
ticular election, yet I offer Jesus freely to every individual soul.  
You may carry sanctification to what degrees you will, only I  
cannot agree that the in-being of sin is to be destroyed in this  
life. Oh, my dear brother, the Lord hath been much with me  
in Scotland! I every morning feel my fellowship with Christ,  
and He is pleased to give me all peace and joy in believing.  
In about three weeks I hope to be at Bristol. May all dis-  
putings cease, and each of us talk of nothing but Jesus and Him  
crucified! This is my resolution. The Lord be with your  
spirit. My love to Brother C. and all that love the glorious  
Immanuel.

‘I am, without dissimulation, ever yours,

‘ Greorge Whitefield.’

To Böhler he wrote, ‘I write this to ask pardon for  
mentioning your name in answer to my brother Wesley’s  
sermon. I am very sorry for it. Methinks I hear you  
say, “For Christ’s sake I forgive you.” There have been  
faults on both sides. I think, my dear brother, you have  
not acted simply in some things. Let us confess our  
faults to one another, and pray for one another, that we

may be healed. I wish there may be no more dissension  
between us for the time to come. May God preserve us  
from falling out in our way to heaven! I long to have all  
narrow-spiritedness taken out of my heart.’

His Scotch excursion brought him more worldly honour  
than he had ever before known. He was welcomed to  
their houses by several of the nobility, and became the  
friend, correspondent, and religious helper of the Marquis  
of Lothian, the Earl of Leven, Lord Rae, Lady Mary  
Hamilton, Colonel Gardiner, Lady Frances Gardiner (wife  
of the Colonel), Lady Jean Minmo, and Lady Dirleton.  
Lord Leven gave him a horse to perform his journeys  
on; the Scotch people gave him above five hundred  
pounds for his orphans.

Biding his gift-horse, he took his way from Scotland to  
Wales to be married. Whether he preached on his  
journey or not, does not appear; but in ten days he was  
at Abergavenny, ready ‘to be joined in matrimony’ to  
Mrs. James, a widow, of about thirty-six years of age,  
neither rich nor beautiful, ‘once gay, but for three years  
last past a despised follower of the Lamb,’ one of whom  
he cherished the hope that she would not hinder him in  
his work. If it be the same Mrs. James of whom Wesley  
speaks in his journal but a month before the marriage—  
and there is no reason to doubt it—Wesley’s opinion of  
her was favourable; for he calls her ‘a woman of candour  
and humanity,’ and, we may add, courage, seeing she  
compelled some complainers, who had been free with their  
tongues in Wesley’s absence, to repeat everything to his  
face. How and when Whitefield and she became ac-  
quainted with each other cannot be found out, but most  
probably it was when he visited Wales with Howel  
Harris, before leaving for America the second time. She  
must, in that case, have been a first love, but not a warm  
one, as the Blendon lady had supplanted her, and got  
the first offer of his hand. But the fact is, he was ‘free

from that foolish passion which the world calls love.’  
There is, however, an Eden-like story told about the  
marriage with the matronly housekeeper, which, though  
not to be depended upon, may serve to brighten a prosaic  
event.1 Ebenezer Jones, minister of Ebenezer Chapel,  
near Pontypool, was most happy in his marriage. His  
wife was a woman of eminent piety and strong mind;  
they were married in youth, and years only deepened  
their affection. Mrs. Jones died first, and the afflicted  
widower would say, when speaking of the joys of another  
world, ‘I would not for half a heaven but find her there.’  
Wkitefield, it is said, was so enchanted with their happi-  
ness, when visiting at their house, that he immediately  
determined to change his condition, and soon paid his ad-  
dresses to Mrs. James. Alas! he found that Mrs. James  
and Mrs. Jones were two different beings; though very  
likely the second might have been as incompetent as the  
first to be the wife of a perpetual traveller, who preached  
and travelled all day and wrote letters till after midnight.  
Who could have been the wife of such a man? Clearly  
it was a misfortune that he had not studied the seventh  
chapter of St. Paul’s first,epistle to the Corinthians.

There was probably no cessation of preaching; only a  
few days after the celebration of the marriage he wrote  
to tell an Edinburgh friend that God had been pleased to  
work by his hand since his coming to Wales. Three  
days later still he was in Bristol, building up religious  
societies, and preaching in a large hall which his friends  
had hired; and Mrs. Whitefield was at Abergavenny, stay-  
ing till he could conveniently take her with him on his  
journeys.2

1. Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. ii. p. 117.

2 Bristol had another distinguished visitor at this time. Savage was  
 detained in Newgate for a debt of eight pounds; he had worn out the  
 patience and respect of his friends in the city, and no one would step in to  
 help him. His best friend was Mr. Dagge, ‘ the tender gaoler,’ whose virtues  
 Johnson has praised in high terms, probably not knowing that he was

His appeal from the jurisdiction of the Commissary of  
Charleston was now returned to him from the Lords,  
who saw through the Commissary’s enmity; and there  
was an end of that trouble.

His work now lay in Bristol, where he began a ‘general  
monthly meeting to read corresponding letters,’ and be-  
tween that place and London—the same district in which  
he won his first successes in itinerant preaching; and  
everywhere the desire to hear the truth was more intense  
than ever. Finally, he went to London, taking his wife  
with him, and probably lodged with some Methodist  
friend, one carefully chosen, as he was careful about the  
homes he went to, nor was it everyone who could have  
his presence. To one London brother who wanted to have  
him and his wife he replied, ‘I know not what to say  
about coming to your house; for brother S. tells me you  
and your family are dilatory, and that you do not rise  
sometimes till nine or ten in the morning. This, dear  
Mr. H., will never do for me; and I am persuaded such a  
conduct tends much to the dishonour of God, and to the  
prejudice of your own precious soul. Be not slothful in  
business. Go to bed seasonably, and rise early. Redeem  
your precious time; pick up the fragments of it, that not  
one moment may be lost. Be much in secret prayer.  
Converse less with man, and more with God.’ To this  
wise circumspection, and the fact that he was always the

praising a convert of Whitefield. He says, ‘He’ (Savage) ‘was treated by  
Mr. Dagge, the keeper of the prison, with great humanity,· was supported  
by him at his own table, without any certainty of recompense ; had a room  
to himself, to which he could at any time retire from all disturbance; was  
allowed to stand at the door of the prison, and sometimes taken out into  
the fields; so that he suffered fewer hardships in prison than he had been  
accustomed to undergo in the greatest part of his life.

‘The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a gentle execution of his  
office, but made some overtures to the creditor for his release, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his imprisonment, to treat him with the utmost tenderness and civility.’

It is almost certain that Whitefield sometimes sat down at the keeper’s  
hospitable table with that strange guest.

guest of men of undoubted piety, or of untarnished repu-  
tation, may in part be ascribed his triumph over all the  
bass slanders of his enemies.

London was once more a home of brethren. He could  
talk freely with the Wesleys, though he and they still  
differed widely on a certain point. He was persuaded of  
the futility and mischief of disputation, and longed for  
greater love and unity among his friends, and among all  
the followers of the Lord Jesus. He was anxious to deal  
tenderly with men of all sects, to be open, simple, and  
guileless with them. And good tidings kept coming from  
afar, while the ‘word grew mightily and prevailed’ at  
home. In New England the work was ‘going on  
amazingly;’ in Scotland the awakening was greater than  
ever; the Spirit of God was still among the little orphans  
in Georgia; and in Carolina, a planter, who had himself  
been converted at the orphan-house, had twelve Negroes  
on his estate ‘brought savingly home to Jesus Christ.’  
Still the cry came to him for help, so that he wished he  
had a thousand lives and tongues to give to his Lord.  
As it was, he was working himself at a perilous rate,  
sleeping and eating but little, and constantly employed  
from morning till midnight; ‘yet,’ said he, ‘I walk and  
am not weary, I run and am not faint.’ Then, catching  
fire at the old topic, which to the last never failed to call  
forth all his joy and gratitude, he exclaimed, ‘Oh, free  
grace! It fires my soul, and makes me long to do some-  
thing more for Jesus. It is true, indeed, I want to go  
home, but here are so many souls ready to perish for  
lack of knowledge, that I am willing to tarry below as  
long as my Master hath work for me to do.’ Everything  
was helping to prepare him for another of those daring  
religious forays of which he is the most brilliant captain:  
this was the enterprise he attempted—to beat the devil  
in Moorfields on Whit Monday. The soldier is the best  
historian here:—

‘London, May 11, 1742.

‘With this I send you a few out of the many notes I have  
received from persons who were convicted, converted, or com-  
forted in Moorfields during the late holidays. For many weeks  
I found my heart much pressed to determine to venture to  
preach there at this season, when, if ever, Satan’s children keep  
up their annual rendezvous. I must inform you that Moorfields  
is a large spacious place, given, as I have been told, by one  
Madam Moore, on purpose for all sorts of people to divert them-  
selves in. For many years past, from one end to the other,  
booths of all kinds have been erected for mountebanks, players,  
puppet-shows, and such like. With a heart bleeding with com-  
passion for so many thousands led captive by the devil at his  
will, on Whit Monday, at six o’clock in the morning, attended  
by a large congregation of praying people, I ventured to lift up a  
standard among them in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps  
there were about ten thousand in waiting—not for me, but for  
Satan’s instruments to amuse them. Glad was I to find that I  
had for once, as it were, got the start of the devil. I mounted  
my field-pulpit; almost all immediately flocked around it. I  
preached on these words: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in  
the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up,” &c. They  
gazed, they listened, they wept; and I believe that many felt  
themselves stung with deep conviction for their past sins. All  
was hushed and solemn. Being thus encouraged, I ventured out  
again at noon; but what a scene! The fields, the whole fields  
seemed, in a bad sense of the word, all white, ready, not for the  
Redeemer’s, but Beelzebub’s, harvest. All his agents were in  
full motion—drummers, trumpeters, Merry Andrews, masters  
of puppet-shows, exhibitors of wild beasts, players, &c. &c.  
—all busy in entertaining their respective auditories. I suppose  
there could not be less than twenty or thirty thousand people.  
My pulpit was fixed on the opposite side, and immediately, to  
their great mortification, they found the number of their at-  
tendants sadly lessened. Judging that, like St. Paul, I should  
now be called, as it were, to fight with beasts at Ephesus, I  
preached from these words: “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”  
You may easily guess that there was some noise among the  
craftsmen, and that I was honoured with having a few stones,  
dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of dead cat thrown at me, whilst

engaged in calling them from their favourite, but lying, vani-  
ties. My soul was indeed among lions! but far the greatest  
part of my congregation, which was very large, seemed for  
awhile to be turned into lambs. This encouraged me to give  
notice that I would preach again at six o’clock in the evening.  
I came, I saw, but what—thousands and thousands more than  
before if possible, still more deeply engaged in their unhappy  
diversions; but some thousands amongst them waiting as  
earnestly to hear the gospel. This Satan could not brook.  
One of his choicest servants was exhibiting, trumpeting on a  
large stage; but as soon as the people saw me in my black  
robes and my pulpit, I think all to a man left him and ran to  
me. For awhile I was enabled to lift up my voice like a  
trumpet, and many heard the joyful sound, God’s people kept  
praying, and the enemy’s agents made a kind of a roaring at  
some distance from our camp. At length they approached  
nearer, and the Merry Andrew, attended by others who com-  
plained that they had taken many pounds less that day on  
account of my preaching, got upon a man’s shoulders, and ad-  
vancing near the pulpit attempted to slash me with a long  
heavy whip several times, but always with the violence of his  
motion tumbled down. Soon afterwards they got a recruiting  
serjeant with his drum, &c. to pass through the congregation. I  
gave the word of command, and ordered that way might be  
made for the king’s officer. The ranks opened while all marched  
quietly through, and then closed again.[[7]](#footnote-7) Finding those efforts  
to fail, a large body, quite on the opposite side, assembled to-  
gether, and having got a large pole for their standard, advanced  
towards us with steady and formidable steps till they came very  
near the skirts of our hearing, praying, and almost undaunted

congregation. I saw, gave warning, and prayed to the Captain  
of our salvation for present support and deliverance. He  
heard and answered, for just as they approached as with looks  
full of resentment, I know not by what accident they quarrelled  
among themselves, threw down their staff, and went their  
way, leaving, however, many of their company behind, who,  
before we had done, I trust were brought over to join the be-  
sieged party. I think I continued in praying, preaching, and  
singing—for the noise was too great at times to preach—about  
three hours. We then retired to the Tabernacle with my pockets  
full of notes from persons brought under concern, and read  
them amidst the praises and spiritual acclamations of thousands  
who joined with the holy angels in rejoicing that so many  
sinners were snatched, in such an unexpected, unlikely place and  
manner, out of the very jaws of the devil. This was the be-  
ginning of the Tabernacle society. Three hundred and fifty  
awakened souls were received in one day, and I believe the  
number of notes exceeded a thousand; but I must have done,  
believing you want to retire to join in mutual praise and  
thanksgiving to God and the Lamb with

‘Yours, &c.

‘G. Whitefield.’

Bare facts support the statement that some had been  
‘plucked from the very jaws of the devil.’ Whitefield  
married several who had been living in open adultery;  
one man was converted who had exchanged his wife for  
another, and given fourteen shillings to boot; and several  
were numbered in the society whose days would in all  
probability have been ended at Tyburn. But his exploits  
were not ended. Here is a second letter:—

‘London, May 15, 1742.

‘My dear Friend,—Fresh matter of praise; bless ye the  
Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously! The battle that was  
begun on Monday was not quite over till Wednesday evening,  
though the scene of action was a little shifted. Being strongly  
invited, and a pulpit being prepared for me by an honest Quaker,  
a coal merchant, I ventured on Tuesday evening to preach at  
Mary-le-bone Fields, a place almost as much frequented by

boxers, gamesters, and such like, as Moorfields. A vast con-  
course was assembled together, and as soon as I got into the  
field-pulpit their countenance bespoke the enmity of their heart  
against the preacher. I opened with these words—“I am not  
ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God  
unto salvation to every one that believeth.” I preached in  
great jeopardy; for the pulpit being high and the supports not  
well fixed in the ground, it tottered every time I moved, and  
numbers of enemies strove to push my friends against the sup-  
porters in order to throw me down. But the Redeemer stayed  
my soul on Himself, therefore I was not much moved, unless  
with compassion for those to whom I was delivering my Master’s  
message, which, I had reason to think, by the strong impressions  
that were made, was welcome to many. But Satan did not  
like thus to be attacked in his strongholds, and I narrowly  
escaped with my life; for as I was passing from the pulpit to  
the coach, I felt my wig and hat to be almost off. I turned  
about, and observed a sword just touching my temple. A young  
rake, as I afterwards found, was determined to stab me; but a  
gentleman, seeing the sword thrusting near me, struck it up  
with his cane, and so the destined victim providentially escaped.  
Such an attempt excited abhorrence; the enraged multitude soon  
seized him, and had it not been for one of my friends who re-  
ceived him into his house, he must have undergone a severe  
discipline. The next day I renewed my attack in Moorfields;  
but, would you think it? after they found that pelting, noise,  
and threatening would not do, one of the Merry Andrews got  
up into a tree very near the pulpit, and shamefully exposed his  
nakedness before all the people. Such a beastly action quite  
abashed the serious part of my auditory, whilst hundreds of  
another stamp, instead of rising up to pull down the unhappy  
wretch, expressed their approbation by repeated laughs. I  
must own at first it gave me a shock: I thought Satan had  
now almost outdone himself; but recovering my spirits, I ap-  
pealed to all, since now they had such a spectacle before them,  
whether I had wronged human nature in saying, after pious  
Bishop Hall, “that man, when left to himself, is half a devil  
and half a beast;” or, as the great Mr. Law expressed himself,  
“a motley mixture of the beast and devil.” Silence and atten-  
tion being thus gained, I concluded with a warm exhortation,

and closed our festival enterprises in reading fresh notes that  
were put up, praising and blessing God amidst thousands at  
the Tabernacle for what He had done for precious souls, and on  
account of the deliverances He had wrought out for me and  
His people. I could enlarge; but being about to embark in  
the “Mary and Ann” for Scotland, I must hasten to subscribe  
myself,

‘Yours, &c.

Gr. Whitefield.

‘P.S. I cannot help adding, that several little boys and girls,  
who were fond of sitting round me on the pulpit while I  
preached, and handing to me people’s notes, though they were  
often pelted with eggs, dirt, &c. thrown at me, never once gave  
way; but on the contrary, every time I was struck, turned up  
their little weeping eyes, and seemed to wish they could receive  
the blows for me. God make them in their growing years  
great and living martyrs for Him who out of the mouth of  
babes and sucklings perfects praise!’

Whitefield, accompanied by his wife, now went from  
the excitement of London to that of Scotland; and, hap-  
pily, the voyage afforded him a few days for quieter en-  
gagements, before rushing into the heat of an immense  
‘revival.’ Most of his time on board ship was spent in  
secret prayer. He landed at Leith on June 3, 1742,  
amid the blessings and tears of the people, many of whom  
followed the coach up to Edinburgh, again to welcome  
him when he stepped out.

But all hearts were not glad for his return. The  
Associate Presbytery—still smarting under the rebuff of  
the preceding year, driven to the greater vehemence for  
their testimony the more they saw it unheeded, and made  
the more contentious by the ‘foreigner’s ’ low estimate of  
their ‘ holy contendings ’—were full of wrath. Even the  
Erskines were unfriendly. But the most conspicuous  
enemy was Adam Gib, of Edinburgh, one of the vene-  
rable nine with whom Whitefield had the amusing inter-  
view at Dunfermline. Gib was resolved to expose

Whitefield, and thus to deliver his own soul, and, it might  
be, the souls of the poor deluded, devil-blinded people  
that crowded to hear the deceiver. Accordingly he  
‘published, in the New Church at Bristow, upon Sabbath,  
June 6, 1742, “A Warning against Countenancing the  
Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield;”’ and certainly  
the trumpet gave no uncertain sound. He disclaimed  
any intention of speaking ‘anent the personal character  
or condition of the foreigner meant, or anent what might  
be his scope and aim in his present management, but  
anent the scope of his ministrations.’ The indictment  
was this:—‘That the preacher we speak of, his present  
ministrations have a direct tendency to introduce among  
us a latitudinarian scheme; and particularly to make men  
mere sceptics as to the discipline and government of the  
house of God. True, indeed, this is propagate under a  
very specious pretence—a pretence of universal charity  
for good men that differ about these things.’ Whitefield  
was unhesitatingly declared to be one of the false Christs  
of whom the Church is forewarned in St. Matthew xxiv.  
24; and as a proof of this it was alleged, that the world  
was set a-wondering after him! Were not Scottish  
ministers employed in glorifying him by their letters and  
otherwise? ‘Upon March 26,1740,’ had not ‘Josiah  
Smith, a minister in South Carolina, turned so barefaced  
in Christing Mr. Whitefield, that he preached a whole  
sermon upon him from Job xxxii. 17, wherein gospel doc-  
trine was vindicated as his doctrine, and for his credit?’  
Had not ‘that unparalleled and awful sermon been printed  
at Boston, with a preface by Messieurs Colman and  
Cooper wherein they recommend the author, and his  
doctrine of Mr. Whitefield thus—what he has seen and  
heard, that declares he unto us?’ Worse than that, and  
to bring the matter home to Scotsmen, had not ‘this  
sermon and preface been lately reprinted at Glasgow by  
Mr. Whitefield’s friends, and in a way of approbation?’

The ‘Warning’ caused such a commotion that Gib  
was urged to publish, and taking this as a hint from  
Providence that he should finish his holy task, he ex-  
panded a short sermon of eight pages into an ‘Appen-  
dix’ of fifty-seven—thus getting ample scope to make  
his charges, and to prove them, if that were possible.  
Gib shows, in his own way, ‘that Mr. Whitefield was  
no minister of Jesus Christ; that his call and coming to  
Scotland were scandalous; that his practice was dis-  
orderly and fertile of disorder; that his whole doctrine  
was, and his success must be, diabolical; so that people  
ought to avoid him, from duty to God, to the Church, to  
themselves, to fellow-men, to posterity, and to him.’  
The heavy charges that Whitefield was no minister of  
Jesus Christ, and that his call and coming to Scotland  
were scandalous, are proved by most odd reasoning, and  
may be left to ecclesiastical antiquaries. The charge of  
disorderly practices comes more within the scope of a  
common understanding, and is thus dealt with:—‘To  
prove these things from Scripture and reason belongs not  
to the present undertaking, otherwise it might easily be  
done; but it will be an insuperable task for any man to  
reconcile with, or produce a warrant from, Scripture or  
reason, that gospel ordinances be publicly dispensed  
oftener than once every day, especially among the same  
people. This was as needful in the Apostles their days  
as ever it could be afterwards; but we have no account  
that they had a regular practice of calling people in this  
manner every day off their other necessary employments.  
Moreover, the awful profanation of the Lord’s day, which  
the noise of Mr. Whitefield’s ministrations introduces,  
deserves especial consideration. It is well known that  
on this day multitudes in Edinburgh wait publicly—and  
very indecently, too—for his appearance, through several  
hours before the time appointed for it, and that while  
public worship is exercised through the city, where these

people profess no scruple to join.’ Whitefield’s small  
appreciation of the witnessing of the Church is thus re-  
ferred to:—‘Thus we see the horrid notion Mr. Whitefield  
has of the whole witnessing work of the Christian Church,  
and he derives it from as horrid a source, viz. from Satan,  
that old serpent.’

The theology of Whitefield, which we have seen was  
somewhat rigid and exclusive, was far too lax for Gib.

‘Mr. Whitefield’s universal love,’ he says, ‘proceeds upon  
this erroneous and horrid principle, that God is the lover  
of all souls—which asserts universal redemption—and  
the God of all churches—which asserts Him inconsistent  
and impious.’ Not, however, that Gib would have him-  
self and his brethren set down as lovers of none but the  
good who were in their own communion; his charity  
warmed and expanded wonderfully to admit thus much:

‘We would like what is right in any man; but does love  
to the persons of all men, and to what good they have,  
oblige us to be cool and dumb anent that good, their  
want whereof may or will blast unto them any good they  
have? Does it oblige us to stick only by that good which  
they have, unto the perdition of us and them both?  
When we meet one professing to be a pilgrim heaven-  
ward, and having but one leg, one eye, can we not truly  
love him without letting him hack off one of our legs,  
and pluck out one of our eyes? Is it not the best proof  
of love to him, when we offer, and insist, that he should  
receive supply of a leg and an eye? And if he contu-  
maciously refuse, does love oblige us to hope and wish  
that his one leg and one eye may do him the same good  
that a pair of each would do?’ The worst of Whitefield  
was not even yet discovered; a lower depth of Satan was  
in him; and, as Gib heroically determined to explore it, his  
spirit almost fainted. He says, ‘When I offer to continue  
my thought upon the gloomy subject thereof, my spirit  
is like to freeze with horror, impotent of speech.’ And

this was the horrifying doctrine of the devil-inspired  
foreign curate, ‘The doctrine of grace, as diabolically  
perverted through Mr. Whitefield, is versant about such  
a Christ as is merely a Saviour; and it hurries men off in  
quest of such spiritual influences, convictions, conversions,  
consolations, and assurance, as unconcerned with, and  
hostile unto, the Mediator’s visible glory.’ One charitable  
word crept into this virulent appendix, and is much too  
precious to be lost. ‘I will not say that Mr. Whitefield  
understands all this doctrine, or that he knows the real  
meaning and tendency of what he says and adopts in the  
letter and extract; but ’tis not his intellectuals we are  
debating anent; ’tis his doctrine. Thus our contendings  
against Mr. Whitefield must be proportioned, not to his  
design, but Satan’s; while hereof he is an effectual, though  
blinded, tool.’

Whitefield was not soured by such detraction and  
abuse, but wrote to Ebenezer Erskine to say how much  
concerned he was that their difference as to Outward  
things should cut off their sweet fellowship and com-  
munion with each other. He protested that his love for  
Erskine and Erskine’s brethren was greater than ever;  
that he applauded their zeal for God, though it was not,  
in some respects, according to knowledge, and was fre-  
quently levelled against himself; and that his heart had  
no resentment in it. Meanwhile the people, not heeding  
Gib’s ‘Warning,’ flocked to the Hospital Park, and filled  
the shaded wooden amphitheatre which had been erected  
for their accommodation. Twice a day Whitefield went  
to the Park, and twice a day they came to hear him.

A congregation moved by deeper religious feeling than  
that which agitated Edinburgh was anxious to hear his  
voice in a little village called Cambuslang, on the south  
side of the Clyde, about five miles from Glasgow, and  
now a suburb of that city. Wonderful things were be-  
ginning to take place in that small parish of nine hundred

souls. The Rev. William McCulloch, who had been  
ordained its minister on April 29, 1731, was a man of  
considerable learning and of solid, unostentatious piety,  
slow and cautious as a speaker, and more anxious to feed  
his people with sound truth than to move their passions  
with declamation. The news of the revivals in England  
and in America had awakened a lively interest in him;  
and he began to detail to his people what he knew, and  
they, in their turn, felt as interested as he did. A dilapi-  
dated church and an overflowing congregation next com-  
pelled the good pastor and his flock to resort to the fields  
for worship; and nature, as if anticipating their wants,  
had made a fair temple of her own in a deep ravine near  
the church. The grassy level by the burnside and the  
brae which rises from it in the form of an amphitheatre,  
afforded an admirable place for the gathering of a large  
mass of people; and there the pastor would preach the same  
doctrines which were touching rugged Kingswood colliers,  
depraved London roughs, and formal ministers and pro-  
fessors of religion in both hemispheres; but he dwelt  
mostly on regeneration. The sermon over, he would  
recount of a Sabbath evening what was going on in the  
kingdom of God elsewhere, and then renew his applica-  
tion of the truth to the conscience. The great evangelist  
had also been heard by some of the people; nor could  
they forget his words, or throw off their influence. On  
his previous visit to Scotland, when he went to Glasgow,  
they had stood on the gravestones of the high church-  
yard in that immense congregation which trembled and  
wept as he denounced the curses and offered the blessings  
of the word of God. Others, again, had read the ser-  
mons after they were printed, and had been as vitally  
affected as if they had heard the thrilling voice which  
had spoken them. The religious leaven was touching the  
whole body of the people; and at the end of January  
1742, five months before Whitefield’s second visit to

Scotland, Ingram More, a shoemaker, and Robert Bow-  
man, a weaver, carried a petition round the parish, pray-  
ing the minister to ‘set up a weekly lecture,’ and ninety  
heads of families signed it. The day which was most  
convenient for the temporal interests of the parish was  
Thursday, and on Thursday a lecture was given. Then  
wounded souls began to call at the manse to ask for  
counsel and comfort, and at last, after one of the Thursday  
lectures, fifty of them went; and all that night the faithful  
pastor was engaged in his good work. Next came a  
daily sermon, followed by private teaching, exhortation,  
and prayer; and before Whitefield got there to increase the  
intense feeling and honest conviction which were abroad,  
three hundred souls, according to the computation of Mr.  
McCulloch, ‘had been awakened and convinced of their  
perishing condition without a Saviour, more than two  
hundred of whom were, he believed, hopefully converted  
and brought home to God.’ The congregations on the hill  
side had also increased to nine or ten thousand. All the  
work of preaching and teaching did not, however, devolve  
upon one man; ministers from far and near came to see and  
wonder and help. Great care was taken by them all to  
hinder hypocrisy and delusion from spreading; and indeed  
the work, as examined by faithful men, presented every  
appearance of a work of the Holy Ghost. It embraced all  
classes, all ages, and all moral conditions. Cursing, swear-  
ing, and drunkenness were given up by those who had been  
guilty of these sins, and who had come under its power. It  
kindled remorse for acts of injustice. It compelled resti-  
tution for fraud. It won forgiveness from the revengeful.  
It imparted patience and love to endure the injuries of  
enemies. It bound pastors and people together with a  
stronger bond of sympathy. It raised an altar in the  
household, or kindled afresh the extinguished fire of  
domestic religion. It made men students of the word of  
God, and brought them in thought and purpose and effort

into communion with their Father in heaven. True there  
was chaff among the wheat, but the watchfulness and  
wisdom of the ministers detected it, and quickly drove it  
away. And for long years afterwards humble men and  
women, who dated their conversion from the work at  
Cambuslang, walked among their neighbours with an  
unspotted Christian name, and then died peacefully and  
joyfully in the arms of One whom they had learned in  
the revival days to call Lord and Saviour.

The most remarkable thing in the whole movement was  
an absence of terrible experiences. The great sorrow  
which swelled penitential hearts was not selfish, and came  
from no fear of future punishment, but from a sense of  
the dishonour they had done to God and to their Re-  
deemer. The influence of the Cambuslang meetings was  
at work in many a parish; and Whitefield’s first ride from  
Edinburgh into the west was through places where the  
greatest commotion was visible. When he came to Cam-  
buslang, he immediately preached to a vast congregation,  
which, notwithstanding Gib’s warning against hearing  
sermons on other days than the sabbath, had come to-  
gether on a Tuesday at noon. At six in the evening he  
preached again, and a third time at nine. No doubt the  
audience on the brae side was much the same at each  
service, and we are prepared to hear that by eleven at  
night the enthusiasm had reached its highest pitch. Fog’s  
Manor and Savannah were nothing to the Scotch village,  
with its sober peasantry and well-read artisans. For an  
hour and a half the loud weeping of the company filled  
the stillness of the summer night; while now and again  
the cry of some strong man, or more susceptible woman,  
rang above the preacher’s voice and the general wailing,  
and there was a swaying to and fro where the wounded  
one fell. Often the word would take effect like shot  
piercing a regiment of soldiers, and the congregation was  
broken again and again. It was a very field of battle, as

Whitefield himself has described it. Helpers carried the  
agonised into the house, and, as they passed, the crying  
of those whom they bore moved all hearts with fresh  
emotion, and prepared the way for the word to make  
fresh triumphs. When Whitefield ended his sermon,  
McCulloch took his place, and preached till past one in  
the morning; and even then the people were unwilling to  
leave the spot. Many walked the fields all night, pray-  
ing and singing, the sound of their voices much rejoicing  
the heart of Whitefield as he lay awake in the neighbour-  
ing manse.

The following Sunday was sacrament day, and he  
hurried back to Edinburgh to do some work there,  
before joining in the great and solemn ceremony. He  
says that there was such a shock in Edinburgh on Thurs-  
day night and Friday morning as he had never felt before.  
On Friday night he came to Cambuslang, and on Satur-  
day he preached to more than twenty thousand people.  
Sabbath, however, was the day of days. New converts  
had looked forward to it as the time of their first loving  
confession of their Redeemer, and aged Christians were  
assembled with the freshness of their early devotion upon  
them. Godly pastors had come from neighbouring and  
also from distant places to assist in serving the tables, and  
to take part in prayer and exhortation. All around the  
inner group of believers who were to partake of the  
sacrament for a remembrance of our Lord, was a mighty  
host, scarcely less earnest or less outwardly devout. Two  
tents were erected in the glen. Seventeen hundred tokens  
were issued to those who wished to communicate. The  
tables stood under the brae; and when Whitefield began  
to serve one of them, the people so crowded upon him  
that he was obliged to desist, and go to one of the tents  
to preach. All through the day, preaching by one or  
another never ceased; and at night, when the last com-  
municant had partaken, all the companies, still unwearied

and still ready to hear, met in one congregation, and  
Whitefield, at the request of the ministers, preached to  
them. His sermon was an hour and a half long, and the  
twenty thousand were not tired of hearing it.

Such a day might well have been followed by quiet-  
ness and repose, but his was no heart to cry for leisure,  
whatever his body might do. The following Monday  
was sure to be just such a day as he could most tho-  
roughly enjoy, for the day after communion Sunday has  
had among Presbyterians almost more sanctity than the  
Sunday itself. Preachers have preached their most effec-  
tive sermons on that day, and it was a memorable time  
at Cambuslang. ‘The motion,’ Whitefield says, ‘fled as  
swift as lightning from one end of the auditory to another.  
You might have seen thousands bathed in tears. Some at  
the same time wringing their hands, others almost swoon-  
ing, and others crying out, and mourning over a pierced  
Saviour. It was like the passover in Josiah’s time.’

The sermon preached by him on the Sunday night  
was upon Isaiah liv. 5, ‘For thy Maker is thy husband,’  
and was a sermon more frequently referred to by his  
converts than any other: yet we look in vain for a  
single passage of interest or power in it. The thought is  
meagre, and the language tame; there is a total absence  
of the dramatic element which abounds in all his treat-  
ment of narrative and parable. But, remembering how  
perfectly his heart realised the idea of union with God,  
and how intense was his personal devotion to the will of  
God, it becomes easier to understand the unfailing unc-  
tion with which his common thoughts were clothed. He  
could hardly fail to have power, when entreating sinners  
to yield to God and be joined to the Lord Jesus, who  
could say, without affectation or boast, ‘The hopes of  
bringing more souls to Jesus Christ is the only consider-  
ation that can reconcile me to fife. For this cause I  
can willingly stay long from my wished-for home, my

wished-for Jesus. But whither am I going? I forget  
myself when writing of Jesus. His love fills my soul.’

His qualities of meekness and self-restraint were as  
hardly tested by the meddlesomeness of would-be ad-  
visers as by the blind rage of enemies. Willison, of  
Dundee, a minister of the Kirk, was jealous over him on  
two points: first, as to the question of episcopacy; and,  
secondly, as to his habits of private devotion. As to the  
first, Whitefield told his correspondent that he thought  
his ‘letter breathed much of a sectarian spirit;’ and with  
his wonted charity added, ‘to which I hoped dear Mr.  
Willison was quite averse. Me thinks you seem, dear sir,  
not satisfied, unless I declare myself a Presbyterian, and  
openly renounce the Church of England. God knows  
that I have been faithful in bearing a testimony against  
what I think is corrupt in that church. I have shown  
my freedom in communicating with the Church of Scot-  
land, and in baptizing children their own way. I can go  
no further. Dear sir, be not offended at my plain speak-  
ing. I find but few of a truly catholic spirit. Most are  
catholic till they bring persons over to their own party,  
and there they would fetter them. I have not so learned  
Christ. I desire to act as God acts. I shall approve,  
and join with all who are good in every sect, and cast a  
mantle of love over all that are bad, so far as is con-  
sistent with a good conscience. This I can do without  
temporising; nay, I should defile my conscience if I did  
otherwise. As for my answer to Mr. M., dear sir, it is  
very satisfying to my own soul. Morning and evening  
retirement is certainly exceeding good; but if through  
weakness of body, or frequency of preaching, I cannot go  
to God in my usual set times, I think my spirit is not in  
bondage. It is not for me to tell how often I use secret  
prayer; if I did not use it, nay, if in one sense I did not  
pray without ceasing, it would be difficult for me to keep  
up that frame of soul which, by the Divine blessing, I

daily enjoy. If the work of God prospers, and your  
hands become more full, you will then, dear sir, know  
better what I mean.[[8]](#footnote-8) But enough of this. God knows  
my heart. I would do everything I possibly could to  
satisfy all men, and give a reason of the hope that is in  
me with meekness and fear; but I cannot satisfy all that  
are waiting for an occasion to find fault: our Lord could  
not; I therefore despair of doing it. However, dear sir,  
I take what you have said in very good part; only I  
think you are too solicitous to clear up my character to  
captious and prejudiced men. Let my Master speak for  
me.’

As soon as news of the Cambuslang work came from  
the west, the Seceders called a presbytery, which, with a  
promptitude that showed their prejudices and condemned  
their act as rash and ignorant, appointed a fast for the  
diabolical delusion which had seized the people. The  
notions of Gib were evidently highly popular; for be-  
tween the eleventh of July and the fifteenth—the date of  
the act of the Presbytery—no examination of the work  
could have been made. The act (which I have not had  
the good fortune to see) was described by Robe, of  
Kilsyth, a man of fair and generous temper, as ‘full of  
great swelling words, altogether void of the spirit of the  
meek and lowly Jesus, and the most heaven-daring paper  
that hath been published by any set of men in Britain  
these hundred years past. Therein you declare the  
work of God to be a delusion, and the work of the grand

deceiver.’ The intense, unreasonable prejudice which  
had to be encountered may be understood from the  
guarded way in which an account of the work done by  
McCulloch alone, before Whitefield came, was sent before  
the public; it appeared with an appendix of nine attes-  
tations from trustworthy witnesses, ministers of other  
parishes. Whitefield expressed himself with much com-  
posure in a letter to a friend. ‘The Messrs. Erskine,’ he  
says, ‘and their adherents, would you think it, have  
appointed a public fast to humble themselves, among  
other things, for my being received in Scotland, and for  
the delusion, as they term it, at Cambuslang, and other  
places; and all this because I would not consent to  
preach only for them, till I had light into, and could  
take, the Solemn League and Covenant. But to what  
lengths may prejudice carry even good men! Erom  
giving way to the first risings of bigotry and a party  
spirit, good Lord deliver us! ’

And the charity of this large-hearted man was not  
words on paper; he could believe in the goodness of  
another, in spite of personal wrong done to himself, and  
wait with full confidence the time when evil should be  
overcome with good. Soon after the fast, which was  
proclaimed from Dunfermline, he had a short interview  
with Ralph Erskine, and brotherly love so prevailed that  
they embraced each other, and Ralph said, ‘We have  
seen strange things.’ Whitefield’s faith in the power of  
love to bring brethren to a right state of mind was  
justified even in the case of violent Adam Gib, who,  
when an old man, confessed to his nephew that he  
wished that no copies of his pamphlet against Whitefield  
were on the face of the earth, and that, if he knew how  
to recall them, every copy should be obtained and burnt:  
‘My blood at that time was too hot,’ said he, ‘and I was  
unable to write with becoming temper.’

The strain made upon Whitefield by his exhausting

labours brought back again the spasms of sickness with  
which he had been so frequently seized in America.  
Writing to one of his friends he said: ‘Last night some of  
my friends thought I was going off; but how did Jesus  
fill my heart! To-day I am, as they call it, much better.  
In less than a month, we are to have another sacrament  
at Cambuslang—a thing not practised before in Scotland.  
I entreat all to pray in an especial manner for a blessing  
at that time.’ A fortnight later, when he had got to  
Cambuslang, and shared in the much-desired sacrament,  
he said, ‘My bodily strength is daily renewed, and I  
mount on the wings of faith and love like an eagle.’  
This second celebration was more remarkable than even  
the first. It came about in this wise.

Soon after the first celebration, Webster of Edinburgh  
proposed that there should be a second on an early day,  
and Whitefield seconded him. McCulloch liked the pro-  
posal, but must confer with his people before giving  
an answer. The several meetings for prayer were in-  
formed of it, and they, after supplication and deliberation,  
thought it best to favour it: because in the early days of  
Christianity the sacrament was often celebrated; because  
the present work was extraordinary; and because many  
persons whio had thought of communicating in July had  
been hindered by inward misgivings or outward diffi-  
culties. It was resolved to dispense the Lord’s Supper  
again on August 15. Meanwhile, prayer meetings were  
arranged for through the whole of the intervening month.  
Communicants came from distant as well as neighbouring  
places, from Edinburgh and Kilmarnock, from Irvine and  
Stewarton, and some even from England and Ireland.  
Great numbers of Quakers came to be hearers—not par-  
takers, of course—so, too, did many of the Secession, and  
some of the latter went to the table. Ministers arrived  
from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilsyth, Kinglassie, Irvine,  
Douglas, Blantyre, Kutherglen, and Cathcart. Old Mr.

Bonar, of Torphichen, who took three days to ride  
eighteen miles, was determined to be present, and when  
helped up to one of the three tents which had been  
pitched, preached three times with much energy; he  
returned home with the ‘Nunc dimittis’ on his lips. Be-  
tween thirty and forty thousand people were gathered in  
the glen on the Sunday; and of these three thousand  
communicated.1 The energy of the truth which was all  
day long preached by several ministers in different parts  
was so great that possibly a thousand more would have  
done so, if they could have had access to procure tokens.  
The staff of ministers were assisted at the tables by seve-  
ral elders of rank and distinction. And there was not  
wanting that power which perhaps most, if not all, had  
come hoping to find. Whitefield himself was in a visible  
ecstasy as he stood in the evening serving some tables;  
and at ten at night, his great audience in the churchyard  
could heed only his words, though the weather, which  
had been favourable all day, had broken, and it rained  
fast. On the following morning, at seven o’clock, Web-  
ster preached with immense effect, and Whitefield fol-  
lowed in the same manner later in the day.

The greater the work the hotter the opposition and  
the more furious the denunciations of opponents. The  
Seceders were running greater and greater lengths in  
misguided zeal, and were beginning to split among them-  
selves. This was a chance for the Kirk presbyters, some  
of whom had no love for the prelatist, excepting as he  
fortified their falling Church, to launch out at him; and  
they began to call to account some of the ministers who  
had employed him. The Cameronians, who rallied round  
the blue flag of the Covenant, rivalled in a ‘Declaration ’

1 It will help us to understand how widespread was the religious work at  
this time, if we remember that the population of Glasgow was about 20,000.  
Had every man, woman, and child gone from the city and joined the parish-  
ioners of Cambuslang, the whole would not have made more than two-thirds  
of one of the congregations assembled to hear Whitefield in that village.

the ‘Act’ of the Associate Presbytery. They called their  
document ‘The Declaration, Protestation, and Testimony  
of the suffering Remnant of the anti-Popish, anti-Lutheran,  
anti-Prelatic, anti-Whitefieldian, anti-Erastian, anti-Secta-  
rian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland.  
Published against Mr. George Whitefield and his encou-  
ragers, and against the work at Cambuslang and other  
places and the ignorance and injustice of the declara-  
tion amply sustained the pugnacious title. Whitefield,  
according to it, was a wandering star, who steered his  
course according to the compass of gain and advantage,  
and preached vain-glorious orations. He was the ‘most  
latitudinarian prelatic priest that ever essayed to con-  
found and unite unto one almost all sorts and sizes of  
sects and heresies whatsoever with orthodox Christians;’  
and this was the man whom some who called themselves  
Presbyterians had ‘employed to assist them at their most  
solemn occasions, and not only admitting him to profane  
the holy things of the Lord by partaking of the Lord’s  
Supper himself, but also by employing him to preach,  
exhort, serve communion tables, and to take the bread  
and wine, the elements whereby Christ’s body and blood  
are represented in this holy ordinance, in his foul, prelatic,  
sectarian hands, and to break and divide the same among  
their communicants.’ The blows aimed at Whitefield in  
this document were worse than charges of heresy—‘for  
it is well known,’ said the cruel detractor, ‘from his con-  
duct and management in Scotland last year, in gathering  
and collecting such vast sums of money to himself, pub-  
licly and privately, in the several places where he tra-  
versed, that his unsatiable lust of covetousness (when  
added to other things that he is chargeable with) showed  
him to be such an one that no other thing could be  
rationally judged to be his design in coming to Scotland  
but to pervert the truth, subvert the people, and make  
gain to himself by making merchandise of his pretended

ministry.’ Going on to the work at Cambuslang, it winds  
up with an extraordinary paragraph, which brings the  
sanity of the writers into suspicion: ‘Upon these and  
many other grounds and reasons that might be given  
against it, we do for ourselves, and for all that shall ad-  
here unto us in this, hereby expressly protest, testify, and  
declare against the delusion of Satan at Cambuslang, and  
other places, because, as we have showed, it is not agree-  
able to the law and the testimony, the written Word of  
God (Isa. vii. 20). And we do likewise protest, testify,  
and declare against all the managers, aiders, assisters,  
countenancers, and encouragers of the same; against all  
such as, by subscribed attestations, or otherways, give it  
out to be a wonderful work of the spirit of God, thereby  
labouring to deceive the hearts of the simple, and to  
strengthen their own ill cause; against all such as resort  
to it, plead for it, or any way approve of it; and against  
all such as condemn the faithfulness of such as testify  
against it; and, finally, against all who pass it by in  
silence, without giving a testimony against it. And that  
this our declaration, protestation, and testimony, may  
come to the world’s view, we do appoint and ordain our

emissaries, in our name, to pass upon the day of

August, 1742, to the market cross of --, and other

public places necessary, and there publish and leave copies  
of the same, that none may pretend ignorance hereof.  
Given in Scotland upon the -- day of August, 1742.

‘Let King Jesus reign,

And let all His enemies be scattered.’

A more crafty way of damaging his reputation and  
impeding his work was hit upon by one or more persons  
in America, who wrote to friends in Scotland what they  
pretended to be true accounts of the condition of religion  
in New England. One of the letters was written to a  
minister in Glasgow, and another to Mr. George Wishart,

one of the ministers of Edinburgh. Both letters were  
published without the names of their writers, and were  
offered for public acceptance, the one upon the word of  
its publisher, and the other upon the word of Wishart.  
The first was deemed worthy of an answer, which White-  
field wrote at Cambuslang, where he had fixed his  
head-quarters for some time, and whence he made  
constant excursions to places that wanted his services.  
Its authority was effectually shattered when Whitefield  
pointed out that, if it had come from America at all, it  
had been tampered with since its arrival; for reference  
was made in it to a sermon published in London on  
May 1; yet the letter itself was written on May 24, and  
no mode of transit in those days was swift enough to  
carry news across the Atlantic and back in twenty-three  
days. A few racy touches are to be found in the reply,  
which uphold Whitefield’s reputation for quickness of  
retort. The letter said that Tennent was of an uncha-  
ritable spirit, and made divisions; but it said, also, that  
he was followed by all sorts of people; and Whitefield  
rejoined: ‘This, I think, was a proof that he was of a  
catholic spirit, and not of a divisive, uncharitable temper.’  
Tennant was followed as much as Whitefield, said the  
letter; and Whitefield echoed: ‘And I pray God he may  
be followed a thousand times more.’ ‘And by many  
persons preferred to him,’ said the letter. ‘Very justly  
so,’ said Whitefield. But Tennent’s ‘sermons were some-  
times as confused and senseless as you can imagine.’  
Whitefield capped the censure with the reply: ‘It is well  
they were not always so.’

The letters were, indeed, more of an assault upon  
Whitefield, through Tennent, than of an attempt to assail  
him through his own work. The letter bearing Wishart’s  
imprimatur only repeated the old cry, that Whitefield  
had taken people from their business, and filled every  
one’s mouth with talk about religion. Its real attack was

upon Tennent, and his works and friends, only the people  
in Scotland were asked to regard Whitefield in the same  
light. Whitefield summed the whole matter up in a  
manly, impartial paragraph. He says: ‘There has been  
a great and marvellous work in New England; but, as it  
should seem, by the imprudences of some, and the over-  
boiling zeal of others, some irregularities have been com-  
mitted in several places, which Mr. Tennent himself, in a  
letter to Mr. Parsons, printed in the “Boston Gazette,”  
has borne his testimony against as strongly as any of  
these eminent ministers. This is nothing but what is  
common. It was so in Old England some few years ago.  
Many young persons there ran out before they were  
called; others were guilty of great imprudences. I  
checked them in the strictest manner myself, and found,  
as they grew acquainted with the Lord Jesus and their  
own hearts, the intemperance of their zeal abated, and  
they became truly humble walkers with God. But must  
the whole work of God be condemned as enthusiasm and  
delusion because of some disorder?’[[9]](#footnote-9)

The labour of defending his work, as well as doing it,  
was not all left in Whitefield’s hands. Webster of Edin-  
burgh vindicated the work in the west of Scotland with  
great calmness and charity towards adversaries. His  
words, after those of the Cameronians and Associate Pres-  
byterians, were like summer breezes after an east wind.

‘I shall conclude with observing,’ he says, ‘that the  
warm opposition made to this divine work by several

good men through misinformation or mistaken zeal, and  
the slippery precipice on which they now stand, may  
teach us that it is indeed a dangerous thing to censure  
without proper enquiry. It may serve likewise as a  
solemn warning against a party spirit, which so far blinds  
the eyes. It also gives a noble opportunity for the exer-  
cise of our Christian sympathy and charity towards these  
our erring brethren, and should make us long for a re-  
move to Mount Moriah, the land of vision above, where  
all the true lovers of Jesus shall indeed dwell together in  
perfect unity, where are no wranglings, no strivings about  
matters of faith, where the whole scene of present wor-  
ship being removed, we shall see no more darkly as  
through a glass, but face to face, where perfect light will  
lay a foundation for perfect harmony and love. It is  
with peculiar pleasure that I often think of this happy  
meeting of all the scattered flock of Christ, in the imme-  
diate presence of their dear Redeemer, the Chief Shep-  
herd and Bishop of their souls; and have not the least  
doubt but that my good friend Ebenezer shall then  
enter into the everlasting mansions with many glorified  
saints whom the Associate Presbytery have now given  
over as the property of Satan. May they soon see their  
mistake, and may we yet altogether be happily united in  
the bonds of peace and truth!’

The short retirement which he managed to snatch from  
the revival work was devoted to domestic concerns, as  
well as to the defence of his preaching and its fruits.  
His mother had sought a temporary home in his house at  
Bristol—probably his sister’s house had come into his  
possession—and the event so delighted him that he must  
write to welcome her as if he had been present:—

‘Honoured Mother,’ (he wrote) ‘I rejoice to hear that you  
have been so long under my roof. Blessed be God that I have  
a house for my honoured mother to come to. You are heartily  
welcome to anything my house affords as long as you please. I

am of the same mind now as formerly. If need was, indeed,  
these hands should administer to your necessities. I had rather  
want myself than you should. I shall be highly pleased when  
I come to Bristol, and find you sitting in your youngest son’s  
house. 0 that I may sit with you in the house not made with  
hands eternal in the heavens! Ere long your doom, honoured  
mother, will be fixed. You must shortly go hence, and be no  
more seen. Your only daughter, I trust, is now in the paradise  
of God: methinks I hear her say, “Mother, come up hither.”  
Jesus, I am sure, calls you in His Word. May His spirit enable  
you to say, “Lord! Lο, I come.” My honoured mother, I am  
happier and happier every day. Jesus makes me exceeding  
happy in Himself. I hope by winter to be at Bristol. If any  
enquire after me, please to tell them I am well both in body  
and soul, and desire them to help me to praise free and sove-  
reign grace. 0 that my dear, my very honoured, mother may  
be made an everlasting monument of it! How does my heart  
burn with love and duty to you! Gladly would I wash your  
aged feet, and lean upon your neck, and weep and pray till I  
could pray no more. With this I send you a thousand dutiful  
salutations, and ten thousand hearty and most humble thanks  
for all the pains you underwent in conceiving, bringing forth,  
nursing, and bringing up, honoured mother,

‘Your most unworthy, though most dutiful son till death,

‘George Whiteeield.’

The orphans were still a great, though pleasant burden,  
troubles having overtaken the institution from two sources.  
Barber, who had the management of its spiritual affairs,  
had used harsh and unwise language to the minister of  
Savannah, and both he and Habersham had, as the con-  
sequence, been imprisoned. The action of the magistrates  
was not justifiable, and might have had a bad influence  
upon the future of the colony. The magistrates had also  
seized five small children who had lost their parents on  
their passage out from England, sold their goods, and  
bound them out until they were of age; whereas the  
charter of the orphanage gave Whitefield the right to  
them. They had committed a third offence in going to

the orphan-house, and claiming to take away children  
solely at their own pleasure; and thus the attached  
children were grieved, and the wayward made insolent;  
for, practically, all governing power was destroyed.  
Through all these discouragements General Oglethorpe  
was a warm and useful friend, whose kind help White-  
field gratefully acknowledged.

The second of the troubles came from the Spaniards,  
who, anxious to damage English power, arranged an ex-  
pedition which was to land in Carolina, but was driven by  
bad weather and lack of water to land at St. Simon’s, an  
island so near Bethesda that the persons in charge of the  
institution might well be alarmed; Oglethorpe having  
only a small force at his command, and being surrounded  
by the enemy. With much fear as to what Whitefield  
might think of their conduct, Habersham and Barber  
determined to carry off eighty-five children, women,  
and babes then sheltered in the house, and leave the  
house and its contents to take their chance. Providence  
directed their way to the plantation of Hugh Bryan, who,  
along with another planter, received and lodged them. A  
small party was now encopraged to return to the orphan-  
house to protect the stores, which they found all safe.  
Meanwhile good fortune waited on the arms of Oglethorpe,  
who succeeded in making the enemy beat a retreat; and  
the family at length returned in peace to the house of  
mercy.

The parts of this quickly-told story were not near in  
point of time, and account after account was despatched  
for the information of Whitefield, who was not cast down  
by them, although the orphans were seldom out of his  
mind. He longed to be with them, and thought he could  
willingly be found at their head, kneeling and praying,  
though a Spaniard’s sword should be put to his throat.  
‘But, alas!’ said he, as he remembered his physical  
cowardice, ‘I know not how I should behave if put to the

trial.’ He assured Habersham that he need not say, ‘If  
possible now come over:’ he would he had wings to fly  
to them. Yet, in the next sentence, he showed that his po-  
sition with regard to the orphan-house debts was trying:

‘I yet owe upwards of two hundred and fifty pounds  
in England, upon the orphan-house account, and have  
nothing towards it. How is the world mistaken about  
my circumstances: worth nothing myself, embarrassed  
for others, and yet looked upon to flow in riches!’ But a  
few weeks more brightened his prospects, and he could  
say to the same friend: ‘The collections in Scotland were  
large: at Edinburgh I collected one hundred and twenty-  
eight pounds at one time, and forty-four at another; at  
Glasgow about one hundred and twenty-eight, with private  
donations. I think we got about three hundred pounds  
in all. Blessed be God, I owe nothing now in England  
on the orphan-house account; what is due is abroad.  
I think since I have been in England we have got  
near fifteen hundred pounds. The Lord will raise up  
what we want further; glory be to His name. He keeps  
my faith from failing, and upholds me with His right  
hand, and makes me happier in Himself every day.’

His philanthropic effort laid him open to all kinds of  
assaults. In America and at home the money was  
in every enemy’s mouth. Accordingly, one of his last  
works in Scotland was to write ‘ A Continuation of the  
Account of the orphan-house in Georgia,’ and to give a  
statement of his disbursements and receipts. The latter  
was satisfactory; and from the former we learn that the  
workmen were all discharged, having fulfilled their con-  
tract, and carried on the work so far as to make every  
part of the house habitable; that the stock of cattle was  
something considerable, and in a flourishing condition;  
that the last parliament had resolved to support the  
colony of Georgia; that they had altered its constitution  
in two material points, namely, these: they had allowed

the importation of rum, and free titles to the lands; and  
that if they should see good hereafter to grant a limited  
use of Negroes, it must certainly, in all outward appear-  
ance, be as flourishing a colony as South Carolina, but  
that in the meantime a tolerable shift might be made with  
white servants. Hunting and shooting for much of their  
food, killing some of their own stock, growing their  
own vegetables, helped by the kindness of nearly all  
around them, and receiving constant remittances from  
England, the inmates of the orphan-house were always  
provided for. Whitefield’s faith that God would not see  
them want was never put to shame; and he delighted to  
tell how the house had answered to its motto, the burning  
bush, which, though on fire, was never consumed.

Winter was coming on fast, and it was time for White-  
field to think of returning to London to the only chapel  
which he could call his own; in all other places he was  
dependent upon other clergymen, and, failing their sup-  
port, must betake himself to the fields. At the end of  
October he took horse, and rode post from Edinburgh to  
London in less than five days. The city he left was now  
very dear to him: the writing its name would make him  
say, ‘0 Edinburgh! Edinburgh! I think I shall never  
forget thee.’ He passed from a great contention with  
heart as peaceful as ever rested in human bosom. He  
went chastened and humbled to Scotland; he returned in  
the power of quietness and confidence, persuaded that  
his was not the task of doing anything but preach the  
Lord Jesus, as he knew and loved Him. He had tried  
the disputing way in the Arminian struggle, and the  
quiet way in the Scotch contendings, and found the latter  
far preferable to the former. ‘As far as I am able to de-  
termine,’ he said. ‘I think some who have the truths of  
God on their side defend themselves with too great a  
mixture of their own spirit, and by this means, perhaps,  
some persons may be prejudiced even against truth. Do

not think that all things the most refined Christian in the  
world does are right; or that all principles are wrong  
because some that hold them are too embittered in their  
spirits. It is hard for good men, when the truths of God  
are opposed, to keep their temper, especially at the first  
attack.’ No small influence among men was justly in  
store for one who, feeling that disputing embitters the  
spirit, ruffles the soul, and hinders it from hearing the  
small still voice of the Holy Ghost, could say, as White-  
field did to Wesley, but quoting Wesley’s own words to  
himself, ‘Let the King live for ever, and controversy  
die.’ ‘I care not,’ he said to another friend, ‘if the name  
of George Whitefield be banished out of the world, so  
that Jesus be exalted in it.’

On his arrival in London he found the Tabernacle en-  
larged and ‘a new awakening begun.’ In his winter  
quarters, as he called them, he found himself as busy as  
he had been on the common and in the market-place.  
He worked from morning till midnight; and was carried  
through the duties of each day with cheerfulness and  
almost uninterrupted tranquillity. The society was large  
and in good order, and daily improvements were made.

It was at this time that the congregation began to be  
sprinkled with visitors of distinction. Hitherto, White-  
field’s intercourse with the nobility had been confined to  
those of Scotland, but now English peers and peeresses,  
led by the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, and by the  
Earl’s sisters, the Ladies Hastings,1 began to mingle with  
the humbler orders, among whom his efforts had won  
such astonishing success. The low wooden Tabernacle  
was sometimes, during this winter of 1742, entered by  
the Duke of Cumberland, the ‘hero of Culloden,’ and  
by Frederick, Prince of Wales, that ‘composition of con-  
tradictions, false and sincere, lavish and avaricious, nobody

1 Lady Betty Hastings, whose generosity had helped Whitefield at Oxford,  
died December 22, 1739.

too low or too bad for him to court, and nobody too  
great or too good for him to betray.’1 Lord Hervey, too,  
wretched in health, which he supported by drinking asses’  
milk, his ghastly countenance covered with rouge, would  
sometimes sit on its benches. The Duke of Bolton, Lord  
Lonsdale, and Lord Sidney Beauclerk, who hunted the  
fortunes of the old and childless, but is best known as the  
father of Dr. Johnson’s friend, Topham Beauclerk, also  
came. Most remarkable of all was the haughty face of  
the Duchess of Marlborough, ‘great Atossa—

‘Who with herself, or others, from her birth  
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:

Shines, in exposing knaves, and painting fools,

Yet is whate’er she hates and ridicules.’

Her letters to the Countess of Huntingdon are very cha-  
racteristic of her pride and love of revenge; they show  
also that she did want to be good, but not to give up  
being wicked. She says:—

‘My dear Lady Huntingdon is always so very good to me,  
and I really do feel very sensibly all your kindness and atten-  
tion, that I must accept your very obliging invitation to accom-  
pany you to hear Mr. Whitefield, though I am still suffering  
from the effects of a severe cold. Your concern for my im-  
provement in religious knowledge is very obliging, and I do  
hope that I shall he the better for all your excellent advice.  
God knows we all need mending, and none more than myself.  
I have lived to see great changes in the world—have acted a  
conspicuous part myself—and now hope, in my old days, to  
obtain mercy from God, as I never expect any at the hands of  
my fellow-creatures. The Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Town-  
shend, and Lady Cobham were exceedingly pleased with many  
observations in Mr. Whitefield’s sermon at St. Sepulchre’s  
church, which has made me lament ever since that I did not  
hear it, as it might have been the means of doing me good—  
for good, alas! I do want; but where among the corrupt sons  
and daughters of Adam am I to find it? Your ladyship must

1 Lord Hervey.

direct me. You are all goodness and kindness, and I often wish  
I had a portion of it. Women of wit, beauty, and quality  
cannot hear too many humiliating truths—they shock our pride.  
But we must die—we must converse with earth and worms.

‘Pray do me the favour to present my humble service to  
your excellent spouse. A more amiable man I do not know  
than Lord Huntingdon. And believe me, my dear madam,

‘Your most faithful and most humble servant,

‘S. Marlborough.’

A second letter to the Countess is as follows:—

‘Your letter, my dear madam, was very acceptable. Many  
thanks to Lady Fanny for her good wishes. Any communica-  
tions from her, and my dear, good Lady Huntingdon, are always  
welcome, and always in every particular to my satisfaction. I  
have no comfort in my own family, therefore must look for that  
pleasure and gratification which others can impart. I hope  
you will shortly come and see me, and give me more of your  
company than I have had latterly. In truth I always feel more  
happy and more contented after an hour’s conversation with you  
than I do after a whole week’s round of amusement. When alone,  
my reflections and recollections almost kill me, and I am forced  
to fly the society of those I detest and abhor. How there is  
Lady Frances Saunderson’s great rout to-morrow night—all the  
world will be there, and I must go. I do hate that woman as  
much as I do hate a physician; but I must go, if for no other  
purpose than to mortify and spite her. This is very wicked, I  
know, but I confess all my little peccadillos to you, for I know  
your goodness will lead you to be mild and forgiving, and  
perhaps my wicked heart may gain some good from you in  
the end.

‘Lady Fanny has my best wishes for the success of her attack  
on that crooked, perverse, little wretch at Twickenham.’

Another occasional hearer at the Tabernacle was the  
Duchess of Buckingham, the rival of Atossa in pride,  
but less patient than she under reproof, and hating Me-  
thodist doctrines with all her heart. To Lady Hunting-  
don’s invitation to attend one of Whitefield’s services,  
she replies; ‘I thank your ladyship for the information

concerning Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most  
repulsive, and strongly tinctured with impertinence and  
disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endea-  
vouring to level all ranks, and do away with all distinc-  
tions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart  
as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth.  
This is highly offensive and insulting; and I cannot but  
wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments  
so much at variance with high rank and good breeding.  
Your ladyship does me infinite honour by your obliging  
inquiries after my health. I shall be most happy to  
accept your kind offer of accompanying me to hear your  
favourite preacher, and shall wait your arrival. The  
Duchess of Queensbury insists on my patronising her on  
this occasion; consequently she will be an addition to  
our party.’

The list of Whitefield’s noble hearers is increased by  
the names of the Earl of Oxford, Lady Lisburne, and  
Lady Hinchinbroke. With the exception of the last two  
ladies, none of them accepted his teaching and lived  
according to it. To gratify their taste for the highest  
oratory, or to please the pious Countess who invited their  
attendance, was the motive that brought them to so  
strange a place.

Our eyes are more attracted to Whitefield in the midst  
of his troubles, than in the midst of his triumphs. The  
family gave him many an hour’s concern, and kept  
alive a deep sense of his constant need of divine help:  
he could not forget God while he remembered the  
children. He tells us that one night this winter he lay  
on his face before ‘our compassionate High Priest, telling  
Him what great expenses lay before him for His great  
name’s sake.’ He wanted three hundred pounds for the  
orphans, and much to meet his own personal expenses. Not  
long after he arose from prayer, a letter came to him from  
an Edinburgh friend, containing the help he needed.

In the spring, he started for his old ground in Glou-  
cestershire, and found preaching there to be like preach-  
ing in the Tabernacle. His friends in the county had  
been roughly bandied of late, yet he stood unmolested  
on a spot in Dursley from which his friend Adams had  
been driven but the Sunday before. On Hampton Com-  
mon, from the top of a knoll named, after the preacher  
who first honoured it as his pulpit, ‘Whitefield’s tump,’  
he preached amid much solemnity to a congregation of  
ten thousand; and when he stood at noon on old Mr.  
Cole’s tump at Quarhouse it was an ‘alarming time,’ and  
his soul enjoyed exceeding great liberty. Perhaps the  
memory of departed worth helped to expand his suscep-  
tible heart. His native city delighted in the sound of  
his voice; and not until one o’clock on the Monday  
morning, after he bade them farewell, before starting  
for Wales, could he lay his weary body down to rest.  
Sick and unrefreshed he rose again at five, and, mounting  
horse, rode to meet a congregation which had come at  
seven, ‘hoping to feel the power of a risen Lord.’ He  
read prayers and preached; and then rode on to Stroud,  
where he preached in a field with uncommon freedom  
and power to twelve thousand people. At six in the  
evening he preached to the same number on Hampton  
Common; and still his word was with power. A general  
love-feast of the religious societies in Hampton was next  
presided over by him, and that engagement closed the  
day. All that he has to say about such abundant  
labours is beautifully like the simple loving spirit in  
which he delighted to be about his ‘Father’s business’—  
‘My soul was kept close to Jesus; my bodily strength  
renewed; and I went to bed about midnight very  
cheerful and very happy.’ The next morning a congre-  
gation of some thousands was trembling and rejoicing  
under his word at Dursley; and at night he was in Bristol,  
speaking with wonderful power to a full congregation at

Smith's Hall. The following morning he met as large a  
congregation in the same place, and then set out for  
Watford, in South Wales.

Nor was he on a visit to a friend at Watford for  
the purpose of getting rest and quietness; he had come  
to preside over the second General Association of  
Methodists in Wales. Judging from the amount of  
business done, the men of the Association were gifted  
with some capacity for work. Whitefield opened the  
Association at noon, on the day after his arrival, with a  
‘close and solemn discourse upon walking with God;’  
then they betook themselves to business, and despatched  
several important things. There was an interval from  
seven till ten o’clock, from which hour they worked till  
two in the morning. The next day they sat till four in  
the afternoon; a little refreshment followed and ‘some  
warm talk about the things of God,’ and then Whitefield  
preached to them a sermon upon the believer’s rest.  
These—the refreshment for the body and the refreshment  
for the soul—prepared them for another sitting, which  
lasted until midnight, when the whole business of the  
Association was finished; and feeling that God had been  
with them in all that they had done, they did not forget  
to bless Him for His help before parting.

At the first General Association, of which also White-  
field was chosen Moderator, a resolution of considerable  
importance, as bearing upon the relation of Methodism  
to the Church of England, was passed; and that White-  
field should have allowed it to do so was some violation  
of his usual fairness to all parties. The Association met  
in a Presbyterian or Independent chapel, and represented  
a body of Methodists, the most intelligent and active of  
whom had been gathered from Dissenting congregations.  
A motion was made to separate from the Church of  
England, but the greater part strenuously opposed it,  
because the Methodists enjoyed ‘great liberty under the

mild and gentle government of King George,’ and be-  
cause they thought that they would do him, their country,  
and the cause of God, most service in ranging up and  
down, preaching repentance to those multitudes who  
would go neither to church nor chapel, but were led by  
curiosity to follow preachers into the field. It is easy to  
see why such a decisive proposition as that of separation  
should have fallen to the ground in a meeting which had  
a large proportion of clergymen in it; but it is quite as  
difficult to understand how the Association could accept  
the one substituted in its place, viz.: —‘That those  
brethren who scruple to receive the sacrament in the  
church, on account of the impiety of the administrators  
and the usual communicants there; and among the  
Dissenters, on account of their lukewarmness, should con-  
tinue to receive it in the church, until the Lord open a  
clear way to separate from her communion.’ Dissent  
and lukewarmness were worse than impiety, when im-  
piety was in the church; and so, all tender consciences  
must be urged to commune with the latter rather than  
with the former. The resolution was put by Whitefield  
to the Association, and is another proof that he did not  
mean to go from the church until forcibly ejected.

Wales did honour to her visitor. At Carmarthen,  
which Whitefield describes as ‘one of the greatest and  
most polite places in Wales,’ the justices, who were as-  
sembled at the great sessions, desired him to stay till  
they rose, and they would come to hear him at the  
cross. They came, and many thousands with them, in-  
cluding several persons of quality.

On another day, when he was crossing Carmarthen Bay  
in the ferry, several ships hoisted their flags, and one  
fired a salute.

Yet such attentions never turned him from his gene-  
rous purpose of seeking all the lost; and between the

days when justices and sailors honoured him, he mentions  
with satisfaction that at Jefferson he preached to a Kings-  
wood congregation, and at Llassivran to a Moorfields  
one. As soon as London was reached he wrote to his friend  
Ingham in Yorkshire, announcing his intention to stay  
there for a month, and in the holydays once more to attack  
the prince of darkness in Moorfields; for, said he, ‘many  
precious souls have been captivated with Christ’s love in  
that wicked place: Jerusalem sinners bring most glory  
to the Redeemer.’ Besides, there was a bond of sym-  
pathy between ‘that wicked place’ and Bethesda. Many  
a load of copper, sprinkled here and there with golden  
guineas, and whitened with a few crowns and shillings, had  
been gathered from among the crowd for the orphans;  
and the old kindness towards the preacher and his adopted  
ones was not extinct. Moorfields lifted the last straw  
of obligation in England from Whitefield’s back on the  
second occasion of his getting free, and enabled him to  
write to Habersham, and tell him the good news that he  
owed nothing in England, and that twenty-five pounds  
were in the hands of the bearer of the letter—all that for  
‘my dear family,’ and more soon! The joy of having paid  
debts was mingled with the hope of paying off more; and  
Habersham must give Whitefield’s ‘humble respects to  
dear Mr. Jones,’ and tell him, ‘our Saviour will enable  
me to pay him all soon, with a thousand thanks.’

The incessant toil was making itself felt on that slim  
frame which contained a spirit of seraphic devotion.  
Weariness and feebleness hung about it for a time, but  
preaching was continued at the same rate, the only relief  
being in the shorter distances travelled. The loving heart  
made light of the body’s weakness, and enjoyed for itself  
all the more deeply the secret consolations which come  
from above. It became so full of heaven that Whitefield  
sometimes longed when in public to lie down anywhere,  
that on his face he might give God thanks; and when in

private he wept for hours the tears of his consuming  
love for his Lord.

‘In perils by mine own countrymen’ was another ex-  
perience through which he and his friends were now  
called to pass. Wiltshire had for some time been in  
commotion through the animosity of several clergymen,  
and Whitefield felt himself obliged to put the facts be-  
fore the Bishop of Sarum, who, however, does not seem  
to have interfered to stop the disgraceful proceedings.  
Churchwardens and overseers were strictly forbidden to  
let any of the Methodists have anything out of the  
parish; they obeyed the clergy, and told the poor that  
they would famish them, if in no other way they could  
stop them from joining the new sect. Most of the poor,  
some of them with large families, braved the threat, and  
suffered for their constancy the loss of goods and friends.  
A few denied that they had ever been to meetings; and  
some promised that they would go no more.

Trouble arose in Wales also, and Whitefield appealed  
to the Bishop of Bangor against having certain good  
people indicted for holding a conventicle, when they met  
to tell their religious experiences to each other. With  
some effect he ursed that a continuance of such treat-  
ment must inevitably drive hundreds, if not thousands,  
from the church, and compel them to declare themselves  
Dissenters.

But the greatest difficulty was with the Hampton rioters.  
There was in Hampton one Adams, who having received  
the truth the first time that Whitefield preached it on the  
common, tried to be a minister to his neighbours. His  
house was often crowded with them, while he expounded  
and prayed; but many of the baser sort, privately encou-  
raged by some of a higher rank, would beset the house,  
raise a horrid noise with a low-bell and horn, and then  
beat and abuse the inoffensive worshippers. The violence  
grew worse, and for several days great bodies of men

assembled round the house, broke the windows, and so  
mobbed the people that many expected to be murdered,  
and in their fright hid themselves in holes and corners.  
Even the presence of Whitefield, the conqueror of a Moor-  
fields mob, could not restrain these savage provincials,  
who threatened that they would have a piece of his black  
gown to make aprons of; and once when he was among his  
friends, the crowd continued from four o’clock in the after-  
noon till midnight, rioting, huzzaing, casting dirt upon the  
hearers, and proclaiming that no Anabaptists, Presbyte-  
rians, &c., should preach there, upon pain of being first put  
into a skinpit, and afterwards into a brook. At length  
Whitefield, annoyed beyond endurance, and forgetting his  
cowardice, ran downstairs among them and scattered them  
right and left; but, like a cloud of wasps that have been  
parted by a blow, they were soon together again, ready  
for any mischief. They ended their sport by breaking a  
boy’s and a young lady’s arm in two places. On another  
occasion they were content to pull one or two women  
downstairs by the hair of their heads. Adams was their  
principal object of hatred, because, as they explained to  
him, he had brought false doctrine among his neighbours,  
and impoverished the poor. On a July Sunday after-  
noon, a hundred of them came with their African music,  
forced their way into his house, carried him to a skin-pit  
full of stagnant water and the creeping things which breed  
in it, and threw him in. A friend of his who expostu-  
lated was thrown in twice, then beaten and dragged along  
the kennel. Adams quietly returned to his house to  
pray and exhort his brethren to cheerfulness under suffer-  
ing; but in half-an-hour the mob, anxious for more  
sport, entered his house a second time, dragged him  
downstairs, and led him to Bourn brook, a mile and a  
half from Hampton, and threw him in twice, cutting his  
leg severely against a stone. Meanwhile the constable  
and justices never heeded the appeals made for their

interference, but countenanced the lawless suppression of  
Methodism. The clergy were satisfied with the outrages.  
Preaching was for a time suspended. Whitefield now  
consulted with London friends as to the line of action it  
would be best to take, and all wisely determined to claim  
the protection of the law. But before doing so, the  
rioters were offered a chance of escape, if they would  
acknowledge their fault, mend the windows of Adams’  
house, and pay for curing the boy’s arm. Their reply was  
that they were in high spirits, and were resolved there  
should be no more preaching in Hampton. Whitefield  
and his friends now moved for a rule of Court in the  
King’s Bench to lodge an information against five of the  
ringleaders. Counsel for the rioters prayed that the rule  
might be enlarged until the next term, and it was granted.  
The interval was employed by the two sides in a charac-  
teristic way: the rioters increased their offences, and the  
Methodists stirred up the liberality of friends to bear the  
expenses of the trial, and the hearts of the faithful in  
England, Wales, and Scotland, to keep a day of fasting  
and prayer for its right issue.

It must have added to the excitement of a Methodist’s  
coming to a town, in those days when ‘such great liberty’  
—on one side—was enjoyed under the mild and gentle  
government of King George,’ to see how the church and  
the roughs would receive him. There must have been  
great glee in the belfry at Ottery when, just as Whitefield  
announced his text, the ringers pulled the ropes and  
made the bells utter a clanging peal, in which the finest  
voice became as useless as a whisper. And there must  
have been profound satisfaction in the parsonage when  
the clergyman told an admiring circle how he had de-  
manded of the arch-methodist, as he and his friends made  
for the fields, where they might worship in peace, his  
authority for preaching, and called his meeting illegal  
and a riot. The rabble of Wedgbury, too, must have

been delighted when a sod fell on the reverently-bowed  
head of Whitefield, and another struck his clasped hands,  
as he stood among them and prayed.

But happily the clergy and the blackguards, if united  
for evil in some places, had not a national union. If  
Ottery was inhospitable, St. Gennis prayed for Whitefield’s  
coming; and his visit renewed the days of Cambuslang.  
Writing from this place he said: ‘Glad I am that God  
inclined my heart to come hither. How did His stately  
steps appear in the sanctuary last Lord’s day! Many,  
many prayers were put up by the worthy rector and  
others for an outpouring of God’s blessed Spirit. They  
were answered. Arrows of conviction fled so thick and  
so fast, and such an universal wreeping prevailed from one  
end of the congregation to the other, that good Mr. J.  
could not help going from seat to seat to speak, encou-  
rage, and comfort the wounded souls. The Oxonian’s  
father was almost struck dumb; and the young Oxonian’s  
crest was so lowered that I believe he’ll never venture to  
preach an unknown Christ, or deal in the false commerce of  
unfelt truths. I could enlarge, but I must away to Bideford,  
just to give Satan another stroke, and bid my Christian  
friends farewell, and then return the way I came, namely,  
through Exeter, Wellington, and Bristol, to the great  
metropolis.’ Exeter, also, answered to his call, many of its  
clergy and nearly a third of its inhabitants turning out  
to hear him. He thought that on the whole a healthy  
change was passing over society; that prejudices were  
falling off; and that people were beginning not only  
rationally to discern, but powerfully to feel, the doctrines  
of the gospel.

The expectation of a son’s being born to him now filled  
his heart with all a father’s pride; and, as well as his  
notions of public duty would permit, he was thoughtful for  
his wife’s comfort and safety. But his was not the best of  
keeping for a delicate woman to be committed to; one

day he nearly killed both her and himself. In expecta-  
tion of the birth he restricted his work to London and the  
neighbourhood, and even indulged his domestic affections  
so far as to take Mrs. Whitefield for a drive, according  
to advice. But he was a poor driver, if a fine rider, and  
soon drove into a ditch fourteen feet deep. Mrs. White-  
field put her hand across the chaise, and thus saved her-  
self and him from being thrown out. The horse went  
down as though held by a pulley, probably because the  
ditch narrowed very much towards the bottom. By-  
standers shouted out that they were killed, and ran to  
the rescue; one of them seized the horse’s head, two or  
three pulled Mrs. Whitefield up the side of the ditch, and  
others, with a long whip, drew the preacher from the  
back of the horse, on to which he had scrambled. Doubt-  
less the accident broke off a close religious conversation,  
for Whitefield says that ‘being both in a comfortable  
frame, I must own to my shame that I felt rather regret  
than thankfulness in escaping what I thought would be a  
kind of translation to our wished-for haven. But, 0  
amazing love! we were so strengthened, that the chaise  
and horse being taken up, and our bruises being washed  
with vinegar in a neighbouring house, we went on our  
intended way, and came home rejoicing in God our  
Saviour.’ It would appear that he never risked that  
mode of translation again.

A month afterwards, in October 1743, his son was  
born; and as soon as the news reached him in the  
country, to which he had made a short preaching ex-  
cursion, he hastened to London. When the infant was  
about a week old, his father baptized him in the Taber-  
nacle, in the presence of many thousands of spectators.

The little one was not born in a sumptuous house;  
indeed, his home was not furnished when he came, and  
his father had to be content with borrowed furniture to  
complete his little stock in hand. The simple, grateful,

humble heart of the mighty orator was just like itself  
when he wrote to an old friend in Gloucester: ‘This  
afternoon I received your kind letter, and thank you a  
thousand times for your great generosity in lending me  
some furniture, having little of my own. I know who  
will repay you. Next week, God willing, my dear wife  
and little one will come to Gloucester, for I find it  
beyond my circumstances to maintain them here. I  
leave London, God willing, this day seven-night. My  
brother will receive a letter about my wife’s coming.  
She and the little one are brave and well.’ The little  
one’s life was short as a dream. Within three weeks  
Whitefield was sitting in the Bell, at Gloucester, then his  
brother’s house, writing an account of his death! He  
confessed and deplored his own need of the chastisement.  
His letter is touching for its disappointed love and hum-  
bled confidence. It runs thus: ‘Last night, February 8,  
1744, I was called to sacrifice my Isaac—I mean to bury  
my own child and son, about four months old. Many  
things occurred to make me believe he was not only to  
be continued to me, but to be a preacher of the everlast-  
ing gospel. Pleased with the thought, and ambitious of  
having a son of my own so divinely employed, Satan was  
permitted to give me some wrong impressions, whereby,  
as I now find, I misapplied several texts of Scripture.  
Upon these grounds I made no scruple of declaring  
“that I should have a son, and that his name was to  
be John.” I mentioned the very time of his birth, and  
fondly hoped that he was to be great in the sight of the  
Lord. Everything happened according to the predictions,  
and my wife having had several narrow escapes while  
pregnant, especially by her falling from a high horse, and  
my driving her into a deep ditch in a one-horse chaise a  
little before the time of her lying in, and from which we  
received little or no hurt, confirmed me in my expecta-  
tion that God would grant me my heart’s desire. I

would observe to you that the child was even born in a  
room which the master of the house had prepared as a  
prison for his wife for coming to hear me. With joy  
would she often look upon the bars and staples and  
chains which were fixed in order to keep her in. About  
a week after his birth I publicly baptized him in the  
Tabernacle, and in the company of thousands solemnly  
gave him up to that God who gave him to me. A  
hymn, too, fondly composed by an aged widow as suitable  
to the occasion, was sung, and all went away big with  
hopes of the child’s being hereafter to be employed in  
the work of God; but how soon are all their fond and,  
as the event hath proved, their ill-grounded expectations  
blasted, as well as mine. Housekeeping being expensive  
in London, I thought best to send both parent and child  
to Abergavenny, where my wife had a little house of my  
own, the furniture of which, as I thought of soon em-  
barking for Georgia, I had partly sold, and partly given  
away. In their journey thither they stopped at Glouces-  
ter, at the Bell Inn, which my brother now keeps, and in  
which I was born. There my beloved was cut off with a  
stroke. Upon my coming here, without knowing what  
had happened, I enquired concerning the welfare of  
parent and child, and by the answer found that the  
flower was cut down. I immediately called all to join in  
prayer, in which I blessed the Father of mercies for  
giving me a son, continuing it to me so long, and taking  
it from me so soon. All joined in desiring that I would  
decline preaching till the child was buried; but I re-  
membered a saying of good Mr. Henry, “that weeping  
must not hinder sowing,” and therefore preached twice  
the next day, and also the day following, on the even-  
ing of which, just as I was closing my sermon, the bell  
struck out for the funeral. At first, I must acknowledge,  
it gave nature a little shake, but looking up I recovered  
strength, and then concluded with saying that this text

on which I had been preaching, namely, “All things  
work together for good to them that love God,” made  
me as willing to go out to my son’s funeral as to hear of  
his birth.

‘Our parting from him was solemn. We kneeled  
down, prayed, and shed many tears, but I hope tears of  
resignation: and then, as he died in the house wherein I  
was born, he was taken and laid in the church where I  
was baptized, first communicated, and first preached.  
All this, you may easily guess, threw me into very solemn  
and deep reflection and, I hope, deep humiliation; but I  
was comforted from that passage in the Book of Kings,  
where is recorded the death of the Shunamite’s child,  
which the prophet said “the Lord had hid from him;”  
and the woman’s answer likewise to the prophet when he  
asked, “Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy hus-  
band? Is it well with the child?” And she answered:  
“It is well.” This gave me no small satisfaction. I  
immediately preached upon the text the following day at  
Gloucester, and then hastened up to London, preached  
upon the same there; and, though disappointed of a living-  
preacher by the death of my son, yet I hope what hap-  
pened before his birth, and since at his death, hath  
taught me such lessons as, if duly improved, may render  
his mistaken parent more cautious, more sober-minded,  
more experienced in Satan’s devices, and consequently  
more useful in his future labours to the Church of God.’

There was one sermon, at least, with which he often  
melted his vast congregation into tears, which would lose  
no force of tenderness and love now that his always affec-  
tionate heart, which might nourish the orphans of other  
fathers and mothers, was denied the delight of fondling a  
child of his own—the sermon on Abraham’s offering up  
Isaac. All the grief and struggling of faithful Abraham  
during the three days’ journey to the land of Moriah, with  
Isaac, the burnt-offering, by his side, was henceforth pain-

fully real to Whitefield while, with trembling voice and  
glistening eye, he pictured them to his hearers. All could  
see the vision of ‘the good old man walking with his dear  
child in his hand, and now and then looking upon him,  
loving him, and then turning aside to weep. And,  
perhaps, sometimes he stays a little behind to pour out  
his heart before God, for he had no mortal to tell his  
case to. Then methinks I see him join his son and ser-  
vants again, and talking to them of the things pertaining  
to the kingdom of God, as they walked by the way.’And then his fatherly heart, robbed of the pleasure, so  
often and so surely expected, of confiding and free inter-  
course with a pious and beloved son, would narrate the  
dialogue of the two travellers: ‘Little did Isaac think  
that he was to be offered on that very wood which he  
was carrying upon his shoulders; and therefore Isaac  
innocently, and with a holy freedom—for good men  
should not keep their children at too great a distance—  
“spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father;  
and he, with equal affection and holy condescension, said,  
Here am I, my son.” . . . Here let us pause awhile, and  
by faith take a view of the place where the father has  
laid him. I doubt not but the blessed angels hovered  
round the altar, and sang, “Glory be to God in the  
highest, for giving such faith to man.” Come, all ye  
tender-hearted parents, who know what it is to look over  
a dying child: fancy that you saw the altar erected before  
you, and the wood laid in order, and the beloved Isaac  
bound upon it; fancy that you saw the aged parent stand-  
ing by, weeping. For why may we not suppose that  
Abraham wept, since Jesus Himself wept at the grave of  
Lazarus? Oh, what pious, endearing expressions passed  
now alternately between the father and the son! Me-  
thinks I see the tears trickle down the patriarch  
Abraham’s cheeks; and out of the abundance of the  
heart he cries, “Adieu! adieu! my son! The Lord

gave thee to me, and the Lord calls thee away; blessed  
be the name of the Lord. Adieu! my Isaac, my only  
son, whom I love as my own soul! Adieu! adieu!” I see  
Isaac at the same time meekly resigning himself into his  
Heavenly Father’s hands, and praying to the Most High  
to strengthen his earthly parent to strike the stroke.’  
Then, when men had well entered into the greatness of  
the human sacrifice, and were under the dominion of  
their finest and purest emotions, the preacher said: ‘I see  
your hearts affected, I see your eyes weep. And, indeed,  
who can refrain weeping at the relation of such a story?  
But, behold! I show you a mystery hid under the sacrifice  
of Abraham’s only son which, unless your hearts are hard-  
ened, must cause you to weep tears of love, and that  
plentifully too. I would willingly hope you even pre-  
vent me here, and are ready to say, “It is the love of  
God in giving Jesus Christ to die for our sins.” Yes;  
that is it.’

The evangelist had an ever-changing experience; and  
before his grief for his son was assuaged he was putting  
forth all his energy to secure justice for his poor perse-  
cuted converts at Hampton, going from place to place  
preaching, pleading, and collecting money. The trial,  
which came off at Gloucester Assizes on March 3, 1714,  
was anticipated by the defendants with much confidence,  
because they reckoned that the gentlemen and the jury  
would be prejudiced against the Methodists. Whitefield  
entered court when the second witness was being ex-  
amined, and was the object of every one’s attention, while,  
amid much laughter, the defendants’ counsel went on to  
describe the Methodists after the fashion which best  
suited his bad case. In spite, however, of hard swearing,  
of oratorical pleading, and of the genteel influence which  
the rioters undoubtedly had at their back, the jury found  
the defendants guilty of the whole information lodged  
against them. There was great joy among the despised

sect over this decision; and Whitefield’s first act was to  
retire to his lodgings, and, along with some friends, kneel  
down and offer thanks to God; then he went to the inn  
to pray, and give thanks with the witnesses, and exhort  
them to behave with meekness and humility to their ad-  
versaries. In the evening he preached (his texts were  
always happily chosen) on the Psalmist’s words, ‘By this  
I know that thou favourest me, since thou hast not suf-  
fered mine enemy to triumph over me.’ The next morn-  
ing he hurried off to London, where a great thanksgiving  
service was celebrated. As for the rioters, they were  
greatly alarmed, not knowing that the Methodists only  
intended to show them what they could do, and then for-  
give them.

Our narrative must now run back for a few months,  
that we may note the attitude of the Dissenters towards  
Whitefield. Many of them had shown him much kind-  
ness, but, with the exception of Doddridge and Watts,  
their leaders looked upon him with contempt, or dislike,  
or fear. And for the fear there was some reason. Dis-  
senters were only permitted to hold their religious  
opinions under great disadvantages, and were studiously  
kept down in the state. In consequence, there was a  
great desire on the part of most of them to keep on  
friendly terms with the Established Church, and not to  
risk in any wise the good opinion of its bishops and  
clergy. Theirs was the worldly-wise, cautious spirit of  
men who felt that any false step might multiply their dis-  
abilities, not the fearless spirit of those who could safely  
dare to assume any position. Whitefield, the dread of  
orderly bishops, and the reproach of idle clergymen, they  
therefore carefully shunned. To consort with him would  
have exposed them to double odium—the odium of  
dissent and the odium of Methodism.

Great weight must also be attached to their laudable  
desire to grapple on safe ground with all forms of reli-

gious error; and it was not deemed safe, in dealing with  
Deism, to lie open to the charge of enthusiasm. Only  
the calm, argumentative preacher, such as Butler, or  
Waterland, could be heard against the wit and argu-  
ments of Woolston, Shaftesbury, Collins, and Tindal. A  
feverish fear, only paralleled by that which any sensible  
man might now have of being esteemed a fanatic, agi-  
tated nearly all Christian apologists, of being suspected of  
any sympathy with ardent devotion and burning zeal.  
A reasonable faith, a faith well buttressed with argu-  
ments on the evidences of religion, and quiet, sedate  
religious habits, were supposed to constitute the proper,  
if not the perfect, Christian. Any such passion as glowed  
in the hearts of the early Methodists, common-sense and  
reason must condemn and avoid. To have anything to  
do with the most religious, if not the most learned or the  
most intellectual, class of that time, was virtually to yield  
up the right of speaking on religion. Who dare write  
against Collins, if he had shaken hands with Whiteiield  
or Wesley—the enthusiasts, the reproach of Christianity,  
men whose very profession of Christianity made it require  
a fresh apology from its accomplished defenders to its  
equally able assailants?

Doddridge, who had many friends in the Establish-  
ment,[[10]](#footnote-10) and who also took a lively interest in all public  
movements affecting the honour of religion and the wel-  
fare of mankind, stands out as a noble exception to the  
somewhat timid body with which he was allied. His  
sound and varied learning, together with his solid judg-  
ment, covered him from the sneer that he was a poor  
enthusiast, while his humble piety compelled him to  
countenance the new party in the Church. Persuaded

of the usefulness of Whitefield’s ministrations, he did not  
fear to entertain the evangelist and to bid him God  
speed. His magnanimity surpassed that of Watts, who  
was very cautious with the ‘erratic curate.’ He even  
went to the extent of supplying Whitefield’s place as  
preacher at the Tabernacle; and at their next interview  
Watts said: ‘I am sorry that since your departure I have  
had many questions asked me about your preaching in  
the Tabernacle, and sinking the character of a minister,  
and especially of a tutor,1 among the Dissenters, so low  
thereby. I find many of our friends entertain this idea;  
but I can give no answer, as not knowing how much you  
have been engaged there. I pray God to guard us from  
every temptation.’ Doddridge, always thoughtful, con-  
scientious, and liberal, knew what the Methodists were,  
and what they were doing among the rude, ignorant, and  
irreligious part of the population; and was not to be  
moved out of his position either by ominous shakes of  
the head or by open opposition on the part of his co-  
religionists. When the hackneyed charge of enthusiasm  
was levelled against them his noble reply was: ‘In some  
extraordinary conversions there may be and often is a  
tincture of enthusiasm; but, having weighed the matter  
diligently, I think a man had better be a sober, honest,  
chaste, industrious enthusiast, than live without any re-  
gard to God and religion at all. I think it infinitely  
better that a man should be a religious Methodist than an  
adulterer, a thief, a swearer, a drunkard, or a rebel to his  
parents, as I know some actually were who have been  
wrought upon and reformed by these preachers.’

On Whitefield’s first visit to Northampton, Doddridge  
was only polite in personal intercourse, but on the second,  
he opened his pulpit to him; and this act of brotherly  
kindness Whitefield, we may be sure, would have re-

1 Doddridge had an academy for training godly young men for the  
ministry; he was pastor, tutor, and author.

corded in some way with grateful acknowledgment, had  
it not been done the same week in which his son was  
born, and when he had not time to write more than one  
short note, which, of course, was upon the greater event.  
Doddridge’s daring charity soon brought a rebuke from  
London. Nathanael Neal, an attorney, and son of Neal,  
the historian of the Puritans, said, in a time-serving letter,  
dated October 11, 1743: ‘It was with the utmost concern  
that I received the information of Mr. Whitefield’s having  
preached last week in your pulpit, and that I attended  
the meeting of Coward’s Trustees this day, when that  
matter was canvassed, and that I now find myself obliged  
to apprise you of the very great uneasiness which your  
conduct herein has occasioned them.

‘The many characters you sustain with so much ho-  
nour, and in which I reverence you so highly, make me  
ashamed, and the character I sustain of your friend makes  
it extremely irksome for me, to express any sentiments  
as mine which may seem to arraign your conduct; but   
when I reflect in how disadvantageous a light your re-  
gard to the Methodists has for some considerable time  
placed you in the opinion of many whom I have reason  
to believe you esteem amongst your most judicious and  
hearty friends, and what an advantage it has given  
against you to your secret and avowed enemies, of either  
of which facts I believe you are not in any just degree  
sensible, I could run any hazard of your censure rather  
than that you should remain unapprised of these facts.

‘You cannot be ignorant how obnoxious the impru-  
dences committed, or alleged to be committed, by some  
of the Methodists, have rendered them to great numbers  
of people; and though, indeed, supposing they have a  
spirit of religion amongst them to be found nowhere else,  
so that a man would, for his own sake, and at any  
temporal hazard, take his lot amongst them, yet if,  
besides their reputation for a forward and indiscreet zeal,

Dr. Doddridge 323

and an unsettled, injudicious way of thinking and behav-  
ing, they have nothing to distinguish them from other  
serious and devout Christians, surely every man would  
choose to have as little concern with them as possible.

‘But in the case of such a public character, and so  
extensive a province for the service of religion as yours,  
it seems to me a point well worth considering, whether,  
supposing even the ill-opinion the world entertains of  
them to be groundless, it is a right thing to risk such a  
prospect as Providence has opened before you, of eminent  
and distinguished usefulness, for the sake of any good  
you are likely to do amongst these people.

‘For my own part, I have had the misfortune of  
observing, and I must not conceal it from you, that  
wherever I have heard it mentioned that Dr. Doddridge  
countenanced the Methodists—and it has been the subject  
of conversation much oftener than I could have wished—  
I have heard it constantly spoken of by his friends with  
concern, as threatening a great diminution of his useful-  
ness, and by his adversaries with a sneer of triumph.

‘The Trustees are particularly in pain for it with re-  
gard to your academy, as they know it is an objection  
made to it by some persons in all appearance seriously,  
and by others craftily; and yet they are afraid of giving  
their thoughts even in the most private manner concern-  
ing it, lest it should be made an occasion of drawing  
them into a public opposition to the Methodists, as they  
are likely to be in some measure by your letter to Mr.  
Mason (excusing your prefixing a recommendation of a  
book of theirs, without the advice of the Trustees), which  
letter they have desired me to inform you has given them  
great offence.’

A quick answer returned from Northampton, and on  
October 15 Neal wrote again. He says: ‘I am not insen-  
sible, sir, that the respect many of your people bore to  
Mr. Whitefield, and your own acquaintance with him,

must have made it a matter of difficulty for you entirely  
to have avoided showing him some polite regards on his  
coming to Northampton; and I greatly rejoice in being  
furnished with so particular an account of the circum-  
stances attending his visit that may enable me to say  
you were so far at that time from seeking his preaching  
in your pulpit that you took several steps, and indeed all  
that you thought you could prudently venture on, and  
such as might, if they had succeeded, have been sufficient  
to have prevented it; which I doubt not will, and I am  
sure ought, to have some weight with those who censure  
this step on the ground of imprudence. I could only  
wish that I were able to make these circumstances known  
as far as that censure is likely to extend.’

Doddridge continued ‘imprudent,’ and dared the ‘cen-  
sure;’ so that Neal returned again to the task of remon-  
strating. His third letter is more direct, and plainly tells  
the feelings which he had only hinted at before:

‘Million Bank, December 10, 1743.

‘I am sorry you appear so apprehensive in your last letter,  
lest I should interpret what you said in your first too unfa-  
vourably of the Methodists and Mr. Whitefield, as it confirms  
me in my fears of your attachment to them; but, whatever  
my wishes were in that respect, you may be assured I could  
never venture to represent you as indifferent to them, when  
I read your commendation of his sermon for its excellence  
and oratory, and remember the low, incoherent stuff I used  
to hear him utter at Kennington Common.

‘Whilst I continued oppressed and hurt with these reflec-  
tions, your excellent sermon for the County Hospital came in  
to my relief. The piety, the justness of the sentiments and  
arguments, the manly, graceful diction, and the benevolent  
spirit that runs through the whole of it, both amazed and  
charmed me. It must have extorted from any heart less  
acquainted with your disposition for public usefulness than I  
am, a devout ejaculation that God would never permit such  
talents to come under a wrong direction, or suffer the disad-

vantages they must necessarily submit to, if engaged amongst

men of weak heads and narrow, gloomy sentiments, who may

and ought to be pitied and prayed for, and better informed,

as opportunity allows, but whom no rules of piety or prudence

will oblige us to make our friends and confidants.

‘There are letters shown about town from several ministers  
in the west which make heavy complaints of the disorders  
occasioned by Whitefield and Wesley in those parts. One of  
them, speaking of Mr. Whitefield, calls him “honest, crazy,  
confident Whitefield.” These letters likewise mention that  
some ministers there, who were your pupils, have given him  
countenance; and you can hardly conceive the disrespect this  
has occasioned several ministers and other persons in town to  
speak of you with. Whether you are aware of this I know  
not; and I am sure, if I did not esteem it a mark of sincere  
friendship, I would not give you the uneasiness of hearing it.’

The answer of Doddridge is plain and honest:

‘I am truly sorry,’ he says, ‘that the manner in which I  
spoke of Mr. Whitefield in my last should give you uneasiness.  
I hope I did not assert his sermon to have been free from its  
defects; but I must be extremely prejudiced indeed if it were  
such “wild, incoherent stuff” as you heard on Kennington  
Common. Nor does it seem at all difficult to account for this;  
for that preached here, which I believe was one of his most  
elaborate and, perhaps, favourite discourses, might deserve to  
be spoken of in a different manner. What I then said pro-  
ceeded from a principle which I am sure you will not despise  
—I mean a certain frankness of heart which would not allow  
me to seem to think more meanly of a man to whom I once  
professed some friendship than I really did. I must, indeed,  
look upon it as an unhappy circumstance that he came to  
Northampton just when he did, as I perceive that, in con-  
currence with other circumstances, it has filled town and  
country with astonishment and indignation. Nor did I, indeed,  
imagine my character to have been of such great importance  
in the world as that this little incident should have been  
taken so much notice of. I believe the true reason is, that for  
no other fault than my not being able to go so far as some of  
my brethren into the new ways of thinking and speaking, I

have long had a multitude of enemies, who have been watching  
for some occasion against me; and I thank God that they have  
hitherto, with all that malignity of heart which some of them  
have expressed, been able to find no greater.

‘I had, indeed, great expectations from the Methodists and  
Moravians. I am grieved, from my heart, that so many things  
have occurred among them which have been quite unjustifi-  
able; and I assure you faithfully they are such as would have  
occasioned me to have dropped that intimacy of correspondence  
which I once had with them. And I suppose they have also  
produced the same sentiments in the Archbishop of Canter-  
bury, who, to my certain knowledge, received Count Zinzendorf  
with open arms, and wrote of his being chosen the Moravian  
Bishop, as what was done “plauclente toto ccelesti choro.” I  
shall always be ready to weigh whatever can be said against  
Mr. Whitefield, as well as against any of the rest; and though  
I must have actual demonstration before I can admit him to  
be a dishonest man, and though I shall never be able to think  
all he has written and all I have heard from him nonsense, yet  
I am not so zealously attached to him as to be disposed to  
celebrate him as one of the greatest men of the age, or to  
think that he is the pillar that bears up the whole interest of  
religion among us. And if this moderation of sentiment  
towards him will not appease my angry brethren, as I am sen-  
sible it will not abate the enmity which some have for many  
years entertained towards me, I must acquiesce, and be patient  
till the day of the Lord, when the secrets of all hearts shall be  
made manifest; in which I do from my heart believe that  
with respect to the part I have acted in this affair I shall not  
be ashamed.

‘I had before heard from some of my worthy friends in the  
west of the offence which had been taken at two of my pupils  
there for the respect they showed to Mr. Whitefield; and yet  
they are both persons of eminent piety. He whose name is  
chiefly in question—I mean Mr. Darracott—is one of the most  
devout and extraordinary men I ever sent out; and a person  
who has within these few years been highly useful to numbers  
of his hearers. Some of these, who were the most abandoned  
characters in the place, are now become serious and useful  
Christians; and he himself has honoured his profession, when  
to all around him he seemed on the borders of eternity, by a

behaviour which, in such awful circumstances, the best of men  
might wish to be their own. Mr. Fawcett labours likewise at  
Taunton; and his zeal, so far as I can judge, is inspired both  
with love and prudence. Yet I hear these men are reproached  
because they have treated Mr. Whitefield respectfully; and  
that one of them, after having had a correspondence with him  
for many years, admitted him into his pulpit. I own I am  
very thoughtful when these things will end: in the meantime,  
I am as silent as I can be. I commit the matter to God in  
prayer, and earnestly beg His direction, that He would lead me  
in a plain path. Sometimes I think the storm will soon blow  
over, and that things will return again to their natural course.  
I am sure I see no danger that any of my pupils will prove  
Methodists; I wish many of them may not run into the con-  
trary extreme. It is really, sir, with some confusion that I read  
your encomium upon my sermon: I am sensible it is some con-  
solation to me amidst the uneasiness which, as you conclude,  
other things must give me.’

Two sentences, in which the devout, tender, and  
humble spirit of Doddridge expresses itself, are, when  
taken in connexion with many similar expressions of  
Whitefield, a sufficient explanation of the firm union  
between these distinguished Christians: ‘I am one of  
the least of God’s children,’ said Doddridge, ‘and yet a  
child; and that is my daily joy. Indeed, I feel my  
love to Him increase; I struggle forwards toward Him,  
and look at Him, as it were, sometimes with tears of  
love, when, in the midst of the hurries of life, I cannot  
speak to Him otherwise than by an ejaculation.1

Other persons, of a different communion, and more

Philip, who, in his ‘Life and Times of Whitefield,' was the first to point

out the unfriendly feeling of many Dissenters towards Whitefield, has attempted to explain it on the ground that Dissenters were hoping to get

a 'Comprehension Scheme ' brought into operation, by which they might be

included in the Establishment; but the letter of Barker, a London Dissenting

minister, to Doddridge on the subject, which he quotes, and on which he

mainly bases his conclusion, was not written till February 2, 1748, whereas

it is of the feeling which displayed itself in 1743 that an explanation is

wanted. Again, not a word is said about the 'Comprehension Scheme' in

Neal's letters to Doddridge; and Barker himself treats it more as a passing

exalted in station than Neal, were trying as well as he  
what could be done in a secret way to damage the  
Methodists in general, and Whitefield in particular.  
The mean attempt to sever Doddridge from his friend  
was probably never known to its intended victim; but  
this other meaner work of an enemy, or rather enemies,  
did come to his knowledge. On January 26, 1744, the  
following advertisement appeared in London:—

‘Whereas some anonymous papers against the people called  
Methodists in general, and myself and friends in particular, have  
been for some weeks printed in a large edition, and handed  
about and read in the religious societies of the cities of London  
and Westminster, and given into the hands of many private  
persons, with strict injunctions to lend them to no one, nor let  
them go out of their hands to any, and whereas, after having  
had the hasty perusal of them, I find many queries of great  
importance concerning me and my conduct contained therein;  
and as it appears that our paper has little or no connection  
with another, and a copy, when applied for, was refused me,  
and I know not how soon I may embark for Georgia, I am  
therefore obliged hereby to desire a speedy open publication of  
the aforesaid papers, in order that a candid, impartial answer  
may be made thereto by me,

‘George Whitefield.’

fancy than a serious intention. Neal assails Doddridge’s conduct only on  
the ground that it is losing him caste in society and influence in the Deistic  
struggle, which engaged the finest talent of the church, both established  
and dissenting. Barker’s letter further shows that a great body of Dissenters  
were averse from ‘ Comprehension,’ even in 1748: ‘We won’t be compre-  
hended: we won’t be comprehended,’they said; so that any fear of upsetting  
a darling scheme by communion with the great Methodist leadercould not  
have made them scout Whitefield. And as to the feeling of churchmen  
upon the subject, Herring, the Archbishop of Canterbury, confessed, in 1748,  
that he had no great zeal for attempting anything to introduce Dissenters  
into the church, although he had ‘ most candid sentiments concerning  
them.’ Seeker said to Doddridge in 1744, in a letter which was only a  
friendly, not an official, communication: ‘I see not the least prospect of it’  
—i.e., union between church and dissent—‘for they who should be the most  
concerned for it, are most of them too little so. And of others, few that  
have influence think it can be worth while either to take any pains, or spend  
any time, about matters of this nature: and too many judge the continuance  
of a se aration useful to their particular schemes.’

Rumour was not silent about the authorship of the  
secret papers; no less a personage than the Bishop of  
London was singled out as their writer. Whitefield,  
accordingly, with the frankness and courage which  
always distinguished him, wrote to the bishop himself to  
ask for information:

‘ London, Feb. 1, 1744.

‘My Lord,—Simplicity becomes the followers of Jesus Christ,  
and therefore I think it my duty to trouble your lordship with  
these few lines. I suppose your lordship has seen the adver-  
tisement published by me, about four days ago, concerning  
some anonymous papers which have been handed about in the  
societies for some considerable time. As I think it my duty to  
answer them, I should be glad to be informed whether the report  
be true that your lordship composed them, that I may the better  
know to whom I may direct my answer. A sight also of one of the  
copies, if in your lordship’s keeping, would much oblige, my lord,

‘Your lordship’s most obliged, dutiful son and servant,

‘George Whitefield.

‘PS. The bearer will bring your lordship’s answer; or if  
your lordship please to favour me with a line, be pleased to  
direct for me, to be left with Mr. J. Syms.’

To this letter the bishop sent no answer at all; but  
two days after it was sent to him his printer left the  
following suggestive note for Whitefield:—

‘February 3, 1744.

‘Sir,—My name is Owen. I am a printer in Amen Corner;  
and I waited upon you to let you know that I have had orders  
from several of the bishops to print for their use such numbers  
of the “ Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of the  
Methodists ”—with some additions—as they have respectively  
bespoken. And I will not fail to wait upon you with one copy  
as soon as the impression is finished.

‘I am, sir,

‘Your most obedient, &c.’

I have not had a copy of the anonymous pamphlet in

my hand, and cannot say what were its contents, but  
they are not difficult to discover from Whitefield’s  
‘Answer,’ which he addressed in a ‘Letter to the Eight  
Reverend the Bishop of London, and the other Eight  
Reverend the Bishops concerned in the publication  
thereof,’ namely, of the pamphlet. Whitefield charged  
the pamphlet with having an intention to represent the  
proceedings of the Methodists as dangerous to the Church  
and State, in order to procure an Act of Parliament  
against them, or to oblige them to secure themselves by  
turning Dissenters, that is, putting themselves under the  
Toleration Act. His answer to such an attempt was the  
same as he gave to the Scotch Presbyterians: ‘As yet  
we see no sufficient reason to leave the Church of Eng-  
land, and turn Dissenters; neither will we do it till we  
are thrust out. When a ship is leaky, prudent sailors  
that value the cargo will not leave it to sink, but rather  
continue in it so long as they can, to help pump out  
the water.’ The pamphlet charged the Methodists with  
breaking the statute law by their field-preaching; and to  
be quite sure of the law on this point, Whitefield perused  
all the Acts of Charles II. in which the word ‘field’ is  
mentioned. His conclusion was, that Acts against field-  
preaching related only to seditious conventicles; and of  
this offence Methodism was not guilty. Then Whitefield  
enters upon a defence of his favourite mode of reaching  
the multitude. ‘Why, my lords,’ he asks, ‘should the  
author be so averse to field-preaching? Was not the  
best sermon that was ever preached delivered on a  
mount? Did not our glorious Emmanuel, after He was  
thrust out of the synagogues, preach from a ship, in a  
wilderness, &c.? Did not the Apostles, after His ascen-  
sion, preach in schools, public markets, and such like  
places of resort and concourse? And can we copy after  
better examples? If it be said that the world was then  
heathen, I answer, and am persuaded your lordships will

agree with me in this, that there are thousands and ten  
thousands in his Majesty’s dominions as ignorant of true  
and undefiled religion as ever the heathen were. And  
are not persons who dare venture out, and show such  
poor souls the way to heaven, real friends both of Church  
and State? And why then, my lords, should the civil  
power be applied to in order to quell and suppress  
them, or a pamphlet encouraged by several of the right  
reverend the bishops, which is manifestly calculated for  
that purpose? I would humbly ask your lordships  
whether it would not be more becoming your lordships’  
characters to put your clergy on preaching against  
revelling, cock-fighting, and such like, than to move the  
Government against those who, out of love to God and  
precious souls, put their lives in their hand, and preach  
unto such revellers repentance towards God and faith  
towards our Lord Jesus? What if the Methodists “by  
public advertisements do invite the rabble?” Is not the  
same done by other clergy, and even by your lordships,  
when you preach charity sermons? But, my lords, what  
does the author mean by the rabble? I suppose, the com-  
mon people. If so, these are they who always heard the  
blessed Jesus gladly. It was chiefly the poor, my lords, the  
οχλος, the turba, the mob, the multitude, these people  
who, the Scribes and Pharisees said, knew not the law,  
and were accursed; these were they that were evangelised,  
had the gospel preached unto them, and received the  
Spirit of God’s dear Son. Supposing we do advertise the  
rabble, and none but such make up our auditories—which  
is quite false—if this be the Methodists’ shame, they may  
glory in it. For these rabble, my lords, have precious  
and immortal souls, for which the dear Redeemer shed  
His precious blood, as well as the great and rich. These,  
my lords, are the publicans and harlots that enter into  
the kingdom of heaven, whilst self-righteous formal pro-  
fessors reject it. To show such poor sinners the way to

God, to preach to them the power of Christ’s resurrec-  
tion, and to pluck them as firebrands out of the burning,  
the Methodist preachers go out into the highways and  
hedges. If this is to be vile, by the help of my God I  
shall be more vile; neither count I my life dear unto  
myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and be  
made instrumental in turning any of this rabble to  
righteousness. And however such kind of preachers may  
be everywhere spoken against now, yet I doubt not but  
at the great decisive day they will be received with an  
Euge bene, and shine as stars in the firmament for ever  
and ever; whilst those who have only “divined for hire,  
have fed themselves, and not the flock, and lorded it  
over God’s heritage,” perhaps, may pay dear for their  
preferment, and rise to everlasting contempt. Pardon  
me, my lords, for expressing myself here with some  
degree of warmth. I must own it gives me concern to  
see some of the clergy strain at a gnat, and swallow a  
camel, and attempt to pull out the mote out of our eyes,  
before they have pulled the beam out of their own. Is  
it not ridiculous, my lords, even in the eyes of worldly  
men, and does it not render the author of this pamphlet  
justly liable to contempt, to charge the Methodists with  
breaking canons and rubrics, which is really not their  
fault; when at the same time he knows that the gene-  
rality of the clergy so notoriously break both canons and  
rubrics, and that too in the most important articles, such  
as not catechising, pluralities, non-residence, &c., every-  
day themselves? With what face can he do it? Is not  
this like Nero’s setting Rome on fire, and then charging  
it upon the Christians? May not “physician heal thy-  
self ” be immediately retorted on him?’

The Rev. Thomas Church, vicar of Battersea, came  
to the rescue of the bishops with a ‘Serious and Expos-  
tulatory Letter to the Rev. George Whitefield.’ He

**SELF-VINDICATION. 333**

raised a few questions which throw some light upon  
Whitefield’s ecclesiastical position. There were irregu-  
larities in curtailing the liturgy, or not using the Common  
Prayer in the fields—what had Whitefield to say about  
them? That when, and only when, his ecclesiastical  
superiors should arraign him at the bar of the proper  
ecclesiastical courts would he give any answer at all to the  
question. No doubt he would, had he been arraigned,  
have said that his method was advantageous to the spi-  
ritual welfare of his congregations, and that therefore he  
adopted it; but whether such an answer would have been  
accounted canonically satisfactory may be fairly doubted.  
There was his non-residence at Savannah—what could  
he say in defence of that? He replied: ‘I wish every  
non-resident minister in England could give as good an  
account of their non-residence as I can of my absence  
from Savannah. When I came over to England to receive  
priest’s orders, and collect money for building an orphan-  
house, the honourable Trustees, at the request of many,  
presented me to the living of Savannah. I accepted it,  
but refused the stipend of fifty pounds per annum which  
they generously offered me. Neither did I put them to  
any expense during my stay in England, where I thought  
it my duty to abide till I had collected a sufficient sum  
wherewith I might begin the orphan-house, though I  
should have left England sooner had I not been pre-  
vented by the embargo. However, I was more easy,  
because the honourable Trustees I knew had sent over  
another minister, who arrived soon after I left the colony.  
Upon my second arrival in Georgia, finding the care of  
the orphan-house, and the care of the parish, too great a  
task for me, I immediately wrote over to the honourable  
Trustees to provide another minister. In the meanwhile,  
as most of my parishioners were in debt, or ready to  
leave the colony for want of being employed, and as I

believed that erecting an orphan-house would be the best  
thing I could do for them and their posterity, I thought  
it my duty from time to time to answer the invitations  
that were sent me to preach Christ Jesus in several parts  
of America, and to make more collections towards carry-  
ing on the orphan-house. The Lord stirred up many to  
be ready to distribute and willing to communicate on  
this occasion. I always came home furnished with pro-  
visions and money, most of which was expended among  
the people, and by this means the northern part of the  
colony almost entirely subsisted for a considerable time.  
And now, sir, judge you whether my non-residence was  
anything like the non-residence of most of the English  
clergy. When I was absent from my parishioners, I was  
not loitering or living at ease, but preaching and begging  
for them and theirs; and when I returned, it was not  
to fleece my flock, and then go and spend it upon my  
lusts, or lay it up for a fortune for myself and relations.’  
The family at Bethesda, long wishful to see him, and  
the thousands living between Savannah and Boston, who  
wished again to hear him and sent him urgent requests  
to come among them, constrained him to take his fifth  
voyage to America; and in June, 1744, he took passage  
in a ship which was to sail from Portsmouth. Second  
thoughts, but not better ones, led the captain to refuse  
him a berth in his ship for fear he might spoil the sailors.  
He then betook himself to Plymouth, and secured a  
passage in a mast-ship that was to sail under convoy to  
Piscataway, in New England. The journey from London  
to the seaport was a pleasant one, through the midst of  
warm friends and loving converts; and as he went from  
place to place he encouraged believers and called sinners  
to repentance. Plymouth was not at first altogether  
gratified with the distinction that rested upon it for  
several weeks. It was presumed that Whitefield would  
be sure to appear on the Hoe—a large green for walks

and diversions—on the night of his arrival; and, to  
oppose him and draw away his congregation, some one  
brought a bear and a drum. But the first announce-  
ment of his arrival was false news; and both crowd  
and bear were disappointed. The following night brought  
him; and his first taste of Plymouth civility was the  
bursting open of his room-door by several men under  
pretence of a hue-and-cry. He then withdrew from the  
inn to private lodgings; but this was no protection  
against the purpose of a little knot of fast young men,  
who had resolved, probably in a bragging spirit, to put  
indignity upon him, if not to injure him. Four gentle-  
men called at the house of a particular friend of his to  
ask for his address; and soon afterwards a letter came  
to him from one who represented himself as a nephew of  
Mr. S., an eminent attorney in New York, stating that  
the writer had once supped with Whitefield at Mr. S.’s  
house, and desiring Whitefield’s company to sup with  
him and a few more friends at a tavern. Whitefield  
replied that it was not his custom to sup out at taverns,  
but that out of respect for his uncle, he should be glad  
to see him at his lodgings to eat a morsel with him.  
The young man, a would-be ‘assassin,’ as Whitefield has  
described him (the word must surely be a mistake), came,  
and behaved himself somewhat strangely; his mind was  
absent from the conversation, and his eyes kept wander-  
ing round the room. He bade his host good night, and  
returned to the company of his comrades. Asked by  
them what he had done, he replied that he had not the  
heart to touch a man who had treated him so civilly. A  
lieutenant of a man-of-war then laid a wager of ten  
guineas that he would do the ‘business’ for the Me-  
thodist preacher. Disarmed of his sword, which his  
companions took from him, he presented himself at the  
door of Whitefield’s lodgings about midnight. The good  
man was in bed; but when the landlady told him that a

well-dressed gentleman wanted to see him, he thought it  
must be some Nicodemite, and desired him to be brought  
upstairs. The visitor sat down by the bedside, told  
Whitefield his profession, congratulated him on the suc-  
cess of his ministry, expressed his concern at having been  
detained from hearing him, asked him if he knew who  
he was, and on being answered ‘No,’ gave his name as  
Cadogan, and when Whitefield remarked that he had  
seen a gentleman of the same name at Bristol a fort-  
night ago, rose up and began to call him the most  
abusive names, at the same time beating him violently  
with his gold-headed cane. The attack threw White-  
field into a paroxysm of fear, as he kept expecting that  
his assailant would stab or shoot him. Instead of at-  
tempting any self-defence, he only raised the cry of  
‘murder,’ which soon brought the landlady and her  
daughter into the room, and had them holding the bully  
by the collar. But he quickly freed himself, and re-  
sumed his attack on the man in bed. The cry of murder  
raised by all three at last made him afraid, and as he  
retreated to the chamber door, the landlady helped him  
downstairs with a push. Then a second bully—no  
doubt the whole band were outside listening to the  
scuffle—shouted out, ‘Take courage, I am ready to help  
you,’ and rushing upstairs while his friend was escaping,  
took one of the women by the heels, and threw her so  
violently upon the stairs as almost to break her back.  
By this time the neighbourhood was alarmed, and thus  
the sport of the young gentlemen came to an end. The  
house door was shut, and Whitefield went to sleep medi-  
tating on the propriety with which we are taught in the  
Litany to pray—‘From sudden death, good Lord, deliver  
us!’

Preaching work called Whitefield out next morning,  
and he went to it, saying to his friends who counselled  
the prosecution of the offenders, that he had better work

to do, a restraint for which we cannot but commend him.  
The assault increased his popularity: curiosity drew two  
thousand more to hear a man who ‘had like to have been  
murdered in his bedhalf of them, perhaps, to see a man  
who had like to have been murdered, and the other half  
to see a man who could lie in his bed while the murder-  
ing was going on. Yet there was undoubtedly some  
danger to be apprehended. Once his voice arrested the  
attention of a band of workmen who were passing near  
the field in which he preached; and thinking him mad,  
they filled their pockets with stones to pelt him, and  
arranged to throw him from his block. Their resolution,  
however, failed when they came to stand for a little while  
under the charm of his eloquence; and one of them at  
least went home with a serious heart, and a resolution in  
it that he would come again the next night, and hear  
more. The next night the sermon was on the text  
‘Beginning at Jerusalem,’ and contained, as it was sure  
to do in the hands of a pictorial preacher, and one who  
sought the recovery of ‘Jerusalem sinners’ with the  
greatest devotion, a description of ‘the cruel murder of  
the Lord of life.’ It was an admirable topic for ad-  
mitting a close application of truth to the conscience;  
and when the last sad scenes in our Lord’s life had been  
pourtrayed, Whitefield said to his congregation, ‘You are  
reflecting on the cruelty of these inhuman butchers, who  
imbrued their hands in innocent blood.’ As he spoke  
his eye fell on the young shipbuilder; and then, while  
speaker and hearer seemed to be only with each other in  
the consciousness of each other’s glance, he added, ‘Thou  
art the man.’ The effect was great and manifest; and  
Whitefield, with his own peculiar facility for fastening on  
any passing event, and for preaching to one person in the  
midst of a multitude without any but that person know-  
ing of it, went on to speak words of tenderness and en-  
couragement. A third time did the young man come to

hear, and this time to enter into joy and peace in be-  
lieving. By and by he in turn ventured to preach the  
gospel; and his ministry was one which could boast that  
hardly one of its sermons had fallen uselessly to the  
ground. His last end was according to an earnest and  
oft-repeated prayer, and such as became a good servant  
of the Lord Jesus Christ; strength failed him in the  
pulpit, and he was carried thence to die.

The evangelist laboured bravely amidst his troubles,  
whilst a contrary wind hindered him from sailing; and,  
as had happened a hundred times before, prejudice and  
opposition yielded to his love and effort. Freely and of  
themselves some who had been opposed offered him a  
piece of ground surrounded with walls for a society room.  
Great companies of people, with him in the midst, would  
return from the dock at night, singing and praising God.  
The ferrymen, too, at the ferry had an interest in the  
religious work which had been set on foot, and would  
not take toll from the crowds which passed over to hear  
the sermons. ‘God forbid that we should sell the word  
of God,’ said the kind-hearted fellows.

CHAPTER X.

**August, 1744, to July, 1748.**

FIFTH VOYAGE—ADVENTURES AND CONTROVERSIES— WANDERINGS IN AMERICA INVALIDED IN BERMUDAS—SIXTH VOYAGE.

The fifth voyage was diversified with nautical adventures  
and theological discussions. The usual dangers of ocean  
travelling were at this time, August 1744, increased by  
the men-of-war which were cruising for spoil. France  
and England were at their old folly of treating each other  
as natural enemies. The fleet of one hundred and fifty  
ships which sailed out of Plymouth Sound was therefore  
attended by several convoys; and a good deal of ner-  
vousness was evidently abroad. One day an ominous  
fleet was sighted, but it turned out to be only a friendly  
Dutch one. Another alarm arose from the sail of Ad-  
miral Balchen, ‘who rode by receiving the obeisance of  
the surrounding ships, as though he was lord of the  
whole ocean.’ Whitefield was in poor health, suffering  
from a violent pain in his side, and the tedious voyage  
increased his trouble. Fully six weeks were consumed  
between Plymouth and the Western Isles, and off the  
islands they lay floating in a calm for days; then, as the  
wind sprung up a little, there came a mishap which  
might have sent a vessel to the bottom. Orders were  
given to tack about, to take advantage of the breeze, and  
one of the ships, missing her stays in turning, ran directly  
against the ‘Wilmington,’ on the deck of which sat White-  
field, with his wife and friends around him, singing a  
hymn. The ‘Wilmington,’ being the larger vessel, suffered

no damage, while the other was so broken that the cries  
and groans of her apprehensive crew were awful. Pre-  
sently they came up with the convoy, and when White-  
field’s captain informed them of what had happened, they

answered, ‘This is your praying, and be d\_\_\_\_\_ to ye.’

Shocked by the profanity, the praying men got together,  
and Whitefield, expressing their feelings, cried out, ‘God  
of the sea and God of the dry land, this is a night of  
rebuke and blasphemy; show Thyself, 0 God, and take  
us under Thy own immediate protection; be Thou our  
convoy, and make a difference between those that fear  
Thee and those that fear Thee not.’ The next day a  
violent gale parted the ‘Wilmington’ from the convoy,  
which was seen no more during the rest of the voyage—  
a circumstance which, with one day’s exception, proved  
rather agreeable than otherwise to Whitefield. Until  
the adventure of that day comes in its proper order, we  
may go into Whitefield’s cabin, and consider the thoughts  
which he is planning for the benefit of the Bishop of  
London, and the bishop’s brethren, who wrote the anony-  
mous pamphlet once before mentioned, or, at any rate,  
gave authoritative countenance to it.

The pamphlet complained of the irregular practices of  
the Methodists, and then proceeded to enquire whether  
the doctrines they taught, or the lengths they ran beyond  
what was practised among the religious societies, or in  
other Christian churches, would be a service or a dis-  
service to religion. The startling effects of Whitefield’s  
preaching, the crying and fainting and convulsions, such  
as appeared at Cambuslang, were laid upon him as a  
reproach; and it is well to know what he himself thought  
of them. Referring to a question in the pamphlet on the  
subject, he says, ‘Would not one imagine by this query  
that these itinerants laid down such things as screamings,  
tremblings, &c., as essential marks of the co-operation of  
the Holy Spirit? But can any such thing be proved?

Are they not looked upon by these itinerants themselves  
as extraordinary things, proceeding generally from soul  
distress, and sometimes, it may be, from the agency of the  
evil spirit, who labours to drive poor souls into despair?  
Does not this appear from the relation given of them in  
one of the journals referred to? Are there not many  
relations of the co-operation of the Spirit in the same  
journal, where no such bodily effects are so much as  
hinted at? And does not this give ground to suspect,  
that the “due and regular attendance on the public offices  
of religion, paid by (what our author calls) good men, in  
a serious and composed way,” is little better than a dead  
formal attendance on outward ordinances, which a man  
may continue in all his lifetime, and be all the while far  
from the kingdom of God? Did ever anyone before  
hear this urged as an evidence of co-operation of the  
Spirit? Or would anyone think that the author of the  
observations, ever read the relations that are given of the  
conversion, of several in the Holy Scriptures? For, may  
we not suppose, my lords, that many were cast into  
sudden agonies and screamings—Acts ii. 37—when  
“they were pricked to the heart, and said unto Peter  
and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall  
we do to be saved?” Or what would this author think  
of the conversion of the jailor—Acts x. 29, 30—“Who  
sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul  
and Silas; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what  
must I do to be saved?” Or what would he think of  
Paul, who, trembling and astonished—Acts ix. 6—said,  
“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” and was after-  
wards three days without sight, and neither did eat nor  
drink? Is it not to be feared that if this author had  
been seated upon the bench, and heard this apostle give  
an account of his own conversion, he would have joined  
with Festus in crying out with a loud voice, “Paul,  
much learning doth make thee mad?” And are not all

these things, and whatever else is recorded in the Book  
of God, written for our learning? Is not God the same  
yesterday, to-day, and forever? And may He not now,  
as well as formerly, reveal His arm and display His  
power in bringing sinners home to Himself as suddenly  
and instantaneously as in the first planting of the gospel  
church?’

With this important deduction from the instances  
quoted by Whitefield of persons undergoing great agony  
of mind at the time that they were turned from their  
own way of living to the way appointed by our Lord—  
that there was miracle to alarm them—his explanation  
may be accepted. Cloven tongues like as of fire glowed  
on the heads of the apostles at Pentecost; and the sight of  
them doubtless added to the concern with which Peter’s  
words filled many hearts. A great earthquake shook the  
foundations of the prison at Philippi, opened all doors,  
and unloosed all bonds; and the jailor must have trem-  
bled in the throe, even had guilt not terrified his soul. It  
was the surprise of seeing at midday a light from heaven,  
above the brightness of the sun, shining round about  
them, that dashed Saul and his company to the ground;  
although it is evident that conscience and the Spirit of  
God also wrought in his trembling and astonishment.

‘Soul distress,’ as Whitefield calls the feeling of his  
hearers, is potent enough to make any knees shake,  
and any lips cry out. When the detection of guilt by  
fellow-mortals can make the sweat stand on the brows of  
hardy villains, there need be no questioning of the power  
of conscience to shake any soul with terror. And when  
the prospect of social disgrace or of corporal punishment  
can daunt the wicked, there need be no doubting that  
the consciousness of divine anger hanging over the head  
can produce sudden agony. If anyone should feel in all  
its awful significance the meaning of this, or of many  
similar passages of Holy Writ—‘He that believeth on the

Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the  
Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on  
him’—and also know that he believes not, there is no  
need to go to the ends of the earth to explain his rest-  
lessness, the fire in his bones, the roaring of his heart,  
and the manifestations of his inner feelings.

The pamphlet further complained of Whitefield’s no-  
tions of justification, and of the height to which he  
carried them. The gravamen of the charge is directly  
against the supposed immoral tendency of justification  
bestowed solely on the ground of another’s merit, and has  
been already dealt with; but all the conceptions, which  
in Whitefield’s mind stood related to the conception of  
justification, may now have our consideration. His sys-  
tem was severely logical. The atonement was so much  
suffering endured on the part of our Lord at the hands  
of His angry Father, on behalf of so many sinners; he  
says, ‘When Christ’s righteousness is spoken of, we are to  
understand Christ’s obedience and death—all that Christ  
has done, and all that Christ has suffered for an elect  
world, for all that will believe on Him.’ The position  
of our Lord was purely that of a substitute. The sins of  
the elect were laid on Him in the most literal sense; He  
was then as a sinner in the Father’s sight, and before the  
Father’s law; and upon the head of such an One it was  
only meet that the fiery indignation should be poured.  
The active obedience of our Saviour constituted the  
extra righteousness in the moral world, which, not being  
required for Himself, since He was always pure and sin-  
less, might be imputed to any who would believe on  
Him. Whitefield’s words are, ‘In that nature’—i.e. our  
human nature—‘He obeyed, and thereby fulfilled the  
whole moral law in our stead; and also died a painful  
death upon the cross, and thereby became a curse for, or  
instead of, those whom the Father had given to Him.  
As God He satisfied, at the same time that He obeyed

and suffered as man; and, being God and man in one  
person, He wrought out a full, perfect, and sufficient  
righteousness for all to whom it was to be imputed.’  
The language in which, in his favourite and thrilling  
sermon on ‘The true way of beholding the Lamb of  
God,’ he describes the sufferings of the Redeemer, is, in  
some parts, melting and attractive for its tender sym-  
pathy of love, and, in others, repulsive for its coarse  
exposition of that monstrous theory, that the latter  
punished in His anger His beloved Son. It has one  
saving clause, short indeed, but still a clause to which  
we cling with some hope that Whitefield was not quite  
satisfied with what he said. ‘The paschal lamb,’ he says,

‘was further typical of Christ, its great Antitype, in that  
it was to be killed in the evening, and afterwards roasted  
with fire. So Christ our passover was sacrificed for us  
in the evening of the world, only with this material  
difference, the paschal lamb was first slain, and then  
roasted; whereas the holy Jesus, the spotless Lamb of  
God, was burnt and roasted in the fire of His Father’s  
wrath before He actually expired upon the cross. To  
satisfy you of this, if you can bear to be spectators of such  
an awful tragedy, as I desired you just now to go with  
me to the entrance, so I must now entreat you to ven-  
ture a little farther into the same garden. But — stop —  
what is that we see? Behold the Lamb of God under-  
going the most direful tortures of vindictive wrath! Of  
the people, even of His disciples, there is none with Him.  
Alas! was ever sorrow like unto that sorrow wherewith  
His innocent soul was afflicted in this day of His Father’s  
fierce anger? Before He entered into this bitter passion,  
out of the fulness of His heart He said, “Now is my soul  
troubled.” But how is it troubled now? His agony  
bespeaks it to be exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.  
It extorts sweat, yea, a bloody sweat. His face, His  
hands, His garments, are all over stained with blood. It

extorts strong crying and many tears. See how the  
incarnate Deity lies prostrate before His Father, who  
now laid on Him the iniquities of us all. See how He  
agonises in prayer! Hark! Again and again He addresses  
His Father with an “If it be possible, let this cup pass  
from me!

‘Tell me, ye blessed angels, tell me, Gabriel—or what-  
soever thou art called, who wast sent from heaven in  
this important hour, to strengthen our agonising Lord—  
tell me, if ye can, what Christ endured in this dark and  
doleful night; and tell me, tell me what you yourselves  
felt when you heard this same God-man, whilst expiring  
on the accursed tree, breaking forth into that dolorous,  
unheard of expostulation, “My God, my God, why, or  
how hast thou forsaken me?” Were you not all struck  
dumb? And did not an universal awful silence fill  
heaven itself when God the Father said unto His sword,  
“Sword, smite my fellow?” Well might nature put on  
its sable weeds; well might the rocks rend, to show  
their sympathy with a suffering Saviour; and well might  
the sun withdraw its light, as though it was shocked and  
confounded to see its Maker suffer. But our hearts are  
harder than rocks, or otherwise they would now break;  
and our souls more stupid than any part of the inanimate  
creation, or they would even now, in some degree, at  
least, sympathise with a crucified Bedeemer, who for us [[11]](#footnote-11)

men, and for our salvation, was thus roasted, as it were,  
in the Father’s wrath, and therefore fitly styled the  
Lamb of God.’1

It is to be regretted that he did not follow the glim-  
mer of light which comes through the narrow chink of  
that last sentence, ‘as it were.’ And yet I know not  
that he would have had the slightest increase of moral  
and spiritual power with theological beliefs less literal,  
less objective, less gross, than those which he held. The  
rugged minds which he commonly addressed could grasp,  
as a real redemption for themselves, that their punish-  
ment had been borne by another, and that their unclean-  
ness was hidden from view by a robe of unsullied  
righteousness; and all the objections which a refined  
criticism could offer would have been nothing to them.  
For was it so much the theology of the sermons as the  
spirit of the preacher which won the people’s ear and  
heart. Love is more than theology both with God and  
man, and that was never absent from any sermon of  
Whitefield. Congregations had no time to settle down  
upon his theological mistakes, and find fault with them.  
Before the questioner had well begun to consider what  
hope of acceptance with God anyone durst cherish, if  
the atonement was only for the elect, his soul was called

1 It may be interesting to compare with this view of the Atonement the  
juster view of William Law, to whom Methodism owed much. ‘ The God  
of Christians,’ he says, ‘is so far from being implacable and revengeful that  
you have seen it proved, from text to text, that the whole form and manner  
of our redemption comes wholly from the free, antecedent, infinite love and  
goodness of God towards fallen man; that the innocent Christ did not  
suffer to quiet an angry Deity, but merely as co-operating, assisting, and  
uniting with that love of God which desired our salvation; that He did  
not suffer in our place or stead, but only on our account, which is a quite  
different matter. And to say that He suffered in our place or stead is as  
absurd, as contrary to Scripture, as to say that He rose from the dead and  
ascended into heaven in our place and stead, that we might be excused from  
it. For His sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension are all of them  
equally on our account, for our sake, for our good and benefit, but none of  
them possible to be in our stead.’—‘ The Atonement,’ by the Rev. William  
Law, p. 74.

to repent and believe; for Whitefield was too wise at  
winning souls to leave his ‘application’ to the last: he  
would put an application to every paragraph rather than  
fail in getting practical results. In his sermon on ‘The  
Lord our righteousness’ he rushes straight in among  
his hearers’ doubts and troubles—doubts and troubles  
which his own rebukes and pleadings have created, and  
exclaims, ‘Who knows but the Lord may have mercy on,  
nay, abundantly pardon you? Beg of God to give you  
faith; and, if the Lord gives you that, you will by it  
receive Christ with His righteousness and His all. You  
need not fear the greatness or number of your sins. For  
are you sinners? so am I. Are you the chief of sinners?  
so am I. Are you backsliding sinners? so am I. And  
yet the Lord—for ever adored be His rich, free, and  
sovereign grace—is my righteousness. Come then, 0  
young men, who, as I acted once myself, are playing  
the prodigal, and wandering away afar off from your  
heavenly Father’s house, come home, come home, and  
leave your swine-trough. Feed no longer on the husks  
of sensual delights; for Christ’s sake, arise and come  
home! Your heavenly Father now calls you. See  
yonder the best robe, even the righteousness of His dear  
Son, awaits you. See it; view it again and again. Con-  
sider at how dear a rate it was purchased, even by the  
blood of God. Consider what great need you have of  
it. You are lost, undone, damned for ever, without it.  
Come then, poor guilty prodigals, come home. Indeed  
I will not, like the elder brother in the gospel, be angry;  
no, I will rejoice with the angels in heaven. And 0  
that God would now bow the heavens, and come down!  
Descend, 0 Son of God, descend; and, as Thou hast  
shown in me such mercy, 0 let Thy blessed Spirit apply  
Thy righteousness to some young prodigals now before  
Thee, and clothe their naked souls with Thy best robe! ’  
The writing of theological letters was very rudely in-

terrupted one day. The good ship ‘Wilmington’ was  
toiling through the Atlantic without her convoy, when,  
to the alarm of all, Whitefield included, two ships were  
sighted which the captain took to be enemies, bearing  
down on them with all the sail they could crowd. Pre-  
parations were at once made for an engagement. Guns  
were mounted; chains were put about the masts; the  
great cabin was emptied of everything; hammocks were  
slung about the sides of the ship. Mrs. Whitefield dressed  
herself to be prepared for all events, and then set about  
making cartridges. All but one stood ready for fire and  
smoke. Whitefield retreated to the hold of the ship,  
when told that that was the chaplain’s place. Not liking  
his quarters, however, and being urged by one of his  
New England friends to say something to animate the  
men, he crept upon deck, and beat to arms with a  
warm exhortation. His words wanned the hearts of  
braver men. On came the dreaded enemy, when, lo! a  
nearer view showed that they were two friends, mast-  
ships, which, with the ‘Wilmington,’ ought to have been  
under the protection of the missing convoy! All were  
very much pleased. The captain, as he took the oppor-  
tunity to get the empty cabin cleared, remarked, ‘After  
all, this is the best fighting;’ and the heroic chaplain, who  
stood hard by, yielded assent to the pacific sentiment.

The chaplain had another kind of enemy to fight with,  
and gladly betook himself to his desk and his quill, to  
write ‘Some Remarks upon a late Charge against Enthu-  
siasm, delivered by the Right Reverend Father in God,  
Richard, Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to the  
Reverend the Clergy in the several parts of the Diocess  
of Lichfield and Coventry, in a Triennial Visitation of  
the same in 1741; and published at their request in the  
present year 17 44. In a Letter to the Rev. the Clergy  
of that Diocess.’ The position taken by the bishop is  
almost the same as that chosen by Dr. Gibson, namely,

there has been no Holy Ghost excepting in the times of  
the apostles and in their labonrs. It is an enthusiastical  
notion to think that there is any witnessing of the Spirit  
to the soul of man concerning adoption; or that the  
Spirit is in the believer at all; or that He affords help  
either in praying or in preaching. All pretensions to  
such favours in these last days are vain.1 For the reality  
of these favours Whitefield contended with all his might.  
Nothing was dearer to him than that inward Witness,  
who sealed him unto the day of redemption. Nothing  
could strengthen his heart for his duties so much as  
the light and comfort and help of the Holy Spirit. He  
could best offer the rights and privileges of sonship to all  
when he was indubitably assured that he had them him-  
self. Freed from the abuse he had once made of the  
privilege of having an inner Teacher, Comforter, and  
Guide, by placing his impressions on a level with spoken  
truth, the written word of God, he held with immovable  
firmness to the position, that all believers in Christ Jesus  
have the Spirit within them to sanctify them, and sustain  
them in the fulfilment of duty. Turning round on the  
clergy, he says, ‘How can you agree with the thirteenth  
article, which affirms, “that works done before the  
grace of Christ, and the inspiration of the Spirit, are not  
pleasant to God?”’ Are not all these things against you?  
No they not all concur to prove that you are the betrayers  
of that church which you would pretend to defend?  
Alas! what strangers must you be to a life hid with  
Christ in God, and the blessed fruits of the Spirit, such  
as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,  
faith, meekness, temperance; when you know of no other

1 None can fail to be struck with the change 'which has come over theo-  
logical belief on this subject since Whitefield’s days. Then it was enthusi-  
astical for even a few to think that they had the Spirit within them: now  
an influential school of theologians would account it blind bigotry to ques-  
tion whether the Spirit is in every one, Turk and Jew, Kaffir and Brahmin,  
Christian and Fire-worshipper, alike.

first-fruits of the Spirit than the miraculous gifts of the  
Holy Ghost conferred on some particular persons in the  
primitive church, which a man might have so as to  
prophesy and cast out devils in the name of Christ, and  
yet be commanded to depart from Him on the last day.  
How miserable must the congregations be of which you  
are made overseers! And how little of the divine  
presence must you have felt in your administrations that  
utterly deny the spirit of prayer, and the Spirit’s helping  
you to preach with power, and consider them as things  
that have long since ceased! Is not this the reason why  
you preach as did the scribes, and not with any divine  
pathos and authority, and see so little good effect of your  
sermons? Have not your principles a direct tendency to  
lull poor souls asleep? For, if they are not to look for  
the supernatural operations of the Spirit of God, or any  
inward feeling or perceptions of this Spirit, may not all  
that are baptised, and not notoriously wicked, flatter  
themselves that they are Christians indeed? But is not  
this the very quintessence of Pharisaism? Is not this a  
prophesying falsely, to say unto people, “Peace, peace,”  
when there is no true, solid, scriptural ground for peace?  
And are not you then properly the persons his lordship  
speaks of as “betraying whole multitudes into an un-  
reasonable presumption of their salvation?” For is it  
not the highest presumption for any to hope to be saved  
without the indwelling of the Spirit, since the apostle  
declares in the most awful manner, “If any man have not  
the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His?”’

At the end of eleven weeks, the ‘Wilmington’ came  
within sight of port. The long confinement had made  
Whitefield impatient to land; and, with some friends, he  
eagerly, and in spite of remonstrance, transferred himself  
from the ship to a little fishing-smack which had come  
alongside, and which, it was said, would distance the  
ship by several hours. His haste delayed him. It soon

grew dark, the pilots missed the bar of York harbour,  
and the smack and its passengers were tossed about all  
night. Exposure increased the pain of a severe attack of  
nervous colic, from which he had been suffering for some  
time. He was also so hungry that he could almost have  
gnawed the boards of the boat, and perhaps wood might  
have done him no more harm than the raw potatoes, the  
only food on board, of which he partook freely. It  
pleased him, as he lay shivering, to hear a fisherman, in  
answer to a question about what was going on ashore,  
say that the ‘New-lights’ were expecting one Mr. White-  
field, and that the day before many had been praying for  
his safe arrival. Towards morning the men found the  
inlet; and Whitefield was received into the house of a  
physician, formerly a notorious Deist, but converted at  
Whitefield’s last American visit. Half an hour after his  
arrival, he was put to bed, racked with nervous colic,  
convulsed from his waist to his toes, and a total con-  
vulsion was expected every moment. As his wife and  
friends stood around him, weeping, he begged them not  
to be distressed. Fearing that he might fall into a  
delirium, and say things that were wrong, he told them—  
so anxious was he never to exert a baneful influence—  
that such a thing must not surprise them. Happily the  
worst did not come, yet for four days he could not bear  
the sound of a footstep or of a voice.

As soon as he was somewhat better, the minister of  
York, old Mr. Moody, called to bid him welcome to  
America, and then urged him to give them a sermon. He  
consented. Meanwhile, news had gone to Boston that  
he was dying; and when it reached that city, two of his  
friends started for York, to nurse him if he were alive,  
or to attend his funeral if he were dead. On their arrival,  
they found him in the pulpit! Soon a relapse came on,  
through his catching cold, and his friends again thought  
that his end was come; yet while he lay in agony of

body, his greater pain was, that he had been announced  
to preach, and could not go. The hour of service drew  
near; the minister who had been appointed to fill his  
place was leaving the house for church, when of a  
sudden Whitefield said to his friend and doctor, ‘Doctor,  
my pains are suspended; by the help of God, I’ll go and  
preach, and then come home and die.’ And he did go, pale  
as death, and looking to the astonished congregation like  
one risen from the grave. It was taken for a last sermon,  
both by people and preacher. The invisible things of  
another world lay open to his view, and expecting to be  
with his Master before morning, he spoke with peculiar  
energy for an hour. The effect of his word was, he says,  
worth dying for a thousand times over. But nature was  
hard pressed by the effort, and when, on his return home,  
he was laid on a bed before the fire, animation seemed  
to be suspended, and he could hear his friends say to each  
other, ‘He is gone!’ Gradually he recovered; and the  
first visitor who would see him, yea or nay, was a poor  
Negro woman. Sitting on the ground beside him, and  
looking earnestly into that kind face which always wore  
its gentlest aspect when such as she approached it, she  
said in her broken English, ‘Master, you just go to  
heaven’s gate, but Jesus Christ said, Get you down, get  
you down, you must not come here yet; but go first, and  
call some more poor Negroes.’ The sick man prayed  
that it might be as the simple-hearted Negress wished it  
to be; and prayer and wish were fulfilled.

In about three weeks, though still very weak, he was  
able to proceed to Boston. Here he was convinced that  
since his departure for England a glorious work had been  
going on, both in Boston and in almost all parts of New  
England. That there had been irregularities and follies,  
an unhappy mixture of human infirmity with divine work,  
he could not but sorrowfully admit; but good predomi-  
nated over evil. What reproach was incurred, either justly

or unjustly, was thrown upon him; and many clergy who  
had before met him at Governor Belcher’s table—Belcher  
was not now in the post of governor—and ‘paid him the  
nod,’ were shy and distant, and refused him their pulpits.  
But the congregations had some influence, and would  
not let their recalcitrant ministers have absolute power  
over the pulpits: accordingly many of them passed  
votes of invitation to Whitefield to preach for them, and  
some urged him to set up a six o’clock morning lecture,  
such as he had established in Scotland. With this request  
he complied, and opened a lecture in one of the smallest  
rooms, thinking that but few would attend. But how was  
he disappointed! His first lecture, which was preached  
from the text ‘And they came early in the morning to  
hear him,’ was listened to by such a crowd, that for the  
future he had to use two of the largest places in the city,  
and there an audience of two or three thousand heard  
him. The streets were all astir on those dark February  
mornings with the eager punctual hearers who were  
going to the lectures on Genesis. Before the blinds were  
drawn in the houses of many who had thrown the taunt  
that the ‘new lights’ were idle, and neglected their  
worldly duties, the saints had attended lecture, had cele-  
brated family worship, and had finished breakfast. It  
became the remark of everyone that between tar-water  
—then a popular panacea—and early rising the physi-  
cians would lose their business.

I cannot find that his preaching in churches where the  
clergy were opposed to him, or distant towards him,  
caused, as apparently it would have done, unhappy dif-  
ferences between the clergy and their people; indeed, I  
cannot think that Whitefield, who had been witness of  
the disastrous effects of troubles among brethren, and  
who had become an ardent advocate of peace, could  
have yielded his assent to anything that might leave  
contention behind him. Doubtless his ministrations in-

terfered very slightly, if at all, with the ordinary work  
of the local ministers, and any infringement may have  
been condoned on the ground that preachers were made  
for the people, and not the people for the preachers; and  
if the people would hear him in the churches which  
their money had built and their liberality kept open,  
during his short visits to the city, it was stretching pro-  
fessional claims rather too far to say them ‘nay.’ There  
was certainly great excitement in the city, and party  
feeling ran high. Some of the clergy began to publish  
halfpenny testimonials against him, and the president,  
professors and students of Harvard College joined in the  
assaults. But they assailed a man who was too good  
not to wish to be better, and too candid to be afraid of  
confessing his faults. Their exposure of real blame on  
his part only gave him the opportunity to acknowledge  
(which he did with beautiful humility) wherein he had  
offended; and their shameful treatment of him in other  
respects so roused many of his friends, that they came to  
him to say that they would, with his consent, build in a  
few weeks the outside of the largest place of worship in  
America for his use. He gratefully declined their offer  
as unsuited to his taste and work.

There were strange instances of the effect of his preach-  
ing. One morning the crowd was too dense to be pene-  
trated, and he was obliged to go in at the window.  
Immediately after him came the high sheriff, who had  
been hostile to the ‘new lights,’ and the sight of whose  
face, as it appeared through the window, almost made  
the astonished people cry out, ‘Is Saul also among the  
prophets?’

Another day his friend Mr. Prince told him that he  
should shortly be visited by a very pensive and uncom-  
mon person, one of good parts, ready wit, and lively  
imagination, who, to procure matter for tavern amuse-  
ment, had often gone to hear Whitefield preach, and then

returned to his bottle and his friends, and recounted what  
he could remember, at the same time adorning it with  
further exposition. He went once too often for his fun.  
The crowd which bore him easily into Hr. S.’s meeting-  
house, as Whitefield entered, was like a solid rock behind  
him, when he wished to return with what he thought was  
sufficient food for sport. Obliged to stay, he kept looking  
up at Whitefield and waiting for anything he could ridi-  
cule. But soon he began to feel miserable under what  
he heard; and when he withdrew, it was to go to Mr.  
Prince and confess his sins, and his desire to ask White-  
field’s pardon, only he was afraid to see him. Mr. Prince  
encouraged him to venture. He went, and Whitefield on  
opening the door for him, saw in his pale, pensive, and  
horrified countenance the story of his life. In a low  
plaintive voice he said, ‘Sir, can you forgive me?’ ‘Yes,  
sir, very readily,’ said Whitefield with a smile. The  
visitor thought that the tale of all his wrongdoings  
would make that impossible; but Whitefield asked him  
to sit down, and then spoke to him such comfort as the  
gospel has provided for broken hearts.

His popularity and wide influence were made of ser-  
vice in organising the first expedition that was sent  
against Cape Breton, although he was averse from Avar.  
Colonel Pepperell, one of his daily hearers, having re-  
ceived the offer of commander of the expedition, con-  
sulted Whitefield on the matter; and Whitefield frankly  
pointed out to him what he deemed the improbability of  
success, and the consequence of victory, should it be  
gained. Peppered assumed the command. Then Mr.  
Sherburne, one of the commissaries, another friend, came  
to say that, unless he would favour the expedition,  
‘serious people’ would be discouraged from enlisting;  
and, further, that he must give them a motto for their  
flag. Whitefield refused; Sherburne persisted. White-  
field at length yielded, and gave them, Nil desperandum

Christo duce. As soon as it was known what he had  
done, great numbers enlisted. Before the expedition  
embarked, the officers asked him to preach a sermon;  
and, accordingly, he spiritualised for them the description  
given of the motley band around David at Adullam, at  
the same time exhorting the soldiers to behave like the  
soldiers of David, and the officers to act like David’s  
worthies. And they did act bravely, and conquered. The  
news of their capture of Louisburgh gathered a great  
multitude together, and he embraced the opportunity to  
preach a thanksgiving sermon.

Altogether, he was not well satisfied with having  
turned recruiting sergeant; and we might have felt more  
respect for him had he adhered to his original decision,  
which was really in harmony with his opinions and  
feelings.

The stay among his New England friends was more  
prolonged than usual. Upon the renewal of his journey-  
ings his coarse is not easily traced. Such glimpses of  
him, however, as we do get lend fresh charm both to him  
and his work. One day he is to be seen at a settlement  
of Delaware Indians, the converts of the devout Brainerd,  
preaching to them through an interpreter, and watching,  
with that kindly interest which the orphans at Bethesda  
knew so well, a class of fifty Indian children learning the  
Assembly’s Shorter Catechism. Soon afterwards we find  
him at Philadelphia, welcomed by twenty ministers of  
the city and neighbourhood who own him as their  
spiritual father; surrounded with enthusiastic, solemn  
congregations; and offered by the gentlemen who had  
the management of the free temple there eight hundred  
pounds a year and liberty to travel six months in the  
year, if he would become a minister in the city, an  
offer which he treated as he had done that of the Boston  
people. We see him availing himself of his short stay in  
the city to write to his mother, and tell her, that though

for two years she had not written to him—doubtless his  
incessant and distant wanderings helped to hinder her—  
his attachment to her was as great as ever; and then  
come snatches of news about ‘the golden bait’ which  
‘Jesus had kept him from catching at;’ about his door  
of usefulness which opens wider and wider; about his  
wife being very weak through a miscarriage, or she  
would have enclosed a few lines in his letter; and about  
the many mercies which he receives from God. He  
rejoiced in roaming the woods, hunting for sinners, as he  
called his work; and next we find him among a little  
band of Christians in the backwoods of Virginia. These  
men were first gathered together in a remarkable way.  
Relations and friends in the dear old country, Scotland,  
had got a volume of those Glasgow sermons which had  
helped to kindle the revival in the valley of the Clyde,  
and sent them across the waters. When the precious  
book was received under the shadow of the great forest,  
its owner, one Morris, called his friends and neighbours  
to rejoice with him, and share his feast. As his own  
house was soon crowded to excess, a meeting-house had  
to be built; and many quiet, solemn evenings were spent  
in it, tears flowing from many eyes as freely as if White-  
field’s pathetic voice were speaking the words that were  
only read. The sermons soon took a wider range, and  
upon invitation Morris carried them to distant little  
groups of colonists, who could not enjoy such teaching  
in the churches which by law they were expected to  
frequent.

Yet they might not have their sermon reading without  
annoyance. They were breaking the law, said some,  
and they must say what denomination they were of, a  
question which greatly puzzled their simple minds; but  
remembering that Luther was a noted reformer, and that  
his books had been useful to them, they called themselves  
Lutherans. Then Blair of Fog’s Manor and Tennant paid

them a visit, to cheer and confirm them; and at last  
came Whitefield himself, whose personal character and  
mighty works we may well believe had often been talked  
of when the reading of his sermons was over. The little  
church of Lutherans lifted up its head, like a flower  
refreshed with rain, when Whitefield came; others also  
‘engaged themselves to the Lord.’

Somewhere on the road, his wife, with a Boston young  
lady, left him, to travel to Georgia, and tidings come to  
him that they ‘traverse the woods bravely.’ Whether  
he felt lonely without her with whom he had been ‘more  
than happy ’ he nowhere says; but then he never said as  
much about his troubles as his comforts. We next come  
upon him at Bethesda, where he wintered in 1746-7.  
Most likely his letters to friends in London—the only  
letters he wrote at this time—would have contained  
news about his dear family, had not London friends  
needed counsel and comfort in the midst of troubles  
which had arisen at the Tabernacle. So he said not a  
word about his own heavy burden with the orphans, but  
added another load to all that his tender heart was  
already burdened with. Bethesda had long wished to  
see him, and as soon as he crossed its threshold, the cry  
came from London to return and succour his distressed  
flock there. What could he do but direct his people to  
One whose love was his own daily support? ‘0 that  
your eyes,’ he exclaims, ‘may be looking towards and  
waiting on the blessed Jesus: from Him alone can come  
your salvation. He will be better to you than a thousand  
Whitefields.’

The same generosity which made him accessible to all  
who were in trouble made him most grateful for any  
help afforded him in carrying out his benevolent pur-  
poses. The following letter will show his kindly traits,  
and his perverted notions about slaves:—

*To a generous Benefactor unknown.*

‘Charles Town, March 15, 1747.

‘Whoever you are that delight to imitate the Divine munifi-  
cence in doing good to your fellow-creatures when they know  
not of it, I think it my duty, in behalf of the poor orphans  
committed to my care, to send you a letter of thanks for your  
kind, generous, and opportune benefaction. That God who has  
opened your heart to give so bountifully will as bountifully  
reward you. I hope you have contributed towards the pro-  
moting an institution which has, and I believe will, redound  
much to the Redeemer’s glory. Blessed be God, I hope I can  
say that Bethesda was never in better order than it is now, in  
all probability taking root downwards, and bearing fruit up-  
wards. Since my arrival there this winter I have opened a  
Latin school, and have several children of promising abilities  
that have begun to learn. One little orphan who this time  
twelvemonth could not read his letters, has made a considerable  
proficiency in his accidence. The blessed Spirit has been  
striving with several of the children’s infant hearts; and I hope  
ere long to see some ministers sent forth from that despised  
place called Georgia. It is true the constitution of that colony  
is very bad, and it is impossible for the inhabitants to subsist  
themselves without the use of slaves. But God has put it into  
the hearts of my South Carolina friends to contribute liberally  
towards purchasing a plantation and slaves in this province,  
which I purpose to devote to the support of Bethesda. Blessed  
be God, the purchase is made. I last week bought at a very  
cheap rate a plantation of six hundred and forty acres of ground  
ready cleared, fenced and fit for rice, corn, and everything that  
will be necessary for provisions. One Negro has been given  
me. Some more I purpose to purchase this week. An over-  
seer is put upon the plantation; and I trust a sufficient quantity  
of provision will be raised this year.

‘The family at Bethesda consists of twenty-six. When my  
arrears are discharged I purpose to increase the number. I  
hope that time will soon come, and that He who has begun will  
go on to stir up the friends of Zion to help me, not only to  
discharge the arrears, but also to bring the plantation lately  
purchased to such perfection that, if I should die shortly,  
Bethesda may yet be provided for.

‘As you have been such a benefactor, I thought proper to  
give you this particular account, that you may see it is not  
given in vain. I should enlarge, but have only room to sub-  
scribe myself, generous friend,

‘Your most obedient servant,

‘George Whitefield.’

While benefactors were thanked with exuberant grati-  
tude, detractors were quietly faced with an audited ac-  
count of receipts and disbursements in behalf of the  
orphan-house. A very serious affair was auditing in  
these days, before the introduction of limited liability  
companies. First, Whitetield and Habersham were put  
upon oath that the accounts laid before the bailiffs con-  
tained, to the best of their knowledge, a just and true  
account of ‘all monies collected by, or given to them, or  
any other, for the use and benefit of the said house; and  
that the disbursement had been faithfully applied to and  
for the use of the same.’ Then comes the statement of  
the auditors, given upon oath:—

‘*Savannah in Georgia.*

‘This day personally appeared before us Henry Parker and  
"William Spencer, bailiffs of Savannah aforesaid, William Wood-  
rooffe, William Ewen, and William Kussell of Savannah afore-  
said, who being duly sworn say, That they have carefully and  
strictly examined all and singular the accompts relating to the  
orphan-house in Georgia, contained in forty-one pages, in a  
book entitled, “Receipts and Disbursements for the orphan-  
house in Georgia,” with the original bills, receipts, and other  
vouchers, from the fifteenth day of December, in the year of   
our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, to the  
first of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven  
hundred and forty-five; and that the monies received on ac-  
count of the said orphan-house amounted to the sum of four  
thousand nine hundred eighty-two poimds, twelve shillings  
and eight pence sterling, as above; and that it doth not appear  
that the Reverend Mr. Whitefield hath converted any part

thereof to his own private use and property, or charged the said  
house with any of his travelling’, or other private expenses;  
but, on the contrary, hath contributed to the said house many  
valuable benefactions; and that the monies disbursed on ac-  
count of the said house amounted to the sum of five thousand  
five hundred eleven pounds, seventeen shillings and ninepence  
farthing sterling, as above, which we, in justice to the Reverend  
Mr. Whitefield and the managers of the said house, do hereby  
declare appear to us to be faithfully and justly applied to and  
for the use and benefit of the said house only.

‘William Woodrooffe.

‘William Ewen.

‘William Russell.

‘Sworn this 16th day of April, 1746, before us, bailiffs of  
Savannah; in justification whereof we have hereunto fixed our  
hands and the common seal.

‘Henry Parker.

‘William Spencer.’

The return of spring saw him mounted for another  
excursion. The news of his coming spread from settle-  
ment to settlement; and when the early light of the  
fresh spring mornings flushed the sky, farmers and  
planters bestirred themselves, and prepared for a ride to  
the distant preaching place. Many a lonely forest-path  
and highway, striped with shadows of tall trees and  
bands of sunshine, was enlivened by groups of horsemen  
and solitary riders—some of them men of staunch piety,  
who longed after religious stimulus and instruction, and  
were going to the open glade as devoutly as ever David  
went up to Mount Zion; others of them men of heavy  
heart and sad countenance, who were getting their first  
insight into themselves and the mysteries, of religion, and  
were uneasy as they saw the vision; and others again  
men of thoughtless spirit aud easy life, who supposed  
that religion might very well be left to a more serious  
time than joyous days of health and vigour when the  
blood is warm, but who had a fancy to hear the far-famed

preacher; nor were wives and daughters absent from the  
bands of travellers. As they tied their neighing horses  
to the trees and hedges, and formed themselves into a  
great congregation, few sights could be either more  
picturesque or more impressive. All hearts were more  
or less accessible to the glowing eloquence of the evan-  
gelist, who pleaded before them, with tears and urgent  
words, the claims of his gracious and exalted Master on  
the trust and love of every soul of man. Holy thoughts  
were carried back home by many of the worldly as well  
as by many of the devout; and the plantation and farm  
began to give signs that a God-fearing man lived in the  
principal house on it.

But the evangelist’s health soon began to suffer when  
the cool spring changed to sultry summer. American  
summers always exhausted him, and that of 1747 formed  
no exception. By the middle of May the heat was try-  
ing his ‘wasting tabernacle,’ but, he says, ‘through Christ  
strengthening me, I intend persisting till I drop.’ The  
condition of the southern colonies was so destitute, and  
his sense of the love of our Lord so vivid, that he carried  
out his purpose, and in five weeks made a circuit of five  
hundred miles; but by that time fever was consuming  
him, convulsions shaking him, and nervous colic and  
gravel griping him. Still his resolution was unbroken,  
and he says, ‘I am sick and well, as I used to be in  
England; but the Redeemer fills me with comfort, and  
gives me to rejoice in His salvation day by day. I am  
determined in His strength to die fighting, and to go on  
till I drop! He is a Jesus worth dying for!’ Three days  
afterwards he was compelled to yield a little. ‘With  
great regret,’ he says, ‘I have omitted preaching one  
night, to oblige my friends, and purpose doing so once  
more, that they may not charge me with murdering  
myself; but I hope yet to die in the pulpit, or soon  
after I come out of it! Dying is exceeding pleasant to

me.’ At length that which he dreaded came upon him;  
he could not preach. His chief solace was gone. It is  
with an infinite pathos that the burdened, harassed, per-  
secuted man writes-—‘Tis hard to be silent; but I must  
be tried every way.’ Compelled to hold his peace, he  
made his way as far north as New York, and there again  
resumed his beloved work. To follow him from this  
point would simply be to recount, with an alteration of  
the name of places, the experience of alternate sickness  
and partial recovery, of preaching and its pleasure, which  
has just been before us.

His attention had to be given to things in London,  
though his heart had become so united to America that  
he sometimes thought be should never again leave it.  
Cennick, who had quarrelled with Howel Harris, the  
chief manager of the Tabernacle, during Whitefields  
absence, had gone over to the Moravians. Whiteheld’s  
letter to him upon that step is highly creditable both to  
his charity and good sense: he says—‘I am sorry to  
hear there are yet disputings amongst us about brick  
walls. I was in hopes, after our contests of that kind  
about seven years ago, such a scene would never occur  
again; but I find fresh offences must come, to search out  
and discover to us fresh corruptions, to try our faith,  
teach us to cease from man, and to lean more upon Him  
who by His infinite wisdom and power will cause that  
“out of the eater shall come forth meat, and from the  
strong sweetness.” I am glad you find yourself happy  
in the holy Jesus. I wish thee an increase of such dear-  
bought happiness every day, and pray that thy mouth  
may not be stopped, as others have been before thee,  
from publishing the glad tidings of salvation by a cruci-  
fied Redeemer. It has been my meat and drink to  
preach among poor sinners the unsearchable riches of  
Christ. May’st thou continue and abide in this plan, and  
whether I see thee or not, whether thou dost think of or

write to me any more, I wish thee much success, and  
shall always pray that the work of the Lord may prosper  
in thy hands.’

It is pleasant to know that old divisions were being-  
healed, if, unfortunately, new ones were breaking out.  
The letter just quoted from, and others presently to be  
referred to, amply sustain the generous eulogy of his  
friend Charles Wesley : —

‘When Satan strove the brethren to divide,

And turn their zeal to—“Who is on my side?”

One moment warmed with controversial fire,

He felt the spark as suddenly expire;

He felt revived the pure ethereal flame,

The love for all that bowed to Jesus’ name,

Nor ever more would for opinions fight  
With men whose life, like his, was in the right.

Though long by following multitudes admired,

No party for himself he e’er desired;

His one desire to make the Saviour known,

To magnify the name of Christ alone:

If others strove who should the greatest be,

No lover of pre-eminence was he,

Nor envied those his Lord vouchsafed to bless,

But joyed in theirs as in his own success,

His friends in honour to himself preferred;

And least of all in his own eyes appeared.’

On September II, 1747, he wrote to John Wesley,  
and said: —

‘Not long ago I received your kind letter, dated in February  
last. Your others, I believe, came to hand, and I hope ere  
now you have received my answer. My heart is really for an  
outward as well as an inward union. Nothing shall be wanting  
on my part to bring it about; but I cannot see how it can  
possibly be effected till we all think and speak the same  
things. I rejoice to hear that you and your brother are more  
moderate with respect to sinless perfection. Time and expe-  
rience, I believe, will convince you that attaining such a state

in this life is not a doctrine of the everlasting gospel. As for  
universal redemption, if we omit on each side the talking for  
or against reprobation, which we may do fairly, and agree as  
we already do in giving an universal offer to all poor sinners  
that will come and taste the water of life, I think we may  
manage very well.’

The same day he wrote a shorter but perhaps still  
warmer letter to Charles: he says: —

‘Both your letters and your prayers I trust have reached me.  
May mine reach you also, and then it will not he long ere we  
shall indeed be one fold under one Shepherd. However, if this  
should not be on earth, it will certainly be effected in heaven.  
Thither I trust we are hastening apace. Blessed be God that  
you are kept alive, and that your spiritual children are in-  
creasing. May they increase more and more! Jesus can  
maintain them all. He wills that His house should be full.  
Some have wrote me things to your disadvantage. I do not  
believe them. Love thinks no evil of a friend. Such are  
you to me. I love you most dearly. I could write to you  
much more, but time and business will not permit. You will  
see my letter to your dear brother. That you may be guided  
into all truth, turn thousands and tens of thousands more unto  
righteousness, and shine as the stars in the future world for  
ever and ever, is the hearty prayer of,

‘Very dear sir, yours most affectionately, &c.

‘George whitefield.’

At the end of his summer’s labours be turned his face  
again to Betbesda. A little riding tired him, but still be  
felt that near as he had been to the kingdom of heaven,  
some of his friends had prayed him back again into the  
world. His heart was all gratitude for the success of his  
word: ‘the barren wilderness,’ he says, ‘was made to  
smile all the way.’ What he did during the winter of  
1747-8, whether he went about Georgia preaching to  
little companies, as in the days when he first entered the  
colony, at the same time watching the affairs of the

orphan-house, or rested to recruit himself, cannot be told.  
It is certain that in the spring following he was much  
weighed down with travelling, with care, and with his  
orphan-house debts—was in fact in such poor health that  
his friends advised him to try the air of Bermudas —

‘That happy island where huge lemons grow,

And orange-trees, which golden fruit do hear,

Th’ Hesperian garden boasts of none so fair;

Where shining pearl, coral, and many a pound,

On the rich shore, of ambergris is found.

So sweet the air, so moderate the clime,

None sickly lives, or dies before the time**.’**

Were we to judge of the clime of the Summer Islands  
by Whitefield’s labours in them, Waller’s praise might be  
taken for literal truth; but Whitefield was an energetic  
invalid. The diary of his two months’ stay on the island  
is an agreeable renewal of that journal which he unfor-  
tunately ceased too soon to write. Its only remarkable  
difference from his general run of narrative is the half-  
amused way in which he records the wonder of the great  
men at his preaching without notes. A clergyman in-  
valid who could preach twice a day, and travel consider-  
able distances, was a great marvel, but a clergyman who  
used no ‘minutes’ in the pulpit was a greater. There  
was only one greater degree of marvel possible, and  
that would have been a clergyman preaching from notes  
to Kingswood colliers on Hannam Mount, to London  
rabble at Moorfields fair, to thirty thousand Scotchmen  
who were full of anxiety about their salvation, and  
holding them in rapt attention.

The following is the journal, somewhat abridged : —

13 The simplicity and plainness of the people, together with

the pleasant situation of the island, much delighted me. The  
Rev. Mr. Holiday, minister of Spanish Point, received me in a  
most affectionate and Christian manner, and begged I would

make his house my home. In the evening I expounded at the  
house of Mr. Savage, of Port Royal, which was very commo-  
dious, and which also he would have me make my home. I

went with Mr. Savage, in a boat lent us by Captain, to

the town of St. George, in order to pay our respects to the  
Governor. All along we had a most pleasant prospect of the  
other part of the island. One Mrs. Smith, of St. George’s,  
for whom I had a letter of recommendation from my dear  
old friend, Mr. Smith, of Charles Town, received me into her  
house. About noon, with one of the Council and Mr. Savage,  
I waited upon the Governor. He received us courteously, and  
invited us to dine with him and the council at a tavern. We  
accepted the invitation, and all behaved with great civility  
and respect. After the Governor rose from table, he desired,  
if I stayed in town on the Sunday, that I would dine with him  
at his own house.

‘Sunday, March 20.—Read prayers and preached twice this  
day, to what were esteemed here large auditories—in the  
morning at Spanish Point Church, and in the evening at  
Brackishpond Church, about two miles distant from each other.  
In the afternoon I spoke with greater freedom than in the  
morning, and I trust not altogether in vain. All were atten-  
tive; some wept. I dined with Colonel Butterfield, one of the  
council, and received several invitations to other gentlemen’s  
houses. May God bless and reward them, and incline them to  
open their heart to receive the Lord Jesus! Amen, and Amen!

‘Wednesday, March 23.—Dined with Captain Gibbs, and  
went from thence and expounded at the house of Captain F—le,  
at Hunbay, about two miles distant. The company was here  
also large, attentive, and affected. Our Lord gave me utterance;  
I expounded on the first part of the eighth chapter of Jeremiah.  
After lecture, Mr. Riddle, a counsellor, invited me to his house,  
as did Mr. Paul, an aged Presbyterian minister, to his pulpit;  
which I complied with upon condition the report was true that  
the Governor had served the ministers with an injunction that  
I should not preach in the churches.

‘Sunday, March 27.—Glory be to God! I hope this has been  
a profitable Sabbath to many souls; it has been a pleasant one  
to mine. Both morning and afternoon I preached to a large  
auditory for Bermudas, in Mr. Paul’s meeting-house, which, I

suppose, contains above four hundred. Abundance of Negroes,  
and many others, were in the vestry, porch, and about the  
house. The word seemed to be clothed with a convincing  
power, and to make its way into the hearts of the hearers.  
Between sermons I was entertained very civilly in a neigh-  
bouring house; Judge Bascome and three more of the council  
came thither; each gave me an invitation to his house. 0  
how does the Lord make way for a poor stranger in a strange  
land! After the second sermon I dined with Mr. Paul; and,  
in the evening, expounded to a very large company at Counsellor  
Riddle’s. My body was somewhat weak, but the Lord carried  
me through, and caused me to go to rest rejoicing. May I  
thus go to my grave, when my ceaseless, uninterrupted rest  
shall begin.

‘Thursday, March 31.—Dined on Tuesday at Colonel Cor-  
busier’s, and on Wednesday at Colonel Grilbert’s, both of the  
council, and found by what I could hear that some good had  
been done, and many prejudices removed. Who shall hinder,  
if God will work? Went to an island this afternoon called  
Ireland, upon which live a few families; and, to my surprise,  
found a great many gentlemen and other people, with my friend,  
Mr. Holiday, who came from different parts to hear me. Before  
I began preaching I went round to see a most remarkable cave,  
which very much displayed the exquisite workmanship of Him  
who in His strength setteth fast the mountains, and is girded  
about with power. Whilst I was in the cave, quite unex-  
pectedly, I turned and saw Counsellor Riddle, who with his son  
came to hear me; and whilst we were in the boat, told me  
that he had been with the Grovernor, who declared he had no  
personal prejudice against me, and wondered I did not come to  
town and preach there, for it was the desire of the people; and  
that any house in the town, the court-house not excepted, should  
be at my service. Thanks be to Grod for so much favour! If  
His cause requires it I shall have more. He knows my heart;  
I value the favour of man no further than as it makes room  
for the gospel, and gives me a larger scope to promote the  
glory of God. There being no capacious house upon the island,  
I preached for the first time in the open air; all heard very  
attentively, and it was very pleasant after sermon to see so  
many boats full of people returning from the worship of God.

I talked seriously to some in our own boat, and began to sing  
a psalm, in which they readily joined.

‘ Wednesday, April 6.—Preached yesterday at the house of  
Mr. Anthony Smith, of Baylis Bay, with a considerable degree  
of warmth, and rode afterwards to St. George’s, the only town  
on the island. The gentlemen of the town had sent me an  
invitation by Judge Bascome, and he with several others came  
to visit me at my lodgings, and informed me that the Grovernor  
desired to see mel About ten I waited upon his Excellency, who  
received me with great civility, and told me he had no objec-  
tion against my person or my principles, having never yet heard  
me, and he knew nothing in respect to my conduct in moral  
life that might prejudice him against me; but his instructions  
were to let none preach in the island, unless he had a written  
licence to preach somewhere in America or the West Indies;  
at the same time he acknowledged it was but a matter of mere  
form. I informed his Excellency that I had been regularly  
inducted to the parish of Savannah; that I was ordained  
priest by letters dimissory from my lord of London, and under  
no Church censure from his lordship; and would always read  
the Church prayers, if the clergy would give me the use of  
their churches. I added further, that a minister’s pulpit was  
looked upon as his freehold, and that I knew one clergyman  
who had denied his own diocesan the use of his pulpit. But I  
told his Excellency I was satisfied with the liberty he allowed  
me, and would not act contrary to his injunction. I then  
begged leave to be dismissed, because I was to preach at eleven  
o’clock. His Excellency said he intended to do himself the  
pleasure to hear me. At eleven the church bell rung, the  
church bible, prayer-book, and cushion were sent to the town-  
house. The Grovernor, several of the Council, the minister  
of the parish, and Assembly men, with a great number of  
townspeople assembled in great order. I was very sick, through  
a cold I catched last night; but I read the Church prayers—  
the first lesson was 1 Samuel xv.—and preached on these  
words, “Righteousness exalteth a nation.” Being weak and  
faint, and having much of the headache, I did not do that  
justice to my subject as I sometimes am enabled to do; but  
the Lord so helped me, that, as I found afterwards, the Go-  
vernor and the other gentlemen expressed their approbation,

and acknowledged they did not expect to be so well enter-  
tained. Not unto me, 0 Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy  
free grace be all the glory !”

‘After sermon, Dr. F bs and Mr. P----t, the collector,

came to me, and desired me to favour them and the gentlemen  
of the town with my company to dine with them. I accepted  
the invitation. The Governor, and the President, and Judge  
Bascome were there. All wondered at my speaking so freely  
and fluently without notes. The Grovernor asked me whether  
I used minutes; I answered, No. He said it was a great gift.  
At table his Excellency introduced something of religion by  
asking me the meaning of the word Hades. Several other  
things were started, about free-will, Adam’s fall, predestination,  
&c., to all which God enabled me to answer so pertinently,  
and taught me to mix the utile and dulce so together, that  
all at table seemed highly pleased, shook me by the hand,  
and invited me to their respective houses. The Governor, in  
particular, asked me to dine with him on the morrow; and

Dr. F---b, one of his particular intimates, invited me to

drink tea in the afternoon. I thanked all, returned proper  
respects, and went to my lodgings with some degree of thank-  
fulness for the assistance vouchsafed me, and abased before  
God at the consideration of my own unworthiness. In the  
afternoon, about five o’clock, I expounded the parable of the  
prodigal son to many people at a private house; and, in the  
evening, had liberty to speak freely and closely to those that  
supped with me. 0 that this may be the beginning of good  
gospel times to the inhabitants of this town! Lord, teach me  
to deal prudently with them, and cause them to melt under  
Thy word.

‘Friday, April 8. —Preached yesterday with great clearness  
and freedom to about fourscore people at a house on David’s  
island, over against St. George’s Town; went and·lay at Mr.  
Holiday’s, who came in a boat to fetch me; and this day I  
heard him preach and read prayers, after which I took the  
sacrament from him. Honest man, he would have had me  
administer and officiate; but I chose not to do it, lest I should

14 This is the only instance I remember of Whitefield’s saying anything

About the quality of his sermons. His mind was always concerned about   
the power with which they were preached; and the good they did.

bring him into trouble after my departure. However, in the  
afternoon, I preached at one Mr. Tod's, in the same parish, to  
a very large company indeed. The Lord was with me. My  
heart was warm; and what went from the heart, I trust went  
to the heart, for many were affected. 0 that they may be  
converted also! Then will it be a Glood Friday indeed to their  
souls.

‘Sunday, May 1.—This morning was a little sick, but I  
trust God gave us a happy beginning of the new month. I  
preached twice with power, especially in the morning, to a  
very great congregation in the meeting-house; and in the  
evening, having given previous notice, I preached about four  
miles distant, in the fields, to a large company of Negroes, and  
a number of white people who came to hear what I had to say  
to them. I believe in all there were near fifteen hundred  
people. As the sermon was intended for the Negroes, I gave  
the auditory warning that my discourse would be chiefly  
directed to them, and that I should endeavour to imitate the  
example of Elijah, who, when he was about to raise the child,  
contracted himself to its length. The Negroes seemed very  
sensible and attentive. When I asked them whether all of  
them did not desire to go to heaven? one of them, with a very  
audible voice, said, “Yes, sir.” This caused a little smiling,  
but, in general, everything was carried on with great decency;  
and I believe the Lord enabled me so to discourse as to touch  
the Negroes, and yet not to give them the least umbrage to  
slight or behave imperiously to their masters. If ever a  
minister in preaching need the wisdom of the serpent to be  
joined with the harmlessness of the dove, it must be when dis-  
coursing to Negroes. Vouchsafe me this favour, 0 God, for  
Thy dear Son’s sake!

‘Monday, May 2.—Upon inquiry I found that some of the  
Negroes did not like my preaching, because I told them of  
their cursing, swearing, thieving, and lying. One or two of  
the worst of them, as I was informed, went away. Some said

they would not go any more; they liked Mr. M----r better,

for he never told them of these things; and I said their  
hearts were as black as their faces. They expected, they said,  
to hear me speak against their masters. Blessed be God that  
I was directed not to say anything this first time to the

masters at all, though my text led to it. It might have been  
of bad consequence to tell them their duty, or charge them  
too roundly with the neglect of it, before their slaves. They  
would mind all I said to their masters, and, perhaps, nothing  
that I said to them. Everything is beautiful in its season.  
Lord, teach me always that due season, wherever I am called,  
to give either black or white a portion of Thy word! However,  
others of the poor creatures, I hear, were very thankful, and  
came home to their masters’ houses, saying that they would  
strive to sin no more. Poor hearts! These different accounts  
affected me; and, upon the whole, I could not help rejoicing  
to find that their consciences were so far awake.

‘Saturday, May 7.—In my conversation these two days with  
some of my friends, I was much diverted in hearing several  
things that passed among the poor Negroes since my preaching  
to them last Sunday. One of the women, it seems, said, “ that  
if the book I preached out of was the best book that ever was  
bought at and came out of London, she was sure it never had all  
in it which I spoke to the Negroes.” The old man who spoke out  
loud last Sunday, and said “Yes,” when I asked them whether  
all the Negroes would not go to heaven, being questioned by  
somebody why he spoke out so, answered, “That the gentle-  
man put the question once or twice to them, and the other  
fools had not the manners to make me any answer, till, at last,

I seemed to point to him, and he was ashamed that nobody  
should answer me, and therefore he did.” Another, wondering  
why I said, “Negroes had black hearts,” was answered by his  
black brother thus—“Ah, thou fool, dost thou not understand  
it? He means black with sin.” Two more, girls, were over-  
heard by their mistress talking about religion, and they said,

“They knew if they did not repent, they must be damned.”  
From all which I infer, that these Bermudas Negroes are  
more knowing than I supposed; that their consciences are  
awake and consequently prepared, in a good measure, for hear-  
ing the gospel preached unto them.

‘Sunday, May 15.—Praise the Lord, 0 my soul, and all that  
is within thee praise His holy name! This morning I preached  
my farewell sermon at Mr. Paul’s meeting-house; it was quite  
full, and, as the President said, above one hundred and fifty  
whites, besides blacks, were round the house. Attention sat

**JOURNAL IN BERMUDAS. 373**

on every face; and when I came to take my leave, oh! what a  
sweet unaffected weeping was there to he seen everywhere. I  
believe there were few dry eyes. The Negroes without doors,  
I heard, wept plentifully. My own heart was affected; and  
though I have parted from friends so often, yet I find every  
fresh parting almost unmans me, and very much affects my  
heart. Surely a great work is begun in some souls at Bermudas.  
Carry it on, 0 Lord; and if it be Thy will, send me to this  
dear people again! Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

‘Sunday, May 22.—Blessed be God, the little leaven thrown  
into the three measures of meal begins to ferment and work  
almost every day for the week past. I have conversed with  
souls loaded with a sense of their sins, and, as far as I can  
judge, really pricked to the heart. I preached only three  
times, but to almost three times larger auditories than usual.  
Indeed, the fields are white, ready unto harvest. God has  
been pleased to bless private visits. Go where I will, upon  
the least notice, houses are crowded, and the poor souls that  
follow are soon drenched in tears. This day I took, as it  
were, another farewell. As the ship did not sail, I preached  
at Somerset in the morning, to a large congregation in the  
fields, and expounded in the evening to as large a one at Mr.  
Harvey’s house, round which stood many hundreds of people.  
But in the morning and the evening how did the poor souls  
weep! The Lord seemed to be with me in a peculiar manner;  
and though I was ready to die with heat and straining, yet I  
was enabled to speak louder and with greater power, I think,  
than I have been before. Gifts and grace, especially in the  
evening, were both in exercise. After the service, when I lay  
down on the bed to rest, many came weeping bitterly around  
me, and took their last farewell. Though my body was very  
weak, yet my soul was full of comfort. It magnified the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour. Abundance of  
prayers and blessings were put up for my safe passage to  
England, and speedy return to Bermudas again. May they  
enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth! For, God willing,  
I intend visiting these dear people once more. In the mean-  
while, with all humility and thankfulness of heart, will I here,  
0 Lord, set up my Ebenezer; for hitherto surely Thou hast  
helped me! I cannot help thinking that I was led to this

island by a peculiar Providence. My dear friend, Mr. Smith  
of Charles Town, has been made especially instrumental thereto.  
Thanks be to the Lord for sending me hither. I have been re-  
ceived in a manner which I dared not expect, and have met  
with little, very little, opposition indeed. The inhabitants  
seem to be plain and open-hearted. They have also been  
open-handed. For they have loaded me with provisions for  
my sea store; and in the several parishes, by a large voluntary  
contribution, have raised me upwards of a hundred pounds  
sterling. This will pay a little of Bethesda’s debt, and enable  
me to make such a remittance to my dear yoke-fellow, as may  
keep her from being embarrassed, or too much beholden in my  
absence. Blessed be God for bringing me out of my embar-  
rassments by degrees! May the Lord reward all my bene-  
factors a thousandfold! I hear that what was given was given  
exceeding heartily, and people only lamented they could do no  
more.’

The voyage home was not to be without alarms, though  
it proved, on the whole, both rapid and pleasant. Those  
dreadful men-of-war were hanging about like hungry  
sharks; on the first day of the voyage one of them gave  
chase; and when the ‘Betsy’ approached the English  
Channel, where they swarmed, ‘a large French vessel  
shot twice at, and bore down upon us. We gave up all  
for gone.’ But some pang of compassion or panic of  
fear seized the Frenchman, and he turned about, and left  
his trembling prey unhurt.

Whitefield might not preach during this voyage, be-  
cause his health was so impaired. He says, ‘This may  
spare my lungs, but it grieves my heart. I long to be  
ashore, if it was for no other reason. Besides, I can do  
but little in respect to my writing. You may guess how  
it is when we have four gentlewomen in the cabin!’ How-  
ever, he did write, and finished his abridgement of  
Law’s ‘Serious Call,’ which he endeavoured to ‘gospelise.’  
His journals, too, were revised; and in reference to that  
work, he makes some remarks which will illustrate his

ingenuousness of temper. The revision had brought  
under his notice many things that his maturer judgment,  
and calmer, though not less earnest, spirit could not but  
disapprove of. ‘Alas! alas!’ he says, ‘in how many  
things have I judged and acted wrong. I have been too  
rash and hasty in giving characters, both of places and  
persons. Being fond of Scripture language, I have often  
used a style too Apostolical, and at the same time I have  
been too bitter in my zeal. Wild fire has been mixed  
with it; and I find that I frequently wrote and spoke in  
my own spirit, when I thought I was writing and speak-  
ing by the assistance of the Spirit of God. I have like-  
wise too much made inward impressions my rule of  
acting, and too soon and too explicitly published what  
had been better kept in longer, or told after my death.  
By these things I have given some wrong touches to  
God’s ark, and hurt the blessed cause I would defend,  
and also stirred up endless opposition. This has humbled  
me much since I have been on board, and made me  
think of a saying of Mr. Henry’s, “Joseph had more  
honesty than he had policy, or he never would have told  
his dreams.” At the same time, I cannot but bless and  
praise and magnify that good and gracious God, who  
filled me with so much of His holy fire, and carried me,  
a poor weak youth, through such a torrent both of popu-  
larity and contempt, and set so many seals to my un-  
worthy ministrations. I bless Him for ripening my  
judgment a little more, for giving me to see and confess,  
and I hope in some degree to correct and amend, some  
of my mistakes. I thank God for giving me grace to  
embark in such a blessed cause, and pray Him to give me  
strength to hold on and increase in zeal and love to the  
end.’

He had been made to prove the truth of one of his  
wise remarks, ‘God always makes use of strong passions  
for a great work.’ Strong passions have great dangers;

but he was now beginning to understand how to rule  
them with a stern hand. Less robust in health than  
when he last returned from America, and less disposed to  
contend with those who differed from him, but not a whit  
less zealous or self-sacrificing, only showing the first tints  
of mellow ripeness in all goodness, he stepped again upon  
English soil on July 6, 1748.

CHAPTER XI.

**July, 1748-1752.**

APPOINTED CHAPLAIN TO THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON A SLAVE OWNER.

The English newspapers, Whitefield learned on his arrival  
in England, had interred him as early as April in that  
year. From the people he found a welcome the very  
reverse of that which had pained him seven years before.  
Thousands received him with a joy that almost overcame  
both him and them. Their love and devotion to him  
humbled him to the dust. The damaged fortunes of the  
Tabernacle instantly revived, when he resumed the pulpit  
and the management of affairs. One church also, St.  
Bartholomew’s, was open to him; and there he preached  
to immense congregations, and assisted in administering  
the sacrament to a thousand communicants. Moorfields  
was as white as ever to the harvest.

Many tender memories were awakened by the return  
home; and his affectionate heart yearned towards his family  
and his friends. Though his mother had remained silent  
during all his long absence, and he had vainly entreated a  
letter from her, one of his first acts was to remember her,  
and announce by a letter his arrival. A kindly greeting  
was sent to Wesley. Hervey, one of Whitefield’s con-  
verts, the author of ‘Meditations among the Tombs,’ was  
complimented on his appearance as an author, and en-  
couraged to persevere, because his writings were so  
adapted to the taste of the polite world. Times have  
greatly changed since then, and taste too. Thus he tried  
to keep his place in hearts that had once received him.

An unexpected call was made upon him on the occa-  
sion of this return. Howel Harris had instructions to  
take him, as soon as he landed, to the house of the  
Countess of Huntingdon, at Chelsea. That remarkable  
woman was already well acquainted with the power of  
his oratory over popular assemblies, for she had often  
seen and felt it; now she wanted to see what it could  
avail in her drawing-room upon the hearts of high-born  
ladies and gentlemen. I cannot say what kind of an  
audience he had when he preached in her house the first  
two times, but after the second service, the Countess  
wrote to inform him that several of the nobility wished  
to hear him, if he would come again. In a few days a  
brilliant circle was gathered around him; and he spoke  
to them with all his usual unaffected earnestness and  
natural gracefulness, while they listened with attention  
and some degree of emotion. The Earl of Chesterfield  
thanked him and paid him one of his studied, high-  
mannered compliments at the close: ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘I will  
not tell you what I shall tell others, how I approve of  
you.’ Bolingbroke was afterwards prevailed upon to  
come; ‘he sat like an archbishop;’ and at the conclusion  
condescended to assure Whitefield that he had done  
great justice to the Divine attributes in his discourse.  
Hume, also, became an admirer of this eloquence, which  
had a charm for colliers and peers; in his opinion White-  
field was the most ingenious preacher he had ever heard;  
it was worth going twenty miles to hear him. He gives  
a remarkable instance of the effect with which Whitefield  
once employed apostrophe, not, of course, in the drawing-  
room at Chelsea. ‘Once, after a solemn pause, he thus  
addressed his audience:—“The attendant angel is just  
about to leave the threshold of this sanctuary, and ascend  
to heaven. And shall he ascend, and not bear with him  
the news of one sinner, among all this multitude, re-  
claimed from the error of his way?” To give the greater

effect to this exclamation, Whitefield stamped with his  
foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried  
aloud, “Stop, Grabriel, stop, ere you enter the sacred  
portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner  
converted to God.” This address was accompanied with  
such animated, yet natural, action, that it surpassed any-  
thing I ever saw or heard in any other preacher.’

Within a fortnight, the Countess added his name to  
the number of her chaplains, of whom Romaine was the  
first.[[12]](#footnote-12)

This work among the nobility will shortly demand  
attention again; and in the meantime, we notice, in few  
words, that, besides a flying visit to Wales this autumn,  
he paid a third visit to Scotland; where he had to mourn  
the death of many of his foremost friends, and endure  
the usual ecclesiastical torment about church government.  
Two Synods—Glasgow and Perth—and a Presbytery—  
Edinburgh—wrangled, or as they thought, had a holy  
contending, about him, whether ministers should be pro-  
hibited or discouraged from employing him. ‘The more  
I was blackened,’ he says, ‘the more the Redeemer com-  
forted me.’ At Glasgow, common sense and Christian  
feeling triumphed by a majority of fourteen out of forty.

The hearts of the multitude responded to him as be-  
fore; and his visit gave him great cause for joy and  
thankfulness.

One symptom began to show itself on his return,  
which was premonitory of sad mischief. When he  
went into Scotland, and began to preach, he suffered

from a very severe hoarseness; and when he reached  
Topcliff, on his way back, he wrote to a friend, ‘Though  
I do not preach, yet I hope I am preparing for it.  
Reading, prayer, and meditation are three necessary  
ingredients. Riding, and getting proper rest have re-  
cruited me; but I am apt to believe that I have strained  
myself inwardly. I feel sensible pain in my breath.  
But no matter; it is for a good Master, who bore inex-  
pressible pain for me.’ That pain was to become a  
grievous burden through many years of incredible labour.  
It was too late now to take the prudential measures  
which he felt were necessary even before he started for  
Scotland.

As soon as he reached London, November 10, Lady  
Huntingdon came to town, and made arrangements for  
him to preach in her house to ‘the great and noble.’  
As her name and his become inseparably associated from  
this time forward to the end of his life, it is time to  
indicate her religious position. Lady Selina Shirley was  
born on August 24, 1707—seven years before Whitefield  
—and was married to Theophilus, ninth Earl of Hunting-  
don, on June 3, 1728. She entered heartily into the  
pleasures and duties of her high station, was often at  
court, took a lively interest in politics, and cared for the  
poor on her husband’s estate. She determined to win  
the favour of the Almighty and everlasting life simply by  
her attention to moral maxims, without any reference  
to our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone is life. It  
happened, however, that Lady Magaret Hastings, one  
of her husband’s sisters, came under the influence of  
those new doctrines which were winning such remarkable  
triumphs; and not only so, she became an earnest and  
affectionate teacher of them to her family and friends.  
Among other things she one day made a remark to the  
Countess which produced a deep impression; it was this,  
‘That since she had known and believed in the Lord

Jesus Christ for life and salvation, she had been as happy  
as an angel.’ The Countess knew that she herself could  
pretend to no such joy. The thought haunted her, and  
made her resolve to live a more religious life, which,  
according to her notions, was to multiply her good works  
and increase her austerities. This brought her no relief.  
A dangerous illness then fell upon her; she was brought  
nigh to death; the prospect was terrible; her conscience  
was restless; and no remembrance of her almsgivings  
and fastings could calm it. Then Lady Margaret’s words  
came back into her mind with fresh meaning and force;  
and she learned that Jesus Christ is our life and our sal-  
vation. Her illness left her, and she arose to enter upon  
a career as remarkable as that of any peeress of England.

The change was soon manifest; nor were court beauties,  
such as the Duchess of Buckingham, well pleased to see  
it. They thought that the Earl might very properly  
exert his authority to unconvert her; for it was not to  
be borne that the Methodists should gain a countess.  
The Earl did not care to undertake the task, but thought  
that a conversation with his former tutor, Bishop Benson,  
might do her good, and accordingly recommended her to  
see his lordship. The bishop came, but to a much harder  
task than he had anticipated. Turning to the Scriptures,  
to the articles and the homilies, the neophyte preached  
to him his duties in a style not familiar to bishops’ ears:  
she would not relax her devotion; he must increase his.  
The kind man was ruffled, and was departing in haste,  
and in anger at having ever laid hands on Whitefield,  
whom he blamed for the conversion of the Countess, when  
her ladyship said in her own firm way, ‘My lord! mark  
my words: when you are on your dying bed, that will  
be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with  
complacence.’

The Earl of Huntingdon, who rather yielded to his  
wife’s religious zeal than toned it down to harmonise with

his colder feelings, died on October 13, 1746, leaving  
the Countess in command of immense wealth, and free to  
carry out her wishes without interference from anyone.  
Everything favoured her assumption of that position  
which she was soon to gain, and towards which she took  
her first decisive step, when, in 1748, she appointed  
Whitefield her chaplain. Liberal to profusion in her  
gifts, arbitrary in temper, Calvinistic in creed, consum-  
mate in administrative ability, devout in spirit, and  
thoroughly consecrated to the glory of Christ, she was  
unmistakably the proper leader of the Calvinistic side  
of the Methodist body. Whitefield might be its great  
preacher, but he could not, and cared not to form a  
party. The Countess must form any organisation that  
might be required.

And how did Whitefield bear all this strange change  
of circumstances? I wish I could say that he bore it as  
well as he took Adam Gib’s pamphlet, or the pelting at  
Moorfields. View it from any standpoint, still his manner  
towards the Countess does not look manly and dignified.  
That he never resigned his independence, and that he  
never bore any of that arbitrariness which some ministers  
revolted against, some endured, and others treated with  
good-tempered indifference, is certain; but he did use a  
strain of address to his new friend which is most painful  
to read. He was, at this time, abandoning some of his  
apostolical language: pity that he should have compen-  
sated himself by fixing on the title, ‘elect lady,’ and  
using it till his death, as his description of the good  
Countess. He used to advise his friends ‘to be servant-  
like, but not servile; ’ pity that in this case he did not  
observe the distinction with due care. Yet there are  
many allowances to be made, and it is only just to him  
to keep them in mind. His boyhood and his youth had  
been spent in service which, we may easily believe, left  
some impression both on his mind and his manner; the

first in waiting upon customers at a common bar; the  
second in attending to the wants of young men whom  
he ought to have met as their equal, if their polished  
manners and independent bearing were to be of service to  
him; whereas these advantages may have made him feel  
his own disadvantages all the more deeply, and caused  
him to use a more deferential tone than was quite healthy  
for his manliness. A far deeper reason—the reason, in  
fact—lay in his humble opinion of himself, which was  
rooted in his intense religiousness. None was of poorer  
spirit; none more freely accounted himself the servant  
of all; none was filled with more gratitude and wonder,  
when the least kindness was shown him by the humblest  
person. He thought that he ought to serve everyone,  
carry their burdens, and weep for their losses; but never  
seemed to think that his brother was under the same  
obligation to him. He was honoured, privileged, if any  
one would let him serve him. Throughout the whole of  
his life he never thought himself a person of any con-  
sequence, or prided himself on his unrivalled powers:  
all was enjoyed and used with the simplicity of a little  
child. The slightest attention to his wants, even if paid  
by a Negro, would evoke boundless gratitude, which he  
always expressed in the warmest terms. It was no un-  
common thing for him to be filled with such mean  
thoughts of himself as to make him surprised that the  
crowds did not stone him. Many a time he said that he  
could wash Wesley’s feet. The disagreeable parts of the  
following letter are due to anything but vanity, or I have  
misread him in every position in fife, as well as in this,  
among the nobility. Besides, it should never be for-  
gotten, that he used as much plainness of speech on  
religious subjects with the rich as with the poor—and his  
plainness was very plain indeed.

1 August 21, 1748.

2 Honoured Madam,—\*I received your ladyship’s letter late  
last night, and write this to inform your ladyship that I am

quite willing to comply with your invitation. As I am to  
preach, God willing, at St. Bartholomew’s, on Wednesday  
evening, I will wait upon your ladyship the next morning, and  
spend the whole day at Chelsea. Blessed he God that the rich  
and great begin to have an hearing ear. I think it is a good  
sign that our Lord intends to give to some at least an obedient  
heart. Surely your ladyship and Madam E. are only the first-  
fruits. May you increase and multiply! I believe you will.  
How wonderfully does our Redeemer deal with souls! If they will  
hear the gospel only under a ceiled roof, ministers shall be sent  
to them there. If only in a church, or a field, they shall have  
it there. A word in the lesson, when I was last at your lady-  
ship’s struck me—“Paul preached privately to those that were  
of reputation.” This must be the way, I presume, of dealing  
with the nobility who yet know not the Lord. 0 that I may  
be enabled, when called upon to preach to any of them, so to  
preach as to win their souls to the blessed Jesus! I know that  
your ladyship will pray that it may be so. As for my poor  
prayers, such as they are, your ladyship hath them every day.  
That the blessed Jesus may make your ladyship happily instru-  
mental in bringing many of the noble and mighty to the saving  
knowledge of His eternal Self, and water your own soul every  
moment, is the continual request of, honoured madam,

‘Your ladyship’s most obliged, obedient, humble servant,

‘ GEORGE Whitefield.’

In a letter to Wesley, written a week later, he thus  
refers to the question of union: ‘What have you

thought about an union? I am afraid an external one  
is impracticable. I find by your sermons that we differ  
in principles more than I thought; and I believe we are  
upon two different plans. My attachment to America  
will not permit me to abide very long in England; conse-  
quently, I should but weave a Penelope’s web if I formed  
societies; and if I should form them I have not proper  
assistants to take care of them. I intend, therefore, to  
go about preaching the gospel to every creature. You,  
I suppose, are for settling societies everywhere: but  
more of this when we meet.’

The following are some of the ‘great and noble’ who  
came to the preaching in the drawing-room of the  
Countess of Huntingdon: — The Duchess of Argyll,  
Lady Betty Campbell, Bubb Doddington, George Sel-  
wyn, the Duchess of Montagu, Lady Cardigan, Lord  
Townshend, Charles Townshend, Mr. Lyttleton, Mr. Pitt,  
Lord North, Lord Sandwich. The doctrines which  
Whitefield taught found other believers besides the  
Countess. Lord St. John, half-brother of Bolingbroke,  
seems to have been a convert. His last words, spoken  
to the clergyman who attended him, were—‘To God I  
commit myself: I feel how unworthy I am; but He  
died to save sinners, and the prayer of my heart now  
to Him is, God be merciful to me a sinner.’ Lady Hunt-  
ingdon observes, in a letter to Whitefield, to whom she is  
recounting St. John’s last hours, ‘ This, my good friend,  
is the first-fruits of that plenteous harvest which I trust  
the great Husbandman will yet reap amongst the nobility  
of our land. Thus the great Lord of the harvest hath  
put honour on your ministry, and hath given my heart  
an encouraging token of the utility of our feeble efforts.  
Oh that He may crown them still more abundantly with  
His blessing! Some, I trust, are savingly awakened, while  
many are inquiring. My Lord Bolingbroke was much  
struck with his brother’s language in his last moments.  
I have not seen him since, but am told he feels deeply.  
Oh that the obdurate heart of this desperate infidel may  
yet be shook to its very centre; may his eyes be opened  
by the illuminating influence of divine truth, and may  
the Lord Jesus Christ be revealed to his heart as the  
hope of glory and immortal bliss hereafter! I tremble  
for his destiny: he is a singularly awful character; and  
I am fearfully alarmed lest that gospel which he so  
heartily despises, yet affects to reverence, should prove  
eventually the savour of death unto death to his im-  
mortal soul.’

Bolingbroke was only moved so far as to offer himself  
as a champion of the Calvinistic doctrines; not that he  
cared for them, but they had a philosophical side, and he  
would not object to stand as the philosopher of Calvin-  
istic Methodism! ‘You may command my pen when

you will,’ he said to the Countess; ‘it shall be drawn in  
your service. For, admitting the Bible to be true, I shall  
have little apprehension of maintaining the doctrines of  
predestination and grace against all your revilers.’ What  
would have been the issue of a contest between Wesley  
and his lordship on the five points?

The eccentric Lady Townshend was one of the first  
to admire Whitefield’s oratory; and probably she did so  
quite as much because such admiration was unusual  
among her friends as because the oratory was noble and  
commanding. When her freakish fancy pointed to an  
opposite course, she was equally ready to dislike and dis-  
parage her favourite. With equal facility could she turn  
Papist as Methodist; a cathedral or a tabernacle for her  
place of worship, it mattered not which, if she pleased her  
whim. Horace Walpole tells a characteristic story about  
her. ‘Have you heard,’ he says, ‘the great loss the  
Church of England has had? It is not avowed, but  
hear the evidence and judge. On Sunday last, as George  
Selwyn was strolling home to dinner, at half an hour  
after four, he saw my Lady Townshend’s coach stop at  
Carracioli’s chapel; he watched—saw her go in—her  
footman laughed—he followed; she went up to the  
altar, a woman brought her a cushion, she knelt, crossed  
herself, and prayed. He stole up and knelt by her—con-  
ceive her face, if you can, when she turned and found  
him close to her! In his most demure voice, he said,  
“Pray, madam, how long has your ladyship left the pale  
of our Church?” She looked furies, and made no answer.  
Next day he went to her, and she turned it off upon  
curiosity; but is anything more natural? No; she cer-

tainly means to go armed with every viaticum: the  
Church of England in one hand, Methodism in the other,  
and the Host in her mouth!’ Once Whitefield cherished  
some hope of her conversion, through a serious illness  
which she had; and as late as 1775 Lady Huntingdon  
wrote to her, when she was again in a similar condition,  
and evidently indulged in hopes such as had previously  
buoyed Whitefield up. She seemed to prefer Methodism  
for times of trial.

The Countess of Suffolk was neither so calmly im-  
partial as Bolingbroke nor so obligingly changeful as  
Lady Townshend. Her circumstances—the loss of her  
husband and her only son—at the time that Lady Guild-  
ford took her to the Countess’s to hear the Methodist  
chaplain, might have been thought favourable to her  
acceptance of the truths of religion; but she was stung  
and enraged by every word which Whitefield, ignorant  
both of her presence and her condition, said. Her self-  
control gave way as soon as he withdrew, at the close of  
the service. She then abused Lady Huntingdon to her  
face, in the presence of the illustrious congregation, and  
‘denounced the sermon as a deliberate attack upon her-  
self.’ Her relatives who were present—Lady Betty  
Germain, Lady Eleanor Bertie, and the Duchess Dowager  
of Ancaster—attempted in vain alternately to pacify her,  
by explaining to her that she was mistaken, and to si-  
lence her by command. Thinking herself insulted, she  
would not for some time hear reason; but at length she  
was prevailed upon to apologise, though only with a bad  
grace, to Lady Huntingdon for her rudeness. She was  
never seen again among Whitefield’s hearers, nor did she  
ever really forgive the Countess; on her death-bed she  
denied the Countess permission to come and speak with  
her.

Lady Fanny Shirley, an aunt of Lady Huntingdon,  
the friend and neighbour of Pope, and the rival of Lady

Mary Wortley Montague, became, through the efforts of  
the Countess Helitz, a conspicuous member of the aristo-  
cratic Methodist circle, and had her change of mind duly  
chronicled in the gossiping letters of Walpole. ‘If you  
ever think of returning to England,’ he writes to Sir  
Horace Mann, ‘as I hope it will be long first, you must  
prepare yourself with Methodism. I really believe by  
that time it will be necessary; this sect increases as fast  
as almost ever any religious nonsense did. Lady Eanny  
Shirley has chosen this way of bestowing the dregs of  
her beauty; and Mr. Lyttleton is very near making the  
same sacrifice of the dregs of all those various characters  
that he has worn. The Methodists love your big sinners,  
as proper subjects to work upon—and indeed they have a  
plentiful harvest.’

There can be no doubt that Walpole spoke the truth,  
both about the rapid increase of Methodism and its love  
for ‘big sinners;’ and some one who shared his alarm at  
its advance, through the popularity and success of White-  
field, even ventured to suggest to the king that the  
preacher should be restrained. ‘I believe the best way,’  
said the king, ‘will be to make a bishop of him!’

The Countess of Huntingdon told Mr. Barry, B.A., a  
story which confirms the sneer about big sinners. He  
reports it thus:—‘Some ladies called one Saturday morn-  
ing to pay a visit to Lady Huntingdon, and during the  
visit her ladyship inquired of them if they had ever heard  
Mr. Whitefield preach. Upon being answered in the  
negative, she said, I wish you would hear him; he is to  
preach to-morrow evening at such a church or chapel,  
the name of which the writer forgets—nor is it material.  
They promised her ladyship they would certainly attend.  
They ivere as good as their word; and upon calling on  
the Monday morning on her ladyship, she anxiously in-  
quired if they had heard Mr. Whitefield on the previous  
evening, and how they liked him. The reply was, “Oh,

my lady, of all the preachers we ever heard, he is the  
most strange and unaccountable. Among other prepos-  
terous things—would your ladyship believe it?—he de-  
clared that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners  
that He did not object to receive even the devil’s cast-  
aways. How, my lady, did you ever hear of such a  
thing since you were born?” To which her ladyship  
made the following reply—“There is something, I ac-  
knowledge, a little singular in the invitation, and I do not  
recollect to have ever met with it before ; but as Mr.  
Whitefield is below in the parlour, we’ll have him up,  
and let him answer for himself.” Upon his coming up  
into the drawing-room, Lady Huntingdon said—“Mr.  
Whitefield, these ladies have been preferring a very  
heavy charge against you, and I thought it best that you  
should come up and defend yourself. They say that in  
your sermon last evening, in speaking of the willingness  
of Jesus Christ to receive sinners, you expressed yourself  
in the following terms: That so ready was Christ to re-  
ceive sinners who came to Him, that he was willing to  
receive even the devil’s castaways,” Mr. Whitefield imme-  
diately replied, “I certainly, my lady, must plead guilty  
to the charge; whether I did what was right or other-  
wise, your ladyship shall judge from the following cir-  
cumstance. Did your ladyship notice, about half an hour  
ago, a very modest single rap at the door? It was given  
by a poor, miserable-looking aged female, who requested  
to speak with me. I desired her to be shown into the  
parlour, when she accosted me in the following manner:  
—“I believe, sir, you preached last evening at such a  
chapel?” “Yes, I did.” “Ah, sir, I was accidentally  
passing the door of that chapel, and hearing the voice of  
some one preaching, I did what I have never been in the  
habit of doing—I went in; and one of the first things I  
heard you say was, that Jesus Christ was so willing to  
receive sinners, that he did not object to receiving the

devil’s castaways. Now, sir, I have been on the town  
for many years, and am so worn out in his service, that I  
think I may with truth be called one of the devil’s cast-  
aways. Do you think, sir, that Jesus Christ would receive  
me?” Mr. Whitefield assured her there was no doubt of  
it, if she was but willing to go to Him. From the sequel,  
it appeared that it was the case, and that it ended in the  
sound conversion of this poor creature; and Lady Hunt-  
ingdon was assured from most respectable authority, that  
the woman left a very charming testimony behind her  
that, though her sins had been of a crimson hue, the  
atoning blood of Christ had washed them white as snow.’

Whitefield’s labours among the rich were relieved by  
the more congenial work of visiting some of the provin-  
cial towns. From Gloucester he wrote a letter to the  
Trustees of Georgia, which is painful to read, for its de-  
fence of slavery; nay, worse than that, its entreaty that  
slavery might be introduced where it did not already  
exist. The profit of the slave-trade was now becoming  
so great that all who had any interest in its extension  
were clamouring to have restrictions removed. The  
mercenary spirit was blind and deaf to the griefs and  
wrongs of the poor Africans; and it is deplorable that  
Whitefield, one of the most generous and self-denying of  
men, should have been affected with the popular tone of  
thought and feeling. It was often said, when slavery  
was the domestic institution of America, that contact with  
it too frequently dulled conscience, and turned anti-  
slavery men into pro-slavery men; and from that letter  
which, under the first burst of indignation at the sight of  
shameful cruelties, Whitefield wrote to the inhabitants of  
South Carolina, it would seem that he was no exception  
to the rule. His letter to the Trustees protests his interest  
in the welfare of the colony; but could he have seen the  
result of his policy, as it is now to be traced, in the blood  
and shame of the Negro, through many weary years, he

would have counted himself Georgia’s worst enemy. His  
name has an unhappy distinction as the most famous of  
all who tried to turn Georgia into a Slave State. The  
following is his letter:—

‘*To the Honourable Trustees of Georgia*.

‘ Gloucester, December 6,1748.

‘Honoured gentlemen,—Not want of respect, but a suspicion  
that my letters would not he acceptable, has been the occasion  
of my not writing to you these four years last past. I am sen-  
sible that in some of my former letters, through hurry of  
business, want of more experience, and in all probability too  
great an opinion of my sufficiency, I expressed myself in too  
strong, and sometimes unbecoming, terms. For this I desire  
to be humbled before God and man, knowing that, Peter like,  
by a misguided zeal, I have cut off, as it were, those ears which  
otherwise might have been open to what I had to offer. How-  
ever, I can assure you, honoured gentlemen, to the best of my  
knowledge I have acted a disinterested part, and, notwith-  
standing my manifold mistakes and imprudence, I have simply  
aimed at God’s glory and the good of mankind. This principle  
drew me first to Georgia; this, and this alone, induced me to  
begin and carry on the scheme of the Orphan House; and this,  
honoured gentlemen, excites me to trouble you with the present  
lines.

‘I need not inform you, honoured gentlemen, how the colony  
of Georgia has been declining for these many years last past,  
and at what great disadvantages I have maintained a large  
family in that wilderness, through the providence of a good  
and gracious God. Upwards of five thousand pounds have been  
expended in that undertaking, and yet very little proficiency  
made in the cultivation of my tract of land, and that entirely  
owing to the necessity I lay under of making use of white  
hands. Had a Negro been allowed, I should now have had a  
sufficiency to support a great many orphans, without expending  
"above half the sum which hath been laid out. An unwilling-  
ness" to let so good a design drop, and having a rational convic-  
tion that it must necessarily, if some other method was not  
fixed upon to prevent it,—these two considerations, honoured

gentlemen, prevailed on me, about two years ago, through the  
bounty of my good friends, to purchase a plantation in South  
Carolina, where Negroes are allowed. Blessed be God, this  
plantation hath succeeded; and though at present I have only  
eight working hands, yet in all probability there will be more  
raised in one year, and with a quarter the expense, than has  
been produced at Bethesda for several years last past. This  
confirms me in the opinion I have entertained for a long time,  
that Georgia never can or will be a flourishing province with-  
out Negroes are allowed. But, notwithstanding my private  
judgment, I am determined that not one of mine shall ever be  
allowed to work at the Orphan House till I can do it in a  
legal manner, and by the approbation of the honourable  
Trustees. My chief end in writing this is to inform you,  
honourable gentlemen, of the matter of fact, and to let you  
know that I am as willing as ever to do all I can for Georgia  
and the Orphan House, if either a limited use of Negroes is  
approved of, or some other indented servants sent over. If not,  
I cannot promise to keep any large family, or cultivate the  
plantation in any considerable manner. My strength must  
necessarily be taken to the other side. I would also further  
recommend it to your consideration, honourable gentlemen,  
whether or not, as the Orphan House- was and is intended for a  
charitable purpose, it ought not to be exempted from all quit-  
rents and public taxes, as I believe is customary universally  
for such institutions to be. And as most of the land on which  
the Orphan House is built is good for little, I would humbly  
inquire whether I may not have a grant for five hundred more  
acres that are not taken up, somewhere near the Orphan House?  
My intention is, if you, honourable gentlemen, are pleased to  
put the colony upon another footing—I mean in respect to the  
permission of a limited use of Negroes—to make the Orphan  
House not only a receptacle for fatherless children, but also a  
place of literature and academical studies. Such a place is  
much wanted in the southern parts of America, and, if con-  
ducted in a proper manner, must necessarily be of great service  
to any colony. I can easily procure proper persons to embark  
in such a cause, and I do not know but several families would  
go over, supposing I could give them a probable prospect of a  
support upon their honest industry. I could say more, but I

fear I have been already too prolix. I humbly recommend  
what has been urged to your consideration, and beg leave to  
subscribe myself, honourable gentlemen,

‘Your most obedient, humble servant,

‘George Whitefield.’

Whitefield is seen, at the end of 1748, in kindly and  
close communion with the two foremost Nonconformists  
of his day. On November 25, he called at Lady Abney’s  
to see Dr. Watts, who described himself as ‘a wait-  
ing servant of Christ.’ He helped to raise the vener-  
able man to take some medicine; and within half an  
hour of his departure from the house, the ‘servant’ had  
ceased his ‘waiting,’ and entered into ‘the joy of his  
Lord.’

Whitefield’s letter to Doddridge, on December 21,  
is full of brotherly sympathy with the doctor in his  
troubles through the Moravians, who had disturbed his  
congregation. Whitefield had felt all the annoyance of  
having his work damaged and broken by meddling men,  
and could thoroughly enter into Doddridge’s feelings. He  
speaks as a chastened, humbled, submissive, and chari-  
tably-minded man, not blaming his troublers more than  
he condemns himself, and gratefully acknowledging the  
personal benefit that their conduct, under the divine bless-  
ing, had been to him. It is with touching humility that  
he refers to those dark days when he came from America   
and found his converts turned against him. He says—

‘The Moravians first divided my family, then my parish  
at Georgia, and after that the societies which, under God,

I was an instrument of gathering. I suppose not less  
than four hundred, through their practices, have left the  
Tabernacle. But I have been forsaken other ways. I  
have not had above an hundred to hear me where I had  
twenty thousand, and hundreds now assemble within a  
quarter of a mile of me who never come to see or speak  
to me, though they must own at the great day that I

was their spiritual father. All this I find but little enough  
to teach me to cease from man, and to wean me from  
that too great fondness which spiritual fathers are apt to  
have for their spiritual children.’

It is not less pleasant to find Whitefield and his old tutor  
together again at Bristol. Dr. B was now a prebend-

ary, and when Whitefield called upon him he received him  
gladly. They talked about the Church and Methodism;  
and Whitefield told him that his judgment was riper than  
it had been at the outset of his career, and that as fast as  
he found out his faults he should be glad to acknowledge  
them. The prebendary replied that as Whitefield grew  
moderate, the offence of the bishops and other dignitaries  
would wear away—a change which Whitefield would  
have hailed with satisfaction, though he was content to  
be under displeasure; his great anxiety was to act an  
honest part, and to keep from ‘trimming.’ This is the  
last glimpse we shall get of the kindly man, who did  
Whitefield no slight service by his fatherly oversight,  
when misguided earnestness and anxiety in religion might  
have ruined Whitefield’s energies for life.

The winter’s work among the nobility damaged White-  
field’s health not a little. He was glad to get away into  
the west, to revisit some of his former places of labour  
— Bristol, Plymouth, Exeter, Gloucester. Between  
January 28 and March 10, 1749, this feeble, suffer-  
ing man performed a journey of six hundred miles,  
preaching as frequently as he ever had done in the days  
of health, and, notwithstanding the unseasonable time of  
the year for open-air services, often in the open air. His  
life was a faithful embodiment of some of his happy say-  
ings; such as, ‘I do not preach for life, but from life;’

‘Like a pure crystal, I would transmit all the glory that  
God is pleased to pour upon me, and never claim as my  
own what is His sole property.’ It was with much reluc-  
tance that he thought of turning from his beloved

‘ranging’ to renew his work in the Countess’s house. The  
same diffidence which made him shrink from encounter-  
ing the shocks of life, when he approached the American  
coast on his second visit to America, made him write to  
his friend Hervey—‘Lady Huntingdon writes me word,  
that “the prospect of doing good at my return to London  
is very encouraging.” Thither I am now bound. I go  
with fear and trembling, knowing how difficult it is to  
speak to the great so as to win them to Jesus Christ. I  
am sometimes ready to say, Lord, I pray Thee have me  
excused, and send by whom Thou wilt send. But divine  
grace is sufficient for me. My dear brother, fail not to  
pray for me, that I may hold on and hold out to the end,  
and in prosperity and adversity press forward with an  
even, cheerful, meek, and lowly mind towards the mark,  
for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.’ In  
quite the same spirit he says to the same friend, a few  
weeks later, ‘You judge right when you say, it is your  
opinion that I do not want to make a sect, or set myself  
at the head of a party. No; let the name of Whitefield  
die, so that the cause of Jesus Christ may live. I have  
seen enough of popularity to be sick of it; and did not  
the interest of my blessed Master require my appearing  
in public, the world should hear but little of me hence-  
forward.’ There is a racy humour in some of his letters  
which makes his wisdom all the more palatable. To one  
brother minister he says, ‘I am glad your children grow  
so fast; they become fathers soon; I wish some may not  
prove dwarfs at last. A word to the wise is sufficient.  
I have always found awakening times like spring times:  
many blossoms, but not always so much fruit. But go  
on, my dear man, and in the strength of the Lord you  
shall do valiantly.’

Thus he entered upon his weekly duty among the rich,  
not caring for fame, and not seeking it, as humble a clergy-  
man as ministered in any English church; not sanguine

about the harvest of his new field, but still as eager to do  
his best as when he preached his first sermon, success and  
failure counting nothing with him in determining what  
he should attempt. Woe was unto him if he preached  
not the gospel; to the will of his Lord, and that only,  
did he look.

But other work than preaching demanded his atten-  
tion; for it was no idle word which he spoke to his old  
tutor, when he told him that he would acknowledge his  
faults as fast as he found them out. The Bishop of  
Exeter, Dr. Lavington, furnished him with a fine oppor-  
tunity of retracting many blameworthy words and deeds;  
and no part of his life is more remarkable than this for  
its exhibition of frankness and humility. The bishop  
wrote, in 1747, when Whitefield was absent in America,  
a treatise on ‘The Enthusiasm of the Methodists and  
Papists,’ in which he attempted to draw a parallel be-  
tween the ancient Church and the new sect, or rather the  
new men of his own Church. The subject was tempting  
to an enemy; and the argument adopted valid, if every-  
thing belonging to Popery be evil. The syllogism was—  
Everything belonging to Popery is bad; the enthusiasm  
of the Methodists and the Papists is the same; therefore  
the enthusiasm of the Methodists is bad. The identity of  
Methodist and Popish enthusiasm is traced with much  
patience. Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits are shown  
to be the true forerunners of Whitefield and Wesley! For,  
first—‘For the better advancement of their purposes, both  
commonly begin their adventures with field preaching!’  
It is unquestionable that Whitefield said, that he never  
was more acceptable to his Master than when he was  
standing to teach in the open fields; and ‘Peter of  
Verona, mirror of sanctity, of The holy order of Friars  
Preachers, had’—says Ribadeneira, in the ‘Lives of the  
Saints’—‘a divine talent in preaching; neither churches,  
nor streets, nor market-places, could contain the great

concourse that resorted to hear his sermons. He was the  
hammer and thunderbolt to break and crush heretics, and  
made inquisitor to punish and persecute them.’ Secondly,  
‘At first the Methodists, as a show of humility, made it  
a point not to ride, either on horseback or in a coach;  
though occasionally, and for conveniency sake, they have  
thought proper to deviate from their rule. “I could no  
longer,” says Mr. Whitefield, I walk on foot, as usual,  
but was constrained to go in a coach, to avoid the ho-  
sannas of the multitude.” Very profane, unless it be a  
false print for huzzas. So was it one of St. Francis’ rules  
“ never to tide, but only in cases of manifest necessity or  
infirmity.” ’Thirdly, ‘How good and saintlike it is to  
go dirty, ragged, and slovenly! And how piously did  
Mr. Whitefield, therefore, take care of the outward man!  
“My apparel was mean; I thought it unbecoming a peni-  
tent to have powdered hair; I wore woollen gloves, a  
patched gown, and dirty shoes.” Thus his predecessor  
in saintship, “Ignatius, loved to appear abroad with old  
dirty shoes, used no comb, let his hair clot, and would  
never pare his nails.” A certain Jesuit was so holy that  
he had a hundred and fifty patches upon his breeches,  
and proportionally on his other garments.’ Fourthly,  
‘Of this nature, likewise, is their utter condemnation of all  
recreation and diversion, in every kind and degree.  
Mr. Whitefield, in his letter from New Brunswick, de-  
clares, “That no recreations, considered as such, can be  
innocent. I now began to attack the devil in his strong-  
est holds, and bore testimony against the detestable diver-  
sions of this generation.” And what says the Papist?  
“St. Ignatius, by declaiming against cards and dice, pre-  
vailed upon a whole town to throw them into the river;  
and there was no more play there for three years.”’

Fifthly, ‘Another bait to catch admirers, and very com-  
mon among enthusiasts, is a restless impatience and thirst  
of travelling, and undertaking dangerous voyages, for the

conversion of infidels, together with a declared contempt  
of all dangers, pains, and sufferings. They must desire,  
love, and pray for ill-usage, persecution, martyrdom,  
death, and hell (? purgatory). Accordingly, our itinerant  
Methodists are fond of expressing their zeal on this ac-  
count. Mr. Whitefield says, “When letters came from  
Messrs. Wesleys, and Ingham their fellow-labourer, their  
accounts fired my soul, made me even long to go abroad  
for God too; though too weak in body, I felt at times  
such a strong attraction in my soul towards Georgia,  
that I thought it almost irresistible.” All this only shows  
the natural unsettled humour, the rapid motion of enthu-  
siastic heads. “0 how many times have the nuns seen  
their sister of Pazzi, drunk with zeal for the conversion  
of sinners and infidels, run about the cloisters and gar-  
dens, and other places, bemoaning that she was not a  
man, to go abroad, and gain erring souls!” The wind-  
mill is in all them heads.’ Sixthly, ‘I shall farther con-  
sider some of the circumstances attending their new  
ministration. What first occurs to my mind is the boasted  
success of their preaching, proved by the numbers of their  
followers and converts. But let us hear themselves. Mr.  
Whitefield says, “Thousands and ten thousands follow  
us : the fire is kindled, and I know that all the devils in  
hell shall not be able to quench it.” This is a specimen  
of them success in conversions. And yet we can match  
them among their elder brethren. “St. Anthony had  
such a power over men and women that he converted all  
sorts of sinners, even usurers and common strumpets.”’  
Seventhly, ‘There is, however, reason to believe that the  
good work of Popery is carrying on, from some of their  
tenets and practices, over and above them stringing one  
extravagance upon another, in conformity with the Papal  
fanatics. To this purpose it might be remarked—what  
is manifestly true—that in their several answers and  
defences a strain of Jesuitical sophistry, artifice and craft,

evasion, reserve, equivocation, and prevarication, is of  
constant use. But to waive this. “How often,” says  
Mr. Whitefield, “at the early sacraments have we seen  
Jesus Christ crucified, and evidently set forth before us!”  
Upon this, I asked, whether this did not encourage the  
notion of a real corporal presence in the sacrifice of the  
mass, and was not as good an argument for transubstan-  
tiation as the several fieshy appearances produced by the  
Papists?’ Eighthly, Methodists, Roman Catholics, and  
ancient pagans, are all of the same seed; for, ‘Seeing  
how artful the Methodists are in making diseases to be  
the workings of God’s Spirit and signs of grace and  
sanctity, we may conclude that all their holinesses, Mr.  
Wesley, Mr. Whitefield, and the Pope, have embraced the  
religion of their pagan predecessors, who—as we read  
in divers authors—consecrated most kinds of distempers  
of the body and affections of the mind, erected temples  
and altars to fevers, paleness, madness, and death, to  
laughter, lust, contumely, impudence, and calumny.’  
Ninthly, as proof that Bishop Lavington is not jesting  
when he pretends to find the worst faults of Popery in  
Methodism, and that the parallel which he is trying to  
run between the enthusiasm of both can be carried out  
to the last, he even, after putting Wesley in the same  
category with Simon Magus, as a sorcerer and bewitcher  
of the people, shrinks not from charging the obscenities  
of the heathen mysteries upon the people whom he would  
defame. By some oversight, he did not mark that many  
women ‘who were sinners’ had been touched by White-  
field’s appeals, or doubtless Whitefield’s name would have  
appeared in the shameful pages which are devoted to this  
last argument against Methodism. Wesley is left without  
the countenance and company of his friend, who would  
gladly have borne the reproach with him. There is only  
one thing more painful than the reading of such unscru-  
pulous attacks, and it is the assurance of Archdeacon

Moore that the assertion that ‘Bishop Lavington in his  
latter days repented of his writings against the Methodists,  
I know to be without foundation, as far as his conversa-  
tion could afford assurance to the contrary. To the very  
last he always spoke of them as a fraternity compounded  
of hypocrites and enthusiasts.’

A crushing answer might have been penned by almost  
any honest man; but Whitefield’s ‘Remarks upon the  
Pamphlet,’ as he calls his reply, are better than any  
formal answer. Their spirit is something wonderful; and  
it is impossible to turn from perusing the bishop’s slanders  
and abuse, to read Whitefield’s reply, without feeling how  
good and blessed a thing is an honest, forgiving heart.  
Lavington had said that the Methodist preachers, like St.  
Anthony, were attended by ‘a sturdy set of followers, as  
their guards, armed with clubs under their clothes, me-  
nacing and terrifying such as should dare to speak lightly  
of their apostle.’ ‘You add,’ says Whitefield, ‘“I have  
heard it often affirmed;” and so might the heathens have  
said that they heard it often affirmed, that when the pri-  
mitive Christians received the blessed sacrament, they  
killed a young child, and then sucked its blood. But  
was that any reason why they should believe it? It is  
true, indeed, some of the Methodist preachers have more  
than once been attended with a sturdy set of followers,  
armed with clubs and other weapons, not as their guards,  
but opposers and persecutors; and who have not only  
menaced and terrified, but actually abused and beat many  
of those who came to hear him whom you, I suppose,  
would call their apostle. Both Methodist preachers and  
Methodist hearers too, for want of better arguments, have  
often felt the weight of such irresistible power, which,  
literally speaking, hath struck many of them dumb, and,  
I verily believe, had it not been for some superior in-  
visible guard, must have struck them dead. These are all  
the sturdy set of armed followers that the Methodists

know of. And whatever you may unkindly insinuate  
about my being aware of a turbulent spirit, a fighting  
enthusiasm, amongst them, because I said “I dread  
nothing more than the false zeal of my friends in a suffer-  
ing hour,” I think many years’ experience may convince  
the world that the weapons of their warfare, like those  
of their blessed Redeemer and His apostles, have not  
been carnal; but, thanks be to God, however you may  
ridicule His irresistible power, they have, through Him,  
been mighty to the pulling down of Satan’s strongholds in  
many a sturdy sinner’s heart.’

Whitefield confessed that ‘there is generally much—too  
much—severity in our first zeal; at least there was in  
mine;’ also that his and Seward’s treatment of Arch-  
bishop Tillotson ‘was by far too severe. We condemned  
his state, when we ought only, in a candid manner, which  
I would do again if called to it, to have mentioned what  
we judged wrong in his doctrines. I do not justify it.  
I condemn myself most heartily, and ask pardon for it,  
as I believe he (Seward) would do, were he now alive.  
But, then, do not you still go on, sir, to imitate us in our  
faults; let the surviving Methodists answer for them-  
selves; let Seward and Tillotson lie undisturbed.’ White-  
field adds, on the subject of desiring persecution, ‘What-  
ever can be produced out of any of my writings to prove  
that I have desired or prayed for ill-usage, persecution,  
martyrdom, death, &c., I retract it with all my heart, as  
proceeding from the overflowings of an irregular, though  
well-meant, zeal.’ He also thanks Lavington for pointing  
out the ‘very wrong expression ’ about the ‘hosannas of  
the multitude.’ ‘Your remark,’ he says, ‘runs thus—  
“Very profane, unless it be a false print for huzzas.” I  
could wish it had been so, but the word was my own;  
and though not intended to convey a profane idea, was  
very wrong and unguarded, and I desire may be buried  
in oblivion, unless you, or some other kind person, are

pleased to remind me of it, in order to lay me low before  
God and man.’ The last admission of all is worth all the  
rest, and does honour to Whitefield’s candour; it is a  
perfect atonement for his fault in repeating in public  
private things that occurred between himself and Wesley.  
He says: ‘A review of all this, together with my having  
dropped some too strong expressions about absolute  
reprobation, and more especially my mentioning Mr.  
Wesley’s casting a lot on a private occasion, known only  
to God and ourselves, have put me to great pain.  
Speaking of this last you say, “A more judicious senti-  
ment, perhaps, never dropped from Mr. Whitefield’s pen.”  
I believe, sir, the advice given was right and good; but  
then it was wrong in me to publish a private transaction  
to the world, and very ill-judged to think the glory of  
God could be promoted by unnecessarily exposing my  
friend. To this I have asked both God and him pardon  
years ago. And though I believe both have forgiven  
me, yet I believe I shall never be able to forgive myself.  
As it was a public fault, I think it should be publicly  
acknowledged; and I thank a kind Providence for giving  
me this opportunity of doing it. As for the letters out  
of which you and the author of the “Observations on the  
Conduct and Behaviour of the Methodists” have taken  
so many extracts, I acknowledge that many things in  
them were very exceptionable, though good in the main,  
and therefore they have been suppressed some time.  
Casting lots I do not now approve of, nor have I for  
several years; neither do I think it a safe way—though  
practised, I doubt not, by many good men—to make a  
lottery of the Scriptures, by dipping into them upon  
every occasion.’

The whole of the summer, and the early part of the  
autumn, of 1749, were spent in a tour through the west,  
and through Wales; thousands answering his call, and  
coming, as of old, even when the rain rendered an open-

air service both uncomfortable and dangerous. For two  
days he sought retirement in his wife’s house at Aberga-  
venny (she was now on her way from Bethesda to join  
him), and found it ‘so very sweet,’ that he would have  
been glad never to have been heard of again. From  
thence he wrote to his brother at Bristol a letter which  
exhibits so many sides of his life and character that it  
demands a place in his biography: —

‘ Abergavenny, May 27, 1749.

‘ My very dear Brother,—Enclosed yon have a letter from  
our good Lady Huntingdon, whom, I suppose, you will have  
the honour of receiving in a few days under your roof. Both  
before and ever since I left Bristol, I have been frequently  
thinking of the unspeakable mercies that the infinitely great  
and glorious God is pleased to pour down upon us. Surely the  
language of both our hearts ought to be, “What shall we render  
unto the Lord?” For my part, I am lost in wonder, and want  
a thousand lives to spend in the Redeemer’s service. 0, let  
not my dear brother be angry if I entreat him at length to  
leave off killing, and begin to redeem, time. A concern for  
your eternal welfare so affects me, that it often brings bodily  
sickness upon me, and drives me to a throne of grace, to  
wrestle in your behalf. Even now, whilst I am writing, my  
soul is agonising in prayer for you, hoping I shall see that day  
when you will have poured out on you a spirit of grace and of  
supplication, and look to Him whom we have pierced, and be  
made to mourn as one mourneth for a first-born. Till this be  
done, all resolutions, all schemes for amendment, will be only  
like spiders’ webs. Nature is a mere Proteus, and, till renewed  
by the Spirit of God, though it may shift its scene, will be only  
nature still. Apply then, my dearest brother, to the fountain  
of light and life, from whence every good and perfect gift  
cometh.

‘A worthy woman, in all probability, is going to throw her-  
self under God into your hands. A considerable addition will  
be then made to your present talents, and consequently a greater  
share of care and circumspection necessary to improve all for  
the glory of Him who hath been always preventing and fol-  
lowing you with His blessings. Should you prove any otherwise

than a pious husband, it will be one of the greatest afflictions I  
ever met with in my life. At present you can only hurt yourself,  
which is hurt enough; but then—forgive me, my dear brother;  
I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. My tears shall be  
turned into prayers, and I will follow this letter with strong  
crying unto God in your behalf. My retirement here these  
two days hath been very sweet; but to-morrow I begin a three  
weeks’ circuit. Next Sabbath I am to be at Carmarthen; the  
Friday following at Haverford West. For the present, adieu.  
That you may take Christ to be your all in all, and that the  
remainder of your life may be one continued sacrifice of love  
to Him who hath shed His precious blood for you, is the hearty  
prayer of, my dear brother,

‘Yours most affectionately,

‘GEORGE Whitefield.’

His work among the rich was done with a scrupulous  
disregard of all self-interest. To a friend—in Bermudas,  
I conjecture, though there is no clue by which to iden-  
tify him—who thought that Whitefield had carried  
religion very near the Court, if not quite into it, and that  
he might have influence enough to secure the appoint-  
ment of a religious governor to some colony where a  
governor was wanted, he replied that he should be very  
shy to ask favours, even if he had interest at Court, lest  
he should be thought to preach for himself and not for  
Christ Jesus his Lord, and because he would fain con-  
vince all that he sought not theirs but them. Yet he  
would use his influence with equal freedom in other  
quarters, and especially if it was for anyone in more than  
usually humble circumstances. Such a worthy object,  
came under his notice during this tour, an obscure dis-  
senting minister, who had sold, part of his library to  
finish the meeting-house in which he preached, whose  
dress was very mean—as well it might be, seeing he had  
but three pounds per annum from a fund, and the same  
sum from his people—who lived very low, but enjoyed  
much of God, and who was something of a poet; for

Whitefield found that he had as good an understanding  
of the figurative parts of Scripture as anyone that he  
‘knew of in the world.’ How could he forbear using;  
his interest with a rich and benevolent friend for such a  
‘poor, despised, faithful minister of Christ?’ So he hints  
that four or five guineas might be bestowed on this  
Zachary, who also had a faithful Elizabeth.

A hard task for him was it to inspire other hearts with  
as much moral courage as always bore up his own. By  
word, as well as by example, by reproach, and by loving  
persuasion, he would try to free the fearful from the fear  
of man, which hindered their full and self-denying con-  
secration to the will of Jesus Christ, One of the most  
difficult cases he ever had to manage was that of Dr.  
Stonhouse, of Northampton, an eminent physician, a  
friend of Doddridge, and a man of great refinement.  
Many were the expostulations of the bold evangelist  
before the shrinking man could be brought to a firm  
stand. The following is one of Whitefield’s letters to  
him.

‘Landovery, June 14, 1749.

‘Dear Sir,—A few days ago I received a letter from Mr. C.,  
in which yours to him, dated May 20th, was enclosed. It gave  
me some concern, and would have given me more, had not the  
same letter informed me that good Lady Huntingdon had  
written to you herself. Alas! my dear friend, what needless  
trouble do you give yourself, and into what difficulties does  
your fear of man, your too great attachment to the world, and  
an overweening fondness for your pretty character, every day  
bring you! Is it not time to drop our correspondence, when,  
on so slight an information, you could so much as suspect that  
I had betrayed that confidence you reposed in me, or believe  
that I read a letter wherein you declared yourself a Methodist,  
when I had never such letter from you. The only passage, as  
far as I can remember, that was read—and that, too, at my  
lady’s request, if I mistake not—was that noble one wherein  
you said, “Let the world take my character, and tear it to  
pieces,” &c. Are you ashamed, my dear friend, of the resolu-

tion? Or think yon to put that in practice, and shun being  
called a Methodist? You might as well attempt to reach  
heaven with your hand; for, blessed be God, such an honour  
has He put upon the Methodists, that whoever renounces the  
world and takes up Christ’s cross, and believes and lives the  
doctrines of grace, must be styled a Methodist, whether he will  
or not. Formerly it was “You are a Puritan;” now it is  
“You are a Methodist.” And why does Mr. Stonhouse take  
such pains to declare he never will join the Methodists? Who  
ever asked him? Or what service could you do their cause by  
joining, unless your heart was more estranged from the world  
than at present it is? Would to God you were more likeminded  
with Mr. Hervey. He seems to have sat down and counted  
the cost. He seems to have begun at the right end, and to be  
fully convinced that there is no reconciling Christ and the  
world, God and mammon. My dear Mr. Stonhouse, suffer me  
to be free with you. Our Lord, I trust, has begun a good work  
in your soul; but, indeed, you have many lessons yet to learn.  
The great Physician must give many a bitter potion, in order  
to purge out the opinion you have of your own importance, and  
the too great desire you have to keep in with the world.  
Reproach you cannot shun, if you appear but a little for  
Christ; and you will not have more, perhaps not so much, if  
you show quite out. Perhaps you may say, “I have done this  
already:” do not, then, be ashamed of it, but go on; grow in  
grace; press forwards; and then I care not what declaration  
you make of your not intending to be a Methodist. Be a con-  
sistent Christian; live above the world; call not the fear of  
man Christian prudence; and then underneath you shall be  
God’s everlasting arms. Thanks be to Grod, they have upholden  
me for some weeks last past.

‘I have now been a circuit of several hundred miles. At  
Portsmouth and Gosport the word ran, and was glorified. In  
South Wales everywhere the fields have been white, ready unto  
harvest. Not a dog stirs his tongue. Last Sunday, I believe,  
I preached to near twenty thousand souls. Grace! grace! In  
about ten days I hope to be at Bristol. Soon after I propose  
to go to London, and from thence to Yorkshire and Scotland.  
Follow me with your prayers, and in return you shall be  
remembered by, very dear sir, your affectionate friend,

‘Geoege whitefield.’

His hope of being in Bristol within ten days was  
realised. The day of his arrival was exactly a month  
after the time of his beginning his circuit; and this is  
the account of his work:—‘Yesterday God brought me  
here, after having carried me a circuit of about eight  
hundred miles, and enabled me to preach, I suppose, to  
upwards of a hundred thousand souls. I have been in  
eight Welsh counties, and I think we have not had one  
dry meeting. The work in Wales is much upon the  
advance, and likely to increase daily. Had my dear Mr.  
Hervey been there to have seen the simplicity of so many  
dear souls, I am persuaded he would have said, “Sit  
anim a mea cum Methodistis! ” But everyone to his  
post. During this excursion I have been kept happy  
inwardly, and well in body till the latter end of last  
week, when the Lord was pleased to lay His hand upon  
me, so that I was almost brought to the grave. But He  
that wounds heals also.’

Soon afterwards Whitefield resumed his work in Lon-  
don for a little while, and then returned into the west,  
where Methodist doctrines were agitating all minds, and  
where he was an especial object of interest, on account  
of his reply to the first part of Bishop Lavington’s  
pamphlet. The journey has as many incidents as would  
serve to form the remarkable parts of many a life, but  
in this career they are in danger of being passed over as  
commonplace. It would be a rare thing in the life of  
any clergyman were he, on being recognised as he passed  
through a town, to be asked and entreated by a humble  
unknown woman to stay and give the people a sermon;  
and upon consenting to do so, soon to find himself sur-  
rounded with ‘a great company.’ And the next day the  
congregation at the same place was still greater. This  
happened at Wellington, when Whitefield rode through it.

All along his way he found the good seed of past sow-  
ing times springing up and promising an abundant harvest.

At Plymouth the wonderful power which attended his  
first and second visit was making things look quite new.  
His pamphlet in reply to the bishop had been useful to  
some; its candour and simplicity deserved nothing less.  
The bishop, when asked by some one whether he had  
seen it, replied, ‘Yes: Whitefield writes like an honest  
man and has recanted several things; but he goes on in  
the same way yet.’ His lordship also promised a second  
part of his pamphlet, which in due time appeared; but  
as it was mainly directed against Wesley, in Wesley’s  
hands Whitefield was content to leave it.

The bishop was troubled with Methodists in his own  
diocese, and among his own clergy. as well as with those  
itinerants who, like many Catholic ‘ enthusiasts,’ were  
fond of travelling to make converts. The Rev. Mr.  
Thompson, vicar of St. Gennis was one of these unde-  
sirable ‘sons.’ He was an able, vivacious, bold man,  
and. before his adoption of the new views, the favourite  
of rollicking squires, and of brother clerics who cared  
more for the fleece than the sheep. He was somewhat  
restive under prelatical rule; and when Lavington  
threatened him to his face that he would pull off his  
gown. Thompson immediately pulled it off himself, and  
throwing it at the feet of the astounded bishop, ex-  
claimed, ‘I can preach the gospel without a gown.’ The  
bishop thought it was best to send for him, and try to  
soothe him. Next he had the mortification of seeing  
Whitefield welcomed to Thompson's home, from whence  
he had thought to banish him and the two friends  
fraternising with such cordiality as only men whose  
endangered friendship has stood firm can feel.

The bishop was not, however, to go without his grati-  
fication. In his presence, and in that of many of his  
clergy, Whitefield was for the fourth time violently  
assaulted while preaching the gospel. The blow of a  
cudgel at Basingstoke, the thump of a sod from a Staf-

fordshire heathen, and the pelting with the refuse of a  
Moorfield’s fair, were followed by a stunning blow from  
a great stone, which struck deep into Whitefield’s head,  
and almost rolled him off the table, from which, amidst  
an awful stillness, he was addressing ten thousand hearers.  
A second stone, also meant for him, struck a poor man  
quite to the ground. A third, aimed at the same object,  
fell and did no damage. This was done in the presence  
of the man who had unblushingly repeated the lie, that  
Methodist preachers were often attended with a set of  
sturdy fellows carrying clubs under their clothes, to make  
the congregations reverence their preaching apostle; nor  
did he mount the table to express his shame and regret  
at being the witness of such an outrage, neither did he act  
the part of the kind Samaritan to the injured man.  
The only alleviating thought to this story is that the  
bishop and his clergy do not seem to have been accessory  
to the assault. Whitefield, never wishful to magnify his  
deeds and sufferings, nor to exaggerate another’s fault,  
simply says that it was ‘a drunken man ’ who threw  
three great stones at him; but the assailant must have  
been tolerably sober when once he aimed so well as to  
hit his man on the head, and the next time threw with  
such force as to lay a man on the ground; neither do  
drunken men often manage to carry three large stones  
into a dense crowd.1

1 It would have been more becoming a Christian bishop had Dr. Lavington  
tried to reform the heathen of Exeter, instead of wasting his time in slander-  
ing others who did his neglected work. For the sake of truth it should be  
stated that the city had a band of ruffians called ‘Church Rabble,’ or ‘The  
God-damn-me Crew,’who carried persecution to every length short of death.  
In 1745, the crew, led by a bailiff, a sexton, a parish-clerk, and several  
tradesmen, and encouraged by many ‘gentlemen,’ who placed themselves  
in windows to see the obscene sport, abused the Methodists as they would,  
neither the mayor nor the magistrates interfering to stop them. They kicked  
the men and subjected them to every abuse and indignity. They rubbed  
the faces of the women with lamp-black and oil, they beat their breasts  
with their clenched fists; they stripped them almost naked, then turned the  
rest of their clothes over their heads, and in that condition kicked or dragged

Weak and suffering, yet a moral conqueror, Whitefield  
returned to London; not forgetting on his way to call at  
Dorchester gaol, to comfort John Hayne, a soldier who  
had headed a revival movement among his comrades in  
Flanders, and since his return home had preached in  
Methodist fashion, and been rewarded for his zeal by a  
place among knaves and felons!

Whitefield’s ‘grand catholicon’ under both public and  
domestic trials—preaching—was now used by him with  
unremitting diligence; and in the autumn of 1749 we  
find him in a new district, and amongst a people as dif-  
ferent from those of the west of England as Yorkshire  
moors are different from Devonshire lanes and orchards.  
It was the splendid autumn season when he first clam-  
bered up that steep road ‘winding between wave-like hills  
that rise and fall on every side of the horizon, with a long,  
illimitable, sinuous look, as if they were a part of the line of  
the great serpent, which, the Norse legend says, girdles the  
world;’ and was received at bleak little Haworth, sacred  
both to piety and genius, by William Grimshaw, the in-  
cumbent. The old parsonage (not the one in which the  
Brontes afterwards lived), standing half a mile from the  
church, and commanding from its windows a wide view  
of the valley of the Worth, and from its door, before the  
present ugly shed was built in front of it, the view of the  
interlacing hills towards Keighley, the sheltered valley at  
their feet, and the swelling moors, traced with winding  
roads, that lie bordering on the moors of Ilkley, was solid  
and weather-beaten, like the sturdy man who then in-  
habited it. I do not know whether his eye often lingered

them along the street, or rolled them in the gutters or in mud heaps pre-  
pared for them. To save herself from one of the men who attempted even  
worse outrage, one woman leaped from the gallery of the meeting-house to  
the floor. The riot lasted for hours, and in the presence of thousands.—See  
‘ An Account of a late Riot at Exeter,’ by John Cennick, 1745; and A  
brief Account of the late Persecution and Barbarous Usage of the Methodists  
at Exeter,’ by an Impartial Hand, 1746. The riot occurred in 1745; La-  
vington’s treatise was written in 1747; Whitefield was assaulted in 1749.

on the beauty and grandeur that lay around his home;  
perhaps at the most it would be a hurried glance he  
would give, when he halted for a moment on the door-  
stone, as he went forth to preach, or returned from the  
same duty; for he was an untiring apostle of the truth,  
and it would be little time that he could find for com-  
munion with nature. His work was to soften and change  
the rugged, hardened sinners of the village and of all the  
district around, as far as his iron strength could carry  
him; and for that he must only exchange the saddle  
where he made his sermons for the pulpit where he  
preached them. An all-absorbing thing was the enjoy-  
ing and teaching those truths which had turned his own  
soul from sin to holiness, and which had changed a  
clergyman, a mere professional, who entered ‘holy orders ’  
with the unholy wish to get the best living he could,  
into a loving shepherd, who sought the lambs and the  
sheep by night and day, in summer and winter, in  
‘weariness and painfulness,’ nor ever thought of his  
sacrifice, if so be he might save that which was lost.  
Thirty times a week would he preach in cottage or  
church, or on hill-side; it was an idle week when he  
preached but twelve times. Neither was he satisfied  
simply to preach, to get through his subject; he would  
dwell with unwearied patience on each part of his mes-  
sage, loving the tenderness and mercy of which it spoke,  
and anxious that the feeblest mind should also love and  
understand it. He wore no ‘cloke of covetousness;’ he  
used no ‘flattering words he sought no glory of men.’  
‘Affectionately desirous’ of his people, he would have  
imparted to them not the gospel of God only, but also  
his own soul, because they were dear to him. Truer  
and kinder shepherd never tended flock than this ‘over-  
seer ’ of the flock of God among the hills. Much has  
been said about his eccentricities, but these were little  
noticed by his people, who lived daily in the light of his

shining purity, and received in their every sorrow and  
in their every joy the sympathy of his faithful heart. His  
wonderful visions have been turned against him as a  
reproach to his soundness of judgment; but were visions  
no more talked of than were his by him, and were they  
always connected with such untiring diligence and such  
ungrudging labour as enriched his life, then might we  
pray for men of visions to be quickly multiplied.

His church always presented a remarkable appearance  
on the Sunday. The shepherding of the week made a  
full fold that day. Weavers and farmers, shepherds and  
labourers, came from the remotest parts of his wild dis-  
trict to hear his words of grace and truth, and listened as  
if they felt the power of another world resting on their  
spirits. When Whitefield first visited them, which was  
in September 1749, six thousand people stood in the  
churchyard to hear him, and above a thousand com-  
municants approached the table with feelings of awe and  
joy. So great a number could have been collected to-  
gether in this thinly populated district only by a strong  
desire to hear an unequalled preacher, whose fame  
was familiar through the lips of their pastor, and by a  
deep and real interest in the great subjects on which he  
discoursed: as the congregations at Cambuslang and in  
the American woods were called together. ‘It was,’ says  
Whitefield, ‘a great day of the Son of Man.’

Whitefield paid his first visit to Leeds at the request  
of one of Wesley’s preachers and of all Wesley’s people;  
he was welcomed by all, and [had a congregation of ten  
thousand to hear him. About the same time he visited  
Armley, Pudsey, and Birstal.1

1 Tradition still retains a story about the preaching at Birstal. Nancy  
Bowling, a pious old maid of Heckmondwike, who died thirty years ago, at  
the advanced age of eighty, used to tell how the wind blew from Birstal  
towards Heckmondwike when Whitefield preached, and that his voice could  
be heard on Staincliffe Hill, a mile and a half from where he stood, crying,  
‘ 0 earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!’ The story must have been  
told her; but most likely she had heard Whitefield preach, as she was ten  
years old when he died.

Proceeding northwards, he met Charles Wesley re-  
turning from Newcastle, where Methodism had already  
won a remarkable triumph, and where he had been con-  
firming the believers. Only two months before, there  
had been some conference between them and Harris  
about union or united effort, which had ended in nothing;  
it is thus noticed by Charles in his journal:—‘1749,  
Thursday, August 3. Our conference this week with  
Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Harris came to nought; I think  
through their flying off’ The conference may have been  
about the societies founded by Whitefield, which, on  
account of his inaptitude for their management, and dis-  
like of being at the head of any organised body, were  
now an irksome burden. At any rate, it is certain that  
by September, and no doubt before leaving London for  
Yorkshire, he had given over the immediate care of all  
his societies to Harris, that he might be ‘a preacher at  
large,’ which was the dearest delight of his heart. Yet  
when Charles and he met, somewhere on the great north  
road, Charles immediately turned his horse’s head round  
towards Newcastle, and went (a pleasant sight to see) to  
introduce his brother in Christ to the Methodist pulpit in  
that town. Fortunately, Charles, in the exuberance of  
his joy over the happy event, wrote a letter giving an ac-  
count of what took place; it reflects the highest credit  
upon the spirit in which the three friends were now doing  
their work:—

‘Sheffield, Sunday morning, October 8, 1749.

‘ My dear Friend,—I snatch a few moments before the people  
come to tell yon what you will rejoice to know—that the Lord  
is reviving His work as at the beginning; that multitudes are  
daily added to His church; and that G. W. and my brother  
and I are one—a threefold cord which shall no more be broken.  
The week before last I waited on our friend George to our  
house in Newcastle, and gave him full possession of our pulpit  
and people’s hearts; as full as was in my power to give. The  
Lord united all our hearts. I attended his successful ministry

for some days. He was never more blessed or better satisfied.  
Whole troops of the Dissenters be mowed down. They also are  
so reconciled to us as yon cannot conceive. The world is con-  
founded. The hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. At  
Leeds we met my brother, who gave honest George the right  
hand of fellowship, and attended him everywhere to our  
societies. Some at London will be alarmed at the news; but  
it is the Lord’s doing, as they, I doubt not, will by-and-by  
acknowledge. My dear friends, Mrs. B. and D., shall have the  
full account not many days hence, if the Lord bless my coming  
in as He has blessed my going out. On the next Lord’s day I  
shall rejoice to meet you at His table. Bemember, at all times  
of access, your faithful and affectionate servant in the gospel,

‘C. W,’

This second visit to Leeds, to which Charles refers, was  
after a ride with Whitefield through part of Lancashire  
and part of Cheshire. It made the established and dis-  
senting clergy very angry, and their churches and chapels  
echoed with the thunder of their displeasure.

‘Brother Charles’ and ‘honest George’ did something  
more at Newcastle than preach; and the good feeling of  
Wesley at Leeds was more praiseworthy than it looks at  
first sight. They robbed Wesley of a worthy wife, and  
he generously forgave them, though feeling the loss most  
acutely. When Whitefield went to Newcastle there was  
living in that town an excellent woman, a widow, called  
Mrs. Grace Murray, for whom Wesley felt a strong affec-  
tion, and whom he had engaged to marry early in  
October. Unfortunately for him the lady had a warm  
heart towards John Bennet, another of Wesley’s spiritual,  
children; and notwithstanding she had preferred (hardly  
with noble-mindedness) the offer of the great Methodist  
leader to that of the humbler itinerant, when Charles  
Wesley and Whitefield pressed her to marry Bennet, she  
consented, and did so. There can be no doubt that  
Whitefield played but a secondary part in this blamable  
transaction, and that Charles was the real cause of the

marriage with Bennet. His notion seems to have been  
that his brother ought to hold himself free for the work  
of superintending the numerous societies now planted all  
over the country, and that marrying would shackle him;  
and with this notion Whitefield would readily sympathise,  
although he ought to have known that as marriage had  
not hindered him from taking one journey nor made him  
preach one sermon less, it was quite as likely that  
Wesley could hold on his way with undiminished zeal.  
This much may, perhaps, be said in excuse, that Charles  
Wesley, when he got the cares of a family, did not attend  
to public duties with the same diligence which he showed  
when a bachelor; and that Whitefield may have felt it  
difficult to leave his wife, as he was always obliged to do,  
when he undertook some of his long and trying journeys.  
When Whitefield married it was for the sake of Bethesda,  
where he wanted some one to take charge of the orphans;  
but a single summer had proved too much for Mrs.  
Wliitefield’s health, and she was just returned in a very  
feeble state. But when all is admitted, it was unjusti-  
fiable presumption for Charles Wesley and Whitefield to  
interfere with John's approaching nuptials; and the suc-  
cess of their action was a bitter disappointment to him.

It was November now, and, says Whitefield, ‘indeed  
it begins to be cold abroad.’ Winter was warning him  
home to his tabernacle; so he only called at Sheffield,  
Nottingham and Ashby, on his way southwards. At  
Sheffield he unwittingly gave the Wesleys a most appro-  
priate return for their kindness at Leeds and Newcastle.  
What he did will best appear from the narrative of  
Charles Wesley; for we can understand his marvellous  
power only as we understand the condition of the society  
in the midst of which he appeared but as a wayfaring  
man, and the difficulties over which it triumphed. There  
is also the greater pleasure in quoting the narrative,  
because the events recorded serve to display the high

courage which always carried the Wesley’s like heroes  
through their dangers.

‘1743, Wed. May 25th.— In the afternoon I came to the  
flock in Sheffield, who are as sheep in the midst of wolves, the  
ministers having so stirred up the people, that they are ready  
to tear them in pieces. Most of them have passed through the  
fire of stillness, which came to try them, as soon as they tasted  
the grace of the Lord.

‘At six o’clock I went to the society-house, next door to our  
brother Bennet’s. Hell from beneath was moved to oppose us.  
As soon as I was in the desk with David Taylor, the floods  
began to lift up their voice. An officer—Ensign Green—con-  
tradicted and blasphemed. I took no notice of him, and sung  
on. The stones flew thick, hitting the desk and people. To  
save them and the house, I gave notice I should preach out,  
and look the enemy in the face.

‘The whole army of the aliens followed me. The captain  
laid hold on me, and began reviling. I gave him for answer,  
“A Word in Season; or, Advice to a Soldier;” then prayed,  
particularly for His Majesty King George, and preached the  
gospel with much contention. The stones often struck me in  
the face. After sermon, I prayed for sinners, as servants of  
their master, the devil; upon which the captain ran at me  
with great fury, threatening revenge for my abusing, as he  
called it, “the King his master.” He forced his way through  
the brethren, drew his sword, and presented it to my breast.  
My breast was immediately steeled. I threw it open, and,  
fixing mine eye on his, smiled in his face, and calmly said,  
“I fear God, and honour the King.” His countenance fell in a  
moment; he fetched a deep sigh, put up his sword, and quietly  
left the place.

‘To one of the company, who afterwards informed me, he  
had said, “You shall see, if I do but hold my sword to his  
breast, he will faint away.” So, perhaps, I should, had I had  
only his principles to trust to; but if at that time I was not  
afraid, no thanks to my natural courage.

‘We returned to our brother Bennet’s, and gave ourselves  
up to prayer. The rioters followed, and exceeded in their  
outrage all I have seen before. Those of Moorfields, Cardiff,  
and Walsall were lambs to these. As there is no king in

Israel—no magistrate, I mean, in Sheffield—every man does as  
seems good in his own eyes. Satan now put it into their hearts  
to pull down the society-house; and they set to their work,  
while we were praying and praising God. It was a glorious  
time with us. Every word of exhortation sunk deep; every  
prayer was sealed; and many found the Spirit of glory resting  
on them.

‘One sent for the constable, who came up, and desired me  
to leave the town, “ since I was the occasion of all this dis-  
turbance.” I thanked him for his advice, withal assuring him  
“I should not go a moment sooner for this uproar; was sorry  
for their sakes that they had no law or justice among them;  
as for myself, I had my protection, and knew my business, as I  
supposed he did his.” In proof whereof, he went from us, and  
encouraged the mob.

‘They pressed hard to break open the door. I would have  
gone out to them, but the brethren would not suffer me. They  
laboured all night for their master, and by morning had pulled  
down one end of the house. I could compare them to nothing  
but the men of Sodom, or those coming out of the tombs ex-  
ceeding fierce. Their outcries often awaked me in the night;  
yet, I believe, I got more sleep than any of my neighbours.

‘Thursday, May 26th.— I took David Taylor, and walked  
through the open street to our brother Bennet’s, with the  
multitude at my heels. We passed by the spot where the  
house stood; they had not left one stone upon another. Never-  
theless, the foundation standeth sure, as I told one of them,  
and our house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.  
The mob attended me to my house with great civility; but, as  
soon as I was entered the house, they renewed their threatenings  
to pull it down. The windows were smashed in an instant;  
and my poor host so frightened, that he was ready to give up  
his shield.

‘He had been for a warrant to Mr. Buck, a justice of  
peace, in Rotherham,1 who refused it him, unless he would  
promise to forsake this way.

1 The large town of Sheffield, which now numbers about 230,000 inhabi-  
tants, was a small town of 10,000 when Charles Wesley wrote; and the  
fine valley—now choked with manufactories—which connects it with  
Rotherham was like the beautifully wooded vale in which Gurth and  
Wamba fed the swine of Cedric the Saxon.

‘The house was now on the point of being taken by storm.  
I was writing within, when the cry of my poor friend and his  
family, I thought, called me out to these sons of Belial. In  
the midst of the rabble, I found a friend of Edward’s, with the  
Riot Act. At their desire, I took and read it, and made a  
suitable exhortation. One of the sturdiest rebels our constable  
seized, and carried away captive into the house. I marvelled  
at the patience of his companions; but the Lord overawed  
them. What was done with the prisoner I know not; for in  
five minutes I was fast asleep, in the room they had dismantled.  
I feared no cold, but dropped asleep with that word, “ Scatter  
Thou the people that delight in war.” I afterwards heard that  
within the hour they had all quitted the place.’

Three years later Charles Wesley found ‘the hardened  
sinners at Sheffield ’ still the same; and felt himself con-  
strained to warn them from the awful words: ‘Except  
the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant,  
we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been  
like unto Gomorrah!’ God filled his mouth with judg-  
ments against them, which he trembled to utter and they  
to hear; yet he had no deeper satisfaction than that of  
having delivered his own soul. Other labourers toiled,  
and then came Whitefield, the success of whose preaching  
is thus noticed by Charles Wesley, eighteen months after  
Whitefield’s visit: ‘At two I rejoiced to meet some of  
our dear children in Sheffield. I encouraged them by  
that most glorious promise—“Behold He cometh with  
clouds, and every eye shall see Him.” The door has  
continued open ever since Mr. Whitefield preached here,  
and quite removed the prejudices of our first opposers..  
Some of them were convinced by him, some converted,  
and added to the church. “He that escapes the sword  
of Jehu shall Elisha slay.”’

He was no mighty man, glorying in his strength, who  
won these conquests over fierceness, rage, and hate, but  
one who passed his days in humble watchfulness and de-  
pendence upon heavenly aid. When others were wonder-

ing at his unflagging devotion, he was ‘more afraid of de-  
clining in the latter stages of his road than of anything  
else.’ There was not a grain of self-satisfaction in him. He  
was hungering and thirsting after simplicity and godly  
sincerity. He was subjecting all personal interests to the  
glory and kingdom of his Lord. ‘If souls were profited he  
desired no more.’ Every expense was contracted with  
miserly vigilance, that he might have the more to give to  
the poor, and for the furtherance of the gospel. And in  
every sacrifice made, in every reproach endured, there was  
before his soul the image of his humbled, homeless, suffer-  
ing Redeemer, cheering and reviving and defending him.  
He had struggled upwards to a glorious height of consecra-  
tion and love, yet was he ever mindful of the past, when  
self-will and fear of contempt marred the beauty and  
excellence of his piety, and anxious for the day of his  
final emancipation from sin. ‘0, my dear sir,’ he ex-  
claims to a friend, ‘this pretty character of mine I did  
not at first care to part with; ’twas death to be despised,  
and worse than death to think of being laughed at by  
all. But when I began to consider Him who endured  
such contradiction of sinners against Himself, I then  
longed to drink of the same cup; and, blessed be God,  
contempt and I are pretty intimate, and have been so for  
above twice seven years.’ Humility was now one of the  
most conspicuous among all that radiant cluster of virtues  
and graces which crowned his head like stars. ‘0 that  
I may learn from all I see to desire to be nothing! ’ he  
cries out, ‘and to think it my highest privilege to be an  
assistant to all, but the head of none. I find a love of  
power sometimes intoxicates even God’s own dear children,  
and makes them to mistake passion for zeal, and an over-  
bearing spirit for an authority given them from above.  
For my own part, I find it much easier to obey than  
govern, and that it is much safer to be trodden under  
foot than to have it in one’s power to serve others so.

This makes me fly from that which at our first setting  
out we are too apt to court. Thanks be to the Lord of  
all lords for taking any pains with ill and hell-deserving  
me! I cannot well buy humility at too dear a rate.’

He went to ‘golden seasons’ in London, in the winter  
of 1749-50. Large congregations were gathered together  
in the Tabernacle, at six in the morning. The nobility  
were preached to, and poor people and orphans were not  
forgotten. He tells Lady Huntingdon that he ‘hopes  
to write to the poor baker soon;’ and to Habersham  
at the orphan-house he sends word that he has agreed to  
take ‘little Joseph and his sister,’ also that he hears there  
is a little infant besides the other two, and that he would  
willingly have it also, if it could be kept till it was about  
three years old: for, says he, ‘I hope to grow rich in  
heaven by taking care of orphans on earth.’ Habersham  
is further instructed to let Mrs. V. (probably some widow)  
and the other poor of Savannah reap the benefit of the  
crop, if it answers expectation. ‘Pray let one barrel of  
rice be reserved for them.’

Something, I know not what, excepting the remem-  
brance of the kind treatment which he had received  
from the Wesleys at Newcastle and Leeds, induced him  
to offer to preach in Wesley’s chapel. His friendly  
advance was kindly met; and he preached four or five  
times to large congregations, and administered the sacra-  
ment twice. Wesley also came to the Tabernacle, and  
preached for Whitefield, and administered the sacrament  
to twelve hundred communicants.

It was during this winter that Whitefield said some-  
thing to the Countess of Huntingdon about her becoming  
a ‘leader;’ but his language, as now read, without any  
knowledge of what may have passed in private conversa-  
tion, cannot be safely interpreted. He may have meant  
a leader in the sense in which Wesley was one; but it  
seems inconsistent to be blessing God that he himself was

not a leader, not a head of any party, and at the same  
time to be pleading with another person to assume that  
very position. He may have meant a leader of his  
societies; but Harris already had charge of them. And  
he may have meant a leader only in the general sense of  
her ladyship’s standing forward as a witness for Christ;  
but that she had done for a long time. Any and every  
construction that can be put upon the words—‘A leader  
is wanting: this honour hath been put on your ladyship  
by the great Head of the church’—is open to objection;  
and they all may safely be left in their original obscurity.

His work among the nobility which was in a fair mea-  
sure satisfying even to him, with his spiritual conceptions  
of the work of God, was now the subject of conversation  
at court, as well as in private circles. The following,  
anecdote, which he communicated to the Countess, will  
show how his friends were observed: he says—‘His  
Majesty seems to have been acquainted with some things  
about us, by what passed in his discourse with Lady  
Chesterfield. The particulars are these: her ladyship  
had a suit of clothes on, with a brown ground and silver  
flowers, which was brought from abroad. His Majesty  
coming round to her, first smiled, and then laughed quite  
out. Her ladyship could not imagine what was the matter.  
At length His Majesty said—“I know who chose that  
gown for you ; Mr. Whitefield: and I hear that you  
have attended on him this year and a half.” Her ladyship  
answered—“Yes, I have, and like him very well; ” but  
after she came to her chair was grieved she had not said  
more; so that I find her ladyship is not ashamed.’[[13]](#footnote-13)

Early in 1750, London was several times shaken with  
earthquakes; and the state of excitement into which it

and other causes threw the people, gave Whitefield the  
grandest opportunity of his life for displaying the fulness  
of his love and the strength of his faith in God. The  
first shocks were felt on the 8th of February, and on the 8th  
of March there came another, at a quarter-past five in the  
morning. There was no more harm done than the rocking  
of the houses and the tumbling down of some chimneys;  
but men’s hearts failed them for fear. There was talking  
about judgment and the last day. A soldier, bolder and  
more fanatical than the rest of the people, announced  
the coming overthrow of a great part of the city on a  
certain night, and of course at the dreariest hour of  
that night, between twelve and one o’clock. Multitudes  
fled the city altogether, while others crowded the fields  
and open places for safety from falling houses. The  
Methodist chapels had enormous congregations, and  
Charles Wesley distinguished himself by preaching to  
them; indeed he was just announcing his text to his  
morning congregation when the shock of March 8 made  
the Foundry tremble as if it would fall, and the women  
and children cry out for terror. Whitefield sought his  
congregation in Hyde Park on the dreaded night of the  
soldier’s prediction. He warned and entreated them all  
to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man, an event  
much more stupendous and important than that which  
they now expected every moment to see. Neither moon  
nor star shed any light upon audience or preacher, and  
only one voice was heard in the still darkness, like a  
voice crying in the wilderness. It spoke of mercy and  
judgment, and could hardly have spoken in vain.

The winter in London had been very trying to White-  
field’s health, if refreshing to his heart; throughout the  
whole of it his body was a daily trial to him, and some-  
times he could ‘scarce drag the crazy load along.’ It  
was with delight that he saw spring return, and that he  
went off into the west for a time of ranging. He went

with his hands so full of work, and moved so rapidly  
from place to place that he could hardly find time to eat.  
He found it exceedingly pleasant, and hoped now, in his  
Master’s strength, ‘to begin beginning to spend and be  
spent for Him!’ Twelve times in six days did he preach  
at Plymouth, and the longer he preached, the greater  
became the congregations, and the mightier his word.  
Still he was not satisfied. He wanted ‘more tongues,  
more bodies, more souls for the Lord Jesus;’ had he been  
gifted with ten thousand, Christ should have had them all.

It was inevitable that his flaming zeal, kindled as it  
was by the love of the Lord Jesus, and burning only for  
His glory, should fire all the district through which he  
passed. Gloucester, Bristol, Plymouth, and Cornwall  
right to the Land’s End, were all ablaze with religious  
fervour. He seemed to travel in the strength of the  
Holy Ghost, and to be independent of that crazy body  
which had oppressed him in London. Friends were  
jubilant at his coming; and when he was speaking at  
Bideford, where there was ‘one of the best little flocks  
in all England,’ the bold vicar of St. Gennis almost fell  
under the mighty power of God which came down upon  
the people. Enemies too were active; one obscure  
clergyman saying with much self-importance, that as  
Whitefield was coming he must put on his old armour.  
He did put it on, and on the Sunday morning, with  
Whitefield for a hearer—for Whitefield still loved to  
enter as a hearer the church which had done her best to  
silence him as a preacher—delivered himself of some  
hearty abuse from the text, ‘Beware of false prophets.’  
The slain evangelist had a congregation of ten thousand  
next morning (Monday) to hear him!

Such exertions as he put forth could not fail to do  
him physical mischief. That pain which he felt as he  
came last from Scotland was not inactive; it new and  
again pierced him, and stayed his headlong pace; it had

plagued him in London when he was preaching four  
times a day; and when he was over the first burst of  
effort in the west, and thought himself so much better  
for the change, it returned upon him with increased  
power. He had continued vomitings which ‘almost  
killed him,’ he says; and yet the pulpit was his only  
cure, so that his friends began to pity him less, and to  
leave off that ungrateful caution, “ Spare thyself!”’

I cannot learn that one day’s rest was permitted his  
body, when he returned to London from the west.  
Early in May 1750, he started for Ashby, where Lady  
Huntingdon was lying ill, whom he hoped God’s people  
would keep out of heaven as long as possible, by their  
prayers. He had some pleasant interviews with Dod-  
dridge, with Stonhouse (now a clergyman, and not afraid  
to attend Whitefield’s preaching in the fields, nor to take  
the evangelist’s arm down the street), with Hervey and  
Hartley. At Ashby there began the first of a series of  
little incidents in this town which well illustrate what  
kind of a life his was. ‘The kind people of Ashby,’ he  
says, ‘stirred up some of the baser sort to riot before  
her ladyship’s door, while the gospel was preaching; and  
on Wednesday evening, some people on their return  
home narrowly escaped being murdered. Her ladyship  
has just received a message from the justice, in order to  
bring the offenders before him.’ After passing through  
Nottingham, Mansfield, and Sutton, at which places his  
message wms reverently listened to by vast numbers,  
another rough reception was given him at Rotherham.  
The crier was employed to give notice of a bear-baiting.  
At seven o’clock on a Saturday morning the ‘bear’ had  
his congregation round him; then the drum sounded,  
and several watermen came with great staves to the  
baiting; the constable was struck; two of the mobbers  
were apprehended, but afterwards rescued. One of the  
most active opponents of Whitefield at Rotherham, but

afterwards one of his best friends, was one Thorpe, who  
also thought to make merry with his public-house friends  
at the evangelist’s expense. He and three others engaged  
to compete, in a public-house, for a wager, at mimicking  
Whitefield. His competitors took their turns first; then  
he jumped on the table, saying, ‘I shall beat you all.’  
According to the terms of the contest, he opened the  
bible at haphazard, and took the first text that his eye  
fell upon, which was this, ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all  
likewise perish.’ The words pierced his conscience at  
once; and instead of mimicking, he began to preach in right  
earnest, neither thoughts nor language failing him. His  
audience hung their heads in silence and gloom; none  
attempted to interrupt him as he went on to make re-  
marks which filled his own mind with amazement and  
terror. His sermon—which he always afterwards affirmed  
was preached by the help of the Spirit of God—ended,  
he descended from the table, and left the room in silence,  
without noticing any one. Afterwards he joined Ingham’s  
society, then Wesley’s, and finally becoming an Indepen-  
dent, settled as the pastor of the Independent church at  
Masbro’.[[14]](#footnote-14) The people of Bolton rivalled those of Rother-  
ham in rudeness and violence; a drunkard stood up  
behind Whitefield to preach; and a woman twice at-  
tempted to stab the person who erected the preaching-  
stand in her husband’s field. At Newby Cote, from  
whence he wrote the letter detailing the treatment he  
had received at Bolton, he had to append to his letter, at  
seven on the morning after writing it, a postscript which

ran thus: ‘This last night Satan hath showed his teeth.  
Some persons got into the barn and stable, and have cut  
my chaise, and one of the horses’ tails. What would men  
do, if they could?’ It was reserved for ‘a clergyman at  
Ulverstone, who looked more like a butcher than a  
minister,’ to render the last of those insults which White-  
field bore during this journey. He came with two others,  
and charged a constable to take Whitefield into custody;  
‘but,’ adds Whitefield, ‘I never saw a poor creature sent  
off in such disgrace.’ Thus ‘the poor pilgrim went on’  
from town to town, from county to county.

The journey had also its bright side. Sheffield ‘hard-  
ened sinners’ were visibly altered in their looks since  
the last visit, and received the word with such gladness  
that many went away because they could not come near  
enough to hear. The moors around Haworth were  
thronged on Whit Sunday with thousands of people, and  
the church was thrice almost filled with communicants.  
‘It was a precious season,’ writes Whitefield. Much of  
his work was done in the circuit of his old friend Ingham  
(now married to Lady Margaret Hastings), and in Ing-  
ham’s company and with his assistance. No doubt the  
long-continued and faithful efforts of Ingham, together  
with the indefatigable efforts of the Wesleyan Methodists,  
and of such men as Grimshaw, had well prepared the  
soil, ‘Other men laboured, and he entered into their  
labours;’ nor does he overlook the fact.

His motto for the journey—‘crescit eundo’—was well  
sustained; he kept the wheels oiled by action. He found  
that ‘the best preparation for preaching on the Sunday  
was to preach every day in the week.’ Increasing in  
power as he went, he reached Edinburgh at the end of  
two months, during which time he had preached more  
than ninety times, and to perhaps as many as one hundred  
and forty thousand people.

His coming was hailed with joy in Scotland; larger

congregations than ever waited on his word; and results,  
not so striking, but quite as useful, followed his efforts as  
formerly. His general plan was to preach twice every  
day, the first time early in the morning, and the second  
in the evening at six; but one day he preached thrice,  
and another day four times. This exertion proved too  
much. Ralph Erskine and he met, and shook hands.  
The pamphleteers were quiet; and many of his enemies  
were glad to be at peace with him. ‘The parting was  
rather more affectionate than ever,' he says, ‘and I shall  
have reason to bless God for ever for this last visit to  
Scotland.’

His active life did not altogether remove him from the  
quiet sphere of an ordinary pastor; and sometimes we  
find him comforting the dying, and preparing them for  
their change. Such work awaited him on his return to  
England. The Honourable Miss Hotham, daughter of  
Lady Gertrude Hotham, received her last religious teach-  
ing from him, and some account of her last end, as given  
in a letter written by Whitefield, will shed another ray of  
fight upon the evangelist and his work. He says—‘I  
think it is now near three weeks since good Lady Ger-  
trude desired me to visit her sick daughter. She had  
been prayed for very earnestly the preceding day, after  
the sacrament, and likewise previous to my visit in Lady  
H.’s room. When I came to her bedside she seemed  
glad to see me, but desired I would speak and pray as  
softly as I could. I conversed with her a little, and she  
dropped some strong things about the vanity of the  
world, and the littleness of everything out of Christ. I  
prayed as low as I could, but in prayer—your ladyship  
has been too well acquainted with such things to call it  
enthusiasm—I felt a very uncommon energy and power  
to wrestle with God in her behalf. She soon broke out  
into such words as these—“What a wretch am I!” She  
seemed to speak out of the abundance of her heart, from

a feeling sense of her own vileness. Her honoured  
parent and attendant servant were affected. After prayer  
she seemed as though she felt things unutterable, be-  
moaned her ingratitude to God and Christ, and I believe  
would gladly have given a detail of all her faults she  
could reckon. Her having had a form of godliness,  
but never having felt the power, was what she most  
bewailed.

‘I left her: she continued in the same frame; and  
when Mrs. S. asked her whether she felt her heart to be  
as bad as she expressed herself, she answered—“Yes,  
and worse.” At her request, some time after this, I gave  
her the holy communion. A communion indeed it was.  
Never did I see a person receive it with seemingly greater  
contrition, more earnest desire for pardon and reconcilia-  
tion with God through Christ, or stronger purposes of  
devoting her future life to His service. Being weak, she  
was desired to keep lying on her bed. She replied—“I  
can rise to take my physic, shall I not rise to pray?”  
When I was repeating the communion office she applied  
all to herself, and broke out frequently aloud in her  
applying. When I said—“The burden of them is in-  
tolerable,” she burst out—“Yea, very intolerable:” with  
abundance of such hke expressions. When she took the  
bread and wine, her concern gave her utterance, and she  
spake like one that was ripening for heaven. Those  
around her wept for joy. My cold heart also was  
touched; and I left her with a full persuasion that she  
was either to be taken off soon, or to be a blessing here  
below. I think she lived about a week afterwards. She  
continued in the same frame as far as I hear, and I trust  
is now gone where she will sing the song of Moses and  
of the Lamb for ever and ever.

‘The thought of this comforts good Lady Gertrude,  
and the same consideration, I am persuaded, will have  
the same effect upon your ladyship. Only methinks I

hear your ladyship add—“No: I will not stop here. By  
divine grace I will devote myself to Jesus Christ now,  
and give Him no rest, till I see the world in that light as  
dear Miss Hotham did, and as I myself shall, when I  
come to die. I will follow my honoured mother as she  
follows Jesus Christ, and count the Redeemer’s reproach  
of more value than all the honours, riches, and pleasures  
of the world. I will fly to Christ by faith, and through  
the help of my God, keep up not only the form but also  
the power of godliness in heart and life.”’

The end of 1750 and the beginning of 1751 do not  
appear to have been so stirring as other times in White-  
field’s life; but the fact is that his public labours, numer-  
ous and exhausting as ever, when he was well enough to  
work at all, were considerably overshadowed by personal  
affliction and the affliction of his wife and friends. At  
first, and for some short time after his return from  
Scotland, all was most pleasant and most quiet. He  
looks at home in his house adjoining the Tabernacle  
There he entertains his dearly beloved friend Hervey,  
whose bad health has made a change of air necessary, and  
whom Dr. Stonhouse cannot help with medicine. White-  
field thinks himself the debtor by Hervey’s ‘kindness in  
coming up to be with him.’ Wesley too comes up one  
morning to breakfast with him; and then to pray with  
him. ‘His heart,’ as Wesley says, ‘was susceptible of  
the most generous and the most tender friendship. I  
have frequently thought that this of all others was the  
distinguishing part of his character. How few have we  
known of so kind a temper, of such large and flowing  
affections!’ Charles Wesley, too, had the same judgment  
upon this point, and said of him—

‘For friendship formed by nature and by grace,

His heart made up of truth and tenderness,

He lived, himself on others to bestow.’

It is in the spirit of this beautiful expression of his,

‘It is my comfort that those who are friends to Jesus  
shall live eternally together hereafter,’ that he comes in  
from the Tabernacle to enjoy the conversation of his  
friend; and by and by goes down to Ashby to see the  
Countess and four clergymen who are enjoying her hospi-  
tality. He says that she looks like ‘a good archbishop  
with his chaplains round him.’ They have ‘the sacra-  
ment every morning, heavenly conversation all day, and  
preaching at night.’ He calls this ‘living at court in-  
deed.’ Nor is the ‘heavenly conversation’ without wit  
and pleasantry, for Whitefield was one of the cheerfullest  
of men. ‘Strong good sense, a generous expansion of  
heart, the most artless but captivating affability, the  
brightest cheerfulness and the promptest wit,’ Toplady  
says, ‘made him one of the best companions in the  
world.’

But it is only for a few days that we see him spending  
a life so free from the strain of preaching to thousands.  
He is hardly withdrawn from the fields, yet is longing to  
die preaching in them. His favourite caution to ministers  
—‘Beware of nestling’— is never out of mind; and al-  
though he has won converts in this short stay at Ashby,  
he is soon off to London, and plunged into all the ex-  
citement of his countless labours.

Two months’ work brought on a violent and danger-  
ous fever, which confined him to his room for two weeks.  
He soon was well enough to engage again in his work;  
but he had thought to have cast anchor in ‘the haven of  
eternal rest.’ Half regretfully he received the summons  
‘to put out to sea again;’ but his thought for himself  
was quickly consumed in the old passion of his soul-  
love of others—and he wished that he might live to  
direct them to the haven he had almost sighted.

His wife, too, was in very delicate health, near her  
third confinement; and after that event, she still con-  
tinued for some time in a precarious state. Not a word

fell from his pen about his third child, which was pro-  
bably still-born.

Trouble next fell upon Lady Huntingdon, and what  
affected her affected him. She was, indeed, unwell at  
the same time as Whitefield, but in January 1751, she  
became much worse, and he was sent for to see her at  
once. When he arrived at Ashby, he found her some-  
what better, but her sister-in-law, Lady Frances Hast-  
ings, lying dead in the house. What had been his  
feelings during his own affliction, and in what way he  
preferred to die, if he might have any choice, will appear  
from the following letter:—

‘Ashby Place, January 29; 1751.

‘My very dear Sir,—It is high time to answer your kind  
letter. I am doing it at Ashby, whither I rid post, not knowing  
whether I should see good Lady Huntingdon alive. Blessed he  
God, she is somewhat better, and, I trust, will not yet die, but  
live, and abound yet more and more in the work of the Lord.  
Entreat all our friends to pray for her. Indeed she is worthy.

‘Her sister-in-law, Lady Frances Hastings, lies dead in the  
house. She was a retired Christian, lived silently, and died  
suddenly without a groan. May my exit be like hers! Whether  
right or not, I cannot help wishing that I may go off in the  
same manner. To me it is worse than death to live to be  
nursed, and see friends weeping about one. Sudden death is  
sudden glory. Methinks it is a falling asleep indeed, or rather  
a translation. But all this must be left to our heavenly Father.  
He knows what is best for us and others. Let it be our care to  
have all things ready. Let the house of our hearts and our  
temporal affairs be put in order immediately, that we may have  
nothing to do but to obey the summons, though it should  
be at evening, cock-crowing, or in the morning. Physicians  
that are always attending on the dying, one would imagine,  
should in a peculiar manner learn to die daily. May this be  
your daily employ! I believe it is, though, like me, you must  
complain that the old man dies hard. Well, has he got his  
deadly blow? Die, then, he shall, even that death to which he  
put our Lord. Oh! that the language of our hearts may

always be, “ Crucify him—crucify him!” This is painful; but  
the Redeemer can help us to bear it.

“Thou wilt give strength, Thou wilt give power;  
 Thou wilt in time set free;

This great deliverance, let us hope,

Not for ourselves, but Thee.”

‘I write this out of the fulness of my heart. You will re-  
ceive it as such, and remember me in the best manner to all  
friends. We have had good times. All glory be to Jesus  
through all eternity!

‘Yours, &c.,

‘G. W.’

Whitefield’s preaching this winter was as remarkable  
as on any previous winter for its efficacy in comforting  
mourners, in cheering the faithful, and in converting the  
impenitent. When he finished, and started for Bristol,  
in March, he wrote a characteristic letter to his friend  
Hervey, urging him to come to Lady Huntingdon at  
Bristol; ‘for,’ he says, ‘she will have nobody to give  
her the sacrament unless you come!’ Nevertheless  
Hervey did not obey the summons, because his health  
would not permit him. Whitefield proceeds in his letter:  
‘I ventured the other day to put out a guinea to interest  
for you. It was to release an excellent Christian, who,  
by living very hard, and working near twenty hours out  
of four and-twenty, had brought himself very low. He  
has a wife and four children, and was above two guineas  
in debt. I gave one for myself and one for you. We  
shall have good interest for our money in another world.’

This year his mind was much relieved about Georgia,  
because the introduction of slaves was at length per-  
mitted by the government. The pertinacity of those  
who wanted to make money out of their fellow-men out-  
wearied the better feelings and holier "principles of those  
who saw in the trade a violation of human rights and a  
political curse; and free scope was given for the capture

of Negroes in Africa, and for their introduction into  
America. Whitefield’s remarks upon his new acquisition  
are too strange, as coming from one who had just helped  
the poor, indebted Christian, to be omitted. They cause  
a sigh of regret that he had never heard of the humane  
efforts of Las Casas to undo the kind of mischief which  
he was about to perpetrate with heart and soul, believ-  
ing it to be a work of God; for, much as he abhorred  
Roman Catholicism, there was charity enough in him to  
have learnt a lesson from the fine old Spaniard. ‘Thanks  
be to God,’ he says, ‘that the time for favouring that  
colony’—Georgia—‘seems to be come. I think now is  
the season for us to exert our utmost for the good of the  
poor Ethiopians. We are told, that even they are soon  
to stretch out their hands unto God. And who knows  
but their being settled in Georgia may be over-ruled for  
this great end? As for the lawfulness of keeping slaves,  
I have no doubt, since I hear of some that were bought  
with Abraham’s money, and some that were born in his  
house. And I cannot help thinking, that some of those  
servants mentioned by the apostles in their epistles were  
or had been slaves. It is plain that the Gibeonites were  
doomed to perpetual slavery, and though liberty is a  
sweet thing to such as are born free, yet to those who  
never knew the sweets of it, slavery perhaps may not be  
so irksome.

‘However this be, it is plain to a demonstration, that  
hot countries cannot be cultivated without Negroes.  
What a flourishing country might Georgia have been,  
had the use of them been permitted years ago! How  
many white people have been destroyed for want of  
them, and how many thousands of pounds spent to no  
purpose at all! Had Mr. Henry’—Matthew Henry?—  
‘been in America, I believe he would have seen the  
lawfulness and necessity of having Negroes there. And  
though it is true that they are bought in a wrong way

from their own country, and it is a trade not to be ap-  
proved of, yet as it will be carried on whether we will  
or not, I should think myself highly favoured if I could  
purchase a good number of them, in order to make their  
lives comfortable, and lay a foundation for breeding up  
their posterity in the nurture and admonition of the  
Lord. You know, dear sir, that I had no hand in bring-  
ing them into Georgia; though my judgment was for it,  
and so much money was yearly spent to no purpose, and  
I was strongly importuned thereto, yet I would not have  
a Negro upon my plantation, till the use of them was  
publicly allowed in the colony.’ (It will be remembered  
that he ‘had a hand’ in urging on the alteration of the  
law.) ‘Now this is done, dear sir, let us reason no more  
about it, but diligently improve the present opportunity  
for their instruction. The Trustees favour it, and we  
may never have a like prospect. It rejoiced my soul to  
hear that one of my poor Negroes in Carolina was made  
a brother in Christ. How know we but we may have  
many such instances in Georgia ere it be long? In  
the fall, God willing, I intend seeing what can be done  
towards laying a foundation.’

How complete and miserable a failure was the attempt  
to unite slavery and Christianity will be seen by and by.  
Meanwhile, we think of the orphans being habituated to  
look upon Negroes as a servile race, of their growing to  
manhood and womanhood educated in the ideas of slave-  
holders, and of their being able to throw over all the  
abominations of the system the reputation of a philan-  
thropist so humane and a saint so sincere and so holy as  
was George Whitefield; neither can we forget that every  
man who owned a slave would be able to justify it byWhitefield’s example.

On March 30,1751, Whitefield writes from Plymouth:

‘I suppose the death of our Prince has affected you. It  
has given me a shock.’ The Prince of Wales counted

many of Lady Huntingdon’s friends among his political  
supporters, and she herself, before her conversion, often  
attended his court. Politics and Methodism had a re-  
mote connexion with each other. Many who assembled  
in the Prince’s drawing-room at Leicester House might  
next be seen at Chelsea, or at Audley Street, listening to  
Whitefield. The Countess, however, when she embraced  
the truth and ordered her life according to its law, with-  
drew from fashionable life, and sought her pleasure in  
acts of devotion and in good works. Her absence from  
court was not unnoticed by the Prince; and inquiring  
one day of Lady Charlotte Edwin where she was, he  
received the laconic, mocking answer: ‘I suppose pray-  
ing with her beggars.’ The Prince shook his head, and  
turning to Lady Charlotte, said, ‘Lady Charlotte, when I  
am dying, I think I shall be happy to seize the skirt of  
Lady Huntingdon’s mantle, to lift me up with her to  
heaven.’

The Countess was very anxious to know what were  
the religious principles of the Prince toward the close of  
his life; and, to satisfy herself, wrote to Mr. Lyttleton,  
who had been the Prince’s secretary, and was of like  
mind with her ladyship upon religious subjects, making  
inquiries of him. It was but little that could be learned.  
She says, ‘It is certain that he was in the habit of read-  
ing Dr. Doddridge’s works, which had been presented to  
the Princess, and has been heard to express his appro-  
bation of them in the highest terms. He had frequent  
argument with my Lord Bolingbroke, who thought his  
Royal Highness fast verging towards Methodism, the doc-  
trines of which he was very curious to ascertain. His  
lordship told me, that the Prince went more than once  
to hear Mr. Whitefield, with whom he said he was much  
pleased. Had he lived, it is not improbable but Mr.  
Whitefield would have been promoted in some way.’  
From January 1751 to December 1752-there occurred

nothing that deserves detailed record in a life like this,  
where effort was generally at the full stretch, and where  
sufferings, both mental and bodily, as well as joys,  
abounded. We are prepared to hear of journeys and  
voyages made with the promptness of a general at the  
head of an attacking army; and of weariness and sickness  
paid as the price for the risks run. A few pages of  
Whitefield’s letters carry us into Wales, where, since  
nothing is said about it, we must imagine what work he  
did; and into Ireland, where he was received into the  
house of Mr. Lunell, a Dublin banker, and where the  
people welcomed him, everything, apparently, having  
prepared his way. Dublin was soon aroused by his  
earnest words, and ‘Moorfields auditories’ rewarded him  
for his toil, as they stood with solemn countenances, like  
men who were hearing as for eternity. Athlone and  
Limerick, where as a hunger-bitten, weary traveller, he  
had preached fourteen years before, next heard his voice.  
Then Waterford and Cork, where he stood unhurt in the  
midst of a populace which had shamefully treated the  
Methodists whom the Wesleys and their helpers had  
gathered into a society. Hundreds in that city prayed  
him to continue among them; and many Papists pro-  
mised to leave their priests, if he would consent to the  
request; but their pleading and promising were alike  
ineffectual. He was soon in Dublin again, and as quickly  
away to Belfast and other places in the north. What  
the efforts of the people of Cork and the tears of the  
people of Dublin could not procure—a few days’ longer  
stay—the importunity of the people of Belfast won from  
him. The numbers that attended were so large, and the  
prospect of doing good was so promising, that he grieved  
he had not come among them sooner. And all the while  
he had been performing these journeys and labours in  
the heat of summer, and under physical weakness which  
caused violent vomiting, attended with great loss of blood

after preaching! Yet in five days he was at Glasgow,  
in the house of his old friend Mr. Niven, a merchant,  
who lived above the cross. The enthusiasm of Cam-  
buslang days still burned in the hearts of the peasantry  
and the weavers in the country, and by three o’clock in  
the morning many of them were on their way to the  
city, to hear him on the day of his farewell preaching.  
In Edinburgh, whither he went next, the selecter society  
living in the capital evinced, along with the poor and the  
degraded, as strong a desire to receive his message.  
More work brought on more haemorrhage and more  
prostration, until his body was almost worn out. Eiding  
recruited him; and he was no sooner in London than he  
took ship for his fourth voyage to America, his seventh  
across the Atlantic. After spending the winter in  
America, he embarked for his eighth voyage in the  
spring, and was in England preaching and journeying as  
usual through the whole of the summer. He retired  
to London for the winter of 1752; but at the end of  
what exertion and triumph did that laborious repose  
come! His progress through the north of England  
towards London was a sublime march. From Sheffield  
he wrote that since his leaving Newcastle, he had some-  
times scarce known whether he was in heaven or on  
earth. As he swept along from town to town, thousands  
and thousands flocked twice and thrice a day to hear the  
word of life. ‘A gale of divine influence everywhere  
attended it.’ He continued his work until he reached  
Northampton, where he took coach for London. No  
wonder that, on his arrival in the city, it seemed as if the  
broken tabernacle of the body must release the ardent  
spirit that quickened it. Moreover, the inner life was as  
intense as the outward was active and busy. ‘0, my  
dear friend,’ he exclaims to a correspondent, ‘what  
manner of love is this, that we should be called the  
sons of God! Excuse me. I must pause awhile. My

eyes gush out with water; at present they are almost  
fountains of tears. But thanks be to God they are tears  
of love!’

The ties which bound Charles Wesley and Whitefield  
together were as strong, if not stronger, than those which  
united the two brothers. From that morning when they  
first breakfasted together at Oxford to the day when the  
news of Whitefield’s death reached Charles, they loved  
each other with surprising tenderness and steadfastness.  
Both of them open, frank, emotional, their souls clave  
to each other in sympathy and confidence. Much as  
Whitefield esteemed and venerated Wesley for his zeal,  
his courage, and his labours, much as he loved him as a  
brother in Christ Jesus, there was a measure of coldness  
and reserve in the older man which repelled him, and  
would not allow him the openness and confidence of  
intercourse which he enjoyed with Charles. Whitefield  
must also have felt the chilling influence of Wesley’s im-  
periousness; whereas Charles was truly a brother, with  
no thought of leading or ruling. It thus happened that  
in all the correspondence before the unfortunate breach,  
Charles manifested the most anxious concern for the  
consequences, while John was self-contained, though  
grieved and wounded. And thus it was that when  
Charles himself was nigh to a breach with his brother, he  
turned for counsel to his friend.

To what circumstances that threatened rupture was  
owing, there are at present no means of deciding; the  
letter of Charles to Whitefield was probably destroyed,  
and nothing remains to afford any clue. It is well  
known that immediately after the breach with White-  
field, Charles had some tendency to leave his brother and  
join the Moravians, but that trouble had long gone by.  
The brothers were also somewhat alienated in heart in  
consequence of John’s marriage, but that too was a  
thing of the past. The letter of Whitefield, which was

dated ‘London, Dec. 22, 1752,’ must stand alone, and  
make its own impression, which will probably be some-  
thing like this: the brothers had a partial misunder-  
standing with each other, which Whitefield deprecated,  
while he felt that it was not always easy to keep on good  
terms with the elder one, and that therefore Charles  
might ultimately be compelled to separate from him.  
Nor is it any injustice to say that Wesley was not a man  
with whom it was easy to be on good terms; for his  
lofty claims must have fretted his brethren, and created  
uneasiness. The letter ran thus: ‘I have read and pon-  
dered upon your kind letter with some degree of solem-  
nity of spirit. In the same frame I would now sit down  
to answer it. And what shall I say? Really I can  
scarce tell. The connexion between you and your  
brother hath been so close and continued, and your  
attachment to him so necessary to keep up his interest,  
that I would not willingly for the world do or say any-  
thing that may separate such friends. I cannot help  
thinking that he is still jealous of me and my proceedings;  
but, I thank God, I am quite easy about it. I more and  
more find that he who believeth doth not make haste;  
and that if we will have patience, we shall find that  
every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted,  
however it may seem to have taken very deep root, shall  
be plucked up. I have seen an end of all perfection,  
and expect it only in Him, where I am sure to find it,  
even in the ever-loving, ever-lovely Jesus. He knows  
how I love and honour you and your brother, and how  
often I have preferred your interest to my own. This,  
by the grace of God, I shall still continue to do.’ It  
does not need to be added that the evil was averted, and  
that the brothers worked together to the last.

It was Christmas 1752 when Whitefield wrote this  
letter. Looking round upon the circle of his friends at  
this friendliest season of the year, we miss some kind,

familiar faces. His mother’s face is not there; she had  
died a year before, while he was paying his last visit  
to America. Doddridge’s face is not there; he died at  
Lisbon, and the news of his decease followed Whitefield  
to America. Like the soldier on the battlefield, who  
can but drop a word of pity for a fallen comrade and  
lift up a prayer for himself, Whitefield could only say,  
‘Dr. Doddridge, I find, is gone; Lord Jesus, prepare me  
to follow after!’ The face of ‘good Bishop Benson’ is  
not there; he died on August 30, 1752. His last days  
verified the remark of the Countess of Huntingdon.  
‘My Lord! mark my words: when you are on your  
dying bed, Whitefield’s will be one of the few ordina-  
tions you will reflect upon with complacence.’ On his  
dying bed, he sent Whitefield a present of ten guineas for  
the orphan-house as a token of his regard, and begged to  
be remembered in his prayers. The face of Whitefield’s  
only sister is not there. Her house in Bristol had been  
his home and also his early Sunday morning preaching  
room in that city; and when she died he believed that  
she had entered into ‘the rest that remains for the people  
of God.’ The face of Ralph Erskine is not there. His  
death occurred on November 6, 1752; and when the  
intelligence was brought to Ebenezer, he said with great  
emotion, ‘And is Ralph gone? He has twice got the  
start of me; he was first in Christ, and now he is first in  
glory.’ But the start was not a long one; for Ebenezer  
Erskine was now an old man, and worn with heavy  
labours. On June 2, 1754, he followed his brother  
quietly and gently; as one sleeping and resting himself  
after toil, he went to his reward.

CHAPTER XII.

**1753-1770.**

CHAPEL BUILDING—ATTACKS BY ENEMIES—INFIRMITIES--   
 HIS DEATH--THE RESULTS OF HIS WORK.

No small portion of the year 1753 was spent by White-  
field in what he called cross-ploughing the land; and what  
that work was is well enough known without our follow-  
ing him from field to field. But while he thought that  
he was the happiest man who, being fond neither of  
money, numbers, nor power, went on day by day without  
any other scheme than a general intention to promote  
the common salvation amongst people of all denomina-  
tions, his attention was forcibly called to the work of  
providing a permanent place of worship for his followers  
in London. The churches were as inaccessible to Metho-  
dists as ever; but had they been open probably few would  
have cared to enter them, for the freedom of the Taber-  
nacle was in their estimation preferable to the unalterable  
forms of the Church. The Tabernacle was still the  
wooden building that was hastily erected at the time of  
the division between the Calvinists and the Arminians.  
The idea of a permanent building seems to have been  
first suggested by the Countess of Huntingdon; but  
Whitefield was slow to move. In the winter of 1752  
she and Lady Frances Shirley again urged the work upon  
his attention, and this time he was brought to their side,  
and began to collect money. His people responded with  
their usual liberality, and contributed a hundred and  
seventy six pounds on one Sunday. With eleven hundred

pounds in hand, he, on March 1,1753, laid the first brick  
of the new Tabernacle, which was to be eighty feet  
square, and built around the old place. The ceremony  
was performed with great solemnity, and Whitefield  
preached a sermon from the text—‘In all places were I  
record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee.’  
Three months later the Tabernacle was ready to receive  
its congregation; and he opened it by preaching in it  
morning and evening, to four thousand people or more.

In the spring of this year Whitefield came into serious  
collision with the Moravians. The reports of their pro-  
ceedings and of their financial position which he pub-  
lished in ‘An Expostulatory Letter’ to Count Zinzendorf,  
were brought to his ears by one whom Peter Bohler  
stigmatises as an apostate; but there can be no doubt  
that Whitefield had his information from more sources  
than one; and as Bohler was assailed in the letter, his  
phrase must be somewhat discounted. A man might be  
an apostate from Moravianism, and yet a true witness.  
Whitefield opened his letter with a protestation that a  
real regard for his king and country and a disinterested  
love for his Saviour and his Saviour’s church, would not  
let him keep silence longer with respect to the shocking  
things of which he had heard, and the offences which  
had swelled to such an enormous bulk. According to  
the statements which he had received, there had been  
much foolishness and some wickedness practised by the  
Brethren. On Easter-day they would walk round the  
graves of their deceased friends, attended with hautboys,  
trumpets, French-horns, &c. They perfumed their meet-  
ing-rooms to prepare them for the entrance of our Lord.  
They had pictures of particular persons painted and ex-  
posed in their assemblies. They dressed the women with  
knots of particular colours, to indicate whether they were  
married or marriageable, single or widows, together with  
other distinctions that cannot be named. Many of them

were in debt to an enormous amount. Zinzendorf was  
directly taxed with owing sundry persons forty thousand  
pounds. Bohler was charged with some ridiculous follies.  
The Royal Exchange rung with the tale, of their money  
delinquencies. Families were ruined by them, or kept  
in anxious suspense. Whitefield, therefore, exhorted  
them to remember their former days, and to return to  
the simpler and holier communion which they had for-  
saken. He warned them that God generally suffers  
‘Babels to be built pretty high’ before He comes down  
to confound the language of the builders; that if knaves  
are employed, as they commonly are, God’s honour is  
concerned to discover them; and that if any of His  
children are undesignedly drawn into the mischief, He  
will, for their sakes, rebuke the tempter, and make a way  
for them to escape.

Böhler wrote to Whitefield, and denied the particular  
things with which he had charged him. He also said  
that the Brethren had been charged with faults of which  
they were not guilty, either in whole or in part; but  
how that denial can be made to agree with Bohler’s  
words to his congregation on April 9, 1753 (fifteen days  
before Whitefield’s letter was written), I cannot see: —  
‘Brother Bohler “wished the brethren might attain such  
converse with the Saviour, that all old things might be  
done away thereby, and particularly the guilt any of us  
may have contracted, in these intricate and confused  
times, by want of sufficient love to Him and His blood-  
bought congregation.” ’ It is true that he does not con-  
fess to any other guilt than that of a declension in love;  
but the spiritual condition which he deplores testifies of  
other faults. Neither does Whitefield appear to have  
been so rash and heedless as Bohler asserts he was; for  
even in respect of Bohler’s character he had not spoken  
until after some of the Brethren themselves had expressed  
dissatisfaction with their teacher. A month before the

appearance of Whitefield’s letter, Böhler had refrained  
from communicating at the Lord’s table with his church,  
not on account of any condemnation or guilt felt in his  
own mind, but because some of the brethren and sisters  
were not satisfied with him. Even had the Brethren been  
free from all blame, it is evident that when Whitefield  
expostulated with them he had some good reasons for his  
act. But they were not free from blame. Count Zinzen-  
clorf answered Whitefield, with much confidence and not  
a little manifest annoyance, in a letter which no more  
deals with the broad case than does Böhler’s. He said—  
‘As yet I owe not a farthing of the 40,000*l*. you are  
pleased to tell me of; and if your precipitate officious-  
ness should save me and those foreigners you forewarn  
so compassionately from that debt, your zeal would  
prove very fatal to the English friends you pity, it seems,  
no less than the Germans.’ How was the salvation of  
the foreigners to prove the ruin of the English? Because  
they, that is, Zinzendorf, had bound himself for thirty thou-  
sand pounds as a security to help the English Brethren out  
of an alarming difficulty. There was debt, there was the  
danger of imprisonment, there was scandal, just as White-  
field had stated.

The Count’s words, which describe the state of things  
at the end of 1752 and the beginning of 1753, are as  
follows: —‘I asked the Lord whether I was to think of  
going to prison. The decision was in the negative. I  
forbade Johannes’ writing to Lusatia of my dangerous  
position; for I was not sure whether my imprisonment  
might not stand in the licence of Satan from our Saviour.  
Ordering my papers to be packed up, I prepared every-  
thing as though I was to go to gaol that afternoon, after  
which I enjoyed a quiet siesta. In the very hour when  
payment was due, and no delay admissible, for London  
seemed to be made of iron, Hockel entered my room

with tears of anguish in his eyes. There was a strange  
conflict going on in my mind. Our Saviour had assured  
me, by means of the lot, that I should be able to pay this  
day and in this very hour. It was one peculiar feature  
of my course not to be able to foresee everything, but to  
consign certain things entirely to His wise government;  
and I had promised Him so to do, as confidingly as if the  
desired help were in my own house. Yet the exercise  
of this kind of faith, just then, was far from being  
agreeable. At this moment Jonas (Weiss) entered the  
room with a letter from Cornelius de Laer, enclosing a  
draft for 1,000; upon seeing which Hockel’s tears of  
anguish were changed to those of joy. The imprison-  
ment would have been no disgrace to myself; the whole  
city knew that the Brethren owed me 30,000, and that  
my security had saved them from bankruptcy.’ On  
Good Friday of the same year fifteen Brethren were in  
danger of imprisonment for debt, but were spared the  
disgrace by the Count’s becoming their security to dis-  
charge the debt and interest within four years.

The fact is that the ‘diaconies’ of England, Holland,  
and Germany were almost bankrupt through foolishly  
attempting work for which they had not the means.  
When the money became due, they often had to give  
securities of the poorest kind. They also, in England at  
least, thoughtlessly misled the Count by not informing  
him of the whole of their liabilities. It was truly a  
‘sifting-time,’ as they called it; and while they cannot  
be exonerated from grave censure, their ignorance and  
mistaken piety were not corrupted with any admixture of  
dishonesty.1

Besides the unsatisfactory replies of Bohler and Zinzen-  
dorf, Whitefield received a letter from a Moravian friend,

1  Memoirs of James Hutton/ &c. By Daniel Benham, pp. 265-812;  
and Appendix, pp. 561-565.

to which he wrote a reply, part of which is here tran-  
scribed: —

“My dear Man,—Though my wife hath not sent me the  
letter, yet she writes me,” That you have sent me a threatening  
one.” I thank you for it, though unseen, and say unto thee, if  
thou art thus minded, “What thou doest, do quickly,’ Blessed  
be God, I am ready to receive the most traitorous blow, and to  
confess before God and man all my weaknesses and failings,  
whether in public or private life. I laid my account of such  
treatment before I published my expostulatory letter; and  
your writing: in such a manner convinces me more and more  
that Moravianism leads us to break through the most sacred  
ties of nature, friendship, and disinterested love. But my wife  
says you write, “That I am drunk with power and appro-  
bation.” Wast thou with me so long, my dear man, and hast  
thou known me no better? What power didst thou know me  
ever to grasp at? or what power am I now invested with?  
None that I know of, except that of being a poor pilgrim. And  
as for approbation, God knows I have had little else besides the  
cross to glory in since my first setting out. May that be my  
glory still! My wife says likewise that you write, “The bulk  
of my letter is not truth.” So says Mr. Peter B.; nay, he says  
“that all is a lie;” and I hear he declares so in the pulpit. So  
that, whether I will or not, he obliges me to clear myself in  
print; and if he goes on in this manner, will not only constrain  
me to print a third edition, but also to publish the dreadful  
heap that lies behind. My answers to him, the Count, and my  
old friend H., are almost ready. 0, my dear man, let me tell  
thee that the God of truth and love hates lies: and that course  
can never be good which needs equivocations and falsehoods to  
support it. God willing, you shall have none from me. I  
have naked truth. I write out of pure love; and the Lord  
Jesus only knows what unspeakable grief and pain I feel when  
I think how many of my dear friends have so involved them-  
selves. If anything stops my pen, it will be concern for them,  
not myself. I value neither name, nor life itself, when the  
cause of God calls me to venture both. Thanks be to His  
great name, I can truly say that no sin hath had dominion  
over me; neither have I slept with the guilt of any known,  
unpretended sin lying upon my heart. If you will tell me, I

will be obliged to you. In the meanwhile, I wish thee well in  
body and soul, and subscribe myself, my dear John,

‘Your very affectionate, though injured, friend,

‘For Christ’s sake,

‘ George Whitefield.’

His open-air preaching was concluded this year in a  
way too beautiful to be left without notice. He had  
opened in Bristol another chapel, called by the same  
name as that in London,[[15]](#footnote-15) and then started for Somerset-  
shire. He writes, on December 1, that on the Tuesday  
before, he had preached at seven in the evening to a  
great multitude in the open air; that all was hushed and  
exceeding solemn; that the stars shone with great bright-  
ness; that then, if ever, he had by faith seen Him who  
calls them all by their names; and that his soul was filled  
with holy ambition, and he longed to be one of those  
who shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. His hands  
and body had been pierced with cold; [[16]](#footnote-16) but what,’ he  
asks, ‘are outward things when the soul within is warmed  
with the love of God?’

Much and sincerely as he desired his crown and joy,  
it seemed at this time as if another were to precede him.  
His friend Wesley was ill of what the physicians thought  
was galloping consumption. Whitefield pitied the church  
and himself, but not Wesley. He almost grieved to think  
that he must stay behind in ‘this cold climate,’ whilst  
Wesley took ‘his flight to a radiant throne prepared for  
him from the foundations of the world.’ Then again, he

thought how ‘poor Mr. Charles’ was to be pitied, upon  
whom double work would come. The time was full of  
sorrow; and it gave Whitefield and the Countess an ex-  
cellent opportunity to serve their friends. The Countess  
and another lady, just arrived in Bath from London, went  
from Bath to Bristol, to inform Charles of his brother’s  
dangerous state. He immediately started for London,  
and found John at Lewisham; he fell on his neck and  
wept. Prayer was now offered in all the Methodist  
societies for the recovery of their great leader; and  
Charles records that a change for the better came when  
the people were praying for him at the Foundry. Hope,  
however, had been relinquished by all; and Wesley had  
written his epitaph, which was a longer composition than  
Whitefield had penned for his own tombstone, but similar  
in spirit. Whitefield wrote from Bristol to both the  
brothers, but enclosed John’s letter in Charles’s. Few  
things reflect more honour upon his warmheartedness  
than these words.’

Being unexpectedly brought back from Somersetshire, and  
hearing you are gone upon such a mournful errand, I cannot  
help sending after you a few sympathising lines. The Lord  
help and support you! May a double spirit of the ascending  
Elijah descend and rest on the surviving Elisha! Now is the  
time to prove the strength of Jesus yours. A wife, a friend,  
and brother ill together. Well, this is our comfort, all things  
shall work together for good to those that love God. If you  
think proper, be pleased to deliver the enclosed. It was  
written out of the fulness of my heart. To-morrow I leave  
Bristol, and purpose reaching London by Saturday morning or  
night. Glad should I be to reach heaven first; but faith and  
patience hold out a little longer. Yet a little while, and we  
shall be all together with our common Lord. I commend you  
to His everlasting love; and am, my dear friend, with much  
sympathy,

‘Yours, &c.,  
 ‘**George Whitefield.’**

*To the Reverend Mr. John Wesley.*

‘Bristol, December 3, 1753.

‘Reverend and very dear Sir,—If seeing you so weak, when  
leaving London, distressed me, the news and prospect of your  
approaching dissolution hath quite weighed me down. I pity  
the church, and myself, but not you. A radiant throne awaits  
you, and ere long you will enter into your Masters joy. Yonder  
He stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head  
amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels. But I, poor  
I, that have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen  
years, must be left behind to grovel here below! Well, this is  
my comfort, it cannot be long ere the chariots are sent even  
for worthless me. If prayers can detain them, even you, re-  
verend and very dear sir, shall not leave us yet; but if the  
decree is gone forth that you must now fall asleep in Jesus,  
may He kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the em-  
braces of triumphant love. If in the land of the living, I  
hope to pay my last respects to you next week; if not, reverend  
and dear sir, farewell! I prae, sequar, etsi non passibus aequis.  
My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and, I fear, you  
are too weak for me to enlarge. May underneath you be Christ’s  
everlasting arms! I commend you to His never-failing mercy,  
and am, very dear sir,

‘Your most affectionate, sympathising, and afflicted younger  
 ‘brother in the gospel of our common Lord,

‘Geoege Whitefield.’

It will have been noticed from the letter to Charles  
Wesley that Charles’s wife was ill, as well as his brother.  
She was seized with small-pox in a virulent form, and as  
soon as he could leave London he started for Bristol, to  
wait on her; while at the same time Whitefield, hastened  
by the entreaties of Lady Huntingdon, went from Bristol  
to London. Lady Huntingdon’s friendship for Charles  
Wesley and his wife was of the most practical kind, in-  
ducing her to go twice a day to their house, to wait on  
Mrs. Wesley. It now fell to Whitefield’s lot to com-  
municate with Charles respecting the health of Wesley,

and to sympathise with him in his trouble for his wife.  
One of his letters ran thus:—

‘London, December 13, 1753.

‘My dear Friend,—The Searcher of hearts alone knows the  
sympathy I have felt for you and yours, and what suspense my  
mind hath been in concerning the event of your present cir-  
cumstances. I pray and enquire, enquire and pray again,  
always expecting to hear the worst. Ere this can reach you, I  
expect the lot will be cast either for life or death. I long to  
hear, that I may partake like a friend either of your joy or  
sorrow. Blessed be God for that promise whereby we are as-  
sured that “all things shall work together for good to those  
that love Him.” This may make us at least resigned, when  
called to part with our Isaacs. But who knows the pain of  
parting, when the wife and the friend are conjoined? To have  
the desire of one’s eyes cut off with a stroke, what· but grace—  
omnipotent grace—can enable us to bear it? But who knows,  
perhaps the threatened stroke may be recalled? Surely the  
Lord of all lords is preparing you for further usefulness by these  
complex trials. We must be purged, if we would bring forth  
more fruit. Your brother, I hear, is better; to-day I intended  
to have seen him, but Mr. Blackwell sent me word he thought  
he would be out for the air. I hope Mr. H. is better; but I  
can scarce mention anybody now but dear Mrs. Wesley. Pray  
let me know how it goes with you. My wife truly joins in  
sympathy and love. Night and day indeed you are remembered  
by, my dear friend,

‘Yours, &c.,

‘George Whitefield.’

After continuing in danger for more than twenty days,  
Mrs. Wesley was deemed convalescent by her medical  
attendants; and when the good news reached Whitefield,  
in a letter from Lady Huntingdon, he at once gave  
private and public thanks for her recovery. Alas! a  
blow almost as heavy as the loss of Mrs. Wesley now  
fell on Charles; when the mother was recovering, her  
only child, an infant boy, caught her malady and died.  
The little one bore his uncle’s name.

Meanwhile, Wesley disappointed his friends’ fears by  
slowly regaining his strength. He who seemed so nigh  
his rest returned to work for almost forty years longer,  
and, among other services, preached the funeral sermon  
of his brother Whitefield. It was the cause of sincere  
joy to Whitefield to see his fellow-labourers spared to  
stand by his side; he prayed that the Wesleys might  
both spring up afresh, and their latter end increase more  
and more. ‘Talk not of having no more work in the  
vineyard,’ he wrote to Charles, ‘I hope all our work is  
but just beginning. I am sure it is high time for me to  
do something for Him who hath done and suffered so  
much for me. Hear forty years old, and such a dwarf!  
The winter come already, and so little done in the  
summer! I am ashamed; I blush, and am confounded.’  
This winter of affliction for the Wesleys was one of  
much physical prostration to Whitefield also; every ser-  
mon, he says, was fetched out of the furnace. When  
spring came he sailed with twenty-two orphans for  
Georgia, via Lisbon. This was his ninth voyage; and  
his reason for making it by way of Lisbon was that as a  
preacher and a Protestant he might see something of  
the superstitions of the Church of Rome. For this pur-  
pose he could have chosen no better season and no better  
place; he was in time for all the pageantry and activity  
of Easter week. A gentleman of the factory, whose  
brother had received good through Whitefield’s preach-  
ing, welcomed the evangelist to his house, and afforded  
him every opportunity of gratifying his wishes. For  
were these the wishes of idle curiosity. Whitefield  
delighted in travelling for the sake of preaching and also  
for the sake of seeing men and thing's. He thought that  
it expanded a man’s mind to see strange places and fresh  
customs; and there can be no doubt that his own wide  
charity was due in no small degree to his intercourse  
with men of all classes, of all churches, and of many

nations. At first he did not care much for the distinc-  
tions between churches; and when Quakers, Independents,  
Presbyterians, and Baptists showed him equal kindness  
wherever he travelled, and displayed the great qualities  
of purity and love, he cared yet less. A more impartial  
Christian it would be hard to find. He expected per-  
fection in none, and hailed every tendency to it in all.  
Even Lisbon was to do more than present him with  
things to be hated and shunned. Amid so much that  
was against his judgment and conscience, there were  
things to delight his taste. The singing in St. Domino  
church by the Dominican friars, while the Queen per-  
formed her devotions there, was ‘most surprisingly  
sweet.’ The action of the preachers, a great number of  
whom he heard, struck him as most graceful. ‘Yimdi  
oculi, vividce manus, omnia vivida.’ He thought, as he  
beheld their impressive gesticulation and heard their  
tender tones, that English preachers, who have truth on  
their side, would do well to be a little more fervent in  
their address, and not let falsehood and superstition run  
away with all that is pathetic and affecting. The city  
was a scene to make him all eye and ear. There were  
images of saints with lanterns burning in front of them,  
and churches hung with purple damask trimmed with  
gold. There were the richest and noblest of the land  
bowing before the gorgeous altars, or hurrying from  
church to church to offer their sacrifices. There was the  
spectacle of the King, attended with his nobles, washing  
the feet of twelve poor men, and of the Queen and her  
royal daughters doing the same thing to twelve poor  
women. There were processions of penitents, headed by  
preaching friars bearing crucifixes in their hands, which  
they held up before the eyes of the devotees as they  
exhorted them to fresh acts of sacrifice. His soul was  
moved with pity as he saw by moonlight one night some  
two hundred penitents, dressed in white linen vestments,

barefooted, and with heavy chains attached to their  
ankles, which made a dismal noise as they passed along  
the streets; some carried great stones on their backs, and  
others dead men’s bones and skulls in their hands; most  
of them whipped and lashed themselves with cords, or  
with flat bits of iron. Even in the moonlight the effects  
of their heavy penances could be seen on their red and  
swollen backs. It struck him as a horrible sight, in the  
same church where he so greatly admired the singing, that  
over the great window were the heads of many Jews,  
painted on canvas, who had been condemned by the  
inquisition, and carried out from that church to be burnt.  
‘Strange way this of compelling people to come in!’ he  
exclaimed. ‘Such was not thy method, 0 meek and  
compassionate Lamb of God! But bigotry is as cruel as  
the grave.’ The whole time was, as he said, instructive,  
though silent.

His wife was not with him this voyage, indeed she  
seems to have performed but one long journey with him  
after their marriage. Her health was unequal to the  
trials of an American summer; and it would have been  
useless for her to have travelled with him as a com-  
panion from place to place. He could but leave her to  
her own resources and to the kindness of his friends—  
not a pleasant position for a wife, but the best in which  
he could place her, unless he relinquished his evangelistic  
work, and that would simply have overturned his whole  
plan of life, and violated his most solemn convictions.  
He implored one of his London friends to visit his wife  
frequently—‘Add to my obligations,’ he said, ‘by fre-  
quently visiting my poor wife. Kindnesses shown to  
her in my absence will be double kindnesses.’

With a family, but not with his wife, he arrived at  
Bethesda, which he found in a flourishing state, as was  
also the colony. He had a hundred and six persons,  
black and white, to provide for and to guide; and he

seems to have known the ages and capabilities and con-  
dition of all at the orphan-house, and often to have sent  
specific and peremptory directions concerning particular  
cases. Honour, too, was beginning to come to early and  
faithful colonists. His friend Habersham, who came  
over with him at his first voyage, and to whom he com-  
mitted the temporal affairs of the orphan-house, was now  
appointed secretary to the colony; afterwards he became  
president of the council and Commons House of Assembly.  
Whitefield himself received from the new college of New  
Jersey, for which he had greatly exerted himself before  
leaving England, the degree of Master of Arts. Alto-  
gether a better reception was given him by the country  
than he had received fourteen years before, and that, as  
we have seen, was gratifying enough. His weaknesses  
still clung to him, that is, his weaknesses of the flesh,  
and from this time he may be considered a confirmed  
invalid who refused to be invalided; but his strength of  
heart was not at all diminished, and when he got as far  
north as Portsmouth, he said in the quietest way, ‘I am  
now come to the end of my northward line, and in a day  
or two purpose to turn back, in order to preach all the  
way to Georgia. It is about a sixteen hundred miles’  
journey.’ This was he who was ashamed of his sloth  
and lukewarmness, and longed to be on the stretch for  
God! Yet again, when his ride of two thousand miles  
was ended, and when he had preached for nearly five  
months, he longed to have time to spend in retirement  
and deep humiliation before that Saviour for whom he  
had done so little!

Whitefield’s tenth voyage was performed in the spring  
of 1755. About two months after his arrival in England  
his friend Cennick died. ‘John Cennick,’ he said, ‘is  
now added to the happy number of those who see God  
as He is. I do not envy, but want to follow after him.’  
If not a strong Christian, Cennick was a very devout one;

and the church cannot forget her indebtedness to him  
for a few good hymns which he added to her treasury.  
Some tender, beautiful lines, headed ‘Nunc dimittis  
were found in his pocket-book when he died; here are  
some of them:—

‘I never am forsaken or alone;

Thou kissest all my tears and griefs away:

Art with me all night long, and all the day:

I have no doubt that I belong to Thee,

And shall be with Thee to eternity.

I would not Thee offend—Thou knowst my heart—

Nor one short day before Thy time depart:

But I am weary and dejected too,

0 let me to eternal Sabbath go.’

Whitefleld found the Methodists very lively in England,  
and had the pleasure of hearing that several clergymen  
were preaching those truths which he had done so much  
to propagate. But enemies were also alert. He found  
it difficult to keep clear of collision with Wesley’s friends,  
his own admirers and they being, as usual, as careless  
about unneighbourly acts as their leaders were anxious  
to love and serve one another. He also had open and  
dangerous opposition from some ruffians in the metro-  
polis. It was to be expected that one who eclipsed the  
best actors of the day in grace of action and naturalness  
of expression, and who, at the same time, assailed theatre  
going with unsparing severity, would be attacked in turn.  
Slander and falsehood had shot a feeble missile at him  
when he last visited Scotland, but had given him no  
trouble. In Glasgow he warned his hearers to avoid the  
playhouse, which was then only the wooden booth of  
some strolling players, and represented to them the per-  
nicious influence of theatres upon religion and morality;  
about the same time the proprietor of the booth ordered  
his workmen to take it down. This simple affair was  
thus reported in the ‘Newcastle Journal,’ when he got as

far south as that town: ‘By a letter from Edinburgh we  
are informed that on the 2nd instant, Mr. Whitefield, the  
itinerant, being at Glasgow, and preaching to a numerous  
audience near the playhouse lately built, he inflamed the  
mob so much against it, that they ran directly from before  
him, and pulled it down to the ground. Several of the  
rioters are since taken up, and committed to gaol.’ The  
next trouble with admirers of the stage was of a compli-  
cated kind, and it is difficult to say how much they were  
to blame; for playhouses, a bishop and his vestry, and  
Roman Catholics, who hated King George, are mingled  
in a ludicrous medley in the story. It is possible to get  
consistency only by supposing that all these hated the  
Methodist for special reasons of their own, and were, by  
this common feeling, banded against him: even hatred of  
the same thing will make enemies ‘wondrous kind’ for a  
season. Some religious people, apparently the Dissenters,  
had built a chapel, called Long Acre Chapel, near the  
playhouses. It was an unconsecrated building, duly  
licensed for preaching; its minister was the Rev. John  
Barnard, an Independent, one of Whitefield’s converts.  
Mr. Barnard asked Whitefield to preach in his chapel  
twice a week and Whitefield consented to do so on the  
understanding that he might use the liturgy, if he thought  
proper; for he judged that he might ‘innocently preach  
the love of a crucified Redeemer, without giving any just-  
offence to Jew or Gentile, much less to any bishop or  
overseer of the Church of God.’ Every one was not of  
his mind. A band of roughs were hired to disturb him  
while he preached, by making a noise with a copper fur-  
nace, bells, drums, &c., at the chapel door. Part of their  
pay came from some gentlemen of the vestry of the  
Bishop of Bangor and Dean of Westminster, Dr. Zachariah  
Pearce; and they did their work to perfection. They  
used more dangerous means of silencing the obnoxious  
preacher than drums; they threw stones through the

windows at him, and always missed him, though some  
one else suffered; they rioted at the door, and abused  
him and his congregation as they were leaving the  
chapel. Things were serious, though Whitefield with  
his strong sense of humour called their behaviour ‘a  
serenading from the sons of Jubal and Cain.’ An appeal  
made by him to a magistrate procured protection for a  
time. An appeal to Dr. Pearce was less successful; that  
prelate forbade his preaching in the chapel again; but  
his inhibition was useless. Whitefield continued his  
work. The bishop’s vestry now revived the persecution  
by the mob; and Whitefield made repeated appeals to  
this exemplary overseer to stay the violence, and he ap-  
pealed in vain! Several persons were seriously injured;  
and he himself was threatened with death. Once when  
he entered the pulpit, he found a letter laid upon the  
cushion, which threatened him with ‘a certain, sudden,  
and unavoidable stroke, unless he desisted from preaching  
and pursuing the offenders by law.’ It was his determi-  
nation, formed with the advice of some members of the  
government, to prosecute the offenders, that made them  
assail him in this cowardly way; and it is certain that  
there were some with audacity and wickedness enough  
to give the stroke. For some unusual purpose a man  
followed him into the pulpit of the Tabernacle while the  
Long Acre trouble was at the worst; and it was generally  
supposed that he was an assassin. Whitefield dared the  
worst, and let the prosecution go on, until its preparation  
to enter the King’s Bench terrified his enemies. One of  
them also had previously come under better influences,  
and regretted the part he had taken in paying ruffians  
to commit violence.

The letters to the Bishop of Bangor are important for  
more than the information they give of the rioting. They  
give us a last explanation and vindication of the course  
which Whitefield had followed for so many years, and

which he followed to his death. The letters of the bishop  
to Whitefield were not published, because Whitefield  
thought that it would be a breach of courtesy to pro-  
claim their contents, and his lordship, fearing exposure,  
had signified his intention to use his right as a peer to  
hinder them from appearing; but it is easy to see what  
their substance must have been, from the answers they  
received. Dr. Pearce had charged Whitefield with un-  
faithfulness to the Church of England, and the reply was:  
‘For near these twenty years last past, as thousands can  
testify, I have conscientiously defended her homilies and  
articles, and upon all occasions spoken well of her liturgy.  
Either of these, together with her discipline, I am so far  
from renouncing, much less from throwing aside all  
regard to, that I earnestly pray for the due restoration of  
the one, and daily lament the wanton departure of too,  
too many from the other. But, my lord, what can I do?  
When I acted in the most regular manner, and when I  
was bringing multitudes even of Dissenters themselves to  
crowd the churches, without any other reason being  
given than that of too many followers after me, I was  
denied the use of them. Being thus excluded, and many  
thousands of ignorant souls, that perhaps would neither  
go to church nor meeting-houses, being very hungry  
after the gospel, I thought myself bound in duty to deal  
out to them the bread of life. Being further ambitious  
to serve my God, my king, and my country, I sacrificed  
my affections, and left my native soil, in order to begin  
and carry on an orphan-house in the infant colony of  
Georgia, which, through the Divine blessing, is put upon  
a good foundation. This served as an introduction,  
though without my design, to my visiting the other parts  
of his Majesty’s dominions in North America; and I  
humbly hope that many made truly serious in that  
foreign clime will be my joy and crown of rejoicing in  
the day of the Lord Jesus.

‘Your lordship judgeth exceeding right when you say,  
“I presume you do not mean to declare any dissent from  
the Church of England.” Far be it from me: no, my  
lord, unless thrust out, I shall never leave her, and even  
then (as I hope whenever it happens it will be an unjust  
extrusion) I shall continue to adhere to her doctrines,  
and pray for the much wished for restoration of her  
discipline, even to my dying day. Fond of displaying  
her truly Protestant and orthodox principles, especially  
when church and state are in danger from a cruel and  
popish enemy, I am glad, my lord, of an opportunity of  
preaching, though it be in a meeting-house; and I think  
it discovers a good and moderate spirit in the Dissenters,  
who will quietly attend on the Church service, as many  
have done and continue to do at Long Acre Chapel, while  
many, who I suppose style themselves her faithful sons,  
by very improper instruments of reformation, have en-  
deavoured to disturb and molest us.’

Another extract from the same letter cannot be read  
without great pain by anyone who holds that the accept-  
ance of creeds or the subjection to canons ought to be  
made in simple, literal honesty, without qualifications or  
reservations of any kind. Whitefield’s answer to the  
bishop might be irrefragable if treated upon the ground  
on which he placed it; but truth should not be made  
dependent upon the customs of any class of men, other-  
wise the law of God is made void by human tradition.  
Neither were matters mended by his appealing so  
solemnly to the Almighty, as he did in the following  
words: ‘But, my lord, to come nearer to the point in

hand—and for Christ’s sake let not your lordship be  
offended with my using such plainness of speech—I  
would, as in the presence of the living God, put it to  
your lordship’s conscience whether there is one bishop or  
presbyter in England, Wales, or Ireland, that looks upon  
our canons as his rule of action? If they do, we are all

perjured with a witness, and consequently in a very bad  
sense of the word irregular indeed. When canons and  
other church laws are invented and compiled by men of  
little hearts and bigoted principles on purpose to hinder  
persons of more enlarged souls from doing good, or  
being more extensively useful, they become mere bruta  
fulmina; and when made use of only as cords to bind  
up the hands of a zealous few, that honestly appear for  
their king, their country, and their God, like the withes  
with which the Philistines bound Samson, in my opinion  
they may very legally be broken. ... As good is done,  
and souls are benefited, I hope your lordship will not  
regard a little irregularity, since at the worst it is only  
the irregularity of doing well.’ Impossible as it is to  
withold sympathy from an irregular well-doer, who was  
singled out as the object of pastoral warnings and the  
mark of scoundrels’ brickbats, while card-playing, gamb-  
ling, idle clergymen were passed by without rebuke or  
punishment, there is no gainsaying that he was irregular.  
To judge his conscience is not our office; but it would  
have made one inconsistency the less in his fife, had he  
severed himself from a church with which he could hold  
but a nominal connexion so long as he persisted in his  
irregularities; and it would have been a yet happier  
thing had no church been so rigid in its forms as to make  
the warmest zeal and the tenderest love in its communion  
things which it could not tolerate, and yet remain true to  
its constitution. It is strange when the best Christian  
becomes the most objectionable member of a church.

Early in 1756, the year which our narrative has now  
reached, a great change passed over Whitefield’s personal  
appearance. The graceful figure, which was familiar on  
many a common and park and market-cross of England,  
which Londoners knew so well as he rapidly walked their  
streets, and country-people recognised as he dashed along  
their lanes, attended by a knot of brethren on horseback,

in haste to meet some mighty congregation, or rode slowly  
along, pondering his next sermon or silently communing  
with God—that figure which was associated with the  
godly young man who entranced and awed his country-  
men—was now changed, when he was forty-two years old,  
into the heavy, corpulent, unwieldy form, which en-  
gravers have preserved for us in their likenesses of the  
great preacher.1 The observation of ‘the common people  
who heard him gladly,’ has pictured him in happy lines,  
as they knew him in his earlier and in his later days. It  
is the bold and active young preacher whom we see  
when we hear him described by a poor man as one who  
‘preached like a lion.’ It is the stout man of middle-  
age whom we see when another describes him as ‘a jolly,  
brave man, and sich a look with him.’ [[17]](#footnote-17) [[18]](#footnote-18) [[19]](#footnote-19) And no doubt  
his kindly face and rounded form did make him seem ‘a  
jolly, brave man;’ but the truth is, that this change was,  
owing wholly to disease. It was neither less work nor  
less care that made him seem so pale. As for work, he  
says—‘I have been enabled to preach twice and thrice a  
day, to many, many thousands for these two months last  
past. And yet I cannot die. Nay, they tell me I grow  
fat. I dread a corpulent body; but it breaks in upon  
me like an armed man.’ Preaching failed to cure, it  
rather increased, his complaint. When advised by a  
physician to try a perpetual blister for an inflammatory

quinsey, lie changed the receipt and tried perpetual  
preaching; and he vigorously and perseveringly applied  
the same remedy to corpulency, flux, and asthma, but not  
with the same success. He was doomed to carry a heavy  
burden of flesh.

He had care as well as work. It had been his plan to  
give those who helped at the orphan-house no certain  
income, or a very slender one: he said that if they loved  
him, they would serve him disinterestedly; he asked  
nothing for his own exhausting toils but food and raiment,  
and judged that others should be equally devoted. This  
surrounded him with sycophants, who pretended to be as  
high minded as he wanted to see them, and who humoured  
his impatience of contradiction, but who at the same time  
served themselves in an underhanded way. He could be  
roughly honest himself, and might well have borne with  
it among the managers of his institution; the smooth  
deceit which crept into office turned upon him and  
pierced him, when its time came. He thus complains of  
a loss which he suffered: —‘ I find that poor Η. P. is  
engaged, and that some good friends in Carolina have  
been instrumental in drawing him from the care of a  
family, over which I thought divine Providence had  
made him overseer, and where I imagined he intended  
to have abode at least for some years. I know not what  
reason I have given him to suspect my confidence was  
weakened towards him. I could do no more than trust  
him with my all, and place him at the head of my affairs  
and family without the least check or control. Add to  
all this that, notwithstanding the disparity of age, I con-  
sented that he should have my dear friend’s sister, with  
whom I thought he might live most usefully and happily  
at Bethesda, if you pleased, as long as you both should  
sojourn here below; and you know what satisfaction I  
expressed when I took my leave. But it seems my  
scheme is disconcerted, and my family like to be brought

into confusion. Alas! my dear Mrs. C., if this be the  
case, whom can I send that I may hope will continue  
disinterested long P- But, you know, this is not the first  
time that I have been wounded in the house of my  
friends.

‘I pity Dr.\_\_\_\_ from the bottom of my heart. Never

was I wrote to, or served so, by any from Bethesda  
before. Lord Jesus, lay it not to his charge. Lord Jesus,  
suffer us not to be led into temptation. I did not think  
to write so much. I rather choose to spread all before  
Bethesda’s God.’

When Whitefield had got one permanent chapel in  
London, he began to feel that it would be useful to have  
a second, in another part of the city. The foundation  
stone of Tottenham Court Chapel was accordingly laid  
on May 10, 1756, and the building opened for worship  
on November 7, the same year. It was becoming a  
difficult question for the increasing number of Metho-  
dists, who, like Whitefield and Wesley, nominally adhered  
to the Established Church and called themselves Church-  
men, to determine their standpoint. Churchmen they  
might be in name and spirit and faith, but Churchmen in  
modes of action they were not. As Methodists they  
were no part of the Church of England, neither would  
she recognise them; yet they were not Dissenters. They  
did not feel the objections of the Independents to Epis-  
copacy; they did not feel the scruples of Baptists about  
the baptism of infants; they did not feel the repugnance  
of Quakers to forms and sacraments of every kind; they  
did not feel the abhorrence of Presbyterians of prelates  
and the liturgy. Neither state nor church had made  
any provision for this new people. The action of the  
church had already been taken; it now remained for the  
state to determine its mode of procedure. It quietly let  
Methodism fall into the ranks of dissent, politically consi-  
dered. There was a Toleration Act, and the worshippers

in the new tabernacles and chapels that were beginning  
to multiply might avail themselves of its protection.  
Hence it has followed, that this movement which arose at  
Oxford, which was impelled and guided by duly ordained  
clergymen, and which might have crowded the Church  
of England with vast congregations of devout and holy  
people, has become more and more thoroughly identified  
with the oldest and most extreme forms of dissent in this  
land. Whitefield’s chapels and those of the Countess of  
Huntingdon are all Independent chapels, the use of the  
liturgy in some of them not hindering either minister or  
congregation from declaring that they regard the union  
of state and church as an unholy alliance, damaging to  
the church and burdensome and useless to the state.  
Even the society which Wesley established, and the  
members of which he so solemnly counselled to abide  
loyal to the church of which he was a minister, has  
gradually gone the way of all dissenting societies; it has  
also declared firmly that it will not return to the ancient  
fold, to which it has been invited to return. It is thus  
happening that Methodism, which never contemplated  
any severance from the church at all, is actually threaten-  
ing to bring about the dissolution of a bond which has  
existed ever since the Reformation. Its numbers are  
multiplied by tens of thousands; its chapels throng every  
town, and stand in every village of England; its ministers  
and lay preachers and helpers are legion; the sacra-  
ments of religion, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, are  
duly administered within its pale; its adherents are  
married and buried by their own spiritual teachers. A  
denomination or denominations constituted and managed  
in this way are not likely to long for other pastures and  
another fold. Nor is their unwillingness to be absorbed  
or appended as an auxiliary decreased by some petty ·  
annoyances, remnants of former days, to which they are  
subjected. Their social disadvantages in villages and

country districts, and the rudeness which too often shocks  
and pains them at the parish churchyard, where their  
ministers cannot inter their dead when they have been  
baptized according to the forms, and by a clergyman, of  
the Established Church, and where the clergyman will  
not give them Christian burial when they have not been  
so baptized, serve to excite their anger and hostility.  
As Englismen they cannot help asking themselves what  
is their fault, what their sin, that they should be thus  
treated; and when they see that it is only their love  
of Methodism and their attendance upon its services,  
they cleave all the more closely to their denomination.  
How distant does all this seem to be from the day when  
Whitefield strove to put his new chapel in Tottenham  
Court Road under the protection of the Countess of  
Huntingdon, and thus to preserve it for the Church; and  
when the Countess herself was annoyed at nothing so  
much as at the idea of one of her ministers becoming a  
Dissenter. Berridge of Everton wrote to her twenty  
years after the opening of this chapel, and seven after the  
death of Whitefield, in a strain which shows that even  
at that time, although she had practically been a Dis-  
senter for forty years, she disliked her position, and was  
impatient when anyone told her the bare truth about it.  
But Berridge was an honest man, and minded little how  
anyone resented his plain speaking. His language to the  
Countess was—‘However rusty or rickety the Dissenters  
may appear to you, God hath His remnant among them;  
therefore lift not up your hand against them for the Lord’s  
sake, nor yet for consistency’s sake, because your students  
are as real Dissenting preachers as any in the land,  
unless a gown and band can make a clergyman. The  
bishops look on your students as the worst kind of  
Dissenters; and manifest this by refusing that ordination  
to your preachers which would be readily granted to  
other teachers among the Dissenters.’ There are other

passages in the same letter which describe, almost with  
the accuracy of prophecy, the course of future events in  
Methodism and in the Establishment, and which might  
afford food for profitable thought even yet.

With regard to his new chapel, Whitefield wrote to Lady  
Huntingdon to say that they had consulted the Commons  
about putting it under her Ladyship’s protection, and that  
the answer was: ‘No nobleman can license a chapel, or  
in any manner have one put in his dwelling-house; that  
the chapel must be a private one, and not with doors to  
the street for any persons to resort to at pleasure, for  
then it becomes a public one; that a chapel cannot be  
built and used as such without the consent of the parson  
of the parish, and when it is done with his consent, no  
minister can preach therein, without licence of the bishop  
of the diocese.’ ‘There seems then,’ he says, ‘to be but  
one way, to license it as our other houses are; and  
thanks be to Jesus for that liberty which we have.’ There  
was the same crush of hearers, when the place was  
opened, as there had been at the Tabernacle. Many  
great people came, and begged that they might have a  
constant seat. A neighbouring physician called it ‘White-  
field’s soul-trap,’ and by that name it was commonly  
known among the foolish scoffers. Among the distin-  
guished visitors who were accommodated in Lady Hunt-  
ingdon’s pew, Lord Chesterfield might not unfrequently  
be seen; and once his rigid decorum and self-possession  
were as much overpowered by the eloquence of the  
preacher, as if he had been.a peasant at a Cambuslang  
preaching, or a Welsh miner among a host of his country-  
men shouting ‘ Gogoniant! bendith iti!’1 Whitefield, who

1 ‘ At seven of the morning,’ says Whitefield, ‘ have I seen perhaps ten  
thousand from different parts, in the midst of sermon, crying, “Gogunniant,  
bendyitti,” ready to leap for joy.’ A Welsh friend informs me that White-  
field must have meant, ‘Gogoniant! bendith iti!’ i.e. ‘Glory! blessed be  
Thou!’ The exclamation may still be heard in Calvinistic Methodist  
chapels.

was unrivalled in description, could easily make his  
hearers see with his eyes, and feel with his heart; and on  
this occasion he was giving a vivid and horrifying picture  
of the peril of sinners. He carried his audience out into  
the night, and nigh to a dangerous precipice, where in the  
feeble light might be seen, dim and staggering, the form  
of an old man, a blind beggar, deserted by his dog. The  
old man stumbles on, staff in hand, vainly endeavouring to  
discover his way. His face is towards the cliff; step by  
step he advances; his foot trembles on the ledge; another  
moment, and he will lie mangled in the valley below;  
when up starts the agonised Chesterfield, crying as he  
bounds forward to save him, ‘Good God! he is gone!1

Oratory so perfect and so exciting could not fail to  
bring some actors among the motley throng that listened  
to it. Foote and Garrick might sometimes be seen side  
by side; their opinion was that the sermon was preached  
best when preached for the fortieth time. All its weak-  
nesses were cut off, and all its ineffective parts suppressed;  
all its impressive passages were retained, and improved  
to the uttermost, and his memory holding with unerring  
accuracy what he wished to say, his tone, and look, and  
gesture, were adapted to its utterance with perfect art.  
Yet he was not bound by memory, but seized upon any  
passing circumstance, and turned it to account. The  
heavy thunder-cloud hanging on the horizon, and the  
flash of lightning which rent its bosom were, for his field  
congregations, his most vivid emblems of the coming day  
of wrath. A scoffer’s levity would point his stern rebuke;  
and a penitent’s tear seen in some bedimmed eye would  
prompt a word of loving encouragement.

It was more than the oratorical display which attracted  
to the ‘soul-trap’ Shuter, who was pronounced by Gar-  
rick the greatest comic genius he had ever seen.1 Shuter  
had a warm, kind heart, and must have felt his better

1 ‘Life of David Garrick.’ By Percy Fitzgerald, vol. i. p. 311.

nature moved by the humanity of the teaching of White-  
field. It was he who came to the rescue of a remarkable  
play which was rejected by Garrick, Powel, and Colman;  
Goldsmith thanked him with tears in his eyes for having  
established the reputation of his ‘Good Matur’d Man,’  
when they had deemed it unfit for production on the  
stage.1 He also acted in ‘She Stoops to Conquer.’ At  
the time of his first coming to hear Whitefield he was  
acting the part of Ramble in ‘The Rambler.’ The name  
of the play tempted Whitefield into that playing upon  
words to which he was somewhat addicted, and in the  
use of which he did not always exhibit the best taste.  
Seeing Shuter sitting in the front of the gallery—they  
were by this time knowm to each other personally—he  
fixed his eye upon him, and exclaimed in his warm invi-  
tation to sinners to come to the Lord Jesus: ‘And thou,  
poor Ramble, who hast long rambled from Him, come  
thou also. 0 end thy ramblings by coming to Jesus.’  
Shuter went to Whitefield at the close of the service, and  
said to him: ‘I thought I should have fainted—how  
could you serve me so?’ But neither this pointed ap-  
peal, nor many others to which he listened, succeeded in  
drawing him from his unsatisfying life to a nobler career.  
His part in the production of Goldsmith’s plays, which  
appeared two years before Whitefield’s death, shows that  
he continued to follow his old calling. There is, how-  
ever, an anecdote told of him which proves that the old  
thoughts and feelings were not extinguished, if they were  
not sufficiently strong to rule him. The Rev. Mr. Kins-  
man, who was an intimate friend of his, and had tried  
hard to wean him from his profession, met him one day  
in Portsmouth, and said to him that he had been preach-  
ing so often, and to such large congregations, that his  
physician advised change of air for his health. ‘And I,’  
said Shuter, ‘have been acting till ready to die; but oh,

1 Forster’s ‘Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith,’ p. 458.

how different our conditions! Had you fallen, it ‘would  
have been in the service of God; but in whose service  
have my powers been wasted? I dread to think of it.  
I certainly had a call once, while studying my part in  
the park, and had Mr. Whitefield received me at the  
Lord’s table I never should have gone back; but the  
caresses of the great, who, when unhappy, want Shuter  
to make them laugh, are too seducing. There is a good  
and moral play to-night; but no sooner is it over than I  
come in with my farce of “A Dish of all Sorts,” and  
knock all the moral on the head.’ When his friends  
rated him as a Methodist, because they had seen him  
with Mr. Kinsman, he said: ‘A precious method is mine;  
no, I wish I were; if any be right, they are.’ Lady Hun-  
tingdon gives us yet another glimpse of this kind-hearted  
actor. Writing from Bath to Lady Fanny Shirley, she  
says: ‘I have had a visit from Shuter, the comedian,  
whom I saw in the street, and asked to call on me. He  
was wonderfully astonished when I announced my name.  
We had much conversation; but he cannot give up his  
profession for another more reputable. He spoke of Mr.  
Whitefield with much affection, and with admiration of  
his talents. He promised to come some other time, when  
he had more leisure for conversation. Poor fellow! I  
think he is not far from the kingdom.’

Much has been said of Whitefield’s efforts for his  
orphan-house, and of the success with which he pleaded  
its claims; but let it not be thought that he never sent  
the collection-box round for any other object. He would  
help others when debt and anxiety pressed upon himself;  
the money which would have freed him was cheerfully  
sent to meet other wants. He often preached for the  
French Protestants in Prussia, who had suffered much at  
the hands of the Russians, and collected as much as  
fifteen hundred pounds for them. Many of the nobility  
attended his chapels while he was making this effort; and

the King of Prussia sent him his thanks for it. At  
another time he collected in his chapels, on one day, five  
hundred and sixty pounds, for ‘the relief of the German  
Protestants and the sufferers by fire at Boston.’ But on  
this occasion he resorted to a strange stratagem. At the  
close of the sermon, he said: ‘We will sing a hymn,  
during which those who do not choose to give their mite  
on this awful occasion may sneak off.’ Not one stirred;  
he then ordered the doors to be closed, and descending  
from the pulpit held the plate himself![[20]](#footnote-20) It was a com-  
mon thing to make a collection for the orphan-hospital  
in Edinburgh, when he visited Scotland. He also made  
a levy on the generosity of the Glasgow people, and  
taught them practical charity, as he did all who heard  
him. Franklin’s story of the man who borrowed money  
for the collection at Philadelphia, is matched by a story  
of Whitefield’s power in this Scotch city. An officer,  
who knew Whitefield’s influence, laid a wager with  
another who was going to hear him with a prejudiced  
mind, that he would feel himself obliged to give some-  
thing, notwithstanding his dislike. The wager was ac-  
cepted; and the challenged man went to church with  
empty pockets. But Whitefield so moved his heart that  
he was fain to borrow from his neighbour, and his bet  
was lost.

In May, 1757, Whitefield was the most highly honoured  
man in Edinburgh; the next month he was mobbed and  
stoned in Dublin. Several Scotch towns had previously  
made him a freeman; and this year he received the  
marked respect of the ministers of the General Assembly,  
and of the Lord High Commissioner. Prom the aris-  
tocracy of Scotland he went to the Ormond and Liberty

Boys of Ireland, and at their hands received the last  
violence to which he was to be subjected. He has told  
the tale himself:—

‘ Dublin, July 9, 1757.

‘My dear Friend,—Many attacks have I had from Satan’s  
children, hut yesterday you would have thought he had been  
permitted to have given me an effectual parting blow. You  
have heard of my being in Ireland, and of my preaching daily  
to large and affected auditories, in Mr. Wesley’s spacious room.  
When here last, I preached in a more confined place in the  
week-days, and once or twice ventured out to Oxminton Green,  
a large place like Moorfields, situated very near the barracks,  
where the Ormond and Liberty, that is, High and Low Party,  
Boys generally assemble every Sunday to fight with each other.  
The congregations there were very numerous; the word seemed  
to come with power; and no noise or disturbance ensued. This  
encouraged me to give notice that I would preach there again  
last Sunday afternoon. I went through the barracks, the door  
of which opens into the Green, and pitched my tent near the  
barrack walls, not doubting of the protection, or at least the in-  
terposition, of the officers and soldiery, if there should be occa-  
sion. But how vain is the help of man! Vast was the multitude  
that attended. We sang, prayed, and preached without moles-  
tation; only now and then a few stones and clods of dirt were  
thrown at me. It being war-time, as is my usual practice, I  
exhorted my hearers not only to fear God, but to honour the  
best of kings; and, after sermon, I prayed for the success of  
the Prussian arms. All being over, I thought to return home  
the way I came, but, to my great surprise, access was denied;  
so that I had to go near half a mile from one end of the Green  
to the other, through hundreds and hundreds of Papists, &c.  
Finding me unattended (for a soldier and four Methodist  
preachers, who came with me, had forsook me and fled), I was  
left to their mercy; but that mercy, as you may easily guess,  
was perfect cruelty. Volleys of hard stones came from all  
quarters, and every step I took a fresh stone struck, and made  
me reel backwards and forwards, till I was almost breathless,  
and all over a gore of blood. My strong beaver hat served me,  
as it were, for a skull-cap for awhile ; but at last that was  
knocked off, and my head left quite defenceless. I received

many blows and wounds; one was particularly large and near  
my temples.[[21]](#footnote-21) I thought of Stephen; and as I believed that I  
received more blows, I was in great hopes that like him I  
should be despatched, and go off in this bloody triumph to the  
immediate presence of my Master. But providentially, a mi-  
nister’s house lay next to the Green; with great difficulty I  
staggered to the door, which was kindly opened to and shut  
upon me. Some of the mob in the meantime having broke  
part of the boards of the pulpit into large splinters, they beat  
and wounded my servant grievously in his head and arms, and  
then came and drove him from the door. For a while I con-  
tinued speechless, panting for, and expecting, every breath to  
be my last. Two or three of the hearers, my friends, by some  
means or other got admission ; and kindly, with weeping eyes,  
washed my bloody wounds, and gave me something to smell to,  
and to drink. I gradually revived, but soon found the lady of  
the house desired my absence, for fear the house should be  
pulled down. What to do I knew not, being near two miles  
from Mr. Wesley’s place. Some advised one thing, and some  
another. At length, a carpenter, one of the friends that came  
in, offered me his wig and coat, that I might go off in disguise.  
I accepted of, and put them on, but was soon ashamed of not  
trusting my Master to secure me in my proper habit, and threw  
them off with disdain. I determined to go out, since I found  
my presence was so troublesome, in my proper habit. Imme-  
diately deliverance came. A Methodist preacher, with two  
friends, brought a coach; I leaped into it, and rid in gospel  
triumph through the oaths, curses, and imprecations of whole  
streets of Papists unhurt, though threatened every step of the  
ground. None but those who were spectators of the scene can  
form an idea of the affection with which I was received by the  
weeping, mourning, but now joyful Methodists. A Christian  
surgeon was ready to dress our wounds, which being done, I  
went into the preaching-place, and, after giving a word of ex-  
hortation, joined in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Him  
who makes our extremity his opportunity, who stills the noise

of the waves, and the madness of the most malignant people.  
The next morning I set out for Port Arlington, and left my  
persecutors to His mercy, who out of persecutors hath often  
made preachers. That I may thus be revenged of them is the  
hearty prayer of,

‘Yours, &c.,

‘George Whitefield.’

It is satisfactory to learn from another of his letters  
that the stoning was not in consequence of his having  
spoken against Papists in particular, but for exhorting all  
ranks to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to King  
George. His prudence in avoiding unnecessary offence  
was as great as ever.

To escape the danger of open-air preaching was to  
encounter the danger of ministering in two large chapels  
all the winter through; and in the winter of 1757-8  
Whitefield suffered so much that he was put upon ‘the  
short allowance,’ as he called it, of preaching but once a  
day, and thrice on a Sunday. With so little to do, he  
began to examine things that were near him; and finding  
that round his chapel there was ‘a most beautiful spot of  
ground,’ he designed a plan for building twelve alms-  
houses upon it. Some other ‘good folks’ agreed with  
him, and soon one hundred pounds of the necessary four  
hundred were in his hand. The houses were to be for  
godly widows, who were to have half-a-crown a week  
from the sacrament money. The cost of building them  
was defrayed by private subscriptions, the public being  
kept in ignorance of the scheme until the whole sum was  
promised. In June 1758 the houses received their first  
inmates, and stood as ‘a monument that the Methodists  
were not against good works.’

The summer travels of 1758 were begun at Gloucester,  
and continued into Wales; and it is grievous to mark the  
increasing difficulties under which they were undertaken.  
No trifle ever hindered this willing traveller, but he is

compelled to say to a friend—‘This tabernacle makes me  
to groan. The one-horse chaise will not do for me; as  
it will not quarter, I am shaken to pieces. Driving like-  
wise wearies me, and prevents my reading; and if the  
road be bad my servant that rides the fore-horse is  
dirtied exceedingly. I have therefore sent to Mr. S.’s  
about the postchaise, and desired him to beg the favour  
of you, my dear sir, to look at it, and let me know your  
thoughts. This is giving you trouble, but you are my  
friend.’ Possibly the weakness of the body added to the  
fervour of the spirit, and increased the interest of the  
congregations.

When he visited Scotland in 1759, he exhibited his  
disinterestedness in a very marked way, by refusing either  
for himself personally, or for his orphan-house, the estate,  
both money and lands, valued at seven thousand pounds,  
of a Miss Hunter, which she offered him.

From the account already given of the kindly feeling  
of Shuter the comedian for Whitefield, and of the visits  
paid by the chief of actors to the Tabernacle and Totten-  
ham Court Chapel, it might be supposed that actors were  
among Whitefield’s friends ; that is to say that they  
admired his talents, and respected his character and his  
calling, while refusing to yield to his warnings and  
entreaties to seek another profession; but such was not  
the case. To be inferior to him in histrionic talent  
would not calm the fretful temper which most of them  
had. Garrick would doubtless have been better pleased  
had the public called Whitefield the Garrick of the  
pulpit, and not himself ‘the Whitefield of the stage.’  
He could not always disguise his pleasure when another  
actor was burlesqued and mimicked, and his feelings  
would hardly be more generous towards a Methodist  
preacher. Dr. Johnson, guided no doubt by what he  
mw and knew of the actors of his day, never made a  
truer remark than when he observed that the stage made

‘almost every other man, for whatever reason, con-  
temptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.’ To  
these qualities he might have added, for a description of  
the staff of actors who are the most brilliant in the  
history of the English stage, envious, faithless, deceptive.  
Drury Lane and Covent Garden fought each other in no  
very honourable way; to strike a cowardly blow at a  
rival was not an unpardonable sin. Cibber, with all her  
tenderness and pathos, could not endure another’s success;  
Macklin was always conceited, selfish, and fierce; and  
Eoote was as savage as he was witty. When they envied  
each other’s triumphs, and mimicked each other’s manner,  
it was hardly likely that they could refrain from bur-  
lesquing Whitefield, to amuse their audiences, and to  
gratify themselves. It may be something to their credit  
that the scandalous work was undertaken by the most  
unscrupulous of their number. Foote first of all enter-  
tained the playhouse goers by imitating Whitefield’s  
appearance and manner of speaking. Finding himself  
so successful he next wrote a comedy, called the ‘Minor,’  
which affected to kill Methodism by ridicule, and took  
the chief part in it himself. There is not one happy  
line in it, and it is as destitute of wit as of piety. Its  
immense run in London, where it was acted at both  
theatres, must have been due altogether to Foote’s  
acting. There was something in the impudence of the  
opening sentence worthy of both author and performer:  
‘What think you of one of those itinerant field-orators,  
who, though at declared enmity with common sense,  
have the address to poison the principles and, at the  
same time, pick the pockets, of half our industrious  
fellow subjects?’1

1 The favourite dish of the pocket-picking Mr. Squintum, as Foote, al-  
luding to Whitefield’s defect, called the greatest of the field-orators, was a  
cow-heel. He would cheerfully say, as he sat down to it, ‘How surprised  
would the world he, if they were to peep upon Dr. Squintum, and see a  
cow-heel only upon his table.’

‘I consider those gentlemen in the light of public  
performers, like myself. Ridicule is the only antidote  
against this pernicious poison.’

The chief character is Mrs. Cole, or old Moll, a convert  
of Whitefield; and the colour of her piety appears in  
her offering a book of hymns, a shilling, and a dram to  
some one, to make him also a convert. Herself she thus  
describes—‘No, no, I am worn out, thrown by and for-  
gotten, like a tattered garment, as Mr. Squintum says.  
Oh, he is a dear man ! But for him, I had been a lost  
sheep; never known the comforts of the new birth; no—’

These are the least objectionable parts of the pro-  
duction; its worst are best left alone.

Whitefield, on hearing of the merriment of the town  
at his expense, simply said—‘All hail such contempt!’  
But his friends were not content to remain inactive. The  
Rev. Mr. Madan wrote to Garrick on the intended repre-  
sentation of the play at Drury Lane. Lady Huntingdon  
waited upon the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Devon-  
shire, and applied for its suppression altogether—a most  
proper request, apart from anything that was levelled  
against Methodists; for its impurity condemned it. Yet  
his lordship could only assure her that had the evil  
tendency of the play been found out before it was  
licensed, licence would have been refused; as it was, he  
could do nothing immediately. The Countess next  
appealed to Garrick, who promised to use his influence  
in excluding it for the present, and added ‘that had he  
been aware of the offence it was calculated to give, it  
should never have appeared with his concurrence.’  
Nevertheless the offence was continued.

Foote showed his brutality by bringing the play upon  
the stage at Edinburgh, within two months after White-  
field’s death; but its indecency, combined with the  
heartlessness of caricaturing a man who had never  
entered the city but to bless it, and who was just dead,

emptied the theatre after the first night, and made many  
a pulpit thunder out rebukes. Edinburgh had more  
self-respect than London.

Whitefield was this same year brought into contact  
with the notorious Earl Eerrers, cousin of Lady Hunting-  
don. When this wild, boastful, reckless peer was tried  
for the murder of his steward, Mr. Johnson, there were  
sitting in the House of Lords a little group of Methodists,  
drawn thither by the regard they had for Lady Hunting-  
don, and the interest they took in all that concerned her.  
George Whitefield and his wife, Charles [Wesley and his  
wife, and one Mrs. Beckman, ‘a truly good woman,’ sat  
side by side, waiting till half-past eleven o’clock for the  
Lords to assemble; then they saw them enter in great  
state—barons, lords, bishops, earls, dukes, and the Lord  
High Steward. Besides them, there were in the House  
most of the royal family, the peeresses, the chief gentry  
of the kingdom, and the foreign ambassadors. The trial  
over, and the peers having declared their verdict, the  
wretched man was sent for to the bar, to hear from the  
judge the unanimous judgment of all his peers that he  
was guilty of felony and murder. His execution was  
delayed from April 16 to May 5, an interval which he  
spent in careless self-indulgence, so far as lie could get  
indulgence, and in total indifference to all the religious  
solicitude shown in his behalf. Lady Huntingdon re-  
strained him a little, and kept him from appearing  
utterly shameless. He twice received Whitefield very  
politely; but his heart was unmoved. His last words  
before the bolt was drawn were: ‘0 God, forgive me all  
my errors; pardon all my sins.’

The Methodists laid themselves open to some criticism  
by the great anxiety which they manifested respecting  
the fast words and deeds of men. That the root of it  
was true love for man, there can be no doubt; it was  
the same feeling which made them so abundant in

labours for the healthy and strong; but they might  
wisely have refrained from laying such emphasis upon  
last utterances. While they did well to leave nothing  
undone to bring the sinner to repentance, they should,  
in all cases where the life had been wicked, have with-  
held an opinion about the final destiny. It is both touch-  
ing and pitiful to see how Lady Huntingdon collected  
evidence respecting the religious opinions of the Prince of  
Wales towards the end of his life; and it was a terrible  
blow to her and her co-religionists when Earl Ferrers  
remained impenitent to the end, notwithstanding private  
and public prayer offered on his behalf, and all manner  
of entreaties addressed to him. A humble, holy life can  
have but one issue, and all who have lived it may be  
confidently said to be with Christ; an unholy life, con-  
cluding with a testimony that certain truths have been  
accepted, must have an uncertain issue, so far as we who  
remain can see; and it is best to be silent about it,  
though we may hope for the best. Some blame may be  
fairly charged as well upon an earnest piety as upon a  
gross superstition, for making last confessions and last  
actions appear in the eyes of many as of more importance  
than daily repentance, daily faith, and daily good works.

An unusually sad and weary tone is perceptible in  
nearly all Whitefield’s letters of 1761, nor did he write  
many. For weeks he did not preach a single sermon;  
the ability to say but a few words was gratefully re-  
ceived as a little reviving in his bondage. He was be-  
ginning to know what nervous disorders are, and was  
thankful when his friends were prudent, and did not  
press him to preach much. His prayer was for resig-  
nation, so long as the Lord Jesus enforced silence upon  
him. As to the cause of his weakness and sickness, he  
thought it was the loss of his usual voyages, which cer-  
tainly had always been an acceptable cessation of the  
toils of preaching, if they often brought the quieter and

less exhausting toils of writing. Thus he proceeded  
slowly from place to place, getting as far north as Edin-  
burgh, where he had to say, ‘Little, very little can be  
expected from a dying man.’ It was his old enjoyment,  
field-preaching, which revived him again. The open sky  
above his head, the expansive landscape, and the sight  
and sound of all nature’s charms, refreshed him, as an  
imprisoned Indian would live a new life at the sight and  
touch of the prairie. ‘How gladly would I bid adieu to  
ceiled houses and vaulted roofs!’ he exclaimed, when he  
resumed his open-air work. Yet his revival was only  
temporary; winter prostrated him as much as ever, and  
he was fain to make arrangements for sailing to America  
the following summer. The condition and wants of  
Bethesda, and his own feeble health, seemed to tell him  
that he must attempt another voyage. He accordingly  
persuaded his friends, Mr. Robert Keen, a woollen-draper  
in the Minories, and Mr. Hardy, to accept the office of  
trustees to the two London chapels and all his other  
concerns in England. He told them that their com-  
pliance with his request would relieve him of a ponde-  
rous load which oppressed him much. When they  
accepted the responsibility, he entreated Mr. Keen not  
to consult him upon anything, unless absolutely neces-  
sary; for, he added, ‘the Lord, I trust and believe, will  
give you a right judgment in all things.’ In this con-  
fidence he was not mistaken; his friends proved true to  
him and true to the cause which he served. But before  
we see him on board ship at Greenock, where he em-  
barked for his eleventh voyage, there is an assailant to  
be answered, and a faithful labourer to be laid in his  
grave.

The assailant was Dr. Warburton, who since 1759 had  
filled the place of good Bishop Benson, as bishop of  
Gloucester. Where Whitefield had found kindness and  
help, he was now to encounter fierce and uncompro-

mising hostility. Warburton was totally opposed to the  
doctrines of Methodism; and the success they had gained  
in the land was a sufficient reason for his attempting to  
demolish them. Even before the death of the charitable  
Doddridge, he showed his dislike of ‘enthusiasm ’ in a  
characteristic way, by rating Lady Huntingdon and  
Doddridge in Lady Huntingdon’s house, where he was  
paying the dying man a farewell visit before his de-  
parture for Lisbon. Neither the politeness due from  
guest to hostess, nor the consideration due to a feeble  
friend, could restrain his vehement temper. On another  
occasion, he provoked a skirmish at Prior Park—after-  
wards his own residence—where lie met Dr. Hartley, Dr.  
Oliver, Mr. Allen, and Lady Huntingdon. Dr. Hartley  
having spoken in laudatory terms of Whitefield’s abilities,  
and respectfully of his doctrines, Warburton remarked,  
‘Of his oratorical powers, and their astonishing influence  
on the minds of thousands, there can be no doubt: they  
are of a high order; but with respect to his doctrines, I  
consider them pernicious and false.’ The conversation  
grew into a debate, and the debate became so warm that  
Warburton, pressed by argument and sorely ruffled in  
temper, hastily left the room, no doubt leaving as many  
marks as he carried with him. He was now to strike a  
heavier and more effective blow at ‘the false and per-  
nicious doctrines,’ which were spreading and triumphing  
on every hand.

The work he wrote was called a vindication of the  
office and operations of the Holy Spirit from the insults  
of infidelity and the abuses of fanaticism. As by Bishop  
Gibson, at whose hands Warburton had received ordina-  
tion to the priest’s office, so by Warburton, the fanatics  
were more warmly assailed than the infidels. Indeed,  
the word used by Warburton is less courteous than  
Gibson’s; with Gibson the Methodists were ‘enthusiasts; ’  
with Warburton they are ‘fanatics.’ Nay, fanatics on the

title-page is changed into ‘fools’ in the preface; and we  
are treated to an ingenious piece of reasoning to har-  
monise Solomon’s seemingly contradictory advice, ‘Answer  
not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like  
unto him,’ and ‘Answer a fool according to his folly, lest  
he be wise in his own conceit.’ It need hardly be said  
which of these methods a man of the bishop’s temper  
would be sure to adopt with infidels and Methodist  
fanatics. True, he says some wise, charitable things in  
the preface about the unwisdom of the defender of  
religion imitating the insulter of it in his modes of  
disputation, which may be comprised in sophistry,  
buffoonery, and scurrility; but he soon forgot his own  
counsel. It was more than he could do to treat a  
Methodist with fairness or charity.

His book might have done one great service to the  
Church had it been devoted only to the discussion of a  
question which he introduces as but a stepping-stone to  
his conclusions against the infidels and the fanatics,  
namely, the inspiration of Holy Scripture. His sober,  
thoughtful view of that great subject might have saved  
Christianity from many a reproach, had it been commonly  
adopted by the believers of our faith. But the conclu-  
sion he waned to reach was something subversive of the  
Methodistical belief concerning the operations of the Holy  
Ghost upon the heart of man; substantially the same  
view which Bishop Gibson had advanced against ‘en-  
thusiasm,’ but supported by a greater show of reasoning.  
He says ‘On the whole, then, we conclude that all the  
scriptures of the New Testament were given by inspi-  
ration of God; and thus the prophetic promise of our  
blessed Master, that the Comforter should abide with us  
for ever, was eminently fulfilled. For though, according  
to the promise, His ordinary influence occasionally assists  
the faithful of all ages, yet His constant abode and  
supreme illumination is in the sacred scriptures of the

New Testament.’ This establishes the first of the two  
points which were to be proved, namely, that the  
Comforter was given (1.) to enlighten the understanding,  
and (2.) to purify and support the will. His light shines  
in the word of God only, and not in our heart; and this  
word of God is of miraculous production. As to the  
Spirit’s action upon the will, that also was miraculous.  
The next point to be settled was, whether, from the  
primitive ages down to these latter times, the Holy Ghost  
hath continued to exercise either part of His office in the  
same extraordinary manner in which He entered upon it,  
when His descent on the Apostles was accompanied with  
all the sensible marks of the Divinity.’ This leads to an  
examination of the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle  
to the Corinthians, from which the bishop seeks to prove  
that after the establishment of the Church by miraculous  
power everything was withdrawn from her excepting  
charity. The reasons for this change in the divine  
working among men are three: First, the minds of the  
Apostles were rude and uninformed, strangers to all  
celestial knowledge; but now we possess the truth, we  
hold the rule of faith. Secondly, ‘the nature and genius  
of the gospel were so averse to all the religious institu-  
tions of the world, that the whole strength of human  
prejudices was set in opposition to it:’ but now, ‘what-  
ever there may be remaining of the bias of prejudice (as  
such will mix itself even with our best conclusions), it  
draws the other way.’ In view of this fact, it is absurd  
of the fanatics to speak in their journals as if we lived  
in a land of pagans, with all their prejudices full blown.  
Thirdly, the abatement of the influences of the supporting  
Spirit of grace is due to the peace and security of the  
Church; the profession of the Christian faith is attended  
with ease and honour; the conviction of human reason  
is abundantly sufficient to support us in our religious  
perseverance.

To these views Whitefield wrote an answer, in the form  
of a letter to a friend, which he called ‘Observations on  
some fatal mistakes in a book lately published, and  
entitled, &c.’ He fairly and exactly summed up the  
bishop’s reasoning by saying that, in effect, it robbed the  
Church of its promised Comforter, and thereby left us  
without any supernatural influence or divine operations  
whatsoever. Left in this forlorn state, and yet told by  
the bishop that charity is the one thing which is to abide  
in the Church for ever, Whitefield asks, with pertinence  
and force—‘Now can human reason, with all its heights;  
can calm philosophy, with all its depths; or moral suasion,  
with all its insinuating arts, so much as pretend to kindle,  
much less to maintain and blow up into a settled, habitual  
flame of holy fire, such a spark as this in the human  
heart?’ Upon our ability to do without the Holy Ghost  
he remarked with a pungency which Warburton must  
have felt keenly: ‘Supposing matters to be as this writer  
represents them, I do not see what great need we have of  
any established rule at all, at least in respect to practice,  
since corrupt nature is abundantly sufficient of itself to  
help us to persevere in a religion attended with ease and  
honour. And I verily believe that the Deists throw  
aside this rule of faith entirely, not barely on account of  
a deficiency in argument to support its authenticity, but,  
because they daily see so many who profess to hold this  
established, self-denying rule of faith with their lips,  
persevering all their lives long in nothing else but an  
endless and insatiable pursuit after worldly ease and  
honour.’ He proceeds—‘The scriptures are so far from  
encouraging us to plead for a diminution of divine  
influence in these last days of the gospel because an  
external rule of faith is thereby established, that, on the  
contrary, we are encouraged by this very established rule  
to expect, hope, long, and pray for larger and more  
extensive showers of divine influence than any former

age hath ever yet experienced.’ Warburton fared worse  
at Whitefield’s hands, when the manner and language of  
his book and its personal references were dealt with: —  
‘Our author,’ says Whitefield, ‘calls the Rev. Mr. John  
Wesley “paltry mimic, spiritual empiric, spiritual mar-  
tialist, meek apostle, new adventurer.” The Methodists,  
according to him, are “modern apostles, the saints, new  
missionaries, illuminated doctors, this sect of fanatics.  
Methodism itself is a modern saintship. Mr. Law begat  
it, and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle, and the devil  
himself is man-midwife to their new birth.” And yet  
this is the man who in his preface to this very book lays  
it down as an invariable maxim “that truth is never so  
grossly injured, or its advocates so dishonoured, as when  
they employ the foolish arts of sophistry, buffoonery,  
and personal abuse in its defence.”’ He concluded by  
recommending Warburton and all who hated Methodism  
to seek its extinction by a safer and more honourable  
method than abuse, the method recommended by Bishop  
Burnet for the extinction of Puritan preachers—‘Out-live,  
out-labour, out-preach them.’ Had the bishop tried that  
way, he might have found that he succeeded ill without  
that heavenly influence which he did his utmost to  
disparage.

It is not without interest to observe that Whitefield’s  
first and last discussion was with a bishop, and upon the  
doctrine of the Holy Ghost. Years of labour had only  
strengthened his persuasion that the Comforter still  
abides personally with believers, and that without His  
action upon the heart no man can be led into the new  
life in Christ Jesus.

Before Whitefield sails we must notice the death of  
his friend Grimshaw, which occurred on April 7, 1763.  
Whether they met as Whitefield travelled north I can-  
not say; but it is most probable they did, as Whitefield  
was at Leeds in March, and he seldom got so near

Haworth without affording himself the pleasure of preach-  
ing there. No such startling and appalling, as well as  
happy, effects had ever attended his ministry as were  
felt there. It was as if the very voice of God were  
speaking, when once he cried out to a man who had seated  
himself on the tower of the church, ‘Man, I have a word  
for thee;’ that man was afterwards found among Grim-  
shaw’s converts. More solemn was the effect of his  
words on another occasion. He was standing on the  
scaffold which used to be erected for these outside  
gatherings; worship had been offered by the congrega-  
tion; the time for the sermon had come; all eyes were  
turned upon him and all ears waiting for his first  
words, when he was seen to spend a few moments  
in silent prayer. Silently they waited; then, looking  
round upon them, he lifted up his hands, and earnestly  
invoked the presence and working of the Holy Ghost.  
A little while longer, and he announced with solemn  
voice and manner the solemn text, ‘It is appointed unto  
men once to die, but after this the judgment.’ He  
paused, and while he did so ‘a wild shriek of terror  
arose from the midst of the mass.’ Some confusion  
followed, but Whitefield exhorted the people to remain  
still, while Grimshaw pressed into the crowd, to see  
what had happened. Hastening back in a few minutes,  
he said as he approached the scaffold, ‘Brother White-  
field, you stand amongst the dead and the dying; an  
immortal soul has been called into eternity; the de-  
stroying angel is passing over the congregation; cry  
aloud, and spare not!’ The people were then told that  
one of their number had died. A second time the text  
was announced, ‘It is appointed unto men once to die.’  
Again, from the spot where Lady Huntingdon and Lady  
Margaret Ingham were standing, arose a second shriek;  
and a shudder of awe ran through every heart, when it  
was known that a second person had died. Not over-

come by the terror of the scene, but strengthened by the  
secret Helper whose grace he had implored, Whitefield  
commenced again, and proceeded, ‘in a strain of tre-  
mendous eloquence’ to warn the impenitent of their  
perilous position. Fear and eager interest were in all  
hearts, as the silent, motionless congregation listened to  
his word; for had not the decree come forth against two  
souls, and who knew but that it might next come to  
him?

Such preaching as this might lead to the opinion that  
Whitefield was always either solemn or vehement; but  
really no one could have tried more ways than he; and  
faithful as he was, he was not always faithful enough for  
the stern preacher of the moors. It was common for  
him to expose the mistakes and pretensions of professors  
of religion, and getting on that topic before Grimshaw’s  
congregation, it occurred to him that his remarks could  
hardly be appropriate to them; he therefore proceeded  
to say that as they had long enjoyed the ministry of a  
faithful pastor they must surely be a sincerely godly  
people, when Grimshaw interrupted him, and cried out,  
‘0 sir, for God’s sake do not speak so; I pray you,  
do not flatter them; I fear the greater part of them are  
going to hell with their eyes open!’

If Grimshaw was not mistaken in this judgment,  
which was probably spoken early in his ministry, a great  
change must have passed over his congregation through  
his labours. He afterwards assured Romaine that not  
fewer than twelve hundred were in communion with  
him; most of whom, in the judgment of charity, he  
could not but believe to be one with Christ. The  
church could not hold the number who sometimes came  
to communicate, and one congregation would withdraw  
for another to fill its place. In one instance, when  
Whitefield was present, thirty-five bottles of wine were  
used in the ordinance.

The complaint which carried Grimshaw off was putrid  
fever, caught by him in visiting his flock, among whom  
it was working most fatally. For one-and-twenty years  
had he proved himself a good minister; not one soul  
was there in all the district of his travels with whose  
spiritual condition he was unacquainted; and after he  
died, no parishioner could hear his name mentioned with-  
out tears.

It may have been of Grimshaw that Whitefield was  
specially thinking when he said, ‘Others can die, but I  
cannot.’ Ready to fall, as it seemed, yet able to do  
something, he sailed for America the sixth time on June  
4, 1763, and after a twelve weeks’ voyage landed in  
Virginia. ‘Jesus,’ he says, ‘hath made the ship a Bethel,  
and I enjoyed that quietness which I have in vain sought  
after for some years on shore. Not an oath to be heard,  
even in the greatest hurry. All hath been harmony and  
love. But my breath is short, and I have little hopes  
since my last relapse of much further public usefulness.  
A few exertions, like the last struggles of a dying man,  
or glimmering flashes of a taper just burning out, is all  
that can be expected from me. But blessed be God,  
the taper will be lighted up again in Heaven.’

From Virginia he proceeded northwards to Philadel-  
phia, New York, and Boston; and was so much strength-  
ened by the cold as to be able to preach thrice a week.  
There was such a flocking of all ranks in New York to  
his preaching as he had never seen there before. It was  
in this city that he gained one of his greatest oratorical  
conquests; and a comparison of the anecdote with that  
which relates Chesterfield’s excitement will serve to show  
his mastery over all classes of people. On this occasion he  
was preaching before the seamen of New York, ‘when  
suddenly, assuming a nautical tone and manner that were  
irresistible, he thus suddenly broke in with, “Well, my  
boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway

over a smooth sea, before a light breeze, and we shall  
soon lose sight of land. But what means this sudden  
lowering of the heavens, and that dark cloud arising from  
beneath the western horizon? Hark! Don’t you hear  
distant thunder? Don’t you see those flashes of light-  
ning? There is a storm gathering! Every man to his  
duty! How the waves arise, and dash against the ship!  
The air is dark! The tempest rages! Our masts are  
gone! The ship is on her beam-ends! What next?”’  
This appeal instantly brought the sailors to their feet  
with a shout, ‘The long boat! take to the long boat!’

His power to engage the attention of shipbuilders was  
as great as that of exciting sailors, one builder declaring  
that he could build a ship from stem to stern every  
Sunday under the sermon at the parish church, but could  
not get a plank down when Whitefield preached.

Still, his success was not uniform, only he would have  
success, if it could be gained. If the fault were in his  
own heart, he would pray, while he preached, for help  
from above. If the fault were in his hearers he would  
correct it; if they were thoughtless, he would charge  
them with it as they sat; if they were stupid and unin-  
terested, he would ask them whether he was preaching  
to men or to stones. Dr. Young is said to have sat  
down and wept when his royal hearers slept during his  
sermon; but Whitefield would have done something  
very different, most likely what he did to a small  
American congregation on a rainy day. A curious  
student from Princeton (New Jersey) College was present,  
and has told the story. The first part of the sermon  
made no impression upon the student, and he began to  
say to himself, ‘This man is not so great a wonder after  
all. His ideas are all common-place and superficial—  
mere show, and not a great deal even of that.’ The  
congregation seemed as uninterested as himself, one old  
man, who sat in front of the pulpit, having fallen sound

asleep! Whitefield now stopped; his face darkened with  
a frown; and changing his tone, he cried out, ‘If I had  
come to speak to you in my own name, you might rest  
your elbows on your knees, and your heads upon your  
hands, and sleep; and once in a while look up and say,  
“What does the babbler talk of?” But I have not  
come to you in my own name. No: I have come to  
you in the name of the Lord of Hosts’—here he brought  
his hand and foot down with a force that made the  
building ring—‘and I must and will be heard!’ The  
congregation started, and the old man awoke. ‘Ay, ay,’  
said Whitefield, fixing his eyes on him, ‘I have waked  
you up, have I? I meant to do it. I am not come  
here to preach to stocks and stones; I have come to you  
in the name of the Lord God of Hosts, and I must, and I  
will, have an audience.’ There was no more sleeping or  
indolence that day.1

Other things besides preaching filled his mind when,  
after a long delay in the north of the colonies, he  
travelled to Bethesda, and reached it, as he had so often  
done before, in time to spend Christmas with the orphans.  
It had long been his wish to add to the orphanage a  
college like New Jersey, for the training of gentlemen’s  
sons; and now, along with the pleasure which he felt in  
seeing the peace and plenty of his cherished retreat, he  
had the satisfaction of thinking that his second project  
would be accomplished. He memorialised the Governor,  
James Wright, Esq., setting forth in his petition that in  
addition to his original plan, which he had carried out  
these many years at great expense, he had long wished  
to make further provision for the education of persons

1 Garrick, so it is affirmed, used to say that Whitefield could make  
people weep merely by his enunciation of the word Mesopotamia, or by  
the pathos with which he could read a bookseller's catalogue! Garrick did  
not say that he had ever seen this feat performed; he surely must have  
been befooling some too warm admirer of the preacher, to see how much  
he could believe.

of superior rank, who might thus be fitted for usefulness,  
either in church or state; that he witnessed with pleasure  
the increasing prosperity of the province, but saw with  
concern that many gentlemen, who would have preferred  
having their sons educated nearer home, had been obliged  
to send them to the northern provinces; that a college  
in Georgia would be a central institution for the whole of  
the southern district, and might even count upon many  
youths being sent from the British West India Islands  
and other parts; that a considerable sum of money was  
soon to be laid out in purchasing a large number of  
Negroes, for the further cultivation of the orphan-house  
and other additional lands, and for the future support of  
‘a worthy, able president, professors, and tutors, and  
other good purposes intended;’ he therefore prayed his  
Excellency and the members of His Majesty’s Council to  
grant him in trust two thousand acres of land on the north  
fork of Turtle River, or lands south of the river Altamaha.  
This memorial was supported by an earnest ‘Address of  
both Houses of Assembly,’ which bore the signature of  
James Habersham as president. His Excellency gave a  
favourable answer, and referred the matter to the home  
authorities.

It was necessary, therefore, for Whitefield to return to  
England, and watch the progress of his idea there. The  
accounts of the orphan-house had been audited before  
the Honourable Noble Jones (not an unknown name in  
this life), and it was found that all arrears were paid off;  
and that there were cash, stock, and plenty of all kinds  
of provision in hand. There was no danger, for at least  
a year, of any going back. This lifted a great load off  
Whitefield’s mind; and when the day of his departure  
came, he had ‘a cutting parting.’ ‘And now,’ he said,  
‘farewell, my beloved Bethesda! surely the most delight-  
fully situated place in all the southern parts of America.  
What a blessed winter have I had! Peace, and love, and

harmony, and plenty, reign here.’ But the pilgrim spirit  
was not dead in him; he was still an evangelist. Not  
long after his departure for the north, he declared that  
his pilgrim kind of life was the very joy of his heart;  
and that a ‘little bit of cold meat and a morsel of bread  
in a wood, was a most luxurious repast,’ for the presence  
of Jesus was all in all, whether in the city or the  
wilderness.

Work and sickness had wrought a striking change in  
Whitefield’s appearance when he ended his twelfth voyage.  
That his health must have been grievously broken is  
evident from his touching appeal to his friends Keen and  
Hardy: ‘Stand, my friends,’ he said, ‘and insist upon my  
not being brought into action too soon. The poor old  
shattered barque hath not been in dock one week, for a  
long while. I scarce know what I write. Tender love  
to all.’ Asthma had now firmly seated itself in his  
constitution, and he felt sure that he should never  
breathe as he would, till he breathed in yonder heaven.  
Wesley was painfully struck when he met him towards  
the close of the year in London. ‘I breakfasted,’ he  
says in his journal, ‘with Mr. Whitefield, who seemed to  
be an old, old man, being fairly worn out in his Master’s  
service, though he has hardly seen fifty years; and yet it  
pleases God that I, who am now in my sixty-third year,  
find no disorder, no weakness, no decay, no difference  
from what I was at five-and-twenty, only that I have  
fewer teeth and more grey hairs.’ A month later  
Wesley again wrote in his journal—‘Mr. Whitefield called  
upon me. ‘He breathes nothing but peace and love.  
Bigotry cannot stand before him, but hides its head  
wherever he comes.’

The silver cord was not even yet to be loosed, although  
the body appeared to be ready for the grave, and the  
soul for heaven. Lady Huntingdon was increasing the  
number of her chapels. She had one at Brighton, which

was partly due to Whitefield’s preaching under a tree  
behind the White Lion Inn; she had another at Norwich;  
and a third at Tunbridge Wells; and when she had got  
one finished at Bath, Whitefield must needs open it. He  
went and preached one of the sermons on October 6, 1765.  
It was a chapel in which many of the witty and the learned  
were to hear his expositions of truth. It had also a  
strange corner, called ‘Nicodemus’s Corner,’ into which  
Lady Betty Cobbe, daughter-in-law of the Archbishop of  
Dublin, used to smuggle bishops, whom she had per-  
suaded to go and hear Whitefield, but who did not want  
to be seen in such a place as an unconsecrated chapel.  
The curtained seats just inside the door were both con-  
venient and secret.1

It had once been a cherished object with Wesley to  
form ‘an active and open union’ between all Methodist  
clergymen, of whom there were about forty in the Church  
of England; but his plan, when submitted to them, was  
not adopted, and he was obliged to stand in his singular  
position as the head of his society. Something more  
practical came of a kind of union between himself, his  
brother, Whitefield, and Lady Huntingdon, which was  
suggested by the Countess. When he was preaching in  
Scotland and the north of England, an earnest request

came to him at Rotherham, from ------ , ‘whose heart,’

he says, ‘ God has turned again, without any expectation  
of mine,’ praying him to come to London. ‘If no other  
good result from it,’ he says, ‘but our firm union with  
Mr. Whitefield, it is an abundant recompense for my  
labour. My brother and I conferred with him every  
day; and, let the honourable men do what they please,  
we resolved, by the grace of God, to go on hand in hand,  
through honour and dishonour.’ The fruit of the union  
was first gathered in the Countess’s chapel at Bath, where,

1 Were these pews the originals of those abominable curtained pews  
which may yet be seen in some Dissenting chapels?

to the surprise of many, Wesley preached to a large and  
serious congregation, and fully delivered his own soul.  
Walpole was one of the hearers, and thought that  
Wesley was ‘wondrous clever, but as evidently an  
actor as Garrick!’ An equally kind reception was  
given to Wesley by Whitefield’s friends, when he reached  
Plymouth. He was invited to preach in the Tabernacle  
in the afternoon; and in the evening he was offered the  
use of Whitefield’s room at the dock, but large as it was,  
it could not hold the congregation.

The references of Charles Wesley to this union are as  
warm, or warmer than those of his brother. He writes  
to his wife to tell her, among other things, that his  
brother had come. ‘This morning,’ he says, ‘we spent  
two blessed hours with G. Whitefield. The threefold  
cord, we trust, will never more be broken. On Tuesday  
next my brother is to preach in Lady Huntingdon’s  
chapel at Bath. That and all her chapels (not to say, as  
I might, herself also) are now put into the hands of us  
three.’ It was a time when the two sections of Metho-  
dism strove for the mastery in brotherly love. Whitefield  
‘was treated’—such is Charles Wesley’s language—‘most  
magnificently by his own begotten children, for his love  
to us.’

The Countess was nothing behind in kindliness. A  
letter from her to Wesley, dated September 14, 1766,  
ran thus: ‘I am most highly obliged by your kind offer  
of serving the chapel at Bath during your stay at Bristol;  
I mean on Sundays. It is the most important time, being  
the height of the latter season, when the great of this  
world are only in the reach of the sound of the gospel  
from that quarter. The mornings are their time; the  
evenings the inhabitants chiefly. I do trust that this  
union which is commenced will be for the furtherance of  
our faith and mutual love to each other. It is for the  
interest of the best of causes that we should all be found,

first, faithful to the Lord, and then to each other. I find  
something wanting, and that is a meeting now and then  
agreed upon that you, your brother, Mr. Whitefield and  
I, should at times be glad regularly to communicate our  
observations upon the general state of the work. Light  
might follow, and would be a kind of guide to me, as I  
am connected with many.’

One, not less kind, not less broad in charity than any,  
was silent upon the union. It was all that Whitefield  
could do to preach occasionally, and watch over the  
interests of Bethesda; others must chronicle passing  
events.

And how was the plan for a college at Bethesda pros-  
pering? First of all Whitefield waited a long time, to  
give the home authorities the fullest opportunity of  
maturing their thoughts; but by delay they intended  
hindrance, not help. He therefore memorialised His  
Majesty, praying that since the colonists were deeply  
interested in the scheme, and were impatiently waiting  
for information, something might be done. How came  
the intricacies of ‘red-tape.’ The original memorial of  
Whitefield, supported by the ‘Address’ of the colonial  
Houses of Assembly, was remitted to the Lords Commis-  
sioners for Trade and Plantations, and they sent it to the  
Archbishop of Canterbury, who effectually frustrated its  
intention by a bigoted demand that the charter of the  
college, were one granted, should contain a clause making  
it obligatory to appoint none but a member of the Church  
of England to the office of head master. To this demand  
Whitefield offered respectful but uncompromising oppo-  
sition. He had no objection to the election of such a  
master, provided the wardens chose him freely; indeed  
his preference went that way, but rather than bind the  
wardens, there should be no college at all. Whitefield  
showed himself to be as far advanced on this subject of  
college constitution and management as the most liberal

men of a century later. He would have no exceptional  
privilege for a churchman; he would not have the daily  
use of the liturgy enjoined; he would not have one doc-  
trinal article entered in the charter. His letter to the  
archbishop stating and defending his views is as noble  
and catholic a production as ever came from his pen,  
while its references to himself and his toils are as pathetic  
as they are modest. Why did he object to a compulsory  
clause respecting the master? Was he opposed to the  
Church of England? By no means: the majority of the  
wardens were sure to be of that communion, and their  
choice would be sure to fall upon a master like them-  
selves in belief; but choice and compulsion were very  
different things. Did he dislike the liturgy? No: he  
loved it, and had injured himself by his frequent reading  
of it in Tottenham Court Chapel; moreover, it had been  
read twice every Sunday in the orphan-house from the  
day of the first institution of the house. Did he disbelieve  
the doctrinal articles? No: on the contrary, his accepta-  
tion of them was as literal and honest as man could give,  
and he had preached and upheld them everywhere.1 The  
whole question turned upon freedom or compulsion. As  
for the orphan-house, Whitefield thought that an insti-  
tution to which Dr. Benson had made a dying bequest  
and for which he had offered his dying prayers, had some  
claim upon the archbishop also; and as for himself he  
had no ambition to settle as the first master of the college;  
his ‘shoulders were too weak for the support of such an  
academical burden, his capacity by no means extensive  
enough for such a scholastic trust.’ To be a presbyter at  
large was the station to which God had called him for

1 The last time he was in America, that is, the time when his memorial  
was written, he had strongly recommended the homilies to a large audience  
in one of the ‘politest places on the continent,’ probably Philadelphia or  
Boston; and the next day numbers went to the stores to purchase them.  
The store-keeper was puzzled with the word, and asked his customers what  
muslins they meant, whether they were not hummims?

thirty years; and now his only ambition was that the last  
glimmerings of an expiring taper might guide some  
wandering sinners to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus  
Christ.

All that he could say could not move either the  
archbishop or the Lord President; for was not the  
memorialist a Methodist? and was he not pleading for  
liberty of thought and action? In reply to their remarks  
upon the disputed points, Whitefield said that, in ad-  
dition to all the reasons already given, his reputation for  
truthfulness was at stake, and he might not trifle with it.  
From the first, whenever he had been asked ‘upon what  
bottom the intended college was to be founded,’ he had  
repeatedly and readily replied, ‘Undoubtedly upon a  
broad bottom;’ he had even gone so far as to say from  
the pulpit that it should be upon ‘a broad bottom and  
no other;’ and how could he now withdraw from his  
word? More than that, most of the money which he  
had collected for the orphan-house had been given by  
Dissenters, and could he be so basely ungrateful as to  
deny them admission to the very place which their libe-  
rality had created and sustained? If it were asked by  
what warrant he had said that the college should stand  
only on a liberal charter, he replied, ‘Because of the  
known, long-established, mild, and uncoercive genius of  
the English Government; because of his Grace’s mode-  
ration towards Protestant Dissenters; because of the  
unconquerable attachment of the Americans to toleration  
principles; because of the avowed habitual feelings and  
sentiments of his own heart.’ He wrote as feeling that  
his very piety and salvation were involved in the position  
he assumed, and his last words to the archbishop are well  
worth preserving: ‘If I know anything of my own heart,’  
he said, ‘I have no ambition to be looked upon at pre-  
sent, or remembered for the future, as a founder of a  
college; but I would fain, may it please your Grace, act

**t**he part of an honest man, a disinterested minister of  
Jesus Christ, and a truly catholic, moderate presbyter of  
the Church of England. In this way, and in this only,  
can I hope for a continued heartfelt enjoyment of that  
peace of God which passeth all understanding, whilst here  
on earth, and be thereby prepared to stand with humble  
boldness before the awful, impartial tribunal of the great  
Shepherd and Bishop of souls at the great day.’

His plan was defeated, for the present at least. In  
order to uphold his reputation in America, he published  
his correspondence with the archbishop, and sent it to the  
Governor of Georgia for circulation. To come as near  
his idea as possible, he now proposed to add a public  
academy to the orphan-house, and to form a proper  
trust, to act after his decease, or even before, with this  
proviso, that no opportunity should be omitted of making  
fresh application for a college charter, ‘upon a broad  
bottom, whenever those in power might think it for the  
glory of God and the interest of their king and country  
to grant the same.’ Thus his ‘beloved Bethesda’ would  
not only be continued as a house of mercy for orphans,  
but be confirmed as a seat and nursery of sound learning  
and religious education to the latest posterity. Great and  
worthy aspirations, which were doomed to disappoint-  
ment!

In 1768 six students of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, were  
expelled the University, for holding Methodistical tenets,  
for taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the  
scriptures, for singing hymns in private houses, and for  
being tradesmen before entering as students. They used to  
meet at the house of a Mrs. Hurbridge, where Mr. Stilling-  
fleet, then a fellow of Merton College, would expound  
and pray, and invite them to do likewise; they also  
engaged in religious work in the cottages of the poor.  
Their tutor, who was subject to attacks of insanity, first  
accused them to Dr. Dixon, the principal, as enthusiasts,

who talked of inspiration, regeneration, and drawing nigh  
to God; but Dr. Dixon treated the charge as an evidence  
that the tutor’s complaint was troubling him again. He  
had full confidence in the character of the students.  
The tutor next lodged his charge with Dr. Durell, the  
Vice-Chancellor, who was of opinion that any more  
Whitefields or Wesleys at Oxford would be a great  
calamity, and that the offenders should at once be cited  
before a visitatorial tribunal. The members of the tri-  
bunal were nominated; the notice of citation was nailed  
upon the college door; and the students appeared to  
answer the charge. They had warm friends in several  
heads of houses, and Dr. Dixon generously pleaded their  
cause. It was in vain. The Vice-Chancellor and the  
rest of the tribunal declared them worthy of expulsion,  
and sentence was accordingly pronounced against them.

But the judges did not escape public censure. It was  
to be expected that the Methodists would be against  
them; they were also opposed by men of equal standing  
in the Church with themselves. Whitefield could not  
let the matter pass without notice; and he wrote and  
published a letter to Dr. Durell, besides showing the  
students much private sympathy. As to the charges,  
what evil or crime worthy of expulsion, he asked, could  
there be in having followed a trade before entering the  
University? and whoever heard of its being accounted a  
disparagement to any great public character that he had  
once been a mechanic? Why, David was a shepherd,  
and even Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter. But the  
delinquents had been found guilty of praying. And how  
could that, he demanded, disqualify them for the private  
or public discharge of their ministerial functions? But  
it was extempore prayer that they had used. Extempore  
prayer a crime! It was not a crime to be found in any  
law-book, neither had anyone been called before the bar  
of any public court of judicature to answer for it for at

least a century. Expelled for extempore praying! Then  
it was high time there were some expulsions for ex-  
tempore swearing, which was surely the greater sin of  
the two. But these men sang hymns. Yes, he replied,  
and so did David; and this very exercise of praise are  
we taught by St. Paul to cultivate. Praise! Well, Catholic  
students might sing; then why not Protestants? Ought  
Protestants to be less devout than Papists? And if the  
Duke of Cumberland allowed his pious soldiers to sing,  
why should the Vice-Chancellor of a University forbid his  
pious students? Or was there more harm in hearing a  
psalm-tune than in listening to the noise of box and dice,  
which was not an unknown sound even at Oxford?

Thus far his polemics. We must now follow him to  
other engagements. As if with an expectation of soon  
dying, he now began to collect his letters; and to this  
forethought we are indebted for the best story of his life.  
He felt that another voyage to America, whither he must  
go again on account of Bethesda’s affairs, would probably  
be the last; and he begged his friends Keen and Hardy  
to let him have his papers and letters, that he might  
revise and dispose of them in a proper manner.

It was in June and July, 1768, that he paid his last  
visit to Edinburgh, always a dear city to him. He  
thanked God for ordering his steps thither. The congre-  
gations in the orphan-house park were as large and  
attentive as those which he addressed when he was  
called a godly youth by his friends, and a minister of  
the devil by his enemies. Great was their affection for  
him, and his only danger was that of ‘being hugged to  
death;’ for there were friends of twenty-seven years’  
standing, and spiritual children of the same age, who  
remembered the days of old. They were seeking after  
their first love; and the Spirit of God seemed to be  
moving amongst them. He often got into the open air  
upon what he was beginning fondly to call his ‘throne;’

and indeed he was a king of men when there. ‘0 to  
die there!’ he exclaimed; then, checking himself, he  
added, ‘Too great, too great an honour to be expected!’  
No doubt the parting was as painful as any he had ever  
known; and he was wont to call parting days ‘execution  
days.’

Soon after his return to London, Mrs. Whitefield was  
seized with an ‘inflammatory fever,’ and died on August  
9, 1768. He preached her funeral sermon from a very  
singular text, Romans viii. 20—‘For the creature was  
made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of  
Him who hath subjected the same in hope.’ Un-  
fortunately, that sermon is not preserved, and the only  
references made by him to the event are very trifling,  
and throw no light upon his domestic life. He calls the  
death an ‘unexpected breach,’ and says that he feels the  
loss of his ‘right hand’ daily. Cornelius Winter, who  
lived in Whitefleld’s house for some time, is more  
explicit, and says ‘He was not happy in his wife; but I  
fear some, who had not all the religion they professed,  
contributed to his infelicity. He did not intentionally  
make his wife unhappy. He always preserved great  
decency and decorum in his conduct towards her. Her  
death set his mind much at liberty. She certainly did  
not behave in all respects as she ought. She could be  
under no temptation from his conduct towards the sex,  
for he was a very pure man, a strict example of the  
chastity he inculcated upon others.’ Equally clear is the  
testimony of Berridge, only he lays the fault all on one   
side; he says ‘No trap so mischievous to the field-  
preacher as wedlock, and it is laid for him at every  
hedge-corner. Matrimony has quite maimed poor Charles  
[Wesley], and might have spoiled John [Wesley] and  
George [Whitefield], if a wise Master had not graciously  
sent them a brace of ferrets.--Dear George has now got  
his liberty again, and he will ’scape well if he is not

caught by another tenterhook.’ The evidence upon this  
point of Whitefield’s life might be completed by the  
publication of some manuscript letters of Whitefield to  
his wife and of her to him, which are now unwisely  
kept from the public; but I understand that they show  
that his domestic life, as much of it as he ever knew,  
was not happy.

Philip (in his ‘Life and Times of Whitefield’) did  
his best to overturn Winter’s statement, and, without  
sufficient reason, as I think, called it rash ; of Berridge’s  
language he knew nothing ; and of the private letters  
he never heard. Taking a survey of all that bears upon  
the unsettled question—the statements already given,  
and Whitefield’s language concerning his wife, which has  
been quoted in the course of this biography with  
scrupulous exactness and fairness, and all of it is kind,  
some of it warmly affectionate—I cannot but conclude  
that Whitefield’s domestic life would have been happy  
enough could he have had more of it. His marrying at  
all was a blunder. Love cannot live upon nothing; yet  
his and his wife’s was put upon that fare. It was  
impossible for her to accompany him on his journeys; it  
was impossible for him to stay at home; it was impossible  
for him to write to her often. What wonder if she did  
not behave in all respects as she ought? Berridge called  
her by too hard a name, as well as too rude, when he  
called her a ‘ferret.’ It seems highly creditable to them  
that they bore with each other as they did; he did not  
mean to make her unhappy, and she did not mean to  
misbehave; and they knew each other’s intentions too well  
to quarrel. She never questioned his sincerity, nor he hers.  
There can be no doubt but that his own words about her  
and himself, written but a month before she died, are  
now fulfilled, and they will form the best conclusion  
to one of the few shaded parts of his many-sided life—

‘We are both descending,’ he said, ‘in order to ascend

Where sin and pain and sorrow cease,

And all is calm and joy and peace.’

He might have followed his wife more quickly than he  
had expected; within a month of her death, he burst a  
vein by hard riding and frequent preaching. Rest and  
quietness were enjoined upon him until the flux was  
quite stopped. The fact is, he had been in Wales, and  
it was not easy to keep himself within bounds among the  
fiery, rapturous Welsh. Moreover, he had been attending  
a significant ceremony—the opening of a college for the  
education of godly young men who aspired to be ministers.  
The Countess of Huntingdon had for some time purposed  
founding such an institution; and, on the anniversary of  
her birthday, August 24, 1768, Trevecca House, in the  
parish of Talgarth, South Wales, was dedicated by her  
to a new purpose, and was afterwards known as Trevecca  
College. Whitefield opened both the college and the  
chapel attached to it; and on the following Sunday, he  
preached in the court before the college, to a congregation  
of some thousands.

The winter of 1768-9 was spent by Whitefield in  
London; it was the last but one he lived to see. He  
was well enough to preach frequently; and as we shall  
not again find him among his London friends, it may be  
best now to notice some of his habits and characteristics  
which have not yet been mentioned.1 We know how  
neat and punctual he was in his younger days, and he  
was not different as an old man. It was a great fault for  
his meals to be but a few minutes late; and he would  
suffer no sitting up after ten o’clock at night, and no  
lying in bed after four in the morning. He would rise  
up abruptly in the midst of a conversation at ten at  
night, and say, ‘But we forget ourselves. Come, gentle-  
men, it is time for all good folks to be at home.’  
Whether anyone or no one sat down to table with him,

1 Jay’s ‘Memoirs of Cornelius Winter.’

and whether he had but bread and cheese or a complete  
dinner, the table must be properly spread. His love of  
exactness and order was the same in business transactions;  
every article was paid for at once, and for small articles  
the money was taken in the hand. His temper was  
soon annoyed, but quickly appeased. Not being patient  
enough one day to hear an explanation of a fault from  
some one who was studious to please, he gave much  
pain, and saw it by the tears which he started; this  
instantly touched him with grief, and bursting into tears  
himself, he said, ‘I shall live to be a poor peevish old  
man, and everybody will be tired of me.’ His commands  
were given kindly; and he always applauded when a  
person did right.

It is painful to learn that in his old age his confidence  
in mankind was much shaken. Always true to his  
friends in all fortunes, he yet was doomed to feel the  
treachery of many; and on that account he seemed to  
dread outliving his usefulness. The same experience  
made him exacting, and almost harsh, with young men  
who wanted to be ministers. To curb their vanity, as he  
would say, he would place them in humiliating circum-  
stances, and then refer to the young Roman orators, who  
after being applauded were sent upon trifling errands.  
He would keep them in suspense, and afford them little  
or no encouragement. One man, who answered him  
that he was a tailor, was dismissed with—‘Go to rag-fair,  
and buy old clothes; ’ and very likely rag-fair was his  
proper destination. He said of another who had preached  
in his vestry from the text, ‘These that have turned the  
world upside down have come hither also’—‘That man  
shall come no more here; if God had called him to  
preach, He would have furnished him with a proper  
text.’ He judged rightly; for the man afterwards be-  
came an inconsistent clergyman: he too would have  
been best at rag-fair.

Tormented as he must have been with all kinds of  
visitors and all kinds of requests, had he kept an open  
door, he wisely suffered but few to see him freely.  
‘Who is it?’ ‘What is his business?’ he would demand  
before his door was opened; and if the door was opened,  
he would say, ‘Tell him to come to-morrow morning at  
six o’clock, perhaps five, or immediately after preaching;  
if he is later, I cannot see him.’

Knowing that he sometimes preached an hour and a  
half or two hours, it prepares us for long prayers also;  
and perhaps had others prayed as well as he preached he  
might have borne with them. But he hated all unreality.  
In the middle of an immoderately long prayer by the  
master of the house where he was once staying, he rose  
from his knees, and sat down in the chair; and when  
the drawler concluded, he said to him with a frown:

‘Sir, you prayed me into a good frame, and you prayed  
me out of it again.’

We have seen that he was like old Mr. Cole in his use  
of anecdotes, nor were they always without a touch of  
humour. He was no more afraid of his congregations  
smiling than weeping; to get the truth into their hearts  
and heads was his object. His observant habits gathered  
illustrations from all quarters; and the last book he had  
read was sure to colour his next sermon.

He always ascended the pulpit with a pale, serious face,  
and a slow, calm step, as if he had a great message for  
the expectant thousands. Much preaching made him,  
not more familiar with his awful themes, but more  
solemn; and towards the close of fife, he sometimes  
entreated his friends to mention nothing to him which  
did not relate to eternity. On Sabbath morning his  
preaching was explanatory and doctrinal; in the after-  
noon it was more general and hortatory; and in the  
evening it was more general still. In the morning he  
was calm and conversational, occasionally making a

modest show of learning; in the evening he was oratori-  
cal, and attempted by every art of persuasion and every  
terror of denunciation to save his hearers from sin and  
its punishment. Then his perfect elocution and graceful  
gestures were in full play, his uttermost acting never  
appearing unnatural or improper. It is difficult to be-  
lieve that any preacher could successfully put a fold of  
his gown over his eyes to express grief, yet Whitefield  
invariably did it when he was depicting in his own vivid  
way the downfall of Peter, and grieving over it.

He seemed to have no particular time for preparing  
for the pulpit, although before entering it he loved to  
have an hour or two alone; and on Sunday mornings he  
generally had Clarke’s Bible, Matthew Henry’s Commen-  
tary, and Cruden’s Concordance within reach. It was  
remarked also that at this time his state of mind was  
more than usually devout; but ordinarily, indeed, the  
intervals of conversation were filled up with private  
ejaculations of praise and prayer, notwithstanding his love  
of pleasantry, which he did not care to suppress. His  
was an honest, real life from beginning to end; he was  
himself at all times and everywhere.

He did not love to be known and observed wherever  
he went. If he ever was fond of popularity, he was  
weary of it long before he became old, and often said  
that he ‘almost envied the man who could take his  
choice of food at an eating-house, and pass unnoticed.’

It is said that when he wrote his pamphlets, he shut  
himself up in his room, and would see no one until his  
work was done. Besides the productions of his pen  
already noticed, he wrote a ‘Recommendatory Preface to  
the Works of John Bunyan,’ which would have been  
more appropriately called a recommendation of Puritans  
and Puritan divinity; it contains not one discriminating  
remark upon the writings of the dreamer. Early in his  
ministry, he began some ‘Observations on select passages

of Scripture, turned into catechetical questions,’ which  
are much like the questions which an ordinary Sunday-  
school teacher would put to his class; but they were soon  
discontinued. A more elaborate work was ‘Law Gos-  
pelised,’ which means ‘an attempt to render Mr. Law’s  
“Serious Call” more useful to the children of God, by  
excluding whatever is not truly evangelical, and illus-  
trating the subject more fully from the Holy Scriptures.’  
We never hear of Law in this evangelical garb now,  
though we do hear of him without it. He has been  
preferred ungospelised; and Whitefield might have saved  
his trouble, had he remembered that ‘men do not put  
new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the  
wine runneth out, and the bottles perish.’ He contem-  
plated editing a new edition of the Homilies, for which  
he wrote a preface, and added a prayer for each homily,  
and a hymn selected either from Watts’s or Wesley’s  
collection. It was intended chiefly for the poor, and as  
a safeguard against Popery. He thought that it would  
banish heterodoxy and ‘mere heathen morality,’ and  
show that the ‘enthusiasts’ were the best churchmen;  
but his plan was not carried out.

He published several prayers, some of which are most  
appropriate in petition and language. Their titles are a  
leaf of Church history, and the petitions contained in  
some are as plain an index to passing conditions of life  
as are the peculiarities of the psalms. They were com-  
posed for persons desiring and seeking after the new birth,  
for those newly awakened to a sense of the divine life,  
for those under spiritual desertion, for those under the  
displeasure of relations for being religious; then come  
the cases of servants, Negroes, labourers, rich men,  
travellers, sailors, the sick, and persons in a storm at sea.

The prayer for a person before he goes a journey may  
be quoted: —

‘God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, who

leddest the people through a wilderness by a cloud by day, and  
a pillar of fire by night; and didst guide the wise men on their  
journey to Jerusalem, by a star in the east; give Thy angels  
charge concerning me, Thy unworthy servant, that I may not  
so much as hurt my foot against a stone. Keep me, 0 God,  
keep me on my journey, and suffer me not to fall among  
robbers. Jesus, thou Good Samaritan, take care of, support,  
defend, and provide for me. Behold, I go out by the direction  
of Thy providence; Lord, therefore let Thy presence go along  
with me, and Thy Spirit speak to my soul, when I am journey-  
ing alone by the wayside. 0, let me know that I am not  
alone, because my heavenly Father is with me. Keep me from  
evil company; or, if it be Thy will I should meet with any,  
give me courage and freedom, 0 Lord, to discourse of the  
things concerning the kingdom of God. And 0 that Thou  
wouldest let me meet with some of Thy own dear children!  
0, that Thou would’st be with us, as with the disciples at  
Emmaus, and cause our hearts mutually to burn with love  
towards Thee and one another! Provide for me proper refresh-  
ment; and, wherever I lodge, be Thou constrained, 0 God, for  
Thy own name’s sake, to lodge with me. Teach me, whether at  
home or abroad, to behave as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth.  
Preserve my household and friends in my absence, and grant  
that I may return to them again in peace. Enable me patiently  
to take up every cross that may be put in my way. Let me not  
be weary and faint in my mind. Make, 0 Lord, right paths  
for my feet; enable me to hold out to the end of the race set  
before me, and, after the journey of this life, translate me to  
that blessed place where the wicked one will cease from  
troubling, and my weary soul enjoy an everlasting rest with  
Thee, 0 Father, Son, and blessed Spirit; to whom, as three  
Persons but one God, be ascribed all possible power, might,  
majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.’

There is no hymn bearing Whitefield’s name. The  
Methodist revival gave the English Church in all its  
branches the greater number of its best hymns. Watts,  
Charles Wesley, John Wesley, Zinzendorf, Doddridge,  
Cennick, Madan, Berridge, Haweis, Toplady, all of them  
either taking an active part in the movement or coming

within the range of its influence, have expressed for us  
the humblest grief of our repentance, the fullest trust of  
our faith, and the brightest expectation of our hope;  
but Whitefield has given us not a verse. Emotional, like  
Charles Wesley, he yet had none of that fervid poet’s  
music. He was nothing but a preacher; but as a  
preacher he was the greatest of all his brethren, the  
most competent of his contemporaries being judges.

The only direct association of Whitefield’s name with  
the names of the brilliant and gifted men of his time has  
already appeared in the narrative of his preaching  
triumphs. It was principally statesmen—Pitt and Fox  
among the number, never Burke—who went to hear him.  
Not one of the celebrated Literary Club, Garrick excepted,  
was ever seen in the ‘soul-trap.’ Oglethorpe makes a  
kind of link between the Club and the Tabernacle. A  
friend of Whitefield, he was also a friend of Goldsmith;  
and sometimes he and Topham Beauclerc would turn in  
of an evening, to drink a glass of wine with ‘Gold,’  
at his chambers in Brick Court, Middle Temple—the  
chambers which he bought with the proceeds of the play  
that Shuter lifted into popularity. But the easy ways of  
many of these sons of genius, their wine-sipping, when  
they could get it, their comfortable suppers at the ‘Turk’s  
Head,’ their gaiety and their sins, sufficiently explain  
how it was that in all Whitefield’s career not one of them  
crossed his path. They talked about him, as they talked  
about everybody and everything; they theorised about  
his popularity; Johnson was sure that it was ‘chiefly  
owing to the peculiarity of his manner. He would be  
followed by crowds were he to wear a nightcap in the  
pulpit, or were he to preach from a tree.’ No doubt of  
it: and no doubt the nightcap would have made grasping  
men give of their beloved money to the orphan-house,  
and hardened sinners go home as gentle as lambs, and  
worldly wretches, who had been living only for the body

and for this life, begin to lift up their abject souls to  
look towards the splendours and joys of a heavenly  
kingdom!

Blind Handel might often be seen at the Countess’s,  
where he would gratify the Methodists by telling them  
what great pleasure he had enjoyed in setting the  
scriptures to music, and how some of the sublime  
passages of the Psalms were a comfort and a satisfaction  
to him. Lady Gertrude Hotham and Lady Chesterfield,  
both of them Methodists, gave occasional concerts of  
sacred music at their houses; and there on other occasions  
Giardini might be seen with his violin, applauded as  
heartily as in any opera-house. But whether the earnest  
preacher ever indulged himself with the gratification, I  
cannot say; it is hardly likely that he was once present.

‘I must work while it is called day,’ was the thought  
ever before his mind.

So we turn again with him to the places which he had  
loved to frequent, and where his form has become familiar  
to us. It is the last interview between Whitefield and  
Wesley that Wesley records in his journal on Monday  
(their old meeting day), February 27, 1769. He says,  
‘I had one more agreeable conversation with my old  
friend and fellow-labourer, George Whitefield. His soul  
appeared to be vigorous still, but his body was sinking  
apace; and, unless God interposes with His mighty hand,  
he must soon finish his labours.’ And this is a pleasant  
picture of the now aged, greyheaded evangelists, who in  
their youth had fired the nation with religious enthusiasm,  
which is sketched by Charles Wesley in a letter to his  
wife: ‘Last Friday I dined with my brother at George’s  
chapel. Mrs. Herritage was mistress, and provided the  
dinner. Hearty Mr. Adams was there; and to complete  
our band, Howel Harris. It was indeed a feast of love.  
My brother and George prayed: we all sang an hymn in  
the chapel.’ They were never all together again in this

world. Their last hymn in ‘George’s chapel’ carries the  
soul up to that house in the heavens, and we seem to  
hear it renewed again there.

The parting solemnities were exceedingly awful, when,  
early in September, 1769, Whitefield, accompanied by  
Cornelius Winter, took his last farewell of his English  
friends. His thirteenth voyage much resembled his first;  
it was hindered by the same delays; it was made danger-  
ous by the same high gales. He took to his old employ-  
ment when sailing, of reading the History of England,  
composing sermons, and writing letters. The greatest  
respect was shown him by both captain and passengers;  
and all attended service. He only wanted somebody  
about him with ‘a little more brains,’ he said, and then  
his comforts would have been complete.

His reception at Charleston was very hearty, and he  
preached the day after landing. Bethesda was in a satis-  
factory condition; he admitted ten orphans in the spring  
of 1770. They were what he called his prizes. The  
peace and happiness of the place were his daily joy; and  
thus Bethesda, after all the trouble it had cost him, after  
all his prayers and tears and pleadings for it, was to  
minister largely to the comfort of his last days. The  
hope of making it a college was again revived; and he  
prepared a draft of its future constitution, naming the  
wardens, but omitting himself, and thus annihilating his  
own name. Circumstances, however, soon changed, and  
he felt that its affairs must go on in their old channel.

His health continued better than it had been for years;  
and when summer approached he started on his old  
preaching circuit in the north. Invitations crowded in  
upon him; and he travelled from place to place as if  
the vigour of his youth were renewed. During one  
month, July, he travelled five hundred miles, riding and  
preaching during the heat of every day.

How like the language of his youth is that which he

penned at New York to his friend Keen—‘0. what a  
new scene of usefulness is opening in various parts of this  
new world! All fresh work where I have been. The  
divine influence hath been as at the first. Invitations  
crowd upon me both from ministers and people, from  
many, many quarters. A very peculiar providence led me  
lately to a place where a horse-stealer was executed;  
thousands attended. The poor criminal had sent me  
several letters, hearing I was in the country. The sheriff  
allowed him to come and hear a sermon under an adja-  
cent tree. Solemn! solemn! After being by himself  
about an hour, I walked half a mile with him to the  
gallows. His heart had been softened before my first  
visit. He seemed full of solid, divine consolations. An  
instructive walk! I went up with him into the cart. He  
gave a short exhortation. I then stood upon the coffin,  
added, I trust, a word in season, prayed, gave the  
blessing, and took my leave.’ This was not the first ex-  
ecution he had been present at. He pressed all things  
into the service of the pulpit, and was wont to make even  
the final scenes of a criminal’s career give effect to the  
urgency and solemnity of his appeals and warnings. At  
the close of a sermon, and after pausing for a moment, he  
would say, with his eyes fall of tears and his heart almost  
too big for words:—‘I am going now to put on my con-  
demning cap. Sinner. I must do it; I must pronounce  
sentence upon you.’ Then, like a peal of thunder, fell the  
terrible curse, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting  
fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’

It was now eventide with him; but one week of life  
remained. There was a hush and quietness gathering  
around the close of his benevolent ministry, which seemed  
to tell of coming rest for the weary and broken servant.  
Opposition was silent; none spoke or wrote a word  
against him. The people, as if they expected to see his  
face no more, clung to him. and were unwilling to let

him leave their towns and villages, through which he was  
still attempting to travel on his evangelistic work. But it  
was not always he could meet them, when they had as-  
sembled together; for the body was being shaken to its  
fall. They were, he said, but ‘poor efforts he could make  
to serve his Lord. 0, for a warm heart! 0, to stand fast  
in the faith—to quit ourselves like men, and be strong!’  
To the letter which contains this prayer, he subscribed  
himself, as was now his way, ‘Less than the least of  
all, George Whitefield.’ It was the last subscription  
he penned, and well did it harmonise with one of the  
strongest wishes he had ever made known to God—the  
wish to be humble.

On Friday, September 29, he preached at Ports-  
mouth; and on the following morning started for Boston,  
travelling by way of Exeter and Newbury Port, in order  
to fulfil an engagement at the latter place on the Sunday.  
But the people of Exeter could not let him pass without  
his giving them a sermon; and he yielded to their en-  
treaties. He had ridden fifteen miles that morning, and,  
as he was more uneasy than usual, one remarked to him,  
before going out to preach: ‘Sir, you are more fit to go  
to bed than to preach.’ Whitefield answered: ‘True,  
sir;’ then, turning aside, he clasped his hands together,  
and looking up, said: ‘Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy  
work, but not of Thy work. If I have not yet finished  
my course, let me go and speak for Thee once more in  
the fields, seal Thy truth, and come home and die.’ The  
Lord heard his request. He went out and preached in  
the fields for nearly two hours to a large congregation.  
Then he dined, and rode forward to Newbury Port with  
a friend. In the evening he was tired, and, after an early  
supper, of which he partook very sparingly, begged the  
Rev. Mr. Parsons, at whose house he was staying, to have  
family prayer, so that he might retire to rest at once.  
Meanwhile, the pavement in front of the house and the

hall became crowded with people who wanted to hear  
some words of grace and truth from his lips; but he felt  
himself unequal to the task of addressing them, and said  
to another clergyman, ‘Brother, you must speak to these  
dear people; I cannot say a word.’ To his friend and  
companion, who slept in the same room with him, he  
said, ‘I will sit and read till you come to me.’ But there  
were the waiting people to be passed, as, with candle in  
hand, he went to his bedroom; and his heart strove with  
him to say something. He halted on the staircase, turned  
towards them, and began an exhortation. Tearful eyes  
were lifted up to him, while his words flowed on and  
ceased not ‘until the candle, which he still held, burned  
away, and went out in its socket.’1

When his friend entered his room, Whitefield was  
found reading the Bible, with Watts’s Psalms lying open  
before him. After committing himself into the hands of  
God, he went to rest, and slept, with the window half  
open, till two in the morning, when an attack of asthma  
seized him. Yet he talked of his work as if many days  
more were left to him; he must have two or three days’  
riding without preaching, and then he would be all right;  
or, he thought, his preaching the next day would make,  
him better—his old remedy, ‘a pulpit-sweat,’ would  
relieve him; he would rather wear out than rust out. It  
had long been his habit to rise in the night and pray; and  
this night, weary and panting, he sat up in bed and prayed  
God to bless his preaching on the past day, and his forth-  
coming services on the Sunday; to bring more souls to  
Christ; to give him direction in the way he should take,  
whether he should winter at Boston, or hasten to the  
south; to remember Bethesda and his dear family; to  
smile on the congregations at the Tabernacle and Totten-  
ham Court Chapel, and on all his English friends. He lay  
down again to sleep; but in an hour he called his friend

1 ‘History of Methodism.’ By Abel Stevens, LL.D., p. 360.

for help. ‘My asthma—my asthma is coming on,’ he  
said. At five o’clock he rose to open the window wider  
for more air. A few minutes afterwards, he turned to  
his companion, and said, ‘I am dying.’ He ran to the  
other window, panting for breath, but could get no relief.  
They seated him in his chair, wrapped his cloak round  
him, and did their utmost to restore him. But the end  
was come. The device on his seal of wings outspread for  
flight, and the motto it bore, ‘Astra petamusj had long  
expressed his ardent desire to pass even beyond the stars;  
and, at six o’clock on Sunday morning, September 30,  
1770, he entered heaven itself.

The end was conformable to his hope and prayer. He  
was an evangelist, and died in a foreign land, although  
not among strangers. He was a field-preacher, and  
preached his last sermon in the fields. He had feared out-  
living his usefulness, and was permitted a reviving of his  
strength before he departed at the comparatively early  
age of fifty-six, and after thirty-four years of exertion.  
He had expected to die silent; for, he said, ‘It has pleased  
God to enable me to bear so many testimonies for Him  
during my life, that He will require none from me when  
I die.’ And so it was.

He was buried, according to his wish, beneath the  
pulpit of Mr. Parsons, at Newbury Port, the mighty host  
of mourners present, six thousand members and ministers  
of many denominations, fitly representing the catholicity  
of his heart and the magnitude of his labours. When the  
coffin was placed close to the mouth of the vault, one of  
his sons in the faith ascended the pulpit, offered prayer,  
and confessed before all his vast obligations to him whose  
body they were about to commit to the grave. His emo-  
tion conquered him, and, as he cried out, ‘0, my father,  
my father!’ and stood and wept, the people mingled their  
tears with his. They tried to sing a hymn, but weeping  
choked many voices. A sermon was then preached; the

coffin was lowered into the vault; another short prayer  
was offered; and the congregation, still in tears, passed  
along the streets to their homes.

The outward demonstrations of grief were numerous  
and sincere. The bells of Newbury Port were tolled,  
and the ships in the harbour fired their guns, and hung  
their flags half-mast high. Funeral sermons were preached  
in the principal cities of America. In Georgia all the  
black cloth in the stores was bought up for mourning by  
the sorrowing people. They hung the church at Savannah  
in black, and the Governor and the Council led the pro-  
cession which attended to hear the funeral sermon. In  
London, where the news of his death was received on  
November 5, the same grief was felt and expressed.  
The ‘London Chronicle’ of November 19 says that the  
multitudes which went to hear his funeral sermon by  
Wesley, in Tottenham Court Chapel and the Tabernacle,  
exceeded all belief; and in churches and chapels of all  
orders there were similar commemorations of him.

Lovers of absolute, unvarying consistency, and lovers  
of real or apparent contradictions may measure him by  
the room he had for diverse things. He loved privacy,  
but always lived in public; he was the foremost philan-  
thropist of his time, but owned fifty slaves to maintain  
his orphans; he was slim in person, but occasionally  
stormed in his preaching as if he were a giant; he was  
weak, but worked to the last, and crowded a long life  
into a short one; he was the favourite preacher of col-  
liers and London roughs, but was an equal favourite of  
peers and scholars; he believed in a limited atonement  
for sin, but proclaimed the love of God with a tender-  
ness which made all feel that Christ had died for them;  
he was a clergyman of the Church of England, but, at  
his own request, lies buried in a Presbyterian Church;  
he was a Calvinist in doctrine, but chose an Arminian to  
preach his funeral sermon.

Two questions are almost sure to be upon the reader’s  
tongue. First, what became of the orphan-house?  
Secondly, where are the results of his preaching? These  
shall now be answered.

I. The orphan-house with everything connected with  
it was left to the Countess of Huntingdon, Mr. Habersham  
to act in her absence from America. Arrangements  
had been made in Whitefield’s lifetime for carrying on  
an academy along with the orphanage. It became also  
a home, whence missionaries, sent from England by Lady  
Huntingdon, started on mission work among the Indians  
and the settlers. It was accidentally burnt down about  
two years after the death of Whitefield, and rebuilt, but  
not upon the original site. Other changes of fortune  
happened to it, one of which was the appointment of  
Franklin, its early opponent, as a trustee, because he was  
an ‘honest man.’ Its original charter appointed its con-  
tinuance so long as there were three members to cele-  
brate the anniversary, which falls on St. George’s Hay.  
This provision might once have sealed its fate. Three  
members, ‘a Protestant, a Catholic, and an Israelite,’  
who apparently constituted the whole board at that time,  
were all prisoners of war on board a British man-of-war  
when St. George’s Day came round. Remembering the  
charter, they begged permission of the captain to go  
ashore, and celebrate the anniversary under an oak tree  
in Tunbury, Georgia. He consented, and the ceremony  
was duly performed. Mr. Joseph S. Fay, now of Boston,  
and formerly of Savannah, succeeded, during the time he  
was president of the institution, in repurchasing the old  
site, and placing the orphanage upon it again. This year  
(1870) a new building has been begun, which will make  
the fourth since Whitefield laid the first brick of Bethesda  
with his own hand.1

1 I am indebted for these particulars to the kindness of the Rev. Dr.  
Blagden and the Rev. Dr. Tarbox, of Boston, U.S., who received them  
from Mr. Minis and Mr. Weld; the former is a Jew and president of the  
board of trustees.

Between 1739 and 1770, forty-three girls and one  
hundred and forty boys were clothed, educated, main-  
tained, and suitably provided for in the orphan-house;  
and over and above this number many poor children were  
occasionally received, educated, and maintained. Ac-  
cording to the audit of 1770, this work was done at a  
cost of 15,404, of which 11,000. was collected by  
Whitefield, the rest being raised by the farm.

II. The results of Whitefield’s work may be classed as  
indirect and direct results. 1. Among the first must be  
placed the impetus which he undoubtedly gave to philan-  
thropical work. His preaching to prisoners and his  
constant pleadings for orphans and other distressed per-  
sons, accustomed all classes of people to kindly thoughts  
for the wretched and the forlorn. He created, not alto-  
gether, but largely, the feeling upon which philanthropy  
in its active forms must live. The benevolent objects of  
present religious work received recognition in every city  
and village, when the connexion between acceptance  
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and the neces-  
sity for good works was repeatedly and clearly pointed  
out. Justification was the introduction to feeding the  
hungry, clothing the naked, and housing the orphan.

It is equally significant that the great missionary move-  
ments of our time followed close upon the Methodist  
reformation; and in that reformation, who was there  
among the host of preachers and evangelists to be com-  
pared with Whitefield for missionary enterprise? Whose  
foot ranged over so wide a circuit? Whose sympathies  
were enlisted for so many objects? If he did not go to  
the heathen who worship idols of wood and stone, he  
went to those who were debased by the lowest vices; and  
when, under his leadership, the Church had conducted  
them to a holy life and pure enjoyments, her attention  
was next directed to the heathen beyond. Whitefield  
accustomed the Church to the idea of aggression upon

the kingdom of darkness; he taught her that all lost and  
forgotten people are the inheritance of her Lord.

Again, it needs but a simple statement of facts to  
show that Whitefield’s preaching and his catholic spirit  
(the latter more than the former) have tended in no  
small measure to produce in England, as they first did  
in America, a true love of spiritual freedom, and an  
honest reverence for religious equality. In his labours  
among all denominations he affected no condescension,  
he never played the patron. All were equally, truly  
brethren. Neither to benefit himself, nor to forward any  
of his plans, would he place one denomination before  
another. His conduct with regard to Bethesda College  
proves indisputably that he believed in religious equality,  
and would not support or countenance anything else;  
and whether society is now following him, or clinging to  
unrighteous and unchristian exclusiveness, none can fail  
to see. But it was not his logical faculty that helped  
him so far forward in the path of truth; it was his bro-  
therly spirit, that could endure no distinctions; his heart  
always led him onward and upward.

Could nothing more than this be said, then Whitefield  
has not lived in vain; since the power of a life consists  
not so much in the formation of parties, and sects, and  
schools, as in the anticipation of the truest and holiest  
things of future days, and in the preparation of the world  
for their advent. Churches may be cemeteries of the  
dead railed off from the living; or loving messengers of  
Christ going about doing good. Whitefield found them  
the former, and left them the latter.

2. Still, the demand is sure to be made for facts and  
figures. What did he accomplish? is the question asked.  
The answer is:—

(1.) That his converts were to be found wherever he  
had travelled, nay even beyond that extensive range, and  
were to be counted by tens of thousands.

(2.) That a great number of his converts were mi-  
nisters properly trained for their ministerial work, who  
handed the truth down to children’s children. In the  
neighbourhood of Boston in America alone there were  
at one time twenty ministers who owned him as their  
spiritual father. Some of them had a spiritual history  
not much less wonderful than his own. Such was the  
case with a young man at Norwich in England, who went  
to hear Whitefield preach, that he might be able to tell  
his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren,  
what the great Methodist was like; for a fortune-teller  
had informed him that he should live to be an old man,  
and see these distant descendants. He got the informa-  
tion in sport, but it turned to good account. The early  
parts of Whitefield’s sermon made no impression upon  
him; but when Whitefield abruptly broke off, paused  
for a few moments, then burst into a flood of tears, and  
lifting up his hands and eyes, exclaimed, ‘0 my hearers,  
the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to  
come!’ the words sunk into his heart. For days and weeks  
he could think of little else; then came the change in cha-  
racter and the change in life. He was only one of many.

(3.) That he was the first of the evangelical clergy in  
the Church of England; and had they formed a separate  
sect, instead of a party in a church, no one would have  
asked what are the results of his labours. This is the  
party which holds Whitefield’s legacy to mankind strictly  
in the letter—sometimes not more than that. Other  
parties again, to whose faith and practice he would have  
taken serious exception, have imbibed his spirit of zeal  
and love, and closely resemble him in all that makes his  
character noble and his life beautiful. It is confessedly  
difficult to trace spiritual influences through all their  
subtle operations, and upon this point I would speak with  
caution and reserve; yet it cannot be denied that not a  
few who would disclaim all connexion with him, even

the most remote, owe to him and to the early Methodists  
their spiritual life. One party may savour of Rome, and  
the other of rationalism; but the sincere attention of both  
to religion is infinitely better than the formality and utter  
godlessness which prevailed when Whitefield lifted up  
his voice in the fields. The whole Church of England  
has been moved by the wave which first lifted on its  
breast only a small section of her people, though parties  
have drifted in different directions.

(4.) That he helped to revive the churches of the  
Dissenters. His own chapels fell into their hands; and  
in many of their favourite preachers, down even to the  
present day, it would not be difficult to trace the in-  
fluence of his popular oratory. But their present leaders,  
their men of middle age, are far removed from his  
theological standpoint, while they cherish the thoughts  
and the heavenly influence which made his ministry so  
mighty. They proclaim an atonement for sin, while dis-  
carding his gross conceptions of the nature of atonement;  
they insist upon a personal and vital union of spirit with  
Jesus Christ; they invoke the help of the Holy Ghost,  
feeling that without His power upon preacher and hearer  
no spiritual good can be done. But they say little  
about predestination, and nothing at all about Christ’s  
having died for an elect world.

(5.) That the Church of Scotland was made alive again  
by his numerous visits to Scotland, and his impassioned  
appeals to the slumbering and the dead. Wesley could  
do nothing north of the Tweed; the people were ‘un-  
feeling,’ ‘dead stones,’ decent and serious but ‘perfectly  
unconcerned,’ they ‘heard much, knew everything, and  
felt nothing;’ he did not hesitate to say that ‘the hand  
of the Lord was almost entirely stayed in Scotland.’ It  
might have occurred to him that where his friend had so  
signally succeeded and he had as signally failed, some  
fault might possibly attach to himself. Scotch journeys

were nearly always an unmixed joy to Whitefield because  
of the good he did; and it is noticeable that thirty years  
ago, the foremost'ministers and the great bulk of the  
members of the Scotch Church assumed the position of  
the English Dissenters, and made of themselves a ‘Free  
Church.’

(6.) That the Church in Wales, of all denominations,  
received a remarkable impetus from Methodism, and that  
Whitefield was the first to join hands with the earnest  
men of the Principality. The early representations of the  
Methodists as to the religious condition of the country  
cannot be relied upon, but the following comparative  
table has been carefully prepared by Dr. Rees, and pub-  
lished in his volume on ‘Nonconformity in Wales.’ It  
gives the number of Nonconformist congregations in  
Wales as 110 in 1716, 105 in 1742, 171 in 1775, 993 in  
1816, 2927 in 1861. The great increase between 1775  
and 1816 was owing to the separation of the Calvinistic  
Methodists from the Established Church, which took  
place in 1811; and from 1816 to 1861 the increase is the  
result of the zeal and labours of the churches, crowned  
with the blessing of God. Broadly stated, the result of  
Methodism in Wales has been the changing of a nation  
of ignorant irreligious Churchmen into a nation of con-  
scientious Nonconformists, who adhere to their convictions  
in spite of much persecution and disadvantage. Whitefield  
neither desired nor sought the nonconformity; but, as  
in the case of Scotland, an intense religious life would  
have freedom of action.

(7.) That in America he founded the Presbyterian  
church of Virginia,1 and helped more than any man  
to triple the ministers of the New York Synod within  
seven years,2 and to bring into existence a hundred and  
fifty congregational churches in less than twenty years.3

1 The Great Awakening.’ By Joseph Tracy, pp. 374-384.  
 2 Ibid. p. 386. 3 Ibid. p. 339.

His labours materially aided the building of Princeton  
College and Dartmouth College.1 They also produced  
the same effect upon church government in America  
which we have seen to have been produced in Scotland,  
England and Wales. The spiritual life would not be  
fettered; and the union between church and state was  
broken.2

What did Whitefield accomplish? He founded churches  
and inaugurated religious revolutions by a sermon. His  
last sermons—those which he preached within a few days  
of his death—touched the heart of a young man named  
Randall; his death sealed all the holy impressions as with  
the mark of God; and that young man shortly after-  
wards founded the Free-Will Baptist Church, now fifty  
thousand strong, in the United States.3 His works do  
follow him.

Could his hand add one word to this record of his life  
and its fruits, it would be this—‘Grace! Grace! Grace!’  
For his sake, then, and especially for the sake of Him  
who came bringing grace and truth with Him, it shall be  
inscribed as the last word here—GRACE.

1 History of Methodism, p. 397. 2 Ibid., p. 370. 3 Ibid.

1. ‘The Christian’s Defence against the Fears of Death,’ by Charles Drelin-  
   court, was the most prominent among these books. Its unrivalled advertise-  
   ment and recommendation in ‘A. Relation of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal,’  
   could not fail to attract Whitefield’s attention in his present state of mind.  
   ‘Now you must know Mrs. Teal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty  
   years of age, and for some years last past had been troubled with fits, which  
   were perceived coming on her by her going off from her discourse very abruptly  
   to some impertinence.’ On September 7,1705, Mrs. Veal died at Dover, and,  
   on the following day, attired in a ‘ scowered silk gown, newly made up,’  
   she appeared to her old friend Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury. They spoke  
   together for an hour and three quarters, Mrs. Bargrave not knowing that  
   the lady in the ‘scowered silk’ was a ghost. Their conversation ran much  
   on trifles; but it had also a serious turn, and Mrs. Veal assured her friend  
   that ‘Drelincourt had the clearest notions of death and of the future state  
   of any who had handled that subject.’ This judgment, pronounced by one  
   so well calculated to understand all things about death, having herself  
   passed through it, prepares us to believe that ‘ Drelincourt’s Book of Death  
   is, since this happened, bought up strangely.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Since writing this paragraph I have observed the following sentences in  
   Mr. Forster’s Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith,’ p. 859, viz.

   ‘There had been, in light amusing fiction, no such scene as that where Dr.  
   Primrose, surrounded by the mocking felons of the gaol into which his  
   villanous creditor had thrown him, finds in even those wretched outcasts  
   a common nature to appeal to, minds to instruct, sympathies to bring back  
   to virtue, souls to restore and save. “In less than a fortnight I had formed  
   them into something social and humane.” Into how many hearts may this [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The one great corruption to which all religion is exposed is its separa-  
   tion from morality. The very strength of the religious motive has a tendency  
   to exclude or disparage all other tendencies of the human mind, even the  
   noblest and best. It is against this corruption that the prophetic order from  
   first to last constantly protested. Even its mere outward appearance and  
   organisation bore witness to the greatness of the opposite truth—the in-  
   separable union of morality with religion. Alone of all the high offices of  
   the Jewish Church, the prophets were called by no outward form of con-  
   secration, and were selected from no special tribe or family. But the most  
   effective witness to this great doctrine was borne by their actual teaching.’  
   —Stanley’s ‘Lectures on the Jewish Church,’ p. 451. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Forty years ago a much esteemed Dissenting minister and college tutor  
   at Rotherham kept up this Puritan habit in his family. The name of Dr.  
   Bennet is still mentioned with respect for miles around Rotherham**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This alarm about impoverishing the country does not look so absurd,  
   when it is remembered that in 1706 the total revenue of Scotland was only  
   160,000*l*. The question of taxation formed one of the greatest difficulties  
   in the way of settling the treaty of union between England and Scotland;  
   the poor and thrifty Scotch stipulated that their oats should have some  
   ‘bounty’ extended to them; and to encourage the growth of wool, an act  
   was passed to provide that shrouds should always be used at funerals, but  
   that only woollen ones should be allowed. The following story will still  
   better illustrate the poverty of the nation—‘ Thus we find Mr. William  
   Hunter, the minister of Banff, write as follows to Carstairs—“My Lord Banff, upon declaring himself Protestant, has a mind to go south, and take his place [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. It was some time during these early years of his ministry that, as  
   Franklin relates, a drummer, who formed one of White field’s open-air con-  
   gregations, determined to drown Whitefield’s voice by heating his drum  
   violently. Whitefield attempted to hold his own, and raised his voice to a  
   very loud pitch, but all to no purpose; he then addressed the drummer  
   personally in a happy speech. ‘ Friend,’ said he, ‘you and I serve the two  
   greatest masters existing, but in different callings—you heat up for volun-  
   teers for King George, and I for the Lord Jesus; in God’s name, then, let us  
   not interrupt each other; the world is wide enough for both, and we may  
   get recruits in abundance.’ The drummer accepted the terms of peace, and  
   going away in great good-humour, left the preacher in full possession of  
   the field. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. What would Willison have thought of Whitefield, if he had heard the  
   following vagabond anecdote, which ought to be true, if it is not? Some  
   time after the quarrel upon the five points between Whitefield and Wesley,  
   and their happy reconciliation, the two combatants slept together in the  
   same bed (Methodist preachers sometimes slept three in a bed), at the close  
   of a toilsome day. Wesley knelt down and prayed before lying down to  
   rest, but Whitefield threw himself upon the bed at once. ‘George,’ said  
   Wesley, in a reproachful tone, ‘is that your Calvinism?’ During the night  
   Whitefield awoke, and found his friend fast asleep on his knees by the bed-  
   side; rousing him up he said—‘John, is that your Arminianism?’ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. How much Tennent himself was sobered in judgment upon some ques-  
   tions, though not at all in his way of expressing himself, appears in a letter  
   published in the ‘Boston Evening Post,’July 26, 1742. He says: ‘The  
   late method of setting up separate meetings upon the supposed unregeneraey  
   of pastors of places is enthusiastical, proud, and schismatical. All that fear  
   God ought to oppose it as a most dangerous engine to bring the churches  
   into the most damnable errors and confusions. The practice of openly ex-  
   posing ministers, who are supposed to be unconverted, in public discourse,  
   by particular application of such times and places, serves only to provoke  
   them, instead of doing them any good, and to declare our own arrogance.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. It is pleasant to remember that Warburton, who was long on friendly  
    terms with Doddridge, procured for him some comforts in the packet-beats,  
    when Doddridge sailed for Lisbon in search of health: as it turned out, he  
    went abroad only to die. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cornelius Winter describes the power and effect with which Whitefield  
    was wont to picture the sufferings of the Son of God: he says, ‘You may  
    be sure from what has been said, that when he treated upon the sufferings  
    of our Saviour, it was not without great pathos. He was very ready at that  
    hind of painting which frequently answered the end of real scenery. As  
    though Gethsemane were within sight, he would say, stretching out his  
    hand, “Look yonder! What is that I see? It is my agonising Lord!” And,  
    as though it were not difficult to catch the sound of the Saviour praying,  
    he would exclaim, “Hark! hark! do you not hear?” You may suppose  
    that as this occurred frequently, the efficacy of it was destroyed; but no;  
    though we often knew what was coming, it was as new to us as though we  
    had never heard it before.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The foreign element was conspicuous among the principal men of the  
    Methodist movement. Homaine’s father was a French refugee, who sought  
    the protection of this country after the revocation of the edict of Nantes;  
    Cennick was perhaps of Bohemian extraction; and Fletcher, saintliest of  
    men, was a Swiss. Doddridge also, among the Dissenters, was the grand-  
    son, on his mother’s side, of the Rev. John Beauman, who fled from Prague  
    in 1626, on account of religious troubles into which Bohemia was thrown  
    by the expulsion of Frederick, Elector Palatine. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Did Whitefield choose the King’s coat as well as Lady Chesterfield’s  
    gown? For it was ‘sober brown, trimmed with lace, and blue cuffs.’  
    Perhaps His Majesty took a hint from the quiet taste of the Methodist  
    peeress. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Whitefield’s house was often the village inn, and there he was exposed  
    to annoyance both from drunkards and gamblers. One night the room in  
    which he and a friend slept was next to that in which a set of gamblers  
    were carousing; and their foul language so troubled him that he felt he  
    must go and reprove them. In vain did his friend try to dissuade him. He  
    went and spoke, but apparently without any effect. When he returned  
    and lay down again, his friend said, ‘ What did you gain by it?’ ‘A soft

    Pillow.’ he answered, and soon fell asleep. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Lord Chesterfield contributed twenty pounds towards the erection of  
    the Bristol Tabernacle; but begged that his name might not appear in any  
    way. Sainte Beuve says that he feared ridicule; and very likely that  
    feeling made him wish his name to be withheld. He seems also to hare  
    been afraid of Lady Huntingdon’s importunities, and a little impatience with  
    her is perceptible. ‘Really,’ he said, ‘there is no resisting your ladyship’s  
    importunities. It would ill become me to censure your enthusiastic admi-  
    ration of Mr. Whitefield. His eloquence is unrivalled, his zeal inexhaust-  
    ible ; and not to admire both would argue a total absence of taste, and an  
    insensibility not to be coveted by anybody.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 19 Yours, &c.,

    ‘ **George Whitefield.’** [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. These likenesses were a great bugbear to him; he especially disliked  
    that in which he is represented with his hands lifted above his head, an  
    attitude which he seldom assumed, and but for a moment. He used to say  
    that he should hate himself were he ‘ the sour-looking creature ’ they re-  
    presented him to be. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The words are those of an aged Oxfordshire peasant, and were spoken in answer to the question, whether he remembered Whitefield’s appearance. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. ‘Ay, sure,’said he, ‘he was a jolly, brave man; and what a look he had  
    when he put out his right hand thus, to rebuke a disturber as tried to stop  
    him, under the pear-tree. The man had been very threatening and noisy;  
    but he could not stand the look. Off he rode, and Whitefield said, “There

    he goes: empty barrels make the most din.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. I am not fully satisfied that this anecdote is authentic; it is inserted here  
    upon the authority of ‘ Sketches of the Life and Labours of the Rev. George  
    Whitefield,’ issued by the Committee of the General Assembly of the Free  
    Church of Scotland. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Some time after this adventure, when De Courcy, an Irish clergyman,  
    visited London, and was introduced to Whitefield, the latter held his head  
    downwards, and putting his hand upon a deep scar in it, said, ‘This, Sir, I  
    got in your country for preaching Christ.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-21)